

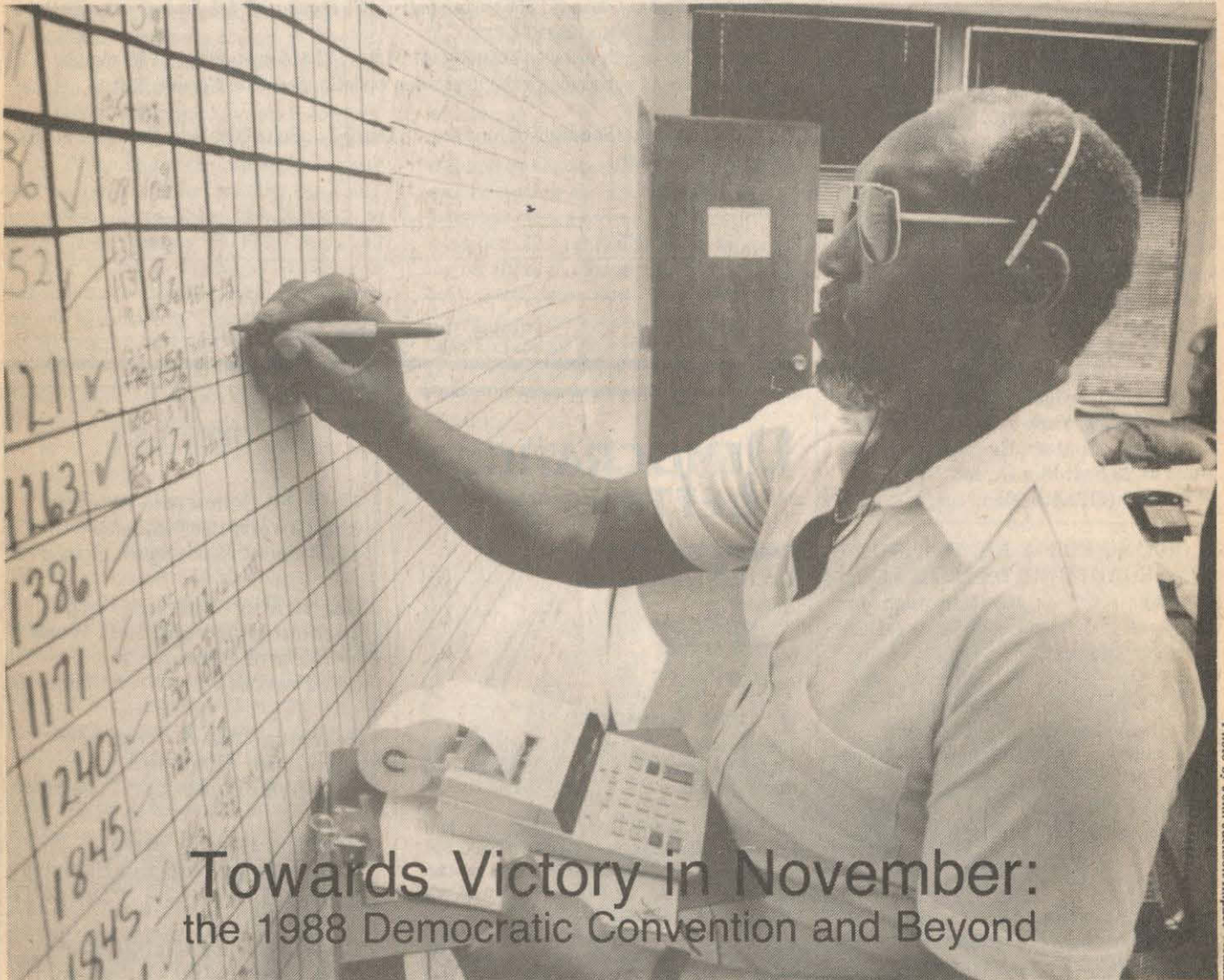
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DEMOCRATIC Left

July-August, 1988

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Towards Victory in November:
the 1988 Democratic Convention and Beyond

Photo by John Jackson/Impact Visuals

**Michael Harrington on direction for the Democrats
Frances Fox Piven and Richard Cloward on Voter Turnout
Also: Hispanic Voters • The Primaries • Local Legislative Victory**

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How the Democrats Can Win the Presidency and Govern the Country

By Michael Harrington

The Democratic party faces two tasks this fall. It has to win the Presidency and the Congress. And it must prepare to govern the United States of America during an extremely difficult period.

Those aims, some say, are in conflict. That is, the smart strategy is to concentrate on winning without mentioning any serious proposals for running the country. Then, once President Dukakis is sworn in on January 20, 1989, there will be time to try to figure out what to do with the nation and the world. To be sure, no one is proposing that the Democrats be as empty-minded as the Reagan "Morning in America" campaign of 1984, which was about as informative as a cereal commercial. The stress, however, is on avoiding specifics about what the new President will do.

I disagree. That is not to say that the presidential campaign should present a detailed list of specific proposals for 1989. The Democrats should focus on some central themes and not drown the public in details. The Party, however, cannot win unless it is ready to take on some of the most popular and effective Republican lies and demonstrate that there are viable alternatives to them. In what follows, then, I want to talk, not about what is abstractly good for the nation, but about which substantial programs and themes can help us to win and to govern.

For eight years now the Republicans have run against the 1960s, and Bush is even now preparing to do battle against the Carter administration of 1977-81. Unless the Democrats are ready to take on some of the myths used to undermine the Party, they will not be able to convince the people that they deserve to regain presidential power. In particular, if we do not debunk the notion that Democratic prodigality in social programs ruined the economy and mandates austerity for the foreseeable future, there is no way we will be able to win broad support. So long

as Congressional Democrats bow to the logic of Graham-Rudman and the myths about wasteful spending which underlies it, they will be unable to follow decent social priorities. Instead, they will continue to adhere to the cruel and simplistic logic which claims that as a nation we have lived beyond our means for too long, that the "party" is now over, and that "ordinary" Americans are the ones who should pay.

First, the new spending of the Sixties and Seventies was primarily for Social Security, an enormously popular program which primarily benefits the non-poor. The real value of social spending for those in most desperate need has been going down since 1969, and the increase in poverty in the Eighties has not been a result of growing welfare rolls — they stopped increasing in 1975 — but of the increase in the working poor and their children.

Second, the Reagan administration created an unprecedented deficit by giving tens of billions away to the rich while

canceling food stamps and medical programs for the poor. It "restored" the economy by smashing the unions and making companies profitable by encouraging them to pay wages that do not even keep pace with the cost of living. The majority of jobs created during the '80s have been low-wage and part-time — jobs with wages that do not lift a family even up to the poverty line, let alone above it. And in doing these things, the Reagan administration has not simply violated basic American ideas of equity. It has also created an income structure in which more and more citizens are dependent upon credit to make ends meet. That is why recent polls show that most Americans are profoundly suspicious of Reagan's claims of economic success even though the statistics seem positive. It is also one of the reasons why there will be a crisis in the future. One can't forever make up income short fall by charging it to Master Card.

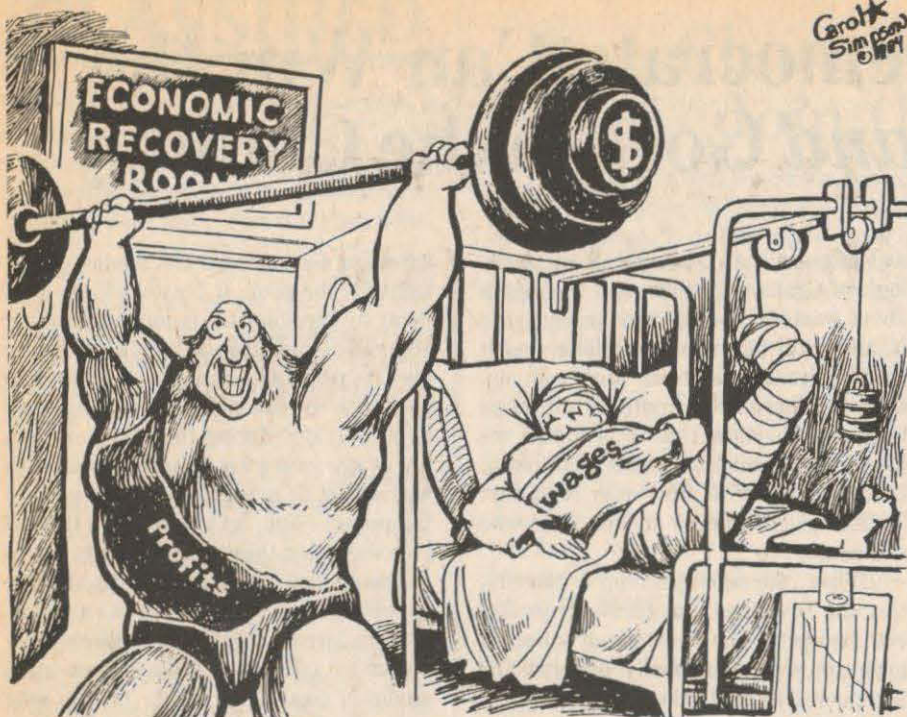
Third, there is no way to avoid the issue of taxes short of simply surrender-



Photo by Harriet Hirschhorn Impact Visuals

Coca Cola advertisement in Haiti reminds us that economic justice in U.S. and Third World must be linked.

Garth
Simpson
© 1987



ing to Reaganomics. If the Democratic party is to adopt a Republican orthodoxy on this count, there is no way that it can pose itself as a viable alternative. Don't misunderstand me. The Democratic candidate should stress that he has no intention of raising the taxes of the average American because those levies are already too high. But he should then add that taking back some of the outrageous giveaways, which Reagan made to the richest 1 percent, is a legitimate way of dealing with our problems.

More broadly, Democrats must attack big business and its Republican political front men on the grounds that it has engaged in wasteful, unproductive spending and refused to invest in America. If the wealthy want to construct plants to deal with poverty and reindustrialize the nation, let them have terrific tax breaks. But they should not get a nickel of federal money for corporate take-overs and Wall Street crap games.

The Republicans say they know how to create wealth and the Democrats only care about distributing it. Nonsense. There has been more unproductive spending under the Reagan administration than ever before in American history, and a fair — a democratic — tax system could be a tremendous instrument for the creation of a dynamic economy.

At the same time, Democrats have

to dispel the notion that a few reductions in the trade deficit mean that the international economic crisis is over. We got into that crisis because Paul Volker and the bankers, with enthusiastic support from the Reagan White House, priced American workers out of the world market at the same time that they attacked their standard of living. And the recent improvement in manufacturing exports has come about because the Administration finally made grudging concessions to getting interest rates down and to devaluing the dollar.

But the crisis is far from over. Africa has been forced to reduce its living standard by 25 percent during this decade, Latin America by one sixth. That is not simply a catastrophe for people who were hungry and poor in the first place. It also means that American manufacturers have lost huge markets. But meanwhile, with a green light from Reagan, multinationals continue to make deals all over the world, exporting jobs, importing parts, turning many American workers into the assemblers of foreign produced parts. Often, the workers who lose their jobs or income blame foreign workers for their woes — rather than the multinationals who played them off against the Americans, and vice versa.

In that context, the proposal made by France's Mitterand at the Toronto summit last month — that the govern-

ments of the rich countries simply forgive a significant portion of African debt — is not only just and decent. It also holds out the possibility of creating new markets for Western goods. Social justice in the Third World, far from being a drain on the American economy, could be the source of employment and wages in this country.

We have begun to move forward on disarmament and we could go much further. Suppose the United States did more than abandon Reagan's utterly impractical Star Wars fantasy. What if we also propose to the Soviet Union that there be a joint effort to develop the poor areas of the world with the money that could be saved from calling off the arms race? This would benefit Indiana and Ohio as well as Ethiopia and Bangla Desh.

The point is, the Democratic party cannot conduct a seminar on budgetary economics this fall, but neither can it ignore the very effective disinformation campaign the Republicans have been running for years. We have to defend ourselves and the best way is to make a case for the democratic (and Democratic) alternative: for promoting growth and work at home and abroad through expanding justice rather than by observing the rules of Republican austerity.

It is clear that the program I have outlined above is quite similar to the one which Jesse Jackson promoted throughout the primaries. To some journalists, Jackson represents an "extremist" point of view. But the American correspondent of the impeccably conservative *Financial Times* of London got it right: only in Ronald Reagan's America could Jackson's ideas seem unrealistic. In every other Western democracy they represent the mainstream. But as long as Democrats fail to understand that Jackson's ideas, and the outline of them presented here, are the potential base for a new majority and a new politics, we will be trapped in Republican assumptions. We must learn from the Jackson campaign.

In November, 1988 the Democrats can win by showing that we have a serious alternative. Then we might even be able to make something out of our victory.

Michael Harrington, co-chair of DSA, has recently finished his 15th book, The Long Distance Runner, and is working on another book on socialism.

Voter Registration Barriers Keep Turnout Down and the Left Weak

by Richard A. Cloward
and Frances Fox Piven

During the current Presidential campaign, many activists are again engaging in voter registration efforts. The reason is obvious enough: the natural constituencies of the left are underrepresented in the electoral system. Only 63 percent of eligible Americans are registered, more than 65 million are not, and two out of three of them are below the median income. (Elections officials claim that 75 percent are registered, but they base this figure on local lists which are clogged with the names of millions of people who have died or who are counted twice because they have moved and reregistered elsewhere.) Consequently, only about half of eligible Americans will go to the polls in November 1988, compared with turnout levels between 75 percent and 95 percent in other Western democracies. Even people in developing countries, such as India and El Salvador, vote more than Americans.

High turnout is encouraged in other countries because citizens are placed on registration lists automatically when they come of age, or they are registered periodically by government-sponsored door-to-door canvasses. In the United States, by contrast, it is up to each citizen to figure out how and where to register, and that may not be an easy matter, especially for the less educated. Once they are registered, however, the US Census Bureau reports that people "overwhelmingly go to the polls." In 1984, 88 percent of registrants voted, including 78 percent of those with an eighth grade education or less.

It is also worth remembering that Americans had the highest rate of voting in the world in the 19th century, despite low education levels. But that was before

politicians created voter registration requirements. Turnout plummeted at the beginning of the 20th century, when poll taxes, literacy tests, and longterm residency requirements were introduced. At the same time, voter registration offices were opened in county seats where citizens had to prove to officials, who were often intimidating and hostile, that they met these qualifications. A procedure which was justified as a way of listing eligible voters was thus converted into a procedure for weeding out those whom politicians considered undesirable.

As a result, blacks and most poor whites were disenfranchised in the South. Southern presidential turnout fell from an average of 67 percent in the latter half of the 19th century to a low of 19 percent in 1924 (and it did not rise appreciably until the post-World War II struggle for voting rights). Literacy tests and obstructive registration procedures also reduced northern presidential turnout from an average of 83 percent in the elections of the late 19th century to 55 percent in the early 1920s. Indeed, fourteen northern states still had literacy tests on the books as late as 1970, when they were outlawed by amendments to the Voting Rights Act. Although poll taxes and literacy tests are things of the past, people must still generally go to a county seat during working hours to register, forms are frequently complex, and elections officials are still often intimidating. Even the twenty-four states that allow people to register by mail have no system to make the mail-in forms widely available.

Registration barriers are not the only reason that turnout is low, nor were they the only reason that turnout fell in the first place. Once voting by the haves-nots was restricted in the early 20th century, party organizers turned away from the candidates, the policies, and the campaign language that would attract them. This marked a major difference with the course of political development in other



Photo by Jim West/Impact Visuals

Door-to-door canvassing by unionist in Detroit.

industrial democracies where parties emerged which articulated the interests of working-class people and mobilized them to vote. The tendency of poorer and minority people to abstain from voting in the United States because of registration restrictions has thus been reinforced by their marginalization from the political culture. This may explain much about the relative lack of class-consciousness among American workers. The labor parties of Europe were agents of class socialization, but the American parties were not forced by the exigencies of electoral competition to give form and voice to a distinctive class politics.

Even the celebrated New Deal party was not a party of working people in the same sense as the labor parties of Europe



Photo by John Jackson/Impact Visuals

Get-out-the-vote phonebanking in Atlanta.

because it was based on an absurd coalition. Northern industrial workers who favored union rights and social programs were joined with better-off southern whites who favored right-to-work laws and generally opposed social welfare protections. Naturally enough, southern Democrats elected to the Congress readily joined with northern Republicans, and the resulting conservative alliance dominated post-war policy. The New Deal party, in short, was divided against itself, and against working people.

The American parties continue to be committed to a narrow electorate. One reason is simply incumbency, as President Carter explained after his voter registration reform bill went down in defeat in 1977: "The more senior and more influential members of the Congress have very safe districts. To have a 25 or 30 percent increase in unpredictable new voters is something they don't relish."

Business, which finances the Parties, is another source of opposition to registration reform. At a time when the corporate sector has mobilized to weaken unions and to slash social programs, business leaders are hardly likely to go along with an increase in voting by the have-nots. Partisan considerations are still another cause of resistance to reform. Republicans fear that higher voting by poorer and minority people would benefit the Democrats, even endangering their hold on the Presidency. They prefer the present restrictive registration system because they can manipulate it to their

advantage with money. Together with the Christian right, the Republican party has been spending millions of dollars to expand registration among conservatives and higher income whites. As for the Democrats, they most probably would not favor expenditures for voter registration even if their party had the money to spend. An upsurge of have-not and minority voting would not only threaten incumbents and put business contributions at risk, but would also disrupt the balance of voter blocs within the Democratic party, eroding support among some groups and strengthening it among others.

Still, if there is little prospect of sweeping national registration reform, there are openings at the state and local level. For the past five years, Human SERVE has been promoting a simple and low cost reform whereby states and localities instruct government employees to ask people who apply for services whether they would like to register to vote. Sixteen states now have "Motor Voter" programs which allow people to register to vote in motor vehicle offices, or even incorporate voter registration information on applications for drivers licenses. Some states and counties are registering people in libraries, and in health, welfare, unemployment, and public utility offices. A number of big cities—New York and San Francisco, for example—have begun to make voter registration forms available in municipal agencies. Some nonprofit agencies, such as

day care and family planning centers, are registering their clients to vote.

The reason some progress is being made with this method of reform is that it takes advantage of the fragmented character of the American state structure—the different levels of government, and the overlapping powers of different branches. If a state legislature will not enact an agency-based reform bill, then a county or municipal legislature might. Moreover, governors, county executives, and mayors have the authority to issue executive orders requiring that registration services be made available in the agencies under their jurisdictions. Big-city mayors could, by themselves, produce millions of new registrants among poorer and minority people. In this way, the fragmented and decentralized governmental structure provides multiple openings for reform.

Still, it is an uphill fight to persuade state, county, and municipal legislatures to enact agency-based voter registration bills, or to persuade governors, county executives, and mayors to establish agency-based registration by executive orders. And even when they do act, there is often no administrative follow through.

DSA chapters and members could contribute to this fight by helping to form coalitions at the state and local level to lobby public officials to enact effective agency-based registration reforms. Successful coalitions have included organized labor, civil rights and women's groups, grassroots organizations such as ACORN and Citizen Action, public interest organizations such as Common Cause and PIRG, and the League of Women Voters. Organizing advice and technical assistance, as well as up-to-date information on developments in your state or locality, can be obtained from Human SERVE, 622 W. 113th Street, New York, NY 10025; (212) 280-5458.

Of course, no one can be sure that millions of poor and minority nonvoters would go to the polls if registration procedures were reformed, or that they would vote differently than better-off whites. What is certain is that there is a good deal of opposition to finding out. ●

Frances Fox Piven teaches at the Graduate School and University Center of the City University of New York, and Richard Cloward teaches at Columbia University. They are the authors of Why Americans Don't Vote, published recently by Pantheon.

DSACTION

REPORTS

- This year's DSA National Board will meet in Los Angeles November 11-13. The Board, which meets alternate years, is the governing body in the years when there is no DSA Convention. It is a delegated body just like the Convention. More information on this meeting will follow shortly.

- Planning on being in Atlanta for the Democratic Convention? Make sure to let Shakoor Aljuwani, DSA's Field Director, know as soon as possible. DSA will host a socialist caucus on Wednesday morning and a reception Tuesday evening.

- The 13th annual Democratic Socialists of America **Youth Section Summer Conference**, which will draw activists from across the country, will take place August 25-28 in Kalamazoo, Michigan. The conference will feature workshops and panels on reproductive rights, South Africa, labor and the economy, and the '88 elections and the Rainbow Coalition. To register contact Elissa McBride at the national office.

- DSA member and Jewish Labor Bund activist Motl Zelmanowicz joined Dr. Marek Edelman, a former commander of the Jewish resistance in the Warsaw ghetto, in dedicating a memorial on April 19 to two Jewish socialist leaders executed by Joseph Stalin in 1941 for protesting the invasion of eastern Poland by the Soviet Union. The execution of the two leaders, Henryk Erlich and Wiktor Alter, was a *cause celebre* for democratic socialists and trade unionists around the world.

The dedication of the monument was one of a series of unofficial events marking the Warsaw ghetto uprising of 1943 against the Nazi occupation. It included representatives of the Solidarity trade union movement and was snubbed by official Polish and Israeli participants in the country for the government-sponsored observances of the uprising.

- National Organizational Director Patrick Lacefield and veteran activist Motl Zelmanowicz were on hand to represent DSA at the recent council meeting of the Socialist International in Madrid, Spain May 11-12. The meeting, hosted by

the ruling Spanish Socialist Workers Party of President Felipe Gonzales, included delegates from forty-seven countries and observers from a host of others.

Among the outstanding issues of the Congress were the resolutions and discussion hailing the then-imminent signing of the INF treaty by the Soviet Union and the United States and urging the two superpowers to move beyond INF to more substantive disarmament. As always, the situation in the Middle East was center stage, highlighted by the presence of our Israeli comrades from the Labour party and MAPAM, Palestinian and Egyptian guests, and observers from the Soviet Union. After much debate, the SI unanimously condemned the violence perpetuated by Israeli Defense Forces on the West Bank and in Gaza, while also condemning terrorist attacks by Palestinians against civilian Israeli targets. The SI strongly supported an international conference on the Middle East as supported by the Israeli parties.

The SI also reiterated its support for the Central American peace process, expressed its solidarity with the movement against apartheid in Southern Africa, and backed the struggles of the people of Brazil, Paraguay, Chile, and Haiti in their respective battles for regimes of genuine democracy and social justice.

- It's not too late to be a part of the historic tribute to Michael Harrington that was held June 30 in New York. A special Commemorative Journal, edited by Irving Howe, will be published by the end of the summer and will include specially commissioned articles, essays, and photographs, as well as coverage of the event. You can be listed in the journal for \$50 (and receive a copy of the journal) or you can purchase the journal without a listing for \$25. All orders must be in by July 30 to "In Celebration of Michael Harrington," 15 Dutch St., Suite 500, New York, NY 10038. Checks must be made payable to the "Commonwealth Foundation."

- The Youth Section recently organized voter registration and literature distribution for Billy Bragg's "Help Save the Youth of America" tour. Billy is active in the Labor party in Great Britain and has been one of the major forces be-

hind Red Wedge, a group of British musicians attempting to increase voter registration and participation among youth. DSA Youth Organizer Elissa McBride traveled with the tour, and youth section activists from all over the country turned out to pass out DSA leaflets, register voters, and hear Billy's music and political commentary. The Youth Section reached many new youth and students, who were excited to find out that there really *are* socialists in the U.S. Look for Billy's new album in record stores; his song "There is Power in a Union" should become a DSA standard.

- DSA's Latino Commission is organizing a conference the weekend of December 1-4 in Chicago. Tentatively called "Latinos and Native Americans: Building Political Strategies for the 1990s," the conference immediately follows a National Latino Conference also being held in Chicago that week. Contact Tom Wakely at (312) 252-1686 or Duane Campbell at (916) 361-9072 for more information. To obtain a copy or subscription of "Our Struggle/Nuestra Lucha," the newsletter of the Latino and Afro-American Commissions, write to Box 162394, Sacramento, CA 95816.

- The national office is in need of a new typewriter. If you have one to donate, or know someone who does, please contact the DSA office at (212) 962-0390.

- Don't forget to send us a message for Labor Day. See back cover for details and order form.

RESOURCES

- **Agency-Based Voter Registration: A National Survey** is an excellent resource for finding out what's being done around voter registration in your county and municipality. To obtain copies, contact Human SERVE at 622 W. 113th Street, Room 410, New York, NY 10025 (212) 280-4053.

- The latest issue of *Labor Voice*, the publication of DSA's Labor Commission, is hot off the presses. For a sample copy or a subscription (\$10 a year), write the Labor Commission at P.O. Box 28408, Washington, DC 20005.

ON THE LEFT

by HARRY FLEISCHMAN

California

East Bay DSA discussed "Keeping Socialism Relevant" at its June 19 meeting in Oakland... DSAers across the state were active in the Jesse Jackson campaign and in state and local primary and referendum drives... The Stanford/ Peninsula DSA chapter had an active year of rebuilding. Chapter activist Eric Roberts taught a course on the history of the 60s, and DSA members debated the *Stanford Review*, the school's right-wing paper... The LA local is organizing a "Politically Palatable Potluck" at which Harold Meyerson will speak on electoral politics and Claire Kaplan will speak about the socialist-feminist retreat.

District of Columbia

DC/MD DSA held its annual meeting and picnic June 4 with DSA Field Director Shakoor Aljuwani and Dorothy Healey speaking on "To the Convention and Beyond." Bernard Demzuc, labor activist and DSAer, was elected a Jackson alternate, while DSAer Ruth Jordan lost out as a Dukakis delegate but was elected to the Democratic State Committee... The 125th anniversary of Germany's Social Democratic Party was celebrated in Washington at a seminar hosted by the Friedrich Ebert Foundation. Former DSA Executive Director James Chapin spoke for DSA, and DSAer Norman Birnbaum gave the closing address.

Illinois

The University of Chicago Student Government (SG) adopted a resolution condemning the Psi Upsilon fraternity for "racist, sexist, and homophobic" posters. At the same meeting, the SG voted 17 to 14 to support a resolution from the Business School condemning the UC Democratic Socialists for a poster attacking corporate evils. In debate, SG member David Bental addressed Jay Hughes, secretary of UC Democratic Socialists, arguing that "There's nothing wrong with junk bonds!"

Kansas

The *Kansas City Star Magazine* carried a long story about "The Radical Capitol of America," Girard, Kansas, where J.A. Wayland's *Appeal to Reason* became the most successful socialist paper ever published in this country. The weekly paper, published from 1890 to the first World War, reached a circulation of half a million.

Kentucky

The *Lexington Herald Leader* printed a special feature about Mary Dunn, DSA National Executive Commit-

tee member and a leader of Central Kentucky DSA. The article, "Activist Traded Complacency for Crusading," stressed her development from suburban housewife to committed activist inspired by a feminist consciousness, and concerns about war, racism, and economic justice... The local held its annual retreat June 11 and 12 to plan the year's activities. Central Kentucky DSA showed "El Norte," a film on economic exploitation and racial discrimination in Guatemala and California, and the local continues to be active in organizing against apartheid in South Africa.

Missouri

Dennis Banks, a Native American leader, spoke at Washington University on "American Indians and the Grave Robbers" in an event co-sponsored by the St. Louis DSA local... Frances Fox Piven and Barbara Ehrenreich both spoke at the National Lawyers Guild annual meeting, which was held in St. Louis. A DSA



Bill E Hill from the National SA Review

tee member and a leader of Central Kentucky DSA. The article, "Activist Traded Complacency for Crusading," stressed her development from suburban housewife to committed activist inspired by a feminist consciousness, and concerns about war, racism, and economic justice... The local held its annual retreat June 11 and 12 to plan the year's activities. Central Kentucky DSA showed "El Norte," a film on economic exploitation and racial discrimination in Guatemala and California, and the local continues to be active in organizing against apartheid in South Africa.

Maryland

Baltimore DSA hosted this year's MidAtlantic Regional Retreat at Notre Dame College June 25-26. A media access training workshop was held during the day on Saturday... DSA is backing efforts to pass a City Council bill to extend civil rights protection to gays and lesbians.

Massachusetts

DSAers were active in the successful drive by AFSCME to organize Harvard University's 3,400 clerical and technical

workers. The NLRB vote was 1,530 for the union to 1,486 against. The Boston local's Debs-Thomas dinner, which was a tremendous success, drew over 200 people including Mayor Flynn.

New York

Ithaca DSA and the Tompkins County Rainbow Coalition invited Jackson backers and others to a discussion on June 2 on "Jackson and the Rainbow: Where Do We Go From Here?" led by DSA's Field Director Shakoor Aljuwani. Jackson won in the city of Ithaca by a narrow margin, and DSAer Ben Nichols will go to the convention as a Jackson alternate delegate... Nassau DSA held its sixth annual Memorial Day picnic May 29... Two DSA members were given special awards by the Sidney Hillman Foundation at its annual luncheon in May. Michael Harrington received an award for Meritorious Public Service and 82-year-old labor writer John Herling won an award for Lifetime Public Service... The *New York Times*, in an article on "Waiting for Koch: Will They Run or Won't They?," featured two DSA members as potential mayoral candidates —

Manhattan Borough President David N. Dinkins and City Councilwoman Ruth Messinger... Many NYC DSAers attended the memorial service for DSA member William McCann, who passed away on May 28 of an AIDS-related lung infection at the age of 25.

Ohio

DSA was active in Jesse Jackson's winning campaign in Cincinnati... DSA's Feminist Commission Retreat was held June 18-19 at Oberlin College. Women from across the country attended to set an agenda for the Commission.

Oregon

Portland DSA held a forum on "Could Legalizing Drugs Reduce Crime?" May 5, with Assistant District Attorney Alex Gordon, prosecutor of drug cases for Multnomah County and Carol Pope, director of Our New Beginnings, a program for women released from prison. DSA is involved in the Justice for Janitors campaign led by Local 49 of the Service Employees International Union. DSA member Bev Stein won overwhelmingly in the primary race for State House District 14. Portland DSA activists, along with members from a variety of other progressive organizations, were active throughout her campaign.

Pennsylvania

The *Easton Express* carried a series on six local families and the race for the White House. One dealt with DSAers Ron and Michelle Biaman and their efforts for a better world... The Reading-Berks DSA local held its annual socialist picnic early in July... Central Pennsylvania DSA is organizing its September annual meeting, the theme of which will be "Labor and Unionism"... Thomas Paine Cronin, president of AFSCME District Council 47, spoke at Philadelphia DSA's May membership meeting on "Contracting Out of Unionized Municipal Jobs: Union-Busting at Work." An upcoming forum will feature a Palestinian speaker and DSAer Mark Breslow on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict... Joni Rabinowitz of the Pittsburgh local was one of Jackson's key organizers in Allegheny County. The local organized a literature table at Billy Bragg's Pittsburgh performance.

Commission Activity on the Upsurge

• Over sixty women attended "Charting our Future: Socialist Women and our Feminist Agenda," DSA's first national women's retreat organized by the Feminist Commission and held at Oberlin College June 17-19. The retreat reflected diversity along many lines. Attendance was diverse geographically, with participants from such states as California, Illinois, Ohio, Kentucky, Pennsylvania, Washington, DC, Maryland, and New York. It was also truly intergenerational, both in terms of age and in terms of experience in DSA and politics generally. It was especially inspiring to learn that many of the women present demonstrate their commitment to social change daily through their work.

DSA co-chair Barbara Ehrenreich opened the retreat, and was followed by reports on a wide range of topics; NOW's political agenda was addressed by Noreen Connell, DSA member and President of NY NOW; reproductive rights organizing was presented by DSAer Janet Catov from the National Abortion Rights Action League of Pennsylvania; mobilization against rape and battering was covered by Los Angeles DSA member Claire Kaplan; organizing efforts around women in poverty was addressed by DSA vice chair Frances Fox Piven; and clerical organizing was discussed by Deborah Meyer from 9to5, the National Association of Working Women. In addition, innovative discussions took place in small groups, which were centered on grassroots experience with multi-racial coalition work and Rainbow organizing.

The conference structure allowed time for informal discussion, which proved to be as valuable as the formal sessions. Participants unanimously expressed the desire for another retreat, and many women took on responsibilities ranging from production of the newsletter 'Not Far Enough' to serving on the newly created Feminist Commission steering committee. For more information about the Feminist Commission, contact Amy Bachrach by writing to the DSA office, 15 Dutch Street, Suite 500, New York, NY 10038.

• The May 27-30, 1988 Memorial Day weekend Congress on "Religion and Politics: Developing Theologies of Peace and Justice" has been hailed as a tremendous success for initiating an important dialogue between different sectors of the religious and political left in the Americas. The Congress, which began Friday night with DSA co-chair Michael Harrington, included such other notable speakers as Jim Wallis, editor of the Christian left magazine *Sojourners*, DSAers Cornel West and Rosemary Radford Ruether, Arthur Waskow, and *Tikkun* editor Michael Lerner. The three day event, attended by over 350 people, was hosted by Chicago DSA and sponsored by the DSA Religion and Socialism Commission, the Chicago Catholic Theological Union, and Meadville/Lombard Theological School.

South African Bongajolo Gopa and South American Gerardo Thijssen, both liberation theologians and political activists, were two Congress participants who were particularly exciting. Both called for increased political activism by the religious left and encouraged greater solidarity with the poor and marginalized of our society.

Workshops on a wide range of topics were offered throughout the weekend; Liberation Theology; The Church in South Africa; The Sanctuary Movement in the U.S.; Non-violent Resistance; Marxism and the Black church; The New Religious Right; and the Ecological Crisis and Creation Ethics. Religion and Socialism Commission activist John Cort spoke on "Towards A New World Vision: Religion and Socialism" at a very successful workshop.

Complete details will soon appear in the next issue of *Religious Socialism*, the newsletter of the Religion and Socialism Commission. For those who could not attend, a two hour video containing the highlights of the Congress, including Mike Harrington's rousing Friday night speech, will soon be available. For further information concerning the Commission or video contact: Thomas Wakely, Chicago DSA's Organizational Director, at (312) 384-0327.

Reaching Out: A Progressive Agenda for Hispanics

by Alfredo Lopez

One day in the next century, Hispanics will become the largest minority in this country — a noteworthy fact for anyone involved in national electoral politics. But for the progressive movement, the potential rise of Hispanics as an electoral force represents an enormous challenge and an opportunity for reasons other than the obvious demographic considerations.

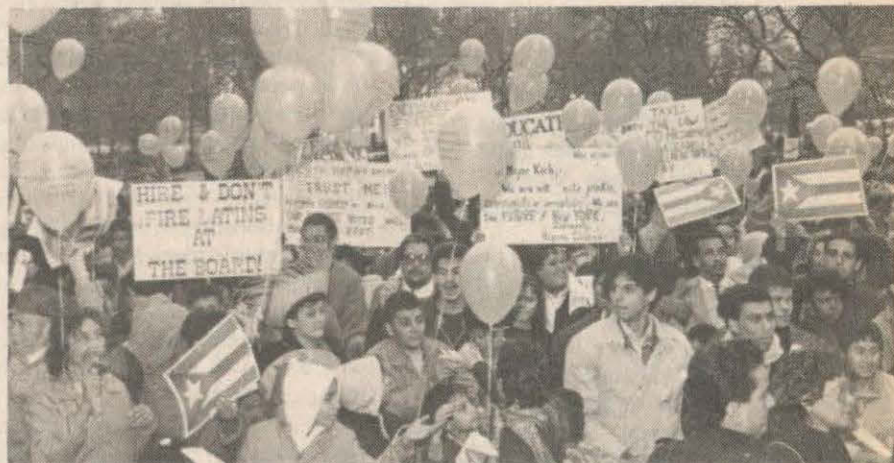
Until now, both major political parties have failed to win substantial Hispanic support; statistics on low voter turnout demonstrate this. The old rules of the electoral game do not apply. The Hispanic population is a new kind of minority, and its recruitment into an electoral bloc demands new tactics. Approaching Hispanics as a single minority group will not work, and the reason why must be grasped by anyone undertaking the task.

The Diverse Minority

The rather sloppy concept of a "Hispanic minority" was developed by non-Hispanics. In reality, there isn't a single, homogeneous population. There are probably more differences than similarities in the backgrounds of, for example, Cubans, Mexicans, and Dominicans. The first group fled Cuba to escape a revolution. The second group fled — and continues to flee — economic deprivation in Mexico. Members of the third group flee the Dominican Republic for various reasons, including political oppression.

These diverse motivations are reflected in class backgrounds and political attitudes. As a rule, Cubans arrive in the United States better educated and more financially secure than, say, Puerto Ricans. They are also more politically conservative and resist entering into coalitions with other minorities. While Puerto Ricans in New York voted for Jesse Jackson in the Democratic party primary, Cubans in New Jersey did not.

Additional social and political dis-



Demonstrators demanding the appointment of a Latino Representative to the NY Board of Education.

parities result from the fact that the populations are concentrated in vastly different regions of this country. And, within each group, there are enormous generational divergences that affect cultural attitudes, the degree of interest in international issues, and the use of language. Finally, there is the fact that many Hispanics (the number remains uncertain) have no legal right to be here, and many who are legal residents don't have the right to vote. Yet given the importance of their concerns, an electoral campaign must, for the first time in history, address the interests of nonvoters.

Thus the task of speaking to this motley group known as the Hispanic minority is a more complicated challenge than might be immediately apparent. At the grassroots level, the progressive movement is already equipped to contend with the challenge. It is sufficiently decentralized and respectful of local leadership to accommodate the input and initiative of leaders of the various communities. But a national campaign has different requirements. When elections draw near, national candidates must develop platforms that will define a common ground for the many Hispanic populations. That common ground does exist. "Spanish-speaking people" share certain concerns — based in part on the racism

confronted by all minorities — and these can be defined in five general areas.

Outlining a Progressive Agenda

Social Policy: Since many Hispanics live in poor communities, they are concerned about "social policy" issues — jobs, housing, and education. While the first two of these issues are now on the tip of almost every tongue, no one has yet addressed the particular educational needs of young Hispanics. Although Jesse Jackson's campaign came closest to doing this, matters of language, social perception, historical example, teaching methods, cultural sensitivity, and bilingual education were still not fully explored.

If a campaign were to propose a year-long series of national conferences of Parent/Teacher organizations in Hispanic communities in order to develop recommendations to the President, the response of Hispanics would probably be overwhelmingly positive. In addition, when right-wingers suggest that English should become the "official national language" of the United States, a progressive campaign should join every existing Hispanic group in taking a vigorous stand against this proposal.

Foreign Policy: The Hispanic communities take an interest in U.S. policy in

Continued on page 14

Socialist Beverly Stein Triumphs In Portland Primary

by Scott Bailey

It was the sweetest election in recent memory in Portland. Just when we had gotten used to settling for "moral" victories, Beverly Stein won the real thing in her Democratic primary race for a seat in the Oregon legislature. Beverly, a long-time Democratic Socialist of America leader in Portland and a former member of DSA's National Executive Committee, ran a strong campaign, capturing 63 percent of the vote. Her district is heavily Democratic and she is favored to win the November general election.

Beverly won in spite of the fact that her opponent started the campaign with much greater name recognition. In addition, her opponent attacked her throughout the race, portraying her alternately as a "carpetbagger" for recently moving into the district, as a "downtown attorney" captive to PAC money, and, of course, as a leader of an "extreme-left" socialist group. The negative campaigning backfired badly. The victory was a breakthrough for the left in Portland; if she wins in November, Beverly will be one of the few Oregon legislators in recent times to emerge from a progressive organizing background.

Three factors propelled Beverly to victory. First, her experience as an organizer attracted many committed activists to her campaign. Second, she ran a textbook grassroots campaign. Third, she appealed to voters both on a personal and an issue basis. These strengths enabled her to organize a broad-based campaign and to win the race.

Stein the Activist

Beverly is one of the best known progressive organizers in Portland. She has been co-chair of Portland DSA since its inception and has served as co-chair of a very active Rainbow Coalition. Her past organizing experience involved

work on a variety of issues and campaigns, including opposing apartheid, working on utility issues, expanding access to child care, and supporting worker buyouts. Her work on different issues and coalitions have made her the best-connected activist in the area. Her skills in facilitation and consensus-building have made her very effective and have earned her few enemies. Beverly was able to bring in experienced activists from many walks who were committed to her campaign, including activists in groups that have traditionally shied away from direct electoral involvement, such as the local Central America solidarity group.

Indeed, the Stein campaign (along with the Jesse Jackson campaign) served as a focus for activism in Portland throughout the spring. Beverly was able to draw resources and volunteers from many progressive organizations. In addition to early support from DSA, she received endorsements from SANE, the Oregon Women's Political Caucus, and the (gay and lesbian) Right to Privacy PAC. Over fifty DSA members actively participated in her campaign, and significant volunteer support came from the

Lesbian Community Project and the state Public Employees Union. She was endorsed by other women's groups, minority groups, the AFL-CIO and other unions, and the League of Conservation Voters as well. The campaign also ran a joint voter registration drive with the Jackson campaign at a college in Beverly's district.

Beverly's connections worked on other levels as well. One get-out-the-vote mailer featured a signed letter endorsing Beverly from the Secretary of State, while a postcard mailer was signed by a popular Portland City Commissioner.

Strong Grassroots Campaign

Beverly ran a technically sophisticated and innovative grassroots campaign. The campaign had two thrusts. The first one was an attempt to build a "friends and neighbors" network of supporters on a precinct-by-precinct basis. The goal was to build a leadership structure across the district. The second thrust was a door-to-door canvas of the entire district. Canvassing was linked by a computerized data bank to targeted mailings and to an aggressive get-out-the-



Beverly Stein at meeting of Oregon Alliance for Progressive Policy.

Photo by Paul Ketchum

vote phone bank to both identified supporters and fence-sitters.

A key to success was the experience and working relationship between Beverly and her campaign manager, Thalia Zapatos. Beverly had previously managed a city council race for a Rainbow candidate. She was able to use this experience to strengthen her role as candidate and Thalia's as manager. Thalia, formerly western regional trainer and electoral advisor for the National Abortion Rights Action League (NARAL) and a Rainbow Coalition activist, brought impressive training skills and grassroots electoral experience to the campaign.

Together they implemented the "friends and neighbors" strategy. The idea was to identify supporters in every precinct early in the campaign. Supporters accompanied Beverly in canvassing their area, distributing lawn signs, contributing and raising funds, and hosting house parties to spread the word to neighbors. This strategy was only partially successful, as active supporters were not evenly dispersed through the district. However, the groundwork done to identify supporters proved valuable for other aspects of the campaign and will serve as an important building block for future campaigns.

The heart of the campaign turned out to be the door-to-door canvas. Beverly's opponent had run for the position twice before and was much better known throughout the district. In order to establish name familiarity, she knocked on every Democratic door in the district. She started canvassing in September, a full eight months before the primary. In November, the campaign had its first organized canvas day, with an interesting twist. Most candidates pay a fee to get on the ballot. Beverly chose to petition to get on the ballot. The signature-collecting process gave canvassers a hook for getting the attention of voters long before most people begin to think about the election. It also demonstrated Beverly's grassroots approach and volunteer support. Most voters wanted to know something about Beverly before signing, so they read her campaign material. Their signatures, in addition to helping to get her on the ballot, worked as an early commitment to vote for her in the election.

Thalia's strong volunteer canvassing program included a thorough training component. Training was offered both to individuals working on the campaign as

well as to political groups supporting Beverly. The result was increased participation, effectiveness, and leadership skills. Volunteer canvassers backed up Beverly by making an additional two contacts at every door prior to the election. Targeted and blanket mailings made for a thorough saturation of the district.

The campaign was capped by an aggressive get-out-the-vote phone bank. By the last week of the campaign, the names of 3,000 supporters had been identified through canvassing, just short of the estimated 3,500 votes needed to win the race. All of these supporters were called in the last days before the election, in addition to many voters who were not at home during canvassing or who were undecided. Very simply, no Democrat in the district escaped contact from Beverly.

"Stein stressed that socialism will allow people control over their own lives."

Stein the Candidate

A grassroots campaign, however, is only as good as the candidate. Fortunately, the candidate in this case was very, very good — some would describe her as relentless. Her campaign manager was almost embarrassed by how little cajoling she had to do to get Beverly to raise funds, make phone calls, or go door-to-door. In fact, we had to hold her back at times so that she would not burn herself out or undermine her own efforts by starting particular projects too early.

Beverly was an effective fundraiser, getting early support from friends who held a series of receptions throughout the city, organized an extremely successful auction, and hosted a benefit at a dance and movie theater. In addition, her union contacts gave her access to PAC funds. She was among the top fundraisers in Oregon legislative races, although virtually all of her contributions came from individual small contributors and progressive organizations.

The number one issue of the campaign was crime. Portland, like other major cities, has had a rising crime problem, exacerbated by the spread of crack. Jails and prisons are overflowing. Recently,

gang members chased out of Los Angeles have set up shop here. Beverly was able to link the crime problem with the need for social programs. While acknowledging the need for more jail space and enforcement, she effectively made the case for more child care, child abuse prevention programs, education, and jobs. Her advocacy for universal health care was well-received.

Socialism and the Campaign

At the beginning of her campaign, Beverly decided to de-emphasize her background as a socialist. She ran primarily to win rather than to educate the voters about democratic socialism, believing that it's easier to educate after one is elected. Focus groups held early in the campaign reinforced that decision.

Her red-baiting opponent, however, made it necessary for her to talk about socialism. When Portland's only daily newspaper profiled the race, it attacked her beliefs and portrayed DSA as an organization opposed to the existence of the private sector. Beverly had to do what a number of us have been doing for years — come up with a 45 second rap which defined the essence of democratic socialism in an accessible way. The theme she stressed was that socialism will allow people to have control over their own lives in a way that is impossible under the current system.

Red-baiting as a campaign tactic back-fired in more than one way. Early in the campaign, a lobbyist for financial institutions was so intrigued by her opponent's charges that he contacted Beverly on his own. After meeting with her, his PAC contributed to the campaign — not a traditional source of funds for progressive candidates. Beverly's highly-credible campaign and her opponent's mudslinging led to her being endorsed by Portland's daily and weekly newspapers, both of which criticized her opponent's style.

Beverly plans to continue campaigning through the November election. Her Republican opponent is right-wing and anti-choice, and her activism in DSA will likely be raised again. Her strong grassroots organization and her commitment to articulating issues voters are concerned about should enable her to win again as well. ●

Scott Bailey, co-chair of Portland DSA, was active throughout Beverly's campaign.

Crossovers are Highlight of 1988 Presidential Campaign

by Harold Meyerson

The two success stories of the 1988 Democratic presidential contest are stories of crossovers, of candidates with rather uniform constituencies which grew more diverse as the campaign progressed. Jesse Jackson's crossovers won him a place in history. Michael Dukakis's crossovers won him the nomination. The question now before the Democrats is whether they can put together their own crossover, an amalgam of Jackson and Dukakis supporters without which the Democratic renaissance will be at best another four-year interlude.

Dukakis's crossovers have received distinctly less attention than Jackson's: they were voters who crossed, not the barriers of race, but the less visible ones of class. Dukakis began the race well within that portion of the pack that was contesting for upper middle class, neoliberal votes. Early on, though, he found himself alone in that pack. No candidate benefited more from the self-destruction of Gary Hart and Joseph Biden (Dukakis, of course, helped speed Biden to his political demise).

Dukakis is a champion of the mediator/good government wing of American liberalism; he has tended to shun the politics of advocacy, of confronting some interests or classes on behalf of others. A recent study of voter turnout in metropolitan Boston conducted by M.I.T.'s Walter Dean Burnham conveys rather starkly the kind of electoral base Dukakis has assembled. Since the mid-Sixties, Burnham demonstrates, "turnout and the Democratic share of the potential working class electorate have collapsed together." Twenty years ago, 30 percent of working-class Boston did not vote, by the mid-Eighties, that figure soared to 65 percent, while middle-class non-voting stayed under 10 percent throughout this period. "Democratic party elites," Burnham concludes, "have realigned their interests and their

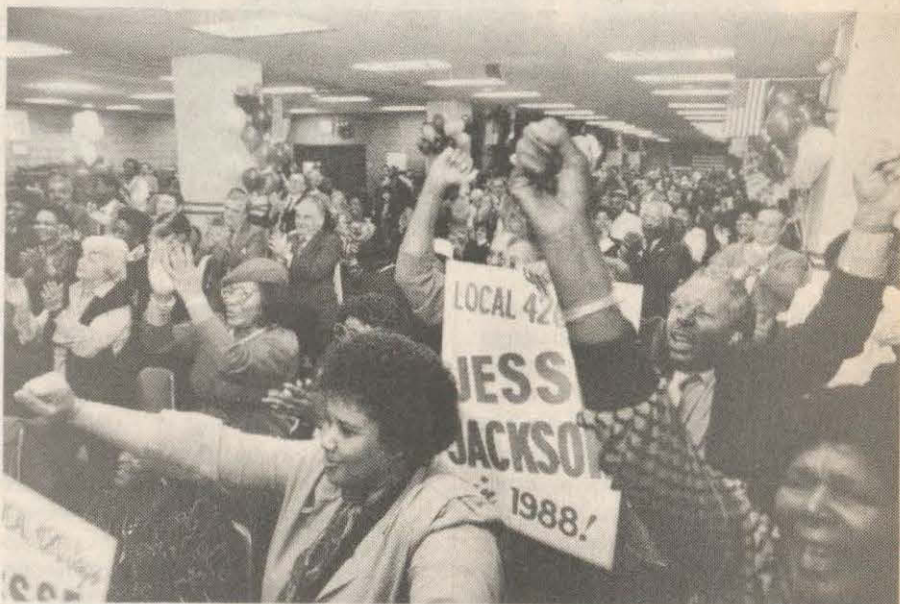


Photo by George Cohen/Impact Visuals

AFSCME DC 37 delegates showing support for Jesse Jackson.

appeals toward high-tech and 'yuppie' concerns...under the leadership of Governor Dukakis."

Dukakis's vote in the early primaries mirrored his vote in Boston: on Super Tuesday, for instance, he ran first among Southern white voters in the highest income strata, while Al Gore outpolled him among Southern whites of more modest means. In time, though, it became apparent why the button-down Governor was also campaigning as the Brookline Zorba: Michael Dukakis had a huge cross-class constituency among the Democrats' unmeltable ethnics. Thirty percent of the Democratic electorate this year was comprised of white Catholics, and Dukakis won 60 percent of its votes (as against just 43 percent of white Protestants). That is, Dukakis waged a campaign that melded the Hart consistency with Mario Cuomo's. He won the Hart constituency somewhat more through substance, the Cuomo constituency rather more through symbols. That may prove a winning formula in November as well, though as a guide to governance, it's altogether skimpy.

The more celebrated crossover of '88 is Jesse Jackson's: his ability to win

three times the white votes he won in 1984. To begin, though, he expanded both the overall share of the black electorate (it was 21 percent in 1988, 18 percent in '84) and his share of that electorate (92 percent in '88, 77 percent in '84). Jackson's share of the white vote rose from 5 to 12.5 percent, and as the campaign progressed, he took in an even greater share of the white liberal vote — culminating with 42 percent in California.

To say that Jackson "moderated" his message between 1984 and 1988 misstates the actuality. Rather, Jackson became a tribune of class and not of race (at least explicitly: he was always the implicit tribune of race as well). Not since the Roosevelt campaign of 1936 has this level of class advocacy and anti-corporate politics been heard in a major Democratic presidential campaign. Over the bleak landscape of neo-democracy, the Jackson campaign exploded with the shock of the old.

The 1988 campaign trail is also littered with the remains of those candidates that failed in their attempt to win crossover votes — Representative Richard Gephardt's most notably. Jackson's anti-corporate perspective made a



Photo by H.L. Delgado/Impact Visuals

Michael Dukakis shakes hands with his supporters.

surprising and stunningly successful appearance in the Gephardt campaign in Iowa last Christmas, and it caromed around the Democratic field for some time thereafter as Gephardt and Al Gore contested for the title of Most Improbable Populist. Even in a well-watered-down condition, the message was a potent one, however, and where either Gephardt or Gore was able to advance it, it won the votes of the putatively conservative white working class. On Super Tuesday, though, the Gephardt message was drowned out by Dukakis money, and the populist impulse on the campaign trail again became the sole possession of Jesse Jackson.

The question is, is that where it should remain? Can Dukakis be elected, can he win, espousing his above-the-fray, tripartite brand of government? And can he govern effectively by its tenets should he prevail this November? Where's the policy crossover between Dukakis and Jackson?

There is a historic model for that crossover — though in the model, Franklin Roosevelt ends up playing the parts of both Dukakis and Jackson. It is a germane model since today, as in the Thirties, the Democrats' paramount task is the creation of a new economic order. The task now before the Democrats is the creation on an international scale of the kind of mixed economy and greater social equity that the Party created nationally in the Thirties. Over the past fifteen years, global banking and multinational corporations have created a brave new world market that has undermined industries, wages, and social equity throughout the west, and subverted the efficacy of traditional national legislation.

Dukakis's response, and it is one he shares with Cuomo and other pillars of the center-left establishment, is to yoke business, labor, and government together with the goal of equitably and consensually reducing costs and thereby improving productivity and the balance of trade. Jackson, by contrast, proposes a corporate code of conduct that encourages domestic investment and discourages capital flight to the port of cheapest labor. He favors trade sanctions against nations that inhibit their workers from organizing — a kind of international Wagner Act through trade policy.

Indeed, it is the two successive periods of the New Deal that provides the models for Dukakis's and Jackson's attempts to harness the new world economy. The tripartism of Dukakis harkens back to the government-business-labor corporatism of the National Recovery Administration and the first New Deal of 1933-1935, which eventually collapsed in a legal tangle brought about by business resistance to a mediating state. The Jackson plan resembles a globalization of the second New Deal of 1935-1937, when, through the establishment of collective bargaining and social insurance, the state sided with the interests of working people against the corporate sector — thereby ensuring the creation of the world's middle class majority in the decades to follow.

It is inconceivable that there will be any lasting Democratic resurgence absent a Democratic delivery of this kind of global second New Deal. The erosion of the Democrats' electoral advantage over the past three decades is a function of their increasing failure to address the needs of working-class America. Burn-

ham argues that the figures he presents for working-class Boston are typical, not exceptional: in that case, both the rate of working-class voting and the share of the work force that is unionized have been effectively halved over the past thirty years. This is the Democratic base that is crumbling, and it can only be reassembled by the kind of trade, employment, and social insurance policies Jackson has advocated.

The Democrats enter the fall campaign with two advocates. The first is George Bush himself. The second is a pervasive gloom and apprehension about the national economy which undercuts the political potency of the Reagan recovery. By a margin of 42 to 16 percent, respondents to a recent ABC/*Washington Post* poll were pessimistic about the future of the economy. Recent CBS/*New York Times* polling discerns for the first time since 1976 plurality support for bigger government offering more services: in terms of family prospects and national prospects, the reign of *laissez-faire* has been judged a failure. These changes in the *zeitgeist* make it possible for the Democrats to thread their way through the upcoming election; and they mandate an activist government should the Democrats win. ●

Harold Meyerson is a Los Angeles-based political consultant and writer. He is a regular contributor to the Los Angeles Herald-Examiner and Dissent, and he is also a member of the National Executive Committee of DSA.

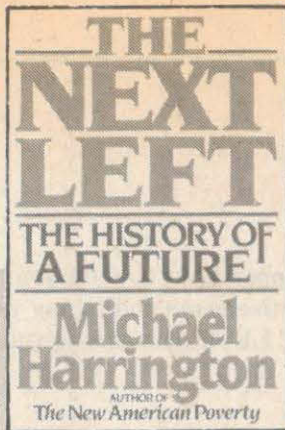
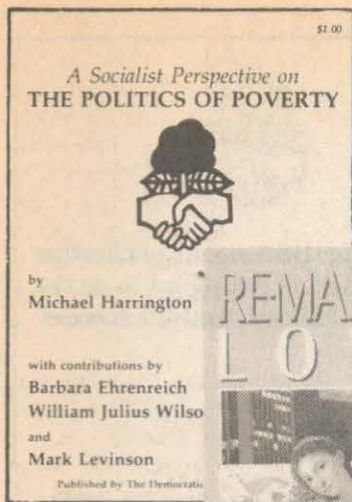
Hispanics

Continued from page 10

Latin America — although that interest varies in intensity and approach. Any progressive campaign will, of course, support respectful bilateral relations, cooperative economic policies, and opposition to human rights violations. But the important point here is to view these not only as foreign policy issues but as Hispanic issues. This means addressing Hispanics directly and involving Hispanic leaders in policy development. Democratic and Republican candidates have almost never done this.

Hispanic Representation in Government: Would the presence of Hispanics in government positions change the way American capitalism treats Hispa-

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The New American Poverty , by Michael Harrington. Poverty in America in the 1980s. Paperback.	\$7.95
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The Vast Majority: A Journey to the World's Poor , by Michael Harrington. A journal style treatment of Third World underdevelopment and aspirations. Published at \$10.95.	\$3.00
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Hispanics

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nieces? This is not the real issue. The importance of a progressive campaign has more to do with coalition building and the process of struggle than it does with getting a candidate elected. Certainly having Jesse Jackson as president would make a positive difference, but having Jesse Jackson as a candidate has already accomplished a great deal.

A campaign platform that calls for a strong Hispanic presence in government would signal the Hispanic communities that the campaign seeks their involvement. So, for example, if Jackson had actually named some Hispanics whom he was considering for cabinet posts, it might have made a significant difference in his ability to attract Hispanic voters during his primary campaign.

Crime and Drugs: Hispanics in general are major victims of street crime and drug addiction. These are particularly difficult issues because the perpetrators are also, in part, the victims. But Hispanics consider criminals and drug pushers their enemies, and they will not accept a campaign satisfied with the traditional "left-wing" explanations of these phenomena as outgrowths of the system's inadequacies. That's not to say that the point shouldn't be made, but it's time for a progressive agenda that includes short-term solutions to both the crime and drug problems. Once again, these are issues on which candidates should seek the involvement of local and regional Hispanic leaders.

Immigration: A truly progressive electoral agenda will have to lay out a clear stand on this issue and risk provoking the ire of other population groups, including organized labor. Immigration

quota regulations must be loosened; residency must become more accessible; and noncitizens who live here must be assured that their basic rights will be scrupulously protected. These positions constitute the political bottom line for many Hispanic groups.

The five areas described above do not constitute a complete platform or a concrete program. But they provide general guidelines. The nuts and bolts would be defined through the work of a movement — which is why movements are created. But as the next century draws near, the time has come for specific attention to these issues. In order to bring Hispanics into the fold, these areas of concern could provide a starting point. ●

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