

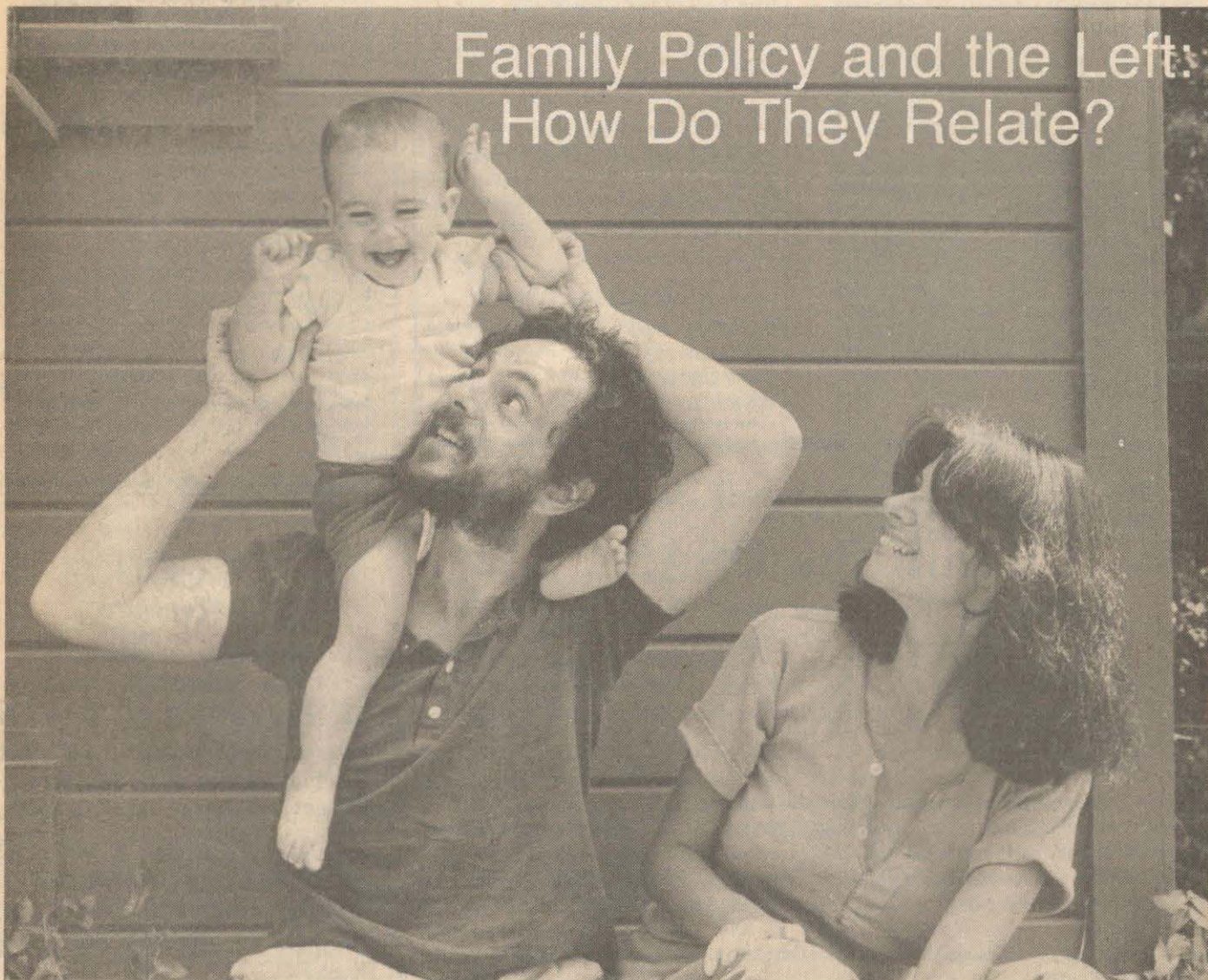
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# DEMOCRATIC Left

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Family Policy and the Left:  
How Do They Relate?



Hazel Hankin/Impact Visuals

**Barbara Ehrenreich on Women and the Family  
Also: The Bohemian Left • Local Policy Initiatives •  
INF Treaty • Internationalization of the Economy •**

# DEMOCRATIC LEFT

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# The Family: Real Issues for Real People

by Guy Molyneux

Some years from now, when historians try to determine just when the political climate began its leftward shift, they may well note Senator Orrin Hatch's submission of a quarter-billion-dollar child care bill in 1987. One could hardly ask for a clearer signal that Democrats now set the nation's political agenda while Republicans merely respond, a dramatic reversal of the prior six years' pattern. And choosing the playing field, as we have painfully learned, takes one a long way toward winning the game.

Family policy issues (parental leave, preschool programs, flextime) make up an important part of that agenda and have significantly contributed to the Democrats' change in fortune. They also provide a theme and strategy that could help us build a progressive political majority. The left can potentially play an important role in this project, but seems unsure of how to proceed. The choice is stark: engagement and influence, or isolation and irrelevance.

## Political Roots

The new family agenda consists of a number of diverse issues, each with a well-organized and growing constituency behind it (see box on page five). They share roots in a set of interrelated social and economic changes that have profoundly affected American family and work life. Three changes stand out as particularly important: the greatly expanded participation of women in the workplace, including the mothers of young children; stagnant or declining wages; and the alarming increase in the number of children living in poverty.

Several distinct strands that are now being woven into a national family agenda can be identified: The first is the focus on children as a way of reopening a discussion of poverty. New concerns about "human capital," fueled by record trade deficits, have only increased attention to the tragic waste and injustice repre-

sented by neglect of children. What began as a maneuver by anti-poverty forces has blossomed into a larger set of issues, with even greater political potential.

At the same time, the increase in working women has produced another set of issues centered on parenting and work. Efforts are under way that address both workplace issues (flextime, leave) and broader public policy questions (child care, afterschool programs, child support enforcement). This agenda promises to strengthen each movement while also defining specific common ground for coalition-building.

## Powerful Theme

Taken as a group, these represent something greater than a set of effective issues, or even a clever appropriation of language. These issues are bound together by, and help define, a potent political theme — the family — which involves thinking and talking about progressive concerns in a new way. In these campaigns we see a new strategic sophistication on the part of progressives, marked by efforts to reach new constituencies, a deeper understanding of the importance of language and symbols, and a creative approach to defining issues in ways that maximize support. The potential inherent in this approach cannot be overestimated.

While the left has learned well that the "personal is political," it has too rarely understood that the political must also be personal. I have no quarrel with reforming the Federal Reserve or fighting intervention in Central America, but these are not exactly issues that "get you where you live." The family agenda addresses immediate felt needs of millions of people — a prerequisite to building a majoritarian movement. Public opinion polls show strong and growing concern about pressures on the working family. Anxiety about parenting, the future of children, young adults beginning families of their own, and elder parents is prevalent.

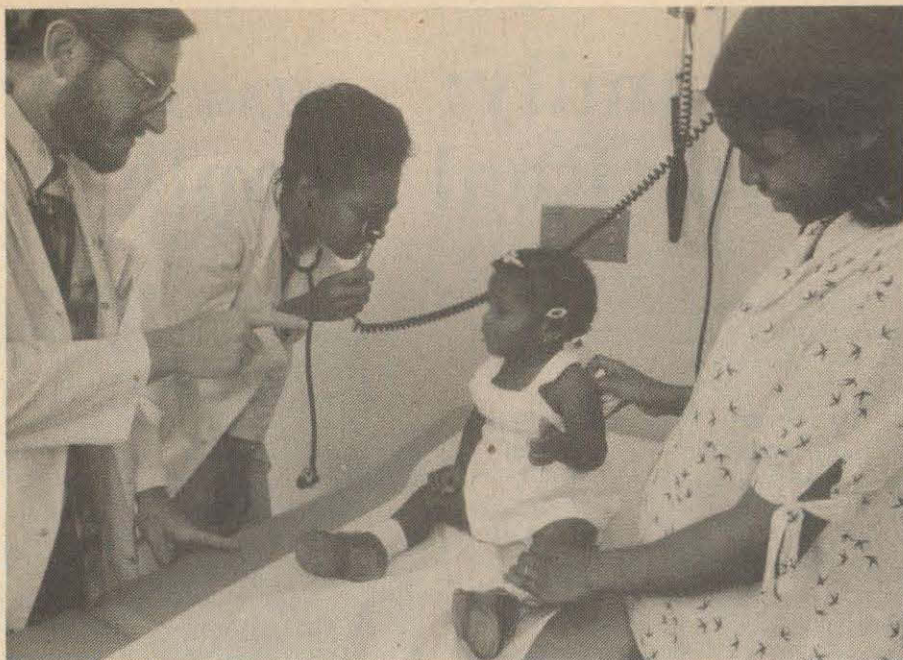
Moreover, polls indicate that people think of these concerns as appropriate



Hazel Hankin/Impact Visuals

places for public policy intervention and are looking for political leadership in this area. As we start to win victories, parents and children will have direct experience with policies and programs which expand their options and improve the quality of their lives. Imagine it: average Americans having *positive* interaction with the public sector in their daily lives! (Quick now, when's the last time it happened to you?) This will open the door to re-legitimizing affirmative government, one of our most difficult ideological challenges.

This suggests a crucial point: "Family policy" is not merely the application of a "good" word to an existing progressive agenda; it's a recognition of how people actually experience and understand many contemporary social and economic ills. That is why the language of family now permeates discussion of "older" policy issues like health care, taxes, and housing. Uneven economic growth means your daughter has to move 1,000



Kathleen Foster/Impact Visuals

**Mother and daughter at Local health clinic.**

miles from home to find a good job. The absence of labor market policies means your son isn't qualified for a decent job when he graduates from high school. Our indecent healthcare system means grandma may have to divorce grandpa, or risk losing the house when he goes into a nursing home next month.

Are these not issues in which the entire society has a proper interest? Of course. But for most Americans they are understood first and foremost in the context of real family relationships. Talking about social policy in terms of the life-cycle makes it more concrete and meaningful.

Ideologically, this approach opens the possibility of an American-style social democratic politics by avoiding a direct challenge to the ethics of self-reliance and personal responsibility. We're not asking that people become wards of a bureaucratic state. We *are* offering assistance to them (and their children and parents) at specific times when self-reliance is not a reasonable expectation. Americans are not looking for government to take over crucial family functions, but they *are* looking for government to help them better fulfill their obligations as parents, spouses, and offspring.

#### Us and Them

A further strength of the family agenda is the extraordinary breadth of its appeal. Of particular significance is the opportunity it gives us to speak to those middle- and working-class voters who

have deserted the Democratic party in recent years, many of whom don't belong to any political organizations. This is a bottom line question for any political strategy: *does it allow us to reach new people?*

This broad appeal is only possible because many planks of the family agenda are universal entitlement programs. A universal approach that builds cross-class support is essential both for winning victories and for defending programs over time. We must build a politics of solidarity rather than generosity, one based on enlightened self-interest and mutuality, not guilt or altruism. Progressives now use words such as "greed" and "selfishness" too freely — middle-class voters often suspect we're talking about them. Besides, self-interest used to be the right's fear — that the masses would use the ballot box to take what they couldn't get in the marketplace — and that's the way it should be. Talking to people about their family concerns facilitates such a reclaiming of legitimate self-interest.

Politics, in one sense, is nothing more (or less) than defining "us" and "them." For too many Americans "us" has meant the hard-working and over-taxed middle class, while "they" are welfare recipients on the dole. Ronald Reagan convinced the former he had more concern for their well-being, and had more respect for the way they lived their lives, than did the Democrats. The politics of family can help us begin to

change those definitions. "We" should be working families, of whatever class; "they" is anybody who opposes the pro-family agenda.

#### The left

Some will surely object that family politics represents, if not outright capitulation to the opposition, then a gamble we can't afford to take. Might not our use of "family" imply support for a conservative social agenda, or a patriarchal family structure? Couldn't a family approach dilute our radical vision?

To begin with, this underestimates our audience. The people to whom we are reaching out know that women aren't going to return to the home. What they want is help in balancing their careers with their parenting responsibilities — precisely what our agenda seeks to do! Moreover, the right certainly sees that our family agenda expands and preserves women's new freedom of choice, which is why they oppose it so strongly.

Such concerns also reflect a complete misunderstanding of the right's situation. It is precisely their allegiance to a traditional family model that prevents them from effectively addressing the new work and family issues. Anytime an ideological commitment puts you at odds with the political majority, you are vulnerable. Just as conservatives use the death penalty as a club to beat up on liberals, we are now in a position to label many Republicans "anti-family."

However, there is surely more than simple misunderstanding involved in hesitations about embracing family policy. We have been on the defensive a long time now, during which leftists could find comfort only in their own political "correctness." Some shellshocked veterans find it tempting even now, I suspect, to continue clinging to that thin reed. But we must resist this course, for now is a time for motion, for political engagement with our fellow citizens — not comfortable and pure isolation.

Such left cavils also reveal, I fear, a passive (stubborn?) acceptance of current political language, issues, and constituency. To be sure, there is a certain nobility in slugging it out, going toe-to-toe with a powerful opponent. But if you're being soundly beaten, isn't it time to choose new weapons, or even new terrain? That is precisely the opportunity we have today.

We must regain a faith in the transformative power of politics. What's most exciting about family politics is that it

## Family Agenda Provides Openings for the Left

by Joan Mandle

Diverse new family forms, which have developed over the last few decades, now exist alongside a minority of families of a more traditional type. With the emergence of these new family types, significant changes in the kinds of problems facing families have also appeared.

The political right, particularly in the last decade, has been the self-appointed critic of changing family forms. Consistently denouncing these changes, the right has attacked the women's movement for destroying "the" family, and has resisted any attempts at problem-solving other than turning the clock back to the traditional family. Recently, however, liberals and progressives have increasingly challenged the right's hegemony on this issue by advocating social policies that actively recognize the growing diversity of families and their problems.

This recent interest in a progressive national family policy provides an opportunity for socialists to educate and help mobilize people around issues which are central to our agenda. Advocacy of such programs may help us overcome our political isolation, which we as socialists experience in the U.S. It will do so by allowing us to emphasize the ways in which such programs can advance important aspects of our politics. Our socialist vision includes the affirmation of an activist role for the government, specifically an activism which allocates resources to meet human needs; a commitment to equality, particularly to policies which result in an equitable distribution of income and wealth; and the expansion of democracy, through programs which allow people to have increased control over important decisions affecting their lives.

The wide variety of contemporary progressive family policies has three main thrusts. The first seeks to address the many problems which stem from conflicts between work and home responsibilities. Here the focus

is on the advocacy of day care and after-school programs; leaves of absence from work associated with the birth of a child, or with the need to care for ill children or relatives; and workers' demands for more flexibility in work scheduling and jobsharing in order to enable workers to fulfill their family responsibilities.

A second theme concerns health care, as awareness grows of the large number of American families that are without health insurance or adequate care. Many different programs have been proposed — from full national health insurance, to increased spending targeted on infants, young children, or nursing and at-home care for the elderly. What is common to these suggestions is a critique of America's health care system as woefully inadequate to meeting the needs of American families.

A third focus highlights the importance of economic problems as a central family concern, noting the increasing percentage of American families living below the poverty level. More specifically, critics note that the feminization and minoritization of poverty have placed growing numbers of minority members, and of women and young children at risk. Some responses to the problem, particularly those concerned with the large number of poor American children, have called for enforcement of child support payments by non-custodial parents, and for the establishment of basic, government-financed, allowances to all parents with children. Others, focusing on the economy as the source of poverty, have advocated broad economic changes such as full-employment policies and job training programs, a significant increase in the minimum wage, and policies such as comparable worth and anti-discrimination legislation which seek to eliminate the sharp income inequities between men and women, and between whites and people of color.

In the debate concerning the specific content and breadth of family

advocacy programs, both tactically and for reasons of principle, democratic socialists should endorse programs which are universal in nature. These programs would be open to all citizens, not only those with particular characteristics, such as poverty. Such universal programs are important because they promote the principle of equality, as needier families take far greater advantage of social programs than do the wealthy. But universal social programs also recommend themselves tactically, since they are more likely to be accepted by large sectors of the population than are programs which are more narrowly focused.

The recent activism around a progressive family agenda — including a demonstration in Washington on May 14th called the "American Family Celebration," — reflects a broad and growing agreement that family-related problems warrant attention. Many are seeking progressive ways to address the social problems created by long term structural and demographic changes in the family, by the Reagan Administration's neglect or destruction of social programs, and by the economy's failure to create enough jobs at high wages for those adults who want to work.

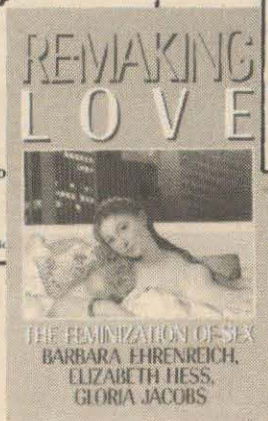
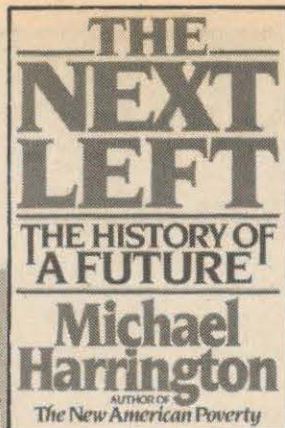
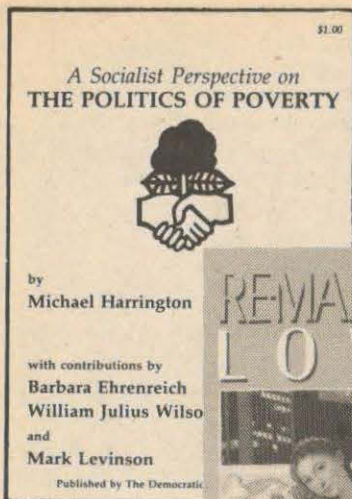
Support by democratic socialists of a progressive family agenda is clearly called for mainly on the grounds that such programs would enhance the lives of large numbers of Americans. In addition, advocacy of these policies provides socialists a forum which can be used to articulate our own political vision. In reaching out to the large numbers of Americans struggling with family-related problems, we have the opportunity to connect politically with them by demonstrating that a radical democratic politics of equity, democracy, and government activism is congruent with the needs and interests of a very large segment of the American people. ●

*Joan Mandle is on DSA's National Executive Committee and teaches at Pennsylvania State University.*

offers the possibility of altering the very meaning of important political terms, of changing the way people think about their relationship to government, and

even of constituting new constituencies. Such possibilities do not come along often, and we let them pass only at great peril. ●

*Guy Molyneux is the Executive Director of the Commonwealth Institute and serves on DSA's National Executive Committee.*



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# The Family is not An Ideal Slogan for the Left

by Barbara Ehrenreich

“**T**he Family,” long the property of the New Right, has suddenly become a liberal rallying cry. Initiatives to promote activism around a “progressive family agenda” are being undertaken by a wide variety of forces. And although none of the Democratic candidates has much to say about women’s issues, all of them are eager to present their views on “family issues” — a category that now includes parental leave, pay equity, child care, raising the minimum wage, national health care, and just about any other liberal social initiative you can think of.

In some ways, the liberal appropriation of the “pro-family” label is long overdue. The right’s claim to be the defender of the American family was always fundamentally cynical. While upholding the virtues of the family — invariably pictured as a white, middle-class, nuclear family lead by a male breadwinner — the Reagan administration undermined the economic viability of this or any family: It cut social programs that help support poor families and it encouraged a wave of wage cutting and plant closings that have hurt millions of American families. The right’s favorite fetishes — “free enterprise” and “the family” — just don’t go together.

But this doesn’t make “the family” an ideal slogan for the left, much less a suitable rubric for the entire progressive economic agenda. There are dangers to borrowing the language and themes of the right: They haven’t been “pro-family” all these years for nothing.

The most common objection to using “the family” as a political catchword is that it downplays the real diversity in the way Americans organize themselves into households and make long-term commitments to each other. In proclaiming themselves “pro-family,” the New Right was upholding a particular ideal of the

family, (married couple, male breadwinner, etc.) even though this type of family (at about 15 percent of households) is nearly extinct. The right did *not* mean to include gay couples, unmarried heterosexual couples, female-headed families, or other arrangements not endorsed by Scripture. These omissions have resulted in social policies based on the assumption that gay families and female-headed families are not *real* families but symptoms of “social pathology.”

The least we can do then, if we wish to appropriate “the family” for the left is to stress the diversity of actual families so that we do not inadvertently reinforce the right’s patriarchal ideal. It was disappointing that the literature for CLUW’s rally, which was endorsed by gay and feminist groups, nowhere mentioned the diversity of real families. Without this essential qualification, the CLUW slogan, “Strengthen the American Family” [chk] sounded unfortunately like something that could have come from the right-wing Pro-Family Forum.

But there are other, potentially more serious, problems, with using the rhetoric of “family.” For one thing, “the family” — when introduced into discussions of economic policy — carries with it the conservative assumption that responsibility for the economic well-being of individuals lies principally with their next of kin. Consider how the right has managed to shift the debate on poverty away from such issues as low wages, to victim-blaming arguments about teen pregnancy, promiscuity, and male irresponsibility.

We can get around this, of course, by continually hammering away at the economic prerequisites for stable family life — especially decent wages and social benefits. But not all poor people — from children to senior citizens — live in families of any sort. And people without families have equally urgent claims on our support. We can use pro-family language if we want, but only at the risk of compromising our own deeply held belief as socialists: that responsibility for the eco-



Two Women at Gay Pride March, NYC

Tony Savino/Impact Visuals

conomic well-being of individuals lies ultimately with the entire society.

### Women Left Out

But what bothers me most about the new liberal emphasis on "the family" is that it seems so often to come at the expense of *women*. In 1984, with Geraldine Ferraro on the Democratic ticket and the gender gap still a hot topic, the word "women" was at least part of the political vocabulary. In the 1988 campaign, the W-word is hardly ever uttered, though all the candidates are eager to address "family issues." So thoroughly has the phrase "family issues" replaced "women" that I half expect to begin to see "men's rooms" and "family issues' rooms."

Yes, I am picking a quarrel about semantics. Some former "women's" issues do make more sense as "family issues;" at least calling child care a family issue may help remind men that they have some responsibility in the matter. But other issues that have recently fallen under the family rubric are in fact *women's* issues. Pay equity, for example. Higher pay for women will of course help women's families, but it will also strengthen the independence of women *from the family*, including all the single and childless women who have tended to vanish altogether from political discussion.

Women — not "families" — are a distinct and politicized constituency, as shown by the continued (though unnoted) existence of the gender gap and by women's strong affiliation with feminism. (A 1989 Gallup poll found that 56 percent of American women — and 65 percent of black women — identify themselves as "feminists.") Eliminating women from the political discourse is a way of saying that we are just another "special interest group" — too self-interested or perhaps too brazen to be an asset to any party or candidate.

Women, of course, are the people who do most of the work of holding families together — caring for the very young and the very old, doing the day-to-day domestic and emotional maintenance work, and increasingly, bringing home an indispensable paycheck. But not all of our concerns — or even the primary concerns of all women — can be wrapped up under the heading of "family." To do so would be engage in the kind of evasive rhetoric characteristic of many prefeminist societies, which routinely lump all issues concerning women, children, and families under one bland heading or government department.

But what is the real issue here? Once we acknowledge the diversity of families, we also have to acknowledge that there is not, as the right so often claims, a "crisis of the American family." There are just many kinds of families — plus non-family living arrangements — all of which need social respect and economic support. Surely we do not want to even *appear* to support government "family policies" that would encourage one kind of family over another. Whom we live with, sleep with, and love is simply not the business of government.

The real issue, the repressed issue, is not family, but community. The attraction of "family" as a catchword is that it seems to provide an alternative to the relentless individualism of capitalist society. But most of us *have* families of one sort or another, and what we need, and often consciously long for, is a sense of community extending beyond the bonds of kinship. In fact, this larger sense of belonging, of human connectedness, is one of the most important things that the

left has to offer — both in the short term and in the democratic socialist society we are working toward.

The retreat — if only rhetorical — to the family reflects the poverty of our current thinking about community. Eight hard years of being on the defensive on almost every issue have taken their toll on our imaginations. Yet it is time to take up, once again, those questions that are both "utopian" and close to each person's heart: What is our vision of community? Can we imagine a revival of community that is both richly engaging and fully respectful of diversity? How can social policy promote genuine community — both in the divided society we live in now and in the classless society we aim to achieve? For ultimately the only way to "strengthen the family," if that is our goal, is to embed it in a vital and caring community. ●

*Barbara Ehrenreich is co-chair of DSA. Her most recent books include The Mean Season (1987), and Re-Making Love: the Feminization of Sex (1986).*

Join DSA Co-Chair Barbara Ehrenreich and socialist- feminist women from across the country...

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Democratic Socialists of America Feminist Commission Retreat

Join with younger and older women, students, activists, researchers, unionists, and teachers from across the country committed to democratic socialism. Create a socialist- feminist agenda by bringing your knowledge and experiences to bear on the following questions and others: How do socialism and feminism interweave? Where is the multi-faceted women's movement going? How is the changing economy effecting women? With workshops on organizing women workers, local feminist activity, violence against women....

### June 18-19, 1988

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Oberlin, Ohio

(By car, Oberlin College is only 35 miles southwest of Cleveland off of Route 480. From Cleveland Hopkins Airport, take the Hopkins limousine service, which has regular departures for Oberlin College.)

On Friday, June 17th, there will be a **RETREAT OUTREACH EVENT** with music, a feminist comedian and videos in Cleveland, Ohio. Contact Adina Davidson at (216) 751-7941 for more information on the outreach event and to secure housing in Cleveland for Friday night.

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Conference registration is \$20... More is you can, less if you can't  
Housing is available on Oberlin campus for \$10 a person for a double room.  
For additional information please contact Sherri Levine at the DSA National Office 962-0390



# States and Cities Take the Lead on Work and Family Issues

by *Debbie Goldman*

**T**he federal government has been slow to respond to the dramatic changes in work and family patterns that have taken place over the past twenty years. During the Reagan years, no major federal initiatives have passed Congress to help families meet their needs for economic security, access to health care, child care and family leave.

In the absence of federal action, many activists have organized to pressure state and local governments to implement new family programs. Across the country, broad coalitions have lobbied legislatures and city councils to pass model legislation. These initiatives provide successful examples of programs that work. At the same time, the limitations of the state and local models demonstrate that action is needed at the federal level to solve what are essentially national problems.

## Child Care Initiatives

Since 1981, the major federal program providing child care subsidies to low-income families, Title XX of the Social Services Block Grant, has been cut in half (adjusted for inflation). Until the Act for Better Child Care Services was introduced into Congress earlier this year, Congress had considered no major child care initiative since President Nixon vetoed a child care bill in 1971.

Many states and cities have stepped into this vacuum to establish innovative programs to expand the supply of affordable, quality child care. While progress is uneven — twenty-eight states are spending less on child care than they did in 1981 — model programs in key states and cities demonstrate what can be done. For example, twenty-two states have initiated or expanded school-based pre-school programs for three, four, and five year-olds and thirteen states provide some funding for school-age, after-school care. Several states have expanded state child

care subsidies to include low-income working families and parents enrolled in training programs and raised income limits to be eligible for subsidies.

It is primarily the wealthier states (i.e., Massachusetts, California, Connecticut, and New York) that have taken the lead. A contrast between state child care assistance in Massachusetts and Alabama provides a case in point. In 1987, Massachusetts won the Coalition of Labor Union Women's "Hit" award for most progress in child care assistance. The state's \$100 million initiative includes:

- subsidies for 22,000 low and moderate income children, including 8,000 children whose parents are enrolled in or graduates of the Employment and Training Choices job training program.
- establishment of twelve resource and referral centers around the state.
- an initiative to raise the wages of child care providers in centers with state contracts by 40 percent to \$18,000 a year.
- provision of child care for state employees at thirty centers in state facilities throughout Massachusetts.

Despite this \$100 million effort, child care in Massachusetts is still hard to find

and difficult to afford. The average cost for full-time child care in Massachusetts is over \$5,000 a year and parents often wait one to two years for child care slots.

Still, contrast the Massachusetts situation with the state of Alabama. There, child care providers, parents, and advocates have been fighting an eight-year battle to maintain even the most minimal level of funding for state child care. The fight has been led by the Federation of Child Care Centers of Alabama (FOCAL), a savvy, grassroots coalition that cuts across race and class lines. "Alabama legislators consider child care a private concern," says FOCAL's assistant director Jack Guillebeaux. "We had to convince our political leaders that child care was essential for the economic development of the state — only then were we able to get child care funding into the state budget."

Finally, several cities are experimenting with new funding sources for child care. Several locales have followed the lead set by San Francisco in 1985 by passing ordinances that require developers to include child care space in new buildings or contribute money to a



Child Care Center in Boston, MA.

Linda Eder/Impact Visuals

## Resources on Work and Family Issues

National Center for Policy Alternatives, Women's Economic Justice Center, 2000 Florida Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20009 (202-387-6030).

Congressional Caucus on Women's Issues, 2471 Rayburn Building, Washington, DC 20515 (202-225-6740).

Children's Defense Fund, *State Child Care Factbook*, 1987, 122 C Street NW, Washington, DC 20001 (202-628-8787). \$5.95.

National Coalition on Women, Work and Welfare Reform, c/o Wider Opportunities for Women, 1325 G St. NW, Washington, DC 20005 (202-638-3143).

National Committee for Pay Equity, 1201 Sixteenth St. NW, Suite 420, Washington, DC 20036 (202-822-7304).

National Black Women's Health Network, 1237 Gordon Street, SW, Atlanta, GA 30310 (404-753-0916).

"Insuring the Uninsured: Options for State Action," available from National Health Care Campaign, 1334 G St NW, Washington DC 20005 (202-639-8833) or Citizen Action, 1300 Connecticut Avenue NW, Suite 401, Washington, DC 20036 (202-857-5153).

Service Employees International Union, "Work and Family Kit," 1313 L St NW, Washington, DC 20005 (202-898-3350). \$5 pre-paid.

child care fund. Seattle in 1986 overwhelmingly endorsed a bond levy to fund fourteen day care centers to be built in the public schools. While the programs will be operated by non-profit agencies, they are a first step toward a comprehensive, cost-effective child care system based in the public schools.

### Family and Medical Leave

While the Family and Medical Leave Act trudges its way through Congress, states have taken action to help provide

job security to new parents. According to the Congressional Caucus on Women's Issues, thirty-three states in 1987 either had or were considering some form of maternity or parental leave legislation.

- Five states (California, Hawaii, New Jersey, New York, and Rhode Island) and Puerto Rico require employers to provide *paid* leave to new mothers in the form of Temporary Disability Insurance (TDI).

- Four states (Oregon, Minnesota, Rhode Island, and Maine) passed parental leave legislation in 1987 or 1988, providing periods of unpaid leave to new fathers and mothers. The period of leave ranges from six weeks (in Minnesota) to thirteen weeks (in Rhode Island). Unlike the legislation pending before Congress, none of these bills include medical leave.

- At least seventeen other states require employers to provide job-guaranteed maternity leave.

In addition, many state and local governments provide generous leave provisions to their own employees, won at the bargaining table or through the legislature. Virtually all major public employee contracts negotiated by the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) and the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) provide at least six months leave to new fathers and mothers. Some go even further. For example, the Sacramento, California Unified School District provides up to *two years* leave to new parents.

### Pay Equity

In 1986, women earned only 65 percent of male wages, and the wages of blacks and Hispanics continued to lag far behind that of white men. The federal government has failed to take even the most minimal first step — a study of federal job classifications — to provide leadership in the fight for pay equity.

Once again, it is the states and localities that are leading the way. The National Committee on Pay Equity reports that in August, 1987 twenty states and countless local jurisdictions had pay equity wage systems in place or were implementing new programs. Additional states and the District of Columbia were conducting job evaluation studies of their own work forces.

- In the first test of pay equity at the polls, San Francisco voters in 1986 overwhelmingly supported implementation of pay equity for city workers. Under the agreement, over 15,000 public employees

in the Bay area will receive over \$19.5 million in salary adjustments.

- In the fall of 1987, the state of Oregon distributed \$22.6 million in pay equity adjustments to 9,000 state workers, with raises averaging about \$100 a month. Worker control over how pay equity adjustments would be distributed was a key demand in a brief 1987 strike waged by the Oregon Public Employees Union/SEIU Local 503.

### Raising the Minimum Wage

The federal minimum wage has been stuck at \$3.35 an hour since 1981, which represents a 27 percent drop in purchasing power after inflation. Raising the minimum wage is an important first step to provide low-wage workers — the majority of whom are women — the ability to support their families above the poverty level.

Ten states and the District of Columbia have taken the lead in raising the minimum wage. These are primarily states in the Northeast with booming economies and low unemployment rates.

- Connecticut raised its minimum wage floor to \$3.75 an hour in October, 1987 and it will go up to \$4.25 an hour in October, 1988.

- California minimum wage will go up to \$4.25 in July of this year as a result of a binding recommendation by that state's Industrial Welfare Commission. Legislative efforts to raise the minimum wage hit a stalemate after Governor Deukmajian vetoed the minimum wage bill.

### Access to Health Care

Thirty-seven million Americans lack health insurance coverage. Of these, thirty million are workers and their families. Despite the mounting health care crisis, action on Capitol Hill has been limited. National health insurance is not even on the agenda, and Senator Kennedy's bill to require employers to provide minimal health insurance to their workers has only three co-sponsors.

Therefore, most advocates have looked to the states for action. Massachusetts' leads the way, with the recent passage of Governor Dukakis' initiative requiring employers (beginning in 1992) to provide health care coverage to employees working more than thirty hours per week (and to part-time employees working twenty hours a week for at least six months). While not perfect, this bill is an important first step.

Other efforts to expand health care

*Continued on page 20.*

# DSACTION

## REPORTS

• Over 2,500 people gathered April 8-10th for the sixth annual **Socialist Scholars Conference**, the largest and longest gathering of its kind in America. This year's Conference, which was titled "Socialist Movements: National and International" featured such notable DSA speakers as Frances Fox Piven, Barbara Ehrenreich, Cornel West, and Bogdan Denitch. Closing remarks by Michael Harrington helped to ensure that the final plenary was especially inspiring.

Panels and workshops addressed a range of critical issues, including feminism and psychoanalysis; Jesse Jackson, the Rainbow Coalition, and the 1988 elections; resistance and conflict in the Middle East; and radical education. The DSA literature table and the Saturday evening reception (at which Barbara Ehrenreich and Michael Harrington spoke) both proved to be tremendously successful: In addition to distributing large quantities of literature, many new members were recruited to the organization.

• The Democratic Socialist of America Youth Section thirteenth annual **Summer Conference** for student activists will take place August 25-28th at Circle Pines Retreat Center, Kalamazoo, MI. It will feature workshops and panels on reproductive rights, labor and the economy, domestic racism, and the 1988 elections. For more information and to register for the conference, contact Elissa McBride, Youth Organizer, (212) 962-0390.

• The first annual DSA East Coast Regional **Economic Justice Media Training** will take place in Philadelphia, June 11-12th. Activists from Philadelphia, New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut will gather to learn how to articulate a radical economic agenda to the mass media. For more information or to register for the seminar, contact Sherri Levine at the DSA office, (212) 962-0390.

• You can still sign-up for the DSA Feminist Commission Retreat, "Charting Our Future: Socialist Women and Our Feminist Agenda," June 18-19th at Oberlin College, Oberlin, OH. Join women from across the country as we plan an action agenda for the feminist commission for the 1980s and beyond. Call Sherri

Levine at (212) 962-0390 for more information.

• This year's DSA Mid-Atlantic Regional Retreat for DSA activists from Maryland, the District of Columbia, Virginia, and Central Pennsylvania will take place at Notre Dame college in Baltimore, June 24-26th. Contact the Baltimore DSA office at (301) 467-9424 to register or for more information.

• Will you be a delegate at the Democratic convention in Atlanta, or are you simply planning on attending the event on your own? If so, make sure to let DSA's field director, Shakoor Aljuwani, know as soon as possible. Call him at the National Office at (212) 962-0390, or write him at 15 Dutch Street, Suite 500, New York, NY 10038. He will be in contact with you prior to the convention, and will fill you in on details about the DSA reception that will take place during the convention.

• Michael Harrington health update: In addition to regular treatments of chemotherapy, Mike continues to actively battle cancer of the esophagus through his writing: His most recent autobiography, *The Long Distance Runner*, will be completed and out in print soon. He has also been doing some public speaking; he recently spoke at the Socialist Scholars Conference and at Union Theological Seminary's annual reunion; He will be participating in the Religion and Socialism Congress over Memorial Day Weekend in Chicago, plans on attending the Democratic convention in July, and will be the recipient of the Sidney Hillman Foundation award in New York on May 19th.

## RESOURCES

• The Center for Social Studies Education recently published the nation's first secondary school curriculum on the Vietnam War, *The Lessons of the Vietnam War: A Modular Textbook*. Jerold Starr, the book's editor, is also a longstanding DSA member. To order, send \$29.95 for a teacher edition or \$24.95 for a student edition to Center for Social Studies Education, 115 Mayfair Drive, Pittsburgh, PA 15228.

• *Gentrification, Strategic Initiatives,*

*and the Left* by Robert Beauregard, the fourth pamphlet in the 8-pamphlet **Alternatives** series, is available. For a subscription to the entire 8-pamphlet series, send \$12.00. For individual pamphlets, send \$1.50 each. For bulk orders of twenty or more, the price is \$1.00. Postage is included in all cases. Mail to Analysis and Policy Press (A&PP), Box 374, Bryn Mawr, PA 19010.

• *Witness To Two Worlds: Salvadoran Refugees in Washington, D.C.* by Katerine Sciacchitano, a pamphlet produced by the D.C./Maryland chapter of DSA, is now available. The pamphlet looks at Salvadorans displaced by the war and at a U.S. foreign policy which denies the development needs of third world countries. To obtain a copy contact the Local at P.O. Box 33345, Washington, D.C. 20033 (202) 483-3299.

• The Spring issue of *Religion and Socialism* features articles on "Religious Socialism on the Supply Side" by Jack Spooner, "A Vision for Religious Socialists" by Arthur Waskow, and a debate on abortion between Judy Harrow and John Cort. Subscriptions to the newsletter are available for \$5.00 from 45 Thorton Street, Roxbury, MA 02119.

• Bulk Orders of *Democratic Left* are available from the National Office. Send 50 cents for orders of twenty or more to 15 Dutch Street, Suite 500, New York, NY 10038.

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## SAVE THE DATE

A 60th Birthday Tribute  
to

**Michael Harrington**

Thursday, June 30, 1988

# ON THE LEFT



by HARRY FLEISCHMAN

## Alaska

Alaska DSA was represented by John Dunken of Juneau at the 15th annual convention of the Yukon New Democratic Party. Juneau DSA, which meets at noon, the first Friday of every month, recently held their sixth annual May Day party....In interior Alaska, despite a serious financial crunch, Fairbanks voters rejected a proposal to turn the Borough transit system over to private enterprise. The fight was led by DSAer Mary Hamilton. For information on Alaska DSA, contact state secretary Dick Farris, P.O. Box 80646, College, Alaska 99708.

## Arkansas

The April 14th opening program of the Arkansas Historical Association, devoted to East Arkansas Delta History, featured a showing of *Our Land Too: The Legacy of the Southern Tenant Farmers Union (STFU)*, with comments by H.L. Mitchell, a DSA member and the union's founder.

## California

The Los Angeles Local and the Socialist Community School honored Chuck Sohner, one of California's foremost labor educators, at this year's May Day celebration. Local 660 of the Service Employees International Union sent a letter of thanks to the Los Angeles DSA for its help on the picket line in its successful struggle to help the registered nurses win their strike in county hospitals....National DSA co-chair Barbara Ehrenreich spoke to the Political Caucus of Hollywood Women. In attendance were Barbara Streisand and other film luminaries....Virginia Franco and Eleanor Richmond of the San Diego Local were integrally involved in organizing a massive Labor for Jackson fundraiser and rally.

## District of Columbia

The Washington/Maryland DSA Local has joined the National Campaign to End Hunger and Homeless-

ness. An upcoming membership meeting will focus on education on the national scene. A tremendously successful fundraiser was organized by the Local to support DSA member Bernie Demczuk's campaign as a Jackson delegate.

## Illinois

Chicago DSA held the 30th annual Norman Thomas - Eugene V. Debs Dinner May 7th, honoring Joe Jacobs, pioneer union lawyer, and Saul Mendelson, Teachers Union organizer and long time socialist activist. The dinner awards were presented by Deborah Meier, DSAer and renowned educator. DSAers Carl Shier and Stanley Rosen were among the speakers at a series of forums on "Work and Jewish Chicago" held in April and May. Shier, a retired UAW representative, spoke on "The Jewish Radical Tradition," and Rosen, a professor of Labor and Industrial Relations at the University of Illinois, spoke on "The Role of Socialist Zionism in Shaping Community Attitudes Towards Work."

## Iowa

The March issue of *United Voice*, the newsletter of Local 12, AFSCME, features an article on Steward Kim Jones, an active DSA member in Iowa City, who talks on his frustration that the U.S. is the only industrialized nation where democratic socialism has not been accepted widely by the labor movement....Barbara Ehrenreich recently drew a crowd of 250 at the Iowa Memorial Union. "Eyes on Justice," an interview with Ehrenreich, will be aired on a local Iowa radio program throughout May.

## Kansas

Barbara Ehrenreich recently gave such an inspiring presentation at Kansas State University, that students and members from that community are committed to forming a new DSA chapter.

## Kentucky

Kentucky DSA showed a video tape of Barbara Ehrenreich debating Communist Party leader Gus Hall on the Donahue show at its April membership meeting. DSA activists have been instrumental in organizing a community-wide campaign to block a

local library from installing South African granite.

## Maine

DSAer Harlan Baker, a 10-year member of the Maine Legislature, also lectures in public speaking at the University of Southern Maine, where he is a member of the American Federation of Teachers Part-Time Faculty Association. Because of his work, says the AFT's *On Campus*, county employees can bargain collectively, employees can expect to be given two months notification of plant closings, and workers have clear guidelines to becoming cooperative owners of the businesses for which they work.

## Maryland

Howard County DSA's April meeting focussed on "The Economics of Protectionism and the 1988 Elections."....Baltimore DSA's April meeting discussed "Building the Next New Left — a Discussion of Student Politics." On April 30th, Baltimore DSA held a Middle Eastern DSA fundraising dinner for over one hundred people at the home of Laila Atallah and Lou Curran. The film, *The Global Assembly Line*, followed by a talk from the film's producer, Maria Fernandez Kelly, was shown at the Progressive Action Center as part of Baltimore DSA's co-sponsored women's film series. Local activists are actively working with the Justice Campaign to help secure passage of a Gay Civil Rights bill in City Council.

## Massachusetts

This year's Boston Eugene Debs-Norman Thomas dinner will honor three local anti-poverty and social justice activists, and Michael Harrington, National DSA co-chair. The Boston DSA's softball team, the DSOX, are gearing up for spring training, with their first practice already scheduled. The Labor support group of the Boston Local continues to play an active role in the Harvard Union of Clerical and Technical Workers union drive. "Glasnost: Change in the Soviet Union" is the name of an upcoming forum where Bogdan Denitch, DSA National Executive Committee member, and Judy Hempfling, a board member of Campaign for Peace and Democracy East and West, will speak.

**Missouri**

The Kansas City Local celebrated May Day by kicking-off DSA member Wade Hannon's campaign for fifth Ward Democratic committeeperson . . . On March 30th, the DSA Washington University Local heard Bob Corbett, Webster University professor and director of the People to People Project, discuss "The End of the Democratic Dream in Haiti." A three-part series on "Justice in the Workplace" was held at Washington University in St. Louis under the auspices of the DSA Local and Washington University Labor Organizing Committee.

**New Hampshire**

The New Hampshire chapter of the National Association of Social Workers honored DSAer Earl Bourdon as "Citizen of the Year" at its annual awards dinner. The *New Hampshire Business Review* in its February/March issue spotlighted Bourdon's TV ads supporting Jesse Jackson as proving "that this state is as capable of seriously considering a black candidate as any place, be it Chicago or the South."

**Nevada**

Mayana Lea, a DSAer from Los Vegas, has been nominated to be a Jackson delegate to the State convention, and hopes to increase DSA visibility throughout the area.

**New York**

A *Daily News* survey found DSAer Ruth Messinger the best City Council member in New York City. She got top marks for intelligence, dedication, concern for citywide issues, and her willingness to take unpopular stands....New York DSA held its annual convention April 30th to elect officers. The morning plenary session featured Ruth Messinger speaking on "Looking Towards 1989 and Beyond," and was followed by workshops on "A Progressive Housing Agenda," "The Problems of the Health Care Systems as Highlighted by the Aids Crisis," and "A Family Policy for America."

**Ohio**

Mahoning Valley DSA is planning a Eugene V. Debs program in June to mark the 70th anniversary of Debs'

anti-war speech in Canton, which caused his arrest....Cleveland DSAers were heavily involved in organizing around Jesse Jackson's campaign

**Oregon**

Portland DSA activist Beverly Stein is running a well-organized campaign for State Representative. Drawing on her support from such organizations as the Rainbow Coalition, DSA, and the Oregon Women's Political Caucus, Stein is waging an aggressive, grassroots campaign.

**Pennsylvania**

Pittsburgh DSA hosted a "Rainbow party" at the University of Pittsburgh's Intercultural House, where a member of the local Rainbow Coalition spoke. A Media Action Project has recently been initiated by activists throughout the Local. Pittsburgh DSAers were critically involved in all aspects of Jesse Jackson's primary campaign....DSA's organizational director Patrick Lacefield spoke to a meeting of the Central Pennsylvania DSA Local on DSA's priorities for 1988. The Local recently voted to affiliate with the Pennsylvania Public Interest Coalition...Philadelphia DSA organized a tremendously successful slide presentation on Vietnam, at which DSA members shared their experiences from a recent visit to that country. An upcoming forum will feature Tom Cronin, president of AFSCME, D.C. 47, speaking on privatization.

**Tennessee**

A unity picnic marked May Day in Nashville this year, as activists gathered to celebrate working men and women throughout the state.

**Texas**

Statewide organizing for the Texas state convention which will take place in Houston, June 17-18th is well underway by DSA activists across the state. DSA folks plan to use literature tables, a resolutions packet, hospitality suite, DSA caucus, speakers, and leaflets to significantly increase Texas DSA membership, to rebuild Locals in Houston, Austin, and San Antonio, and to influence the Democratic party national platform.

**Congress on Religion and Politics: Theologies of Peace and Justice**

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## *Directory of DSA Locals and Organizing Committees*

- Albany DSA Local, Martin Gawoski, 518-436-0670, 129 Dove St., Albany, NY 12202.  
Albuquerque Local, Mary Burke, 505-345-1394, 3120 Glenwood Dr., Apt. 1, NW, Albuquerque, NM 87107.  
Ann Arbor DSA Local, P.O. Box 7211, Eric Ebel, 313- 662-4497, Ann Arbor, MI 48107.  
Atlanta DSA O.C., John Studstill, 404-378-1490, 119 S. Donough St., Decatur, GA 30030.  
Austin DSA Local, Larry Braden, 512-444-5797, 1408 ½ C Nikerson, Austin, TX 78704.  
Baltimore DSA Local, Laila Atallah , 301-467-9388, 1443 Gorsuch Ave., Baltimore, MD 21218.  
Black Swamp DSA Local, Wally Smith, 419-867-0801, 6493 Garden Rd., Maumee, OH 43537.  
Boise DSA Local, James Holden, 208-343-2838, P.O. Box 9424, Boise, ID 83707.  
Boston DSA Local, Eric Bove, 617-426-9026, 186A-188 South St., Boston, MA 02111-9922.  
Carbondale DSA O.C., E.G. Hughes, 618-549-1409, P.O. Box 2701, Carbondale, IL 67902.  
Central KY DSA Local, Jim Ryder, 606-263-1973, 3351 Cove Lake Dr. # 53, Lexington, KY 40502.  
Central PA DSA Local, George Demshock, 717-652-3331, P.O. Box 80, Camp Hill, PA 17011.  
Chicago DSA Local, Tom Wakely, 312-384-0327, 1608 N. Milwaukee Ave., Chicago, IL 60647-5412.  
Cleveland DSA Local, Randy Cunningham, 216-932-2827, 3314 E. Overlook, Cleveland Hts., OH 44118.  
Danville DSA Local, Brian Mitchell, 217-431-8251, 1002 Glenwood, Danville, IL 61832.  
Dayton DSA Local, Tim Cissner, 513-275-2907, 1215 Harvard Blvd, Dayton, OH 45406.  
DC/Maryland DSA Local, Lisa Foley, 202-328-9117, 3205 Adams Mill Rd., Washington, DC 20010.  
Detroit DSA Local, Roger Robinson, 313-352-6519, 23245 Hunters La., Southfield, MI 48034.  
East Bay DSA Local, John Katz, 415-653-4644, 585 62nd St., Oakland, CA 94609.  
Fairbanks DSA Local, Richard Farris, 907-479-8516, Box 80967, Fairbanks, AK 99708.  
Grand Rapids DSA O.C., Anthony Travis, 616-454-5192, 29 College Dr. NE, Grand Rapids, MI 49503.  
Hartford DSA Local, Harry Siebert, 203-232-4178, 61 Tremont, Hartford, CT 06105.  
Houston DSA Local, Jerry Lynch, 713-864-3689, 3220 Louisiana , Houston, TX 77006.  
Howard County DSA Local, Bob Feldman, 301-381-0727, 7205 Talisman Ln., Columbia, MD 21045.  
Iowa City DSA Local, Kim Jones, 319-351-6094, 2023 9th St., Coralville, IA 52241.  
Ithaca DSA Local, Theresa Alt, 607-273-3009, 206 Eddy, Ithaca, NY 14850.  
Juneau DSA Local, John Dunken, 907-586-4409, 609 Main Street, Juneau, AK 99801.  
Kansas City DSA O.C., Wade Hannon, 816-753-2219, P.O. Box 32063, Kansas, MO 64111.  
Keene DSA O.C., Joan Roelofs, 69 Beaver St., Keene, NH 03431.  
Kent DSA Local, Ken Calkins, 491 Stinaff St., Kent, OH 44240.  
Los Angeles DSA Local, Steve Tarzynski, DSA office 213- 385-0605, 2936 W. 8th St., Los Angeles, CA 90005.  
Mahoning Valley DSA O.C., Allan Curry, 216-534-9327, 117 Caroline Ave., Hubbard, OH 44425.  
Marin DSA Local, Gianna Easson, 37 Clorinda St., San Rafael, CA 94901.  
Nashua DSA O.C., Tom Wall, 603-889-0049, 22 Meade St., Nashua, NH 03063.  
Nashville DSA Local, Jean Harrington, 615-227-3945, 1510 Franklin Ave., Nashville, TN 37206.  
Nassau DSA Local, Charlie Russell, 516-423-3760, 107 Jackson Ave., Huntington, NY 11743.  
New Brunswick DSA Local, R. Greene Levitt/B. Volonte, 201-249-7581, P.O. Box 10405, New Brunswick, NJ 08873.  
NYC DSA Local, Steve Oliver, 212-962-1079, 15 Dutch St. Suite 500, New York, NY 10038.  
North Virginia DSA Local, P.O. Box 286, Bobbie Robbins, 203-435-8624, Arlington, VA 22210.  
Palo Alto DSA Local, Carolyn Curtis, 415-364-6124, 645 East View Bay, Redwood City, CA 94062.  
Orlando DSA O.C., John Hedrick, 305-894-9579, P.O. Box 1613, Orlando, FL 32802.  
Philadelphia DSA Local, Bob Hoffman, C/O Summit Church, Green & Westview, Philadelphia, PA 19119.  
Pittsburgh DSA Local, Rob Shepherd, 412-823-8500, 362 Princeton Dr., Pittsburgh, PA 15235.  
Portland DSA Local, Melvin Bell, 503-289-4642, 1804 Simpson, Portland, OR 97217.  
Princeton DSA Local, Henrietta/Bernie Backer, 609-683- 1853, 81 Moore Ave., Princeton, NJ 08540.  
Reading-Berks DSA Local, Bob Millar, 215-944-0991, RD4 Box 4482A, Fleetwood, PA 19522.  
Sacramento DSA Local, P.O. Box 162394, Duane Campbell, 916-361-9072, Sacramento, CA 95816.  
St. Louis DSA Local, Danny Kohl, 314-327-2670, 742 Trinity , St. Louis, MO 63130.  
San Diego DSA Local, Virginia Franco, 619-276-6023, 5122 Gardena Ave., San Diego, CA 92110.  
San Fransisco DSA Local, Robert Lehman, 415-821-1502, 1022-B Shotwell, San Francisco, CA 94110.  
Seattle DSA O.C., Rich Smith, P.O. Box 1182, Bothel, WA 98041.  
San Antonio Local, Sylvia Romo, 526 W. Kings Highway, 512-733-4248, San Antonio TX 78212.  
Sonoma County DSA Local, David Walls, 707-823-7403, 943 Mc Farlane Ave., Sebastopol, CA 95472.  
Southern MS DSA O.C., William & Judy Johnson, 601-474- 2813, 4606 Parkinson Ave., Moss Point, MS 39563.  
Suffolk County DSA Local, Hugh Cleland, 516-751-0340, 528 Pond Path, Setauket, NY 11733.  
Twin Cities DSA Local, Corbin Kidder, 612-227-5171, 442 Summit Ave., Saint Paul, MN 55102.  
Utah DSA Local, P.O. Box 395, Mary Reddick, 801-531- 6233, Salt Lake City, UT 84110.  
Westchester DSA Local, Alfred Greenberg, 914-834-9405, 55 Chatsworth Ave, Larchmont, NY 10538.  
Wichita DSA Local, Jim Philips, 316-681-1469, 2841 E. Kinkaid, Wichita, KS 67211.

# The End of the Cold War?

## U.S. Politics and the INF Treaty

by Paul Joseph

**W**e stand now at a key historical moment in which the proper combination of actions can lead to an entirely new international situation. The signing and almost certain ratification of the INF treaty between the United States and Soviet Union may lead, over the next decade, to the dismantling of the Cold War and the emergence of new global structures that permit both a more secure peace and a more open political, economic, and social agenda within most nations. The circumstances surrounding INF do not guarantee such a positive development, but the contrast with the pessimism of five years ago is striking.

The optimistic scenario runs something like this: INF is followed by an equitable START agreement that significantly reduces the number of strategic launchers and warheads, while constraining modernization and preserving rough parity between Washington and Moscow. U.S.-Soviet relations at the governmen-

tal level continue to improve while the remarkable spread of sub-government contacts between citizens and diverse organizations of both nations is deepened and institutionalized. The chances for resolving regional conflicts in Afghanistan, Kampuchea, and Central America are nurtured, and more space is carved out for the autonomous play of indigenous political forces within each area. A more independent and diverse Europe contributes to a multipolar world. And continued democratic restructuring within the Soviet Union — important in its own right — enhances the possibility for progressive change elsewhere, particularly within the United States.

At the same time, there can be no guarantee that events will adhere to the lines sketched above. In what follows, I outline the possibilities that emanate from INF, the underlying social factors that helped produce the treaty, and the potential obstacles that might undermine the positive trend and revive the shibboleths of the Cold War.

### Pros and Cons

The INF treaty will not by itself de-

termine which path is followed. For better or worse, we will soon live in a world without any U.S. or Soviet ground-launched missiles with a range of between 300 and 3,500 miles. The question is how this fact will be interpreted, and what impact the interpretation will have on the political, economic, and social trends that produced INF in the first place.

What then is the significance of INF? Skeptics point out that the treaty covers only 2,000 out of more than 50,000 U.S. and Soviet warheads. Virtually all of the targets now assigned to the Pershing IIs, GLCMs, SS-4s, and SS-20s can be covered by other nuclear weapon systems. Thousands of nuclear warheads remain in Europe, and each side continues to harbor the elaborate social system, ideology, manufacturing infrastructure, and scientific resources that constitute the "nuclear establishment."

While factually correct, these arguments miss the central point: the INF is a major step away from strategies that embrace the political and military utility of nuclear weapons. Intermediate-range missiles signalled the potential, no mat-



The Ribbon Project demonstration in Washington, D.C.

Rick Reinhard/Impact Visuals

ter how remote in actuality, of conducting limited nuclear war. Rationalist doctrines assuming that nuclear weapons are "big artillery," differing only in degree from other types of weapons, have received a major shock. A key sector on the "ladder of escalation" has been removed from the NATO military doctrine of "flexible response," and the nuclear "menu of options" has lost a course. The actual configuration of nuclear forces is now a step closer to reality, namely that they are good only for inflicting mutual devastation. The removal of the Pershing IIs, which the Soviets feared would facilitate a "decapitation" strike, also improves stability. On a deeper level, INF does not simply block a nuclear weapons system, or hold one at a particular ceiling, but actually removes a system after deployment. Finally, the precedents established in the verification procedures are important for future negotiations.

#### INF and U.S. Opinion

Why do U.S. politics now support a fundamental shift in military posture and U.S.-Soviet relations? American opinion has changed significantly over the past five years. Support for defense spending has declined and Americans are now more likely to identify strength with a renewed economy, rather than a robust military. Fewer people accept the "evil empire" images that equate, in terms of the danger posed by an adversary, Moscow with Hitler's Germany. The Soviet Union still does not enjoy the mystery and attraction that China holds in our popular culture, but die-hard attitudes are now less prevalent. The majority of Americans, while certainly not embracing the Soviet way of life, are nonetheless more inclined towards a pragmatic approach that allows for substantially improved relations and the resolution of common problems.

Significantly, Gorbachev enjoys a two-to-one approval rating in the United States. The success of the Gorbachev reforms may lead to still more openness among Americans. Indeed, the interdependence of U.S. and Soviet political futures is such that progressive domestic change here may depend on measured progress in *perestroika* in the Soviet Union. A significant restructuring in domestic priorities, a hundred billion dollar reduction in the defense budget, or a program of economic revitalization can take place only in a global environment that does not contain powerful enemies.

Another intriguing aspect of the current situation is the increase in sub-government U.S.-Soviet contacts, or what is sometimes called Track II diplomacy. U.S. travel to the Soviet Union has quadrupled during the 1980s. Many recreational ventures, such as joint mountain climbing teams, have been established. Students are visiting the Soviet Union in greater numbers, as are performing artists. Contacts and exchanges within the professions are also increasing: Harvard Business School is sending a team to study Soviet decision-making in critical economic enterprises. The precise significance of these more numerous opportunities for U.S. and Soviet citizens to meet each other face-to-face in a broad range of settings is difficult to ascertain. But five more years of still-deeper contacts will make it all but impossible to reconstruct Cold War hostilities at the popular level.

Organized peace movements are not as visible as they were five years ago, yet their influence remains important. Peace activists have played an important role in lobbying, educating, and occasionally electing members of Congress. As a result, Congress, while not itself a proponent of a new world order or even of significantly changed attitudes, reflects the varied social forces that are bringing about the post-Cold War era. While considerable work remains, the educational efforts of tens of thousands of local peace activists have helped produce a change in public awareness. The *latent* influence of the peace movement is also significant. Government officials are aware of the opposition that will rally against any overt attempt to once again achieve strategic superiority.

The peace movement has had an indirect influence as well. The Reagan administrations' attempt to salvage its reputation through renewed arms control efforts, in the aftermath of Iran/ contra revelations, may be traced in turn

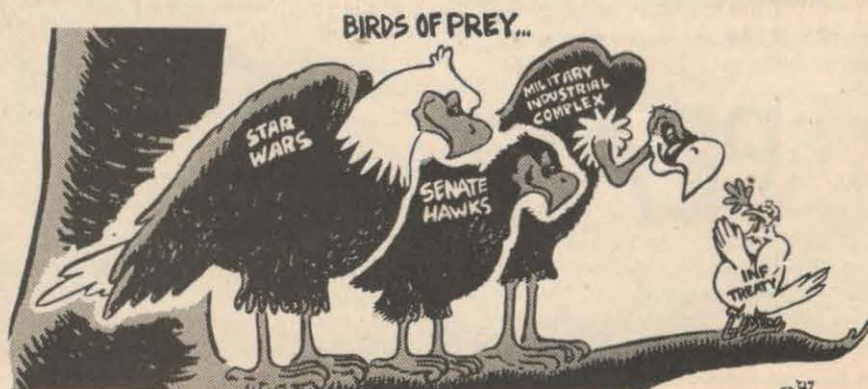
to the need for illegal actions to circumvent congressional aid restrictions won by anti-intervention forces. The circumstances are similar to the Watergate scandal and the War Powers Act, both of which were rooted in the anti-war movement of the sixties.

We can also detect a significant shift among professional strategists. Adherents of MAD ("mutually assured destruction") are currently much stronger than supporters of counterforce. Space has opened on the dovish end of the mainstream policy spectrum. Respected strategists and policy-makers now discuss and give legitimacy to the posture of minimal deterrence and a strategic arsenal with approximately one thousand warheads on each side. Indeed, save for the most conservative periodicals devoted to strategic issues, it is rare to find a flat-out defense of the military and political utility of nuclear weapons.

This combination of changed public attitudes, the latent power of the peace movement, and the shift in strategic thinking had created something like a "nuclear Vietnam-syndrome." Vietnam left a legacy of public hostility to the further use of U.S. ground troops in protracted (more than a week) direct engagement against an opponent who will inflict significant casualties (more than a hundred). Though somewhat inchoate, this sentiment has nonetheless served as an effective constraint on policy, and the Reagan administration has been unable to reverse it. In a similar fashion, it is difficult to imagine, for nuclear weaponry, the recreation of a political coalition devoted to strategic modernization, improved counterforce, and meaningful superiority.

One of the most intriguing aspects of the situation is that the next U.S. president, whether Democrat or Republican, will have to swim in that sea. Even in the circumstances of a polarized presidential

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# Who is the Foreign Competition?

by Steve Max

**G**olden Arches in Moscow? Yes! The Soviets will say goodbye to lunches of black bread and radishes when twenty McDonald's open in their capital. Is it progress or decadence? The question is too subjective to answer, but the agreement between McDonald's Restaurants of Canada and the Moscow City Council tells us more about American corporations than about *glasnost*. International joint ventures are part of a larger pattern that is changing the way corporations do business. The results have serious implications for our jobs, wages, and family life. They also affect our approaches to trade policy. But policy makers have not caught on to the new realities.

The *New York Times* reported, after the Senate recently voted on a new trade bill: "... the United States will play the game of ... making it tougher for foreign competition to take business from domestic companies." But who is the foreign competition and which are the domestic companies? In this era of joint ventures and international mergers, a real distinction is often missing. Today, many American multinational corporations are American in name only. The headquarters building may be in New York or Bonn, but the corporation acts like a separate independent nation.

Carlos Di Benedetti, the head of the Olivetti corporation described the end of the era of national corporations this way, "The concept of the multinational is passe, you can find success today only through alliances that place you simultaneously in every global market." He ought to know, he doesn't just make typewriters. He makes the computers that AT&T sells in America.

Increasingly, competition for markets goes on between alliances of American and foreign companies working together against other alliances of American and foreign companies. These mixed-nation alliances compete for portions of the American market as well as



Good Year firm located in South Africa

for foreign markets. For example, a typical *New York Times* report on the auto industry notes:

"The Pontiac division of General Motors is expected to introduce a model...manufactured by Daewoo of Korea, even though it will bear the familiar LeMans label. [G.M. owns half of Daewoo. The Korean LeMans is already on the market, and as of this writing Daewoo workers were on strike. — S.M.] ... Volkswagen will bring in the Fox, a small car manufactured in Brazil. [The V.W. Westmorland, PA plant is closing. The Brazilian plant is a partnership with Ford. — S.M.] And in Canada where Hyundai has been a best seller ... competition will soon come from the Ford Tracer made by Ford's Taiwanese affiliate, Ford Lio Ho."

It doesn't sound like the American team is out fighting the competition. It sounds like it *is* the competition. Here are some of the recent auto industry alliances or partnerships: G.M./Toyota; G.M./Daewoo; G.M./Isuzu; G.M./Lotus; Ford/Mazda; Ford/Mazda/Kia; Ford/Volkswagen; Chrysler/Mitsubishi;

Chrysler/Mitsubishi/Hyundi; Chrysler/Samsung, and Chrysler/Maserati. General Electric boasts of more than a hundred such partnerships; IBM, GM, AT&T, and Xerox each have a dozen or more. Since 1980, AT&T has taken on partners in the Netherlands, Italy, Spain, South Korea, Taiwan, and Japan. Other partnerships include: Boeing/Mitsubishi, Corning/Cieba-Geigy, Ford/Measurex, Kodak/Cetus, 3M/Harris, and U.S.X./Pohang Steel.

When American corporations go in search of cheap products to sell at home, the results are almost always harmful to our economy. A recent *Wall Street Journal* article datelined Taiwan illustrates the point:

"... very few Taiwanese companies export ... to the U.S. Instead Americans come here to ... send back to the U.S., under American brand names, everything from cheap shoes to consumer electronics. If the Taiwanese don't make something, U.S. companies help them get started, and many American companies operate their own Taiwanese factories solely to ship products back home."

American corporations are not acting any differently from Japanese or European companies. Indeed, there is a worldwide interpenetration of corporate enterprise, which, in some respects, is making national boundaries obsolete. By 1989 Japan will have increased its own offshore production of electronic equipment from 10 percent to 25 percent.

National boundaries fade before the new internationalization of production. A flood of Europeans has been buying up American corporations. Hanson Trust buys SCM, British Prudential buys Jackson National Life, Bretelsmann buys Doubleday, Siemens buys GTE. Thompson S.E. (a French nationalized company) buys the entire consumer electronics division of General Electric.

Five Hundred Japanese companies are now manufacturing in America. *Business Week* predicts that by 1990, with Honda in the lead, Japanese companies in America will be producing more cars than Chrysler. Meanwhile, G.M. steps up its own imports of Korean cars. Now which is the foreign competitor?

Blind to these changes, American policy makers continue to ask in what country a company's headquarters is located, instead of where are its products actually made? This confusion suits American multinationals as they increasingly abandon domestic manufacturing, and distribute products made elsewhere. Of course, many countries do have greater trade restrictions than ours, but as long as the specter of unfair and sneaky foreigners dominates the discussion, the fact that many "American" companies are now part of the problem will be ignored.

The changing role of multinational corporations in the economy raises new policy issues for socialists and progressives. The first is how to move the debate away from the notion that there is a loyal American corporate team out there fighting foreigners and protecting jobs. One answer is legislation requiring that each product carry a label revealing the percentage of foreign parts and materials. Beyond that, a new approach to trade policy is needed, one that regulates individual multinationals, foreign and American, as if they were independent countries, and that checks on their corporate trade balance with America. Is the company taking more out of our economy than it's putting in? That parasitic activity can be stopped by trade restrictions, case by case.

Most important, the new situation

calls for a new response from people like ourselves. In the years when the Third World was essentially a source of cheap raw materials for American industry, Americans really did enjoy a higher standard of living because of lower foreign wages. Understanding this, working people often supported a foreign policy aimed at maintaining that wage difference. Today, it is in our most immediate self-interest to have our government implement a foreign policy aimed at raising Third World living standards. This "full-employment foreign policy" includes withdrawal of support from repressive governments that hinder unions, partial debt forgiveness, and added tariffs on products from corporations that don't observe minimum labor rights and standards. This is key to reducing Third World wage competition with us, as well as making it possible for Third World workers to actually buy the products they make, in addition to some made here.

Ironically, while business is now achieving greater internationalization, it is also inadvertently creating the basis for a new community of interest among working people the world over. To turn this opportunity into real cooperation and unity however, requires an organized effort attacking the old myths and clarifying the new reality. ●

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## INF

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race, it is difficult to conceive of Bush berating Jackson about being "soft on the Russians." Improved relations between the superpowers and a strategic arms pact seen to be on everyone's political agenda. Even Secretary of State George Shultz speaks of the need to recognize "new realities." Questions remain only about pace and specifics.

In economic, political, and military terms, the United States has dominated the post-World War II order. That era is now coming to an end without any clear signs of future structure and leadership save for the fact that the United States and Soviet Union will continue to play major roles of some kind. Historically, superpowers have not easily made necessary adjustments in their position. The question then arises whether the United States will join the list of those for whom military adventurism has accompanied their loss of status.

In considering this question, we recognize that for the near future the United States (as well as the Soviet Union) will have a large military budget. The United States and (to a lesser degree) the Soviet Union have significant economic, political, and bureaucratic interests tied to the maintenance of those budgets at as high levels as possible. This is the most significant obstacle to change.

We should also recognize that INF may be the catalyst for new conventional weaponry. Under one set of circumstances, a START treaty and a U.S. declaration of "no first use" may produce a perceived need for additional non-nuclear expenditures, especially as long as the myth of Soviet conventional military superiority is accepted. This is clearly the fallback position for the traditional Atlanticists in the wake of INF. Another possible substitute is European missiles produced and operated jointly by France and Germany. (French defense minister Andre Giraud denounced INF as a "European Munich.")

Finally, at the top level of the Republican party motivation for arms control is limited to only short-term presidential interests rather than a broader understanding of its role in preserving the national self-interest. Yet the belligerence of Republicans (and mainstream Democrats, for that matter) may be kept in check by business interests which do not support the continuation of the Cold War. In fact, the current fragility of the stock market helps dictate a ceiling to the military budget. Some corporations are once again tentatively exploring the possibilities of new markets in the Soviet Union.

Readjustment always involves bumps and bruises. The importance of maintaining a base line of stability between the superpowers through the arms control process is very clear, yet we must also recognize that the opportunity for fundamental change is now quite real. The polls are clear: Americans want to be "number one" again, but in ways that indicate new openness as to how this goal might be achieved. The possibility of being both strong and cooperative is clearly present. It is our challenge to help define how we can achieve our national interests within the context of continuing to lower the nuclear threat, preserving peace, and encouraging more equitable international economic growth. ●

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# The Pro-Family Agenda: Co-Existing with the Bohemian Left

by Marty Jezer

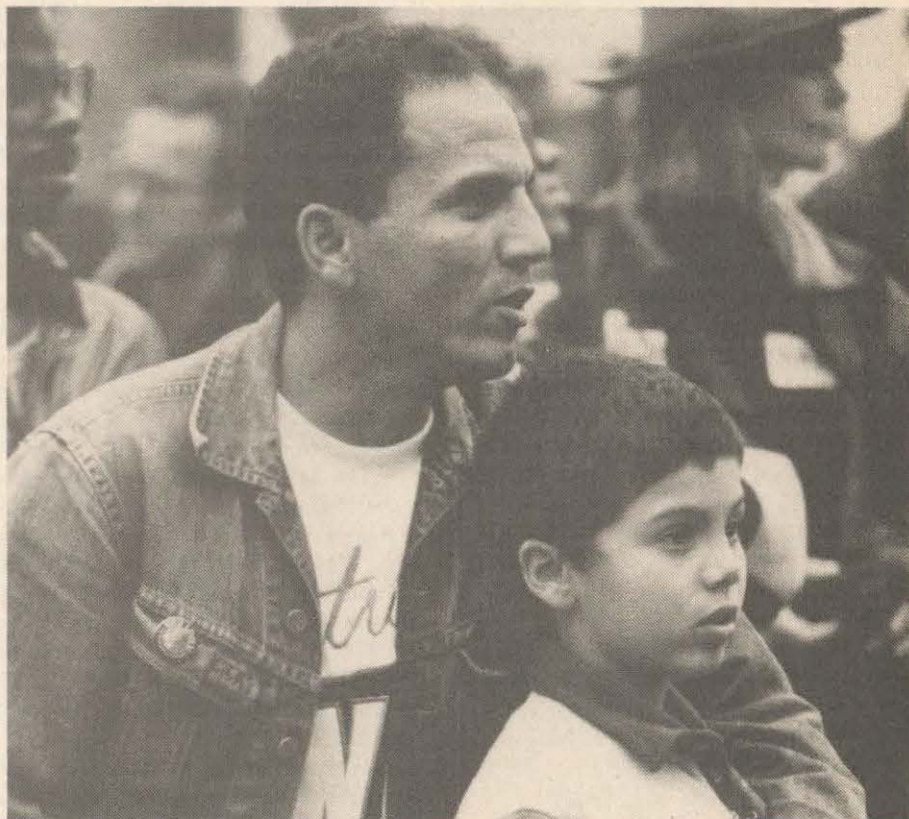
I'm to address the question of a pro-family agenda from a countercultural perspective. As one who, many years ago, went to the woods to live communally and reinvent family life, I approach the subject somewhat humbly. I'm part of a nuclear family now. My perspective has changed, more so than my politics, but in this discussion of family issues, we are not quarreling over political substance, I hope.

Justice demands subsidized day care, Head Start programs, parental leave, better services for the elderly, more funding for schools, tax relief for parents, accessible family planning, programs to deal with violence against women and children, and other family-related programs. We also need socialized health care, a higher minimum wage, a shorter workweek, and a guaranteed income or something similar to ensure economic security and social support for every American regardless of family status.

But this begs the question: Do we dress these demands as family issues and take theoretical positions on family life or do we let them stand on their own, advocating them because they are just and wise?

The right was the first to make the family one of its rallying cries. For them, "pro-family" represents a rear-guard action to glorify the past; Father Knows Best, the patriarchal nuclear family as the American norm. At its core, however, is a far more sinister design. The right's notion of family is anti-feminist, anti-gay, pro-patriarchy, and pro-hierarchy.

Do we want to wrestle with the right over the definition of family in that putrid puddle? Just as the left should be taking the lead as advocates for the elderly, for children (the rights of the *just* born), and parents, it should be unwavering in its commitment to gay rights, abortion rights, and similar issues that the right considers "anti-family."



H.L. DeGrado/Impact Visuals

Demographic trends dictate a broad definition of family. The nuclear family is no longer the norm. Those of us with countercultural ideals, who railed against the nuclear family years ago, can take no credit for its decline. Changing economic and social conditions, not ideological preferences, did it in.

We'll do better advocating concrete programs than theoretical ideas. The "pro-family" ideology is a hornets' nest of contention. What constitutes family? Unmarried women with children? Gay couples who want to raise children? Gay couples who want to marry? Heterosexual couples who don't want to marry? Extended families that include ex-spouses and collective offspring? The permutations are boggling, and some of them would destroy a broad-based pro-family coalition. We should stand for the right of any person or persons to live peacefully any way they want to. And we should fight for programs that give all Americans, regardless of sexual or family preference, an equal right to social support

and economic security. Does the pro-family agenda advance these goals? Or does it incite theoretical arguments that encourage divisiveness?

For all of its furor, the right's family agenda hasn't got very far. And the power of the right is starting to wane (though, down the road and in another guise, it's surely going to reassert itself). Provoking the right in a battle over the definition of family would unify it as it fractionalizes us. But this is stating the case against the "pro-family" agenda defensively, as a caution against a resurgent right. The crux of the matter is, do we need it? Does it advance the spirit of tolerance and concrete programmatic goals?

Those on the left who have been most assertive in promoting family issues have been fixating on the past as much as they have been looking to the future: trying to counter the right (at its peak) by making amends for the excesses of the 1960s. I agree that the left's libertine agenda of the late 1960s and early 1970s

trashed the American family and gave the right an opportunity to organize working-class constituencies around issues of family life. And I agree, also, that we can attract working-class families to our progressive banner by championing issues of family life. The pro-family agenda is, in this sense, a back door to class politics. The astonishing success of Jesse Jackson, who is perceived correctly as socially conservative — especially on issues of youth and drugs — verifies this.

American radicalism has always nurtured (in reference to its origins) a bohemian left. A cauldron of activist politics, alternative lifestyles, and avant-garde expression, it runs like an unruly current, sometimes paralleling, often overlapping, and occasionally, as during the late 1960s and early 1970s, swamping the programmatic and working-class orientation of the traditional left. In addition to peace and justice (and often socialism), the bohemian left demands tolerance for creative expression, freedom for social experimentation, "deviant" lifestyles, and the politics of self and transcendence. The bohemian left does not sit comfortably with the goals of a pro-family agenda. The latter desires stability and security, the former wants to kick out the jams, in personal as well as creative life. The bohemian left, as in its 1960s manifestation, can take things too far. But its core ideas cannot be written off.

The hoary expression "free love" is an example. As initially raised by bohemian feminists in Greenwich Village before World War I, it meant not only an assault on the anti-erotic, double standard of Victorian morality but a challenge to every aspect of the status quo that corroborated male privilege and restrained female opportunity. Bohemian feminists demanded that men and women be equal, not just as lovers, but also as friends, comrades, and intellectual peers. To thrive, free love required a context of shared responsibility, with men assuming equal roles in child care, housekeeping, and all the other daily chores that chained women to the home. "It must be manly as well as womanly to know how to cook, sew, and clean, and take care of yourself in the ordinary exigencies of life," Crystal Eastman — who, typical of the bohemian feminists of that time, was a socialist and an activist against World War I — wrote.

Eastman and her group were admired but isolated. Traditional social-

ists and leaders of the anti-war movement believed their views about sex and family would offend working-class followers. Bourgeois feminists also kept them at a distance. The only support they got was from bohemian men who discarded the feminist ideology and transformed "free love" into sexual freedom, an equal opportunity to get laid and enjoy it (a change not to be slighted given the staying power of sexual repression). Except for the fact that men are no longer in a position to define feminism, the left hasn't changed. It still faces a dilemma: If it pushes a bohemian agenda of social experimentation, it frightens away families who value security above all else. (And the bohemian appeal to affluent youth rarely translates into lasting political gain). But if it tries to distance itself from bohemian radicalism it loses a creative liberatory force and diminishes itself in the process. The two currents must recognize each other and coexist.

The bohemian left needs tolerance more than advocacy. Social experimentation goes on, except in periods of repression. What's worthy (and much that is not) percolates into the broader culture. Family issues, on the other hand, need advocacy and a working coalition of "straight" or "square" working- and middle-class organizations. Where does that lead us?

To a note of caution. The debate isn't an either/or proposition. Advocates of a "pro-family" agenda are going to push their initiative. I would urge: avoid theoretical debates about what constitutes family life, stress tolerance and diversity as essential values, and recognize the importance of experimental (and often shocking) bohemian projects. Like Emma Goldman, I want to dance at the revolution; but I want to note that many of my comrades prefer to polka rather than boogie. I also want to insist upon the rights of wallflowers and of grouchy neighbors who start banging on the pipes when things get raucous in the early morning hours. ●

*Marty Jezer, a DSA member, is author of The Dark Ages: Life in the U.S., 1945-1960 (South End Press) and is writing a book on the bohemian left.*

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## States

*Continued from page 10.*

coverage have required long, hard battles (often led by local affiliates of the

National Health Care Campaign) even to win small victories.

● Washington state adopted an insurance plan to offer coverage on an experimental basis to 30,000 uninsured residents. Wisconsin has a similar program targeted at 9,000 uninsured residents.

● Several small cities in the San Francisco Bay area joined together to form a regional health pool, reducing health care costs by 20 percent while improving coverage for their employees.

These small, piecemeal victories make it clear that only a comprehensive, universal, *national* health care plan will provide a cost-effective method to provide health care for all Americans.

## Family Policy is a Public Issue

Until recently, most Americans have regarded family issues as private concerns. Perhaps one of the most important achievements of these state and local initiatives is that they demonstrate there are public programs that can help families meet their responsibilities.

Public opinion polls document widespread public support for issues such as child care, family and medical leave, raising the minimum wage, pay equity and government health programs. Focus group discussions with low-income, occasional women voters conducted as part of the Women's Vote Project reveal that these women want government activism on such economic and family issues as child care, decent jobs, and health care access. And yet, politicians have been reluctant to mount campaigns framed around a progressive work and family agenda.

A growing number of family advocates are therefore looking to the 1988 election as an opportunity to educate and mobilize voters to hold politicians accountable on family issues. Preliminary discussions have begun under the auspices of the Women's Vote Project (a coalition of women's groups set up in 1984) to initiate several projects in targeted House and Senate races. If successful, these projects will demonstrate that work and family issues can unite broad groups of voters around a progressive family agenda and should spur elected officials at all levels of government to adopt programs that meet the needs of today's families. ●

*Debbie Goldman, a member of the D.C./Maryland DSA Local, works as a policy analyst for the Service Employees International Union (SEIU).*

# A Letter From Sweden

by Timothy Sears

**O**n a recent visit to Sweden I found that almost everyone I spoke to—including trade unionists, feminists, political activists, researchers, and ordinary citizens—believed that the nation's child care system was woefully inadequate. For me, an American trade unionist studying the relationship between the Swedish labor movement and the women's movement, this attitude was hard to understand. We in the United States look to Sweden's comprehensive family policy as one of the most impressive accomplishments of the democratic socialist movement. Its provisions outstrip anything existing here. In Sweden:

- Upon the birth of child, every couple is entitled to twelve months of paid parental leave: nine months at full benefits (90 percent of the person's salary), plus an additional three months at minimum benefits (about \$300 per month). The mother and father are free to divide this year off between them as they wish.
- Parental insurance provides parents with compensation for work time lost to care for a sick child or to visit the child's school.
- To help families balance the responsibilities of working life and child rearing, any working parent of a child under eight has the option of working no more than six hours per day, at six hours pay.
- There is a superb system of child care centers. The center I visited in Stockholm—which I am told is fairly typical of the municipally run nurseries—is a beautiful facility, where a highly trained staff provides the children with arts, music and crafts lessons, developmental training, games, meals, and lots of loving attention. Available at a nominal monthly cost per child, it is hard to imagine a better day care setting for a youngster.

So why were the people I talked to so critical? They are angry about the current shortage of child care centers. Unless they belong to a priority group such as a single-parent or handicapped-child family, most Swedes are unable to find a child care place for children under two years old. "Since the maximum parental leave is only twelve

months," a frustrated young parent explained, "families must make their own child care arrangements, whether with relatives or neighbors or whatever, from the time the kid is a year old until he's two or two and one half. Society has failed to meet its responsibility for care of the youngest children."

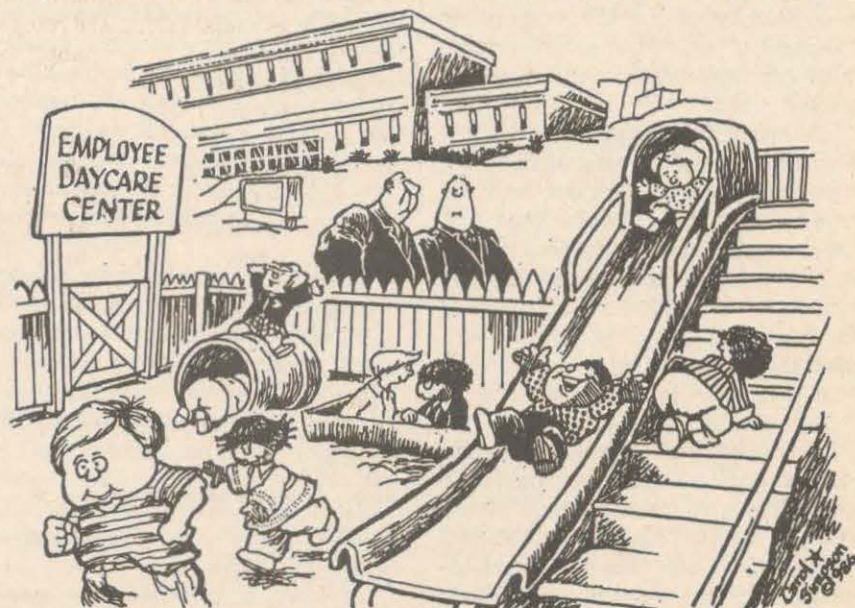
Clearly, Swedish families face the same problems as American families, but the two societies have addressed these challenges in a radically different fashion. And of course, the scope of the problem is of a different order. Working parents in the U.S. must rely, for the most part, on "relatives or neighbors or whatever" for their child care arrangements virtually from the time children are born until they can look after themselves. In Sweden, twelve to eighteen months, when child care is unavailable, is recognized as a social problem requiring social solutions.

The Social Democratic government is responding with a two-pronged policy: an aggressive program of building new day care facilities throughout the country, with a goal of making care available to all children over eighteen months of age; and a proposal to extend parental leave to eighteen months at full benefits.

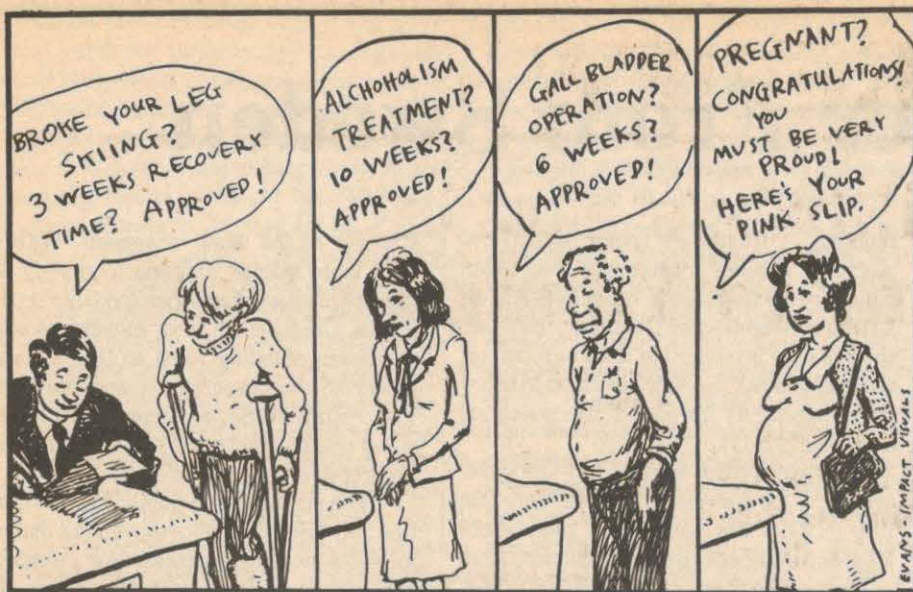
What makes these reforms realistic and practical in Sweden is the political

strength of the labor movement. With a tight labor market and approximately 85 percent of all workers organized into trade unions, the Swedish labor movement acts as a countervailing force to the political power of the corporations and the rich. The resultant Social Democratic hegemony creates enormous opportunities for progressive public policies.

The strength and political sophistication of the Swedish labor movement makes for some exciting alliances. For instance, one current controversial proposal would require that a portion of parental leave (perhaps three to six months of the proposed eighteen) must be taken by the father. Many feminists see this as the only way to make men accept their share of family responsibilities, citing statistics that show that the bulk of parental leave is still taken by mothers. The blue-collar union federation also supports this proposal, but on the grounds that only a use it or lose it provision would overcome employer resistance to male workers' use of parental leave. The unions argue that many young fathers would already like to share more of the responsibilities in the home, but are reluctant to exercise their right to take time off for fear of employer retaliation; most employers see it as natural for a woman to take time off to care for a child,



*"I still can't stand the idea of anybody having fun on company time"*



but consider a man who takes extended parental leave to be less serious about his career.

Interestingly, a number of the most important reforms that have created greater equality between the sexes in Sweden were not the direct result of the concern for gender equality, but rather the labor movement's general concern for social equality. Thus Swedish women workers in the blue collar sector on average make more than 90 percent of the wages earned by their male counterparts; in the U.S., women make only about 60 percent of male earnings. This smaller wage gap results not from policies such as equal pay for work of equal value—the concept of comparable worth is still considered something of a novelty in Sweden—but rather from the trade union movement's "wage policy of solidarity," which has sought greater equality in wage scales across all sectors of Swedish industry.

Although there are problems that still need to be addressed, having tackled some of the broad reforms provides room for showing sensitivity on a smaller scale. And sometimes these little things can mean a lot. The Social Democratic municipal government in the southern industrial city of Malmö recently decided to provide every expectant father with an electronic beeper, so that he could be notified when the mother went into labor.

This simple and inexpensive program that helps ordinary folks share one of life's most precious moments exemplifies the politics of a society that cares. The contrast with our own, supposedly child-centered society, is painfully stark. Here, a simple bill to require employers with more than fifteen employees to provide up

to eighteen weeks of unpaid parental leave has been gutted to apply to employers with more than fifty employees and provide only ten weeks of unpaid leave. Even so, the bill has faced stiff business oppositions and has little chance of passage.

Similarly, for the first time since 1973, a comprehensive day care and child development bill has been introduced in Congress. The Act For Better Child Care, introduced by Senator Christopher Dodd and backed by twenty other Senators, would provide day care for children of the poor and working poor. It, too, has little chance of passage this session, although the mere fact that it could be introduced is seen as a sign of a growing consensus that child care is a societal responsibility. (Conservative Senator Orrin G. Hatch has introduced his own, much less expensive, bill that would provide child care in family day care homes. Despite the fact that the day care would be inadequate and insufficient, his proposal would still cost more than what is now being spent on almost all current child care programs and illustrates the potential for building alliances on this issue.)

One of the best known ideologues of Swedish social democracy, Ernst Wigforss, once explained the movement's principled pragmatism in these terms: "If the renewal of society is of value, if socialism is of value, it is precisely because through it we create better conditions in which people can love and suffer, work, hope and believe, live in nature, among friends and comrades, poignantly experiencing a life that is worth living." ●

*Tim Sears, a long-time DSA member, works for the Bricklayers International Union.*

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# REVIEW

## Children's Stories Empowering to Young and Old

by Maxine Phillips

**NARRATIVES OF LOVE AND LOSS: STUDIES IN MODERN CHILDREN'S FICTION**, by Margaret and Michael Rustin. London and New York: Verso, distributed in the U.S. by Methuen, Inc., 1988. \$35 cloth, \$13.95 paperback.

So why is a nice book like this being reviewed in a socialist magazine? One of the co-authors, Michael Rustin, is head of the sociology department at North East London Polytechnic, author of *For a Pluralist Socialism*, and a contributor to *Dissent*. Margaret Rustin is a child psychotherapist at the well-known Tavistock Clinic in London.

Do we have, then, a socialist analysis of children's literature, a left-wing answer to Bruno Bettelheim's Freudian interpretation of classic fairy tales? Not exactly. Although not as heavy-handed as Bettelheim in explaining why these stories appeal so strongly to children and adults, the authors stick with fairly traditional psychoanalytic interpretations. They examine works, primarily British, drawn mainly from the period of the mid-1950s to 1980, and aimed at five-to eleven-year-olds.

Most of the stories have elements of fantasy (the characters in C.S. Lewis' *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, the miniature people in Mary Norton's *The Borrowers* series, talking animals in E.B. White's *Charlotte's Web*) and deal, as the authors say, with *phantasy*, "the inner, or unconscious mental life of a person." Whether they cope with separation and loss through their relationships to wholly imagined figures or remembered loved ones, the children in the narratives find the strength to move beyond the matrix of family into the wider society. This struggle, which certainly does not end at age eleven, becomes paramount when a child reaches school-age, and it presents different developmental tasks than those identified by Bettelheim in his treatment of the fairy tales.

The Rustins place this internal struggle in a social context, finding, for instance, in the tales of *The Borrowers* a saga of postwar working-class life, or in the travels and travails of Russell Hoban's *The Mouse and His Child* the immigrant experience in America. They point out that the books under discussion reflect a more modern psychoanalytic emphasis on moral and emotional development as well as a postwar optimism of manifold possibilities. They write with grace and clarity, making the material accessible to more

than the first-line audience of educators and mental-health workers.

In fact, the first response of this parent-reader was regret at having been born too soon and in the wrong country to have enjoyed these works at the appropriate age. The second was anticipation that in a few years I could share them with my daughter. No more wondering whether a diet of captive princesses and wicked stepmothers would warp her images of women. Here are books with more nuanced, more true-to-life characters and plots.

These are not representative of all modern children's literature, but they do qualify as classics — works that, are popular and appeal to adults as well as children. With their emphasis on feelings and internal life, the Rustins argue, these works represents a crossover into children's literature of the English novel of sensibility. In the Victorian period, children's literature was divided into male and female spheres of activity and sensibility. One can certainly argue that gender division is still with us in children's and adult fiction, but in the works discussed here, seven of the ten authors are women, and the themes are of interior life. Parents, however, don't have to worry about their children

### List of Principal Works Discussed

- Fox, Paula, *A Likely Place*, Macmillan (New York) 1967.  
———, *How Many Miles to Babylon*, Davis and White & Co. (New York) 1967.  
———, *The Slave Dancer*, Dell Publishing Company (New York) 1967.  
Godden, Rumer, *The Dolls' House*, Michael Joseph 1947.  
———, *The Fairy Doll*, Macmillan 1956.  
———, *The Story of Holly and Ivy*, Macmillan 1957.  
Lewis, C.S., *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, Geoffrey Bles 1950, Penguin Books, 1976.  
———, *Prince Caspian*, Geoffrey Bles 1951, Puffin Books 1962.  
———, *The Silver Chair*, Geoffrey Bles 1953, Puffin Books, 1965.  
———, *The Horse and his Boy*, Geoffrey Bles 1954, Puffin Books 1965.  
Norton, Mary, *The Borrowers*, Dent 1952.  
———, *The Borrowers Afield*, Dent 1955.  
———, *The Borrowers Afloat*, Dent 1959.  
White, E.B., *Charlotte's Web*, Hamish Hamilton 1952, Puffin Books 1963.  
———, *The Trumpet of the Swan*, Harper and Row (USA) 1970.  
———, *Stuart Little*, Puffin Books 1969.

## Children

Continued from page 23.

being bored. There is adventure enough for everyone, although all of the writers, with the exception of Paula Fox in *The Slave Dancer*, deal with themes that are not quite so horrifying as those of the Grimm Brothers. As life, at least for middle-class children, has become easier, children's stories no longer reflect the life-and-death struggles of an earlier, harsher time.

Yet what all classic children's stories share, and the Rustins allude to it in their discussion of hopefulness, is the triumph of presumably powerless children over the adverse aspects of their lives. Bettelheim speaks of resolving Oedipal longings. The Rustins speak of working through separation from *Mother* and loss of familiar family as the child moves into the outer world. But in either case, the universal human experience is that we were once small, helpless, and totally dependent. Those feelings did not leave us when we left adolescence. Depending on our childhood experiences, they haunt us daily in our encounters with authority figures or oppressive systems. The Rustins claim that children's literature appropriately places more emphasis on hope than does adult literature. They credit the hopefulness of the child characters with transformations of the evil characters around them, or at least with forcing evil characters to respond differently to their victims.

We socialists are often called childish for our "naive" beliefs in the possibilities for a better life. It's supposed to be a sign of adulthood to believe that problems are intractable, power relations don't change, and life is unfair. We flout the conventional wisdom by believing that people *can* change their conditions and that they don't need fairy godmothers or magic wands to do it. We want to hold to that belief, and we want to pass it on to our children.

So do we bombard our kids with political tracts disguised as children's fiction, lecture them about racism and sexism, or do we seek out literature and situations that will show them not only the faces of evil, but the redemptive possibilities of human action?

One of the favorite stories in our house right now is *Swimmy*, by Leo Lionni. The entire school of fish with which Swimmy runs is wiped out by a big tuna. Only Swimmy survives, devastated. But soon the beauty of life in the ocean, the lovely coral, the graceful sea anemones, the sunlight refracted in the water, makes him want to be happy again. He finds another school of fish, cowering in the depths, afraid to play for fear of being eaten. He organizes them to swim in the shape of a large fish, with himself as the eye, that frightens all the predatory fish around them. We adults see it as a community organizing parable. Our three-year-old daughter has developed a game called sea anemones, captivated more by the sound of the words than the substance of the story. Yet she asks for it nightly, enjoying the tale of small beings who triumph over larger ones.

The Rustins have identified empowering works that we can share with our children and have shown us why they are empowering. I hope their book finds a wide audience in the United States. ●

*Maxine Phillips was executive director of DSA and is now managing editor of Dissent.*

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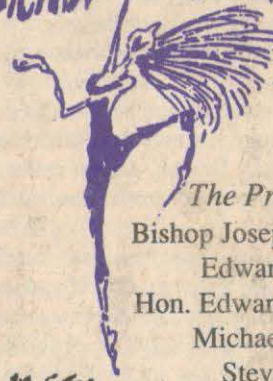
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