

PUBLISHED BY THE DEMOCRATIC SOCIALISTS OF AMERICA

DEMOCRATIC Left

November-December, 1989
Vol. XVII, No. 5
\$1.50



**Join the DSA Caravan to Virginia
In Solidarity with the Striking Miners.**



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**Plus: White Supremacy Groups • Domestic Partner
Legislation • Memorial to Michael Harrington •
Environmental Politics**

EDITORIAL

Capital Gains: Break for the Rich

Membership has its privileges. The cuts in the capital gains tax currently being considered might soon be added to the growing list of privileges for the wealthy. We are all familiar with the statistics documenting the increase in inequality in our country: the lowest fifth of the American people are worse off while the top ten percent are better off than at any time in the last fifteen years. 37 million uninsured and millions more with inadequate health coverage; 3 million homeless, with millions more just one crisis away from being out on the street; 8 million who work and still fall below the poverty level. And yet, 175 Congresspeople, including sixty-four Democrats (we'll get to them in a minute) voted to cut the capital gains tax to 19.6 percent from 33 percent. 80 percent of the benefit from this legislation will go to those who earn more than \$100,000.

The rhetoric being used to justify the cut is that it will free-up the capital necessary to reinvigorate our economy. This supply-side, trickle-down strategy has not worked in the past, nor will it work now. The corporate rich are motivated by their desire to secure large profits quickly. They will spend their money on such paper-shuffling activities as leveraged buy-outs and mergers and acquisitions. Or worse yet, they will continue to exploit the slave wage labor of newly industrialized, nonunion countries such as South Korea and Brazil. Taking their newly found windfall from the tax cut and investing it in upgrading plants and retraining workers in the United States will not be high on the list of ways to spend their money.

Personal savings rates plummeted to historic lows following the capital gains tax cuts in 1978 and 1981. As the tax expert Robert McIntyre of Citizens for Tax Justice explained: "The true tests of any tax policy are fairness and economic efficiency. The capital gains

break flunks both. It's hard to believe that we're having this argument again, and even harder to believe that the Democrats are...losing it."

Then there is the deficit. We have heard for years now that we can no longer afford to maintain or increase spending on social programs because of the tremendous budget deficit. We can financially support the repressive government of El Salvador and build B-1 bombers at millions a shot, but we can no longer afford our current social programs. The arguments supporting the claim that the deficit is political, not economic, are very convincing, and the capital gains tax cut only reinforces this. If there is so much concern about the size of the deficit, then why decrease revenues by billions of dollars over the next five years as it is estimated the cut in capital gains will do? Unless of course, they want to ensure an on-going excuse for cutting much-needed social programs.

Not only is support for the cut in capital gains tax morally reprehensible, but it is bad politics for the Democratic party. 64 Democrats sided with the Republicans in this vote. The Democratic party's best strategy would be one that stresses economic populist issues. We need to unite the bottom two-thirds to win a progressive majority. The only way to do this is to appeal to the anti-corporate, economic justice sentiments shared by the poor, working class, and middle class. Democrats use the excuse that they cannot appear to be against lowering taxes. Who are they kidding? The working and middle classes know that this cut was only intended to benefit the top 2 percent. The Democrats must link tax breaks for the corporate elite to socially responsible investment, as well as be advocates for progressive taxation. Tax breaks must be used to encourage the stimulation of our economy, not to reward the irresponsible

behavior of the corporate world. The anti-taxation sentiments of the working and middle-classes are understandable because they are currently over-taxed compared to the rich. Truly progressive taxation would ensure that the burden was distributed more equitably, as is the case with most other industrialized countries.

At a time when millions of people are homeless and the children of thousands of middle-class families are unable to afford the downpayment on a house, the Democrats try to mimic the Republicans. Not only do we as democratic socialists reject the motivation behind the cut in capital gains, but if Democrats continue to compete with the Republicans over who can be better Republicans, the Democrats will always lose. We must promote a strategy that speaks to the uneasiness shared by a majority of Americans and offers viable alternatives.

— by SHERRI LEVINE

Show Solidarity with the striking United Mine Workers -- Join the DSA caravan to Virginia over Thanksgiving weekend. For more information, see page 9.

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White Supremacy Groups: Organized, Strategic Racism

by Marshall Mayer

Racism is often considered a plague that is most acutely felt in America's large urban areas. An argument can be made, however, that nowhere in the country is racism more devastating than in the Northern Rockies states of Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming and the Pacific Northwest states of Oregon and Washington. Residents in these areas are the target of premeditated, strategic racist activities. Along with the growth in those activities, the civil rights movement is returning to life in an unlikely place.

The total minority population of this five-state region is about 5 percent. Outside of the urban areas of Portland and Seattle, the minority population is mostly Native American. Racial segregation is largely institutionalized through reservations created during the last 125 years, though there are small pockets of urban Indians. Hispanics are the second largest non-urban group, and that population consists primarily of migrant farm workers. There are only sixty-four Jews and no synagogues in the entire state of Montana. Minority communities - where they exist (there are only a few black families in my home town of Helena, Montana, a community of 25,000 people) - are isolated in this vastly rural region.

Aryan Republic

With such a small minority population, some might ask why racism is such a large problem in the Pacific Northwest. Aside from the institutionalized racism which is our country's history, this region has been targeted by organized racists because of the small, widely scattered minority population. A sig-

nificant portion of the national leadership of various racist movements, such as the Christian Identity and Christian Patriot, and white supremacy groups (i.e. neo-Nazis and the Ku Klux Klan), have identified these five states as the homeland of an "Aryan Republic." Acknowledging that their movement will never succeed in turning the United States into a white republic, their "10 percent solution" is to move to the Pacific Northwest and Northern Rockies states, organize a movement to remove all people of "non-Aryan" (e.g. northern European) descent, and establish a separate political regional and political entity - the Aryan Republic.

There had been white supremacist activity in the region before - especially since 1976 when the Aryan Nation compound was founded in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho - but ever since the region became designated a "homeland" three years ago, incidents of anti-Semitic and racially motivated harassment and violence have increased dramatically. In October 1988, Mulegetta Seraw, an Ethiopian national, was beaten to death in front of his Portland home by a group of skinheads yelling racial slurs. (Skinheads, a right-wing outgrowth of the British punk movement of the 1970s, are being actively recruited by several factions of the radical right to become the "brownshirts of a rejuvenated white power movement.") Richard Butler, leader of the Aryan nation, hosted a national gathering of skinheads at his northern Idaho compound recently. Skinhead violence is, however, not exclusively racially motivated: most of its victims are in fact white lesbians and gay men.)

Although violence and terror tactics are historically associated with these hate groups, new strategies are being used by the radical right to achieve their



Ku Klux Klan skinheads.

agenda of establishing an Aryan Republic. They have moved into more subtle forms of "political" activity such as:

- *electoral politics - running open racists for elected positions ranging from congressional representatives to county commissioners;
- *civil disobedience - going on hunger strikes in jail to garner attention to their "plight";
- *tax resistance - jamming up the courts with frivolous suits designed only to gain a forum for espousing their racist views;
- *cable television - airing weekly segments of the racist forum "Race and Reason";
- *youth groups - forming chapters such as the Aryan Youth Movement at the University of Montana; and

Ellen Neff/Impact Visuals

*front groups - forming organizations such as the Steelhead/Salmon Protective Association and Wildlife Network (S/SPAWN) that focuses right-wing pressure to revoke Indian treaty rights under the guise of environmental protection.

White supremacists are organizing in many areas, but emphasis seems to be on targeting farmers and ranchers (i.e. linking drought to water rights that Indians control and continuing to scapegoat Jewish bankers for rural economic problems), rural small business people, hunters and anglers who use the region's vast recreational resources, and Republican party local structures. Economically vulnerable whites have historically turned to the authoritarian populist rhetoric of the radical right. This was most recently seen in alarming numbers during the farm crisis of the early and mid-1980s when the white supremacist movement was very active and growing in the Midwest.

Public Opposition

Another reason the white supremacist movement has targeted the region is that its members figured there would be very little, if any, public opposition to their agenda. They figured wrong. Let's look at just one example.

Daniel Johnson is a lawyer living in Glendale, California. More than a lawyer, he is also founder of the League of Pace Amendment Advocates, a group that seeks segregation of races and a white supremacist society through repealing the 14th Amendment of the United States Constitution. He sought to relocate his offices to Helena about a year ago, because he saw southern Cali-

fornia as a lost cause. The citizens of Helena organized a meeting of 800 people on two-weeks notice to tell Johnson that his racist agenda was not welcome. Johnson decided not to relocate, citing community opposition.

He was, however, emboldened enough by the February election of David Duke (a national leader of the right-wing Populist party) to the Louisiana state legislature) to run for Congress in Wyoming's special election last April. Within an hour of Representative Dick Cheney's announcement of resignation to accept his nomination as secretary of defense, Johnson called the Wyoming secretary of state's office asking how to qualify as an independent on the ballot. He gathered the minimum 479 required signatures within a week. His campaign manager was an open KKK member from Texas, and most of his signature gatherers were skinheads.

What Johnson didn't know was that Wyoming's Secretary of State, Kathy Karpan, was also Governor Mike Sullivan's appointee to the Board of the Northwest Coalition Against Malicious Harassment, a group of churches, civil rights groups, elected officials, local task forces, and law enforcement agencies established two years ago to confront the rise in racially and religiously motivated violence in the region. Her phone call to the Coalition's President, Tony Stewart sparked a community-wide response that spanned Wyoming.

Within two weeks of Johnson's announcement to run, the Wyoming Task Force for Equality was formed. The Task Force exposed Daniel Johnson for who he really was - a racist carpetbagger. While Johnson tried to use the media to gain support for his racist

agenda and candidacy, the Task Force publicized Johnson's philosophies and history. Four days before the special election, the Task Force organized one of the largest demonstrations in Wyoming history - 1,000 people, led by Governor Sullivan, Secretary of State Karpan, and Superintendent of Public Instruction Lynn Simons, the Democratic party's three statewide office holders, hoisting "Equality - Not Bigotry" banners. Noticeably absent from the rally were the Democratic and Republican candidates for the congressional seat.

This unprecedented show of opposition to racism had an impact on the election. When the votes were tallied, Daniel Johnson received just twenty-eight more votes than the number of signatures he had gathered to qualify for the ballot in the first place!

What conclusions can be drawn from our recent experiences in the Northern Rockies? First, the white supremacy movement is simply pushing at the boundaries of "acceptable" racism. Their activities are possible only when racism is not confronted head on.

Second, and precisely for this reason, the presence of white supremacists presents a unique challenge to confront racism that must be taken up by the democratic left. Beyond confronting the radical right, we must determine how to confront the "background" racism that has been with us since the days of the Indian wars. This raises questions of strategy. For instance, how do we keep the white supremacist movement from driving a wedge between environmentalists and Native Americans over water, land, and wildlife management?

We can also make racism a partisan issue to favor progressive Democrats. The issue is not going to go away: the white supremacy movement appears to be taking electoral politics seriously as a national strategy. Republicans do not denounce the presence of David Duke or Daniel Johnson. Democrats clearly have an issue on which they can stake out the moral high ground, and win votes. Pat Buchanan says, "The way to deal with Duke is the way the GOP dealt with the far more formidable challenge of George Wallace. Take a

Continued on page 6.



March for Racial Equality protesting gathering of skinheads at the Nazi church of Richard Butler on Hitler's 100th birthday.

Remembering Mike

by Joanne Barkan

Built in Gothic Revival style, inspired by Chartres Cathedral, the nave of Riverside Church in Manhattan stretches two hundred fifteen feet in length and rises one hundred feet in height. An immense space. From the elevated chancel at one end, on the evening of September 15, 1989, you could watch people filing into that immense space--so many people that latecomers had to find seats in the balcony.

Rally site for striking hospital workers one day, meeting place for disarmament activists the next--Riverside Church was an appropriate setting for the seventeen hundred friends, comrades, and admirers who gathered to remember Michael Harrington.

Members of DSA's national leadership sat in one cluster of high-backed, ornately carved choir stalls--a far cry from the metal folding chairs of a typical National Executive Committee meeting. Facing this "political family," in an identical set of choir stalls, sat Mike's immediate family, relatives, and their personal friends. Between the two groups stood a large photograph of Mike. The camera had caught him in action--Mike speaking at a rally or conference. For anyone who had listened to one of those speeches, the image provoked an auditory sensation: You could almost hear his voice again--that compelling tone, that unmistakable cadence.

As if in tribute to Mike's power as an orator, the words spoken on September 15 reached a high level of eloquence. They were able to convey the magnitude of his political achievement and the generosity of his character. (This was also the case at other DSA memorial meetings for Mike--in Boston, Washington, D.C., Chicago, Los Angeles, and San Francisco.) The speakers



shared early memories; they described Mike's influence on them as individuals; they surveyed his place in history.

"Whether the idea of socialism would have survived at all in the USA without him, we cannot know," observed prominent educator and DSA member Deborah Meier. "But what it means and how it is understood have been deeply influenced by his own particular style, manner, and meaning."

DSA leader Jack Clark remembered working with Mike in 1972 to found the Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee, one of DSA's predecessor organizations. "...I saw Mike's tireless work to bring some life back to American socialism. Divisions with activists from the New Left needed to be healed; Mike was ready and able to do it. Links had to be forged with the unions; Mike took the lead very effectively. Bickering threatened our fragile movement at the 'crazy hour' of a national convention; Mike would take the floor and

reconcile us to a larger unity..."

Author, *Dissent* editor, and DSA vice chair Irving Howe called Mike "our voice, our hope, our pride." He went on to say, "...I heard Mike speak hundreds of times; but I never got tired...because I knew that this was a deeply serious and thoughtful man, but still more, a really good man in whom humane values and fellow-feeling for all who suffered were vibrantly alive."

Luis Ayala, secretary-general of the Socialist International (who came from London to attend the memorial meeting), described Mike's contribution to the work of the International and his distinction as a socialist leader outside the United States.

David Dinkins, Democratic candidate for mayor of New York City and longtime DSA member, talked of Mike's values translated into the world of everyday politics. As several other speakers pointed out, Dinkins' historic victory in the primary election just three

days earlier fulfilled Mike's conception of coalition politics.

For Ruth Messenger, city council member, Democratic candidate for Manhattan borough president, and DSA member, Mike was both advisor and friend. "Mike's faith that political success is possible without the desertion of principle, his insistence that this is the only kind of success that matters, helps keep me going."

Bogdan Denitch, member of DSA's National Executive Committee and one of Mike's oldest friends in the movement, recalled how, as young socialists in the 1950s, they extended days of political activism long into the night at the White Horse tavern in Greenwich Village. Denitch reminded activists that the survival of the movement depends on their work.

Toward the end of the program, Joseph Murphy, chancellor of the City University of New York (which includes Queens College where Mike taught), made a brief announcement: University trustees would soon receive a recommendation to establish a Distinguished Professorship in political science in Mike's name.

Still other words were put to music. Accompanying himself on the piano, Steve Chapin performed songs that communicated both a sense of loss and enduring affection. Later, when the audience sang "Solidarity Forever," many people stood, linking arms up and down the long pews.

Finally there were Mike's words--taped excerpts from several speeches. Although the audio equipment didn't do justice to his voice, something of that compelling tone, that unmistakable cadence came through. He spoke of democratic socialism as the only hope of humanity--necessary but, alas, not inevitable. He spoke of a life devoted to the movement as a life well spent. He spoke of his own commitment not as a burden, but as a joy. When the program ended, Mike's words hung in the air, gathering intensity, expanding. They filled that immense space of Riverside Church--and the heart of every listener.

Joanne Barkan, a member of DSA's National Executive Committee, is a freelance writer in New York.

White Supremacy

Continued from page 3.

hard look at Duke's portfolio of winning issues and expropriate those not in conflict with GOP principles." The Democrats ought to expose the fact that there isn't much to expropriate. And Democrats ought to publicly link Republicans with the radical right.

Finally, why all this emphasis when the radical right will obviously fail to make the Pacific Northwest and Northern Rockies a white republic? The answer is that for the minority population of these states the threats are very real. The white supremacist movement is far larger than most people think; according to the Center for Democratic Renewal about 50,000 people nationally are radical right "activists," while another half million people are active supporters, i.g. contributors.

As democratic socialists, our vision is of a society that encourages and celebrates diversity, respects differences, and guarantees racially equality. Alliances must be built that overcome historic divisions that pit one race against another, in order that together we can eliminate the structures that perpetuate racism.

Marshall Mayer is an organizational consultant living in Helena, Montana and serves on DSA's National Executive Committee.

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DSACTION

REPORTS

*The first Campus/Labor Institute, a project of DSA's American Solidarity Movement, was held Saturday, October 4 in Cleveland, Ohio. The Institute brought together trade unionists and students to exchange political perspectives on the importance of labor and workers' rights. Forty campus activists from Columbus, Chicago, Cleveland, Dayton, and Oberlin learned organizing skills, strategies for labor support,

copies of the new DSA pamphlet, "The Politics of the Housing Crisis" by Peter Dreier were distributed to people participating in the march.

RESOURCES

* The August, 1989 issue of *Labor Voice*, the newsletter of DSA's Labor Commission, is available. The politics of the Reagan years, the H.U.D. scandal, a tribute to Michael Harrington, and a

NY 10017.

* Pick up a copy of *Open the Doors*, a cassette tape by New Democratic Party activist Len Wallace. "The Internationale," "Blackleg Miner," and "Between the Wars" are only a few of the radical tunes to be found on this tape.

* *Issues and Answers* provides news, information, and trends in the public sector. It is published eight times a year by the Public Employees Department of the AFL-CIO, 815 16th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20006.

* The September/October issue of *The Activist*, the journal of the Youth Section of the Democratic Socialists of America, focusses on students and labor. Solidarity with Pittston Miners, Organizing musicians in New York City, the Eastern strike, bridging labor and community are only some of the articles in this special issue. For an annual subscription to this quarterly journal of the Youth Section, send \$5 to DSA, 15 Dutch Street, Suite 500, New York, NY 10038.



DSA members march October 7 in Housing Now! mobilization.

and the history of the labor movement as a force for social change. Speakers included Mark Levinson of the United Automobile and Aerospace Workers Union research department, John Ryan, president of the Communication Workers of America Local 4309, and Joe Ventura from the United Labor Agency. Campus/labor Institutes will take place in other cities throughout 1990.

* DSAers walked over 100 strong at the October 7 Housing Now! March in Washington, DC. DSAers walked with protesters from unions, housing rights organizations, and women's groups to demand housing for all. Hundreds of

look at changes in Poland are some of the topics covered in this issue. Send \$10.00 for a subscription to *Labor Voice* to the DSA Labor Commission, P.O. Box 28408, Washington, DC 20036.

* "The United States and the World Economy" by Walter Russell Mead, a reprint from the Summer, 1989 *World Policy Journal*, is available for \$4.00. In this groundbreaking study, Mead warns that U.S. international economic policy is pushing the world economy toward the formation of potentially hostile regional economic blocs. To order, send \$4.00 to World Policy Institute, 777 United Nations Plaza, New York,

INTERNATIONAL

* DSAer David MacBryde, originally from Texas and currently living in West Berlin, reports with delight and after much work the opening of the "Liaison Bureau for Peace Conversion, West Berlin," with funding from the local ecumenical church initiative for Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation in cooperation with economic conversion efforts of the West German Federation of Labor. Since part of his job will be to develop contacts with labor, church, and academic efforts in the United States towards peace conversion, he would be interested in hearing from DSAers. Contact him at Berlinerstrasse 126, D1000 West Berlin 31, West Germany.

* In Ireland's last election, Prime Minister Charles J. Haughey lost his gamble to win a majority of the 166 seats in the Irish Parliament, leaving him worse off than before the election he called to

DSAaction continued on page 9.

ON THE LEFT

by HARRY FLEISCHMAN

California

A Los Angeles tribute to Michael Harrington was held at the Workmen's Circle September 8. Speakers included Dick Flacks, editor of the "Port Huron Statement" and Professor of Sociology at University of California-Santa Barbara; Harold Meyerson, executive editor of the *LA Weekly* and DSA national executive committee member; Penny Schantz, president of the Santa Cruz Central Labor Council; and Derek Shearer, professor of Urban Studies at Occidental College. A dinner honoring longtime DSA activists Ben Margolin and John McTernan, sponsored by the Southern California Library for Social Research and Education, was held in Santa Monica September 24. LA DSA has actively supported the Eastern Airlines solidarity picket lines and the United Mine Workers strike against Pittston Mine in Virginia....Gordon Haskell, former political director of DSA, spoke on the contributions of Mike Harrington to DSA and the world at the East Bay DSA membership meeting in September....Barbara Ehrenreich, DSA co-chair, will be speaking to three northern California DSA locals in November as part of the California statewide network speakers bureau....A memorial for Michael Harrington was held in northern California on October 15. Speakers included Harry Britt, president of San Francisco Board of Supervisors; Dolores Huerta, vice-president of the United Farm Workers; and Jim Shoch, former DSA political director.

Illinois

The Chicago tribute to Michael Harrington was held September 23 at the Eugene V. Debs Room of the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union hall. Speakers included columnist Studs Terkel; Lowell Livezey on Mike's influence in the religious community; professor William Julius Wilson; Roberta Lynch of AFSCME; Carl Shier on Mike, coalition politics, unions and the Socialist International; and local union president (AFSCME) Allen Schwartz, who sang three songs. Chicago DSA has started a voter registration campaign, working with the Midwest Voter Registration Coalition, IMPACT, and Network 44.

Kentucky

The Central Kentucky DSA local has been active in the last four months in support work for the Pittston United Mine Workers strike, including rallies in Lexington, activity on the University of Kentucky campus, and travels to West Virginia and Virginia for mass rallies and arrests. Several Pittston miners were guests at the September general DSA meeting in Lexington. Some Lexington DSAers held a joint meeting with six members of the Louisville DSA Organizing Committee in August to plan for statewide activities....DSA Youth Section members at the University of Kentucky are helping to create a campus pro-choice coalition.

Massachusetts

Boston DSA held a memorial service for Michael Harrington at the Old South Meeting House October 4. Speakers included Mayor Flynn; National Executive Committee member Marjorie Phye; theologian Harvey Cox; and DSA Publications Director Sherri Levine. In honor of Victor Berger, former president of the Brewery Workers Union and prominent socialist, Boston DSA will hold an evening of revelry, beer-tasting,

and general socialist fun on Friday, October 27.

Michigan

Ann Arbor DSA held an introductory meeting September 20 to inform new members and friends about DSA philosophy and strategy and to consider organizing a Youth Section chapter. They also set-up a study and discussion group, and elected convention delegates. DSAers were active in the Michigan Citizens for Miners which has sent two delegations down to the scene in Appalachia to support the striking coal miners....DSA Organizational Director Patrick Laceyfield visited several Michigan DSA locals, including Detroit, East Lansing, and Ann Arbor, in October.

New Jersey

Cornel West, DSA vice chair and director of the Afro-American Studies Program at Princeton University, spoke to more than a hundred people on "The Postmodern Challenge to the American Left" at a meeting sponsored by the DSA Central Jersey local and the English Department of Rutgers University.

New York

Albany DSA held a benefit party in September for the campaigns of Sharon Ward, Nebraska Brace, Keith John, and Jimmy Scalzo for Albany Common Council and David Dinkins for mayor of New York City....Nassau DSA opened its Fall Seminar on Social Issues with a homage to Michael Harrington. On November 28, George Jackson of Hofstra University will speak on "What is the New Soviet Foreign Policy?" On December 16, Bogdan Denitch will discuss "Will Convergence Take Place Between European Social Democracy and Eastern European Market Socialism?....New York City DSA held a well attended annual convention. DSA is active in David Dinkins mayoral campaign and in Ruth Messinger's

campaign for Manhattan borough president. A forum on reproductive rights gave new energy to the New York Feminist Branch, which is working with the city's Reproductive Rights Coalition.

Ohio

Cleveland DSA has put into motion a plan to hold reproductive rights "house parties" throughout the Greater Cleveland area. An Urban Committee has been meeting weekly to study and discuss the development of American cities from a marxist perspective. The Cleveland local hosted the first DSA campus/labor institute on Saturday, October 21.

Pennsylvania

Philadelphia DSA held its annual meeting September 24. Convention delegates were elected and perspective on issues coming before the convention developed. A group of Philadelphia-area trade union and community activists, including three Philadelphia DSAers, travelled to the site of the United Mine Workers of America strike in a show of solidarity with the miners....Reading-Berks DSA will show "Towards a New Socialism," a video of Michael Harrington's lecture on the potential for the democratic socialist project.

Washington

Seattle DSA met September 24 to hear Steve Soifer and Katherine South discuss "Prospects for Democratic Socialism in the 1990s: Has Capitalism Really Won?"

Washington, DC/MD/NoVA

The DC Politics Committee of DC/MD/NoVa DSA has already had an initial meeting to develop an electoral endorsement plan. The DC local organized a memorial service for Michael Harrington, at which Ruth Jordon, City Councilwoman Hilda Mason, Bill Lucy of the Coalition of Black Trade Unions, and Tim Sears spoke.

DSAaction

Continued from page 7.

strengthen his minority government. The results were a surge for the Irish left, with the Labor Party winning fifteen seats, the Workers party seven, and the Democratic Socialists one.

*Jaime Paz Zamora, leader of The Revolutionary Left Movement (MIR), a party affiliated with the Socialist International, was elected president of Bolivia.

* The elections for the European Parliament in June were a significant victory for the British Labor party, which won forty-five seats to thirty-two for the Conservative party, exactly reversing the Conservatives' previous majority. But the elections in West Germany were less hopeful. While Chancellor Helmut Kohl's Christian Democrats fell

DSA Thanksgiving Caravan in Solidarity with Striking Mine Workers

1,900 members of the United Mine Workers of America have been on strike against the Pittston Coal Company since April 5. **During Thanksgiving, DSA will send a caravan to "Camp Solidarity" in southwestern Virginia to stand in solidarity with the striking Pittston miners.** People will travel by car-pools on November 23, 24, and 25 from regions across the country to support the miners' battle for economic justice. Pittston is demanding givebacks in job security and cuts in health and pension benefits Pittston has refused to sign the industry-wide contract negotiated with the U.M.W. by all other coal companies; cut off health benefits



M. McGregor/Impact Visuals

The Harrison family outside their home in Castlewood. Raymond Harrison, a disabled miner who was injured last year before the strike, had his health care payments cut off by Pittston.

8.2 percent over the last election, they still polled 37.8 percent, just fractionally above the Social Democrats 37.3 percent. The real news was the success of the far-right, anti-foreigner Republican party, which gained 7.1 percent of the popular vote. If current patterns hold until the national election, reported the *New York Times*, West Germany would be faced with the possibility of a "grand coalition" of Christian Democrats and Socialists, or a "traffic light" coalition (red, green, yellow) of Socialists, Greens, and Free Democrats.

to 1,500 widows, disabled miners, and pensioners; and stated that is is willing to endure a two-year strike in order to reduce the labor costs it considers too high. Pittston is demanding the end to a full-coverage health care plan; cuts in pension benefits for retired miners; twenty-four hours advance notice before the union brings safety experts to the mines. Show your support for the miners and their families. To join the caravan, or to send checks and canned goods to the miners, contact DSA: 15 Dutch St., #500, NY, NY 10038. ●

Directory of Democratic Socialists of America Locals and Organizing Committees

Northeast

ALBANY Local, Martin Gawoski, 518-436-0670, 129 Dove St., Albany, NY 12202
BALTIMORE Local, Laila Atallah, 301-467-9388, 1443 Gorsuch Ave., Baltimore, MD 21218
BANGOR, ME O.C., William Stone, 615-832-8609, 40 East Summer Street, Bangor, ME 04401
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Domestic Partner Laws: New Family Policies on the Left

by Christine R. Riddiough

The ads on television may feature Jane Wyatt of "Father Knows Best" and Barbara Billingsley of "Leave It To Beaver" to remind us of those wonderful families of yesteryear, but today's family is a far cry from those fanciful ones of the fifties and sixties. Consider the following:

*less than 10 percent of the population lives in a family headed by a single male breadwinner;

*women are now 44 percent of the workforce and over half of mothers with children under the age of one work outside the home;

*10 percent of the population - 25 million people - is estimated to be gay or lesbian, a high proportion of which lives in coupled relationships;

*37 million people under the age of sixty-five have no health insurance, including 12 million children.

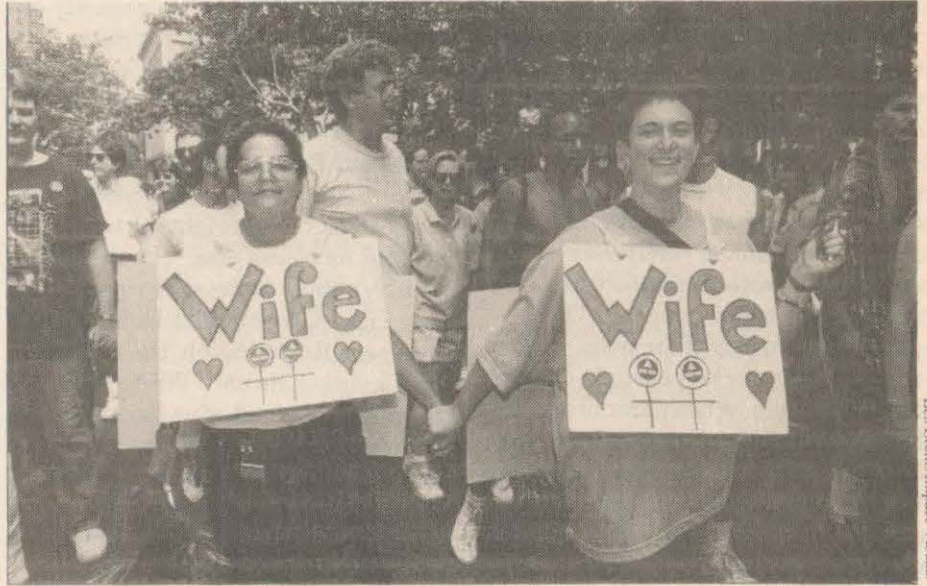
However, benefit programs for employees, government programs for families, and policies set by local, state and federal agencies still operate on the assumption that mom will have dinner on the table when Dad comes home from a hard day at the office. For instance:

*health benefits generally are available only for an employee and his or her spouse and children;

*family and bereavement leave packages frequently ignore family members who are not related by blood or marriage;

*visitation rights in hospitals and prisons often include only those related by blood or marriage;

*unless an unmarried partner is named in a will, inheritance is not automatic.



Les Stone/Impact Visuals

In the last few years some employers, unions, and government agencies have begun to change customs and laws. Changes have generally come at the urging of the gay and lesbian community, the group most uniformly and negatively affected by current law, or at the insistence of women's groups. Some changes have been relatively small - in several states laws regulating powers of attorney have been broadened so that non-lawyers, including spouses and domestic partners can be given the power of attorney. In some states leave policies have been changed to provide for more extensive family and medical leave for employees. In many cases such policies allow for family leave when a person's domestic partner is ill.

Beyond Legal Boundaries

But perhaps the most dramatic changes have taken place in domestic partner laws - laws that provide specific and sometimes broad rights for a domestic partner. Localities that have enacted or are considering such laws include West Hollywood, Berkeley, San Francisco and Santa Cruz, California;

Seattle, Washington; Madison, Wisconsin; East Lansing, Michigan; New York, New York; and Washington, DC. In most places domestic partners are defined as two adults in an intimate relationship who share a home. Frequently, the statutes specify a length of time during which they shall have shared a home. The laws then go on to describe the rights and benefits to be accorded to such partnerships. These have included visitation rights in hospitals and prisons, insurance benefits for partners of government and other employees, and leave benefits.

Domestic-partner benefits is a controversial issue because it so clearly challenges the right-wing's agenda of "protecting the traditional nuclear family." It also raises many questions for the left and for the gay and lesbian community. For several years progressives have tried to recapture the issue of the family from the right - not very successfully. This has caused some to question the support for feminism and gay and lesbian rights. The 1988 American family celebration sponsored by the Coalition of Labor Union Women and

other groups became mired in controversy because of the reluctance of some sponsors to include visibly gay and lesbian activists. This reflects the fear of many in the gay and lesbian community and in the feminist movement that any "redefinition of the family" will not redefine it in a way that is inclusive enough. At the same time, "family issues" are becoming increasingly important to gays and lesbians.

Such issues are not simply abstract ones, but are as much a part of the everyday life of gay men and lesbian as they are of others. Many gays and lesbians have children, live in long-term relationships with a lover, have parents, siblings, cousins, and other relations. Our families rarely receive the respect and protection afforded to the families of married couples. These issues have been raised for years, largely in the context of child custody cases of lesbian mothers. When parents divorce, the court has historically awarded custody routinely to mothers except when the mother is a lesbian. Even now few lesbian mothers are awarded custody when it is contested.

In the last five years, as AIDS has affected more people, gay male couples have faced an increasingly hostile world. When one's heterosexual partner of many years dies, newspaper obituaries print the surviving partner's name as next of kin, but that is not often true when one's same sex partner dies of AIDS. And health insurance policies rarely cover a same sex partner where they would

routinely cover a heterosexual spouse.

Redifining Debate on Family

Domestic partner legislation will not rights all these wrongs, but it has the potential for opening the debate on the family in positive ways. One of the first public considerations of the issue will come this fall in San Francisco when that city faces a referendum on the domestic partner law recently enacted by the board of supervisors. The legislation was passed this spring and signed into law in June by Mayor Art Agnos. It was written by DSA Vice Chair and Board of Supervisor's chair Harry Britt. Britt commented, "This law is about human rights as much as it is about anything else. No one in this country should be treated as a second-class citizen, whether it be because of their race, their religion, their beliefs or their marital status. We have sent a clear signal that all of us have the right to love whom we will." The legislation accords domestic partners the same recognition as married couples and provides for the development of a plan to extend health insurance for all.

In New York this summer a court determined that a gay man has a right to remain in his deceased lover's rent-controlled apartment even though city regulations give that right only to surviving spouses and family members. The court concluded that, "the term 'family'...should not be rigidly restricted to those people who have formalized their relationship by obtaining, for in-

stance, a marriage certificate or an adoption order." The decision was followed closely by an executive order from outgoing mayor Ed Koch, that formalized parts of the court's decision.

These are just two of the recent local actions on the issue. The first national tests may come over the next few years as the District of Columbia Council considers further legislation in this area. A DC government commission, chaired by DSA member Judy Nedrow, is currently studying the possibility of recommending changes in district law affecting government employees. Council passage of such recommendations would then face a possible veto in Congress.

Domestic partner issues are a new effort to redevelop family policy. We can expect more communities to consider them in coming years. And in doing so they will present an opportunity for the left to develop new family policies for new families. ●

Christine R. Riddiough is chair of the DC Domestic Partner Coalition and a vice chair of DSA.

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DEMOCRATIC LEFT (ISSN 0164-3207) is published six times a year at 15 Dutch St., Suite 500, New York, NY 10038. Second Class postage paid at New York, NY. Subscription \$8 regular; \$15 institutional. Postmaster: Send address changes to 15 Dutch Street, Suite 500, New York, NY 10038. DEMOCRATIC LEFT is published by the Democratic Socialists of America, 15 Dutch Street, #500, New York, NY 10038, (212) 962-0390. Signed articles express the opinions of the authors and not necessarily those of the organization.



Richard Gerhart/Impact Visuals

San Francisco's Mayor, Art Agnos, and Supervisor, Harry Britt, shake hands after Agnos signed the nation's first domestic partners legislation.

Books and Literature Available through the DSA Office

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Socialism: Past and Future, by Michael Harrington. Argues that democratic socialism is the only alternative for 21st century. Remaking Love: The Feminization of Sex, by Barbara Ehrenreich, Elizabeth Hess, & Gloria Jacobs. Published at \$15.95.	\$19.00
The Long-Distance Runner, by Michael Harrington. An autobiography that spans the past two decades. Published at \$19.95	\$12.00
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REVIEWS

Can Liberalism be Redeemed by the Environmental Challenge?

by Richard Falk

ENVIRONMENTALISM AND THE FUTURE OF PROGRESSIVE POLITICS by Robert C. Paehlke, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1989. 325 pages.

The 1980s has not been kind to liberalism as the mainstream creed of the Democratic party. Of course, the Dukakis campaign, inept in so many ways, carried the confusion of liberals to an absurd (and unwise) extreme by fearing even to utter the dread L-word, thereby adding ideological self-doubt to his by now legendary lack of electoral charm. Yet the recent difficulties of a liberal political posture cut far deeper than personality and charisma.

Two main lines of explanation cast some light on the current woes of liberalism. Liberalism, with its belief in reason, decency, technology, economic growth, and progress, is the quintessential product of modernist political thinking. Such an outlook produced an optimistic politics that appeared to combine stability for the system with gradual improvement of circumstances for less advantaged groups—labor, blacks, the poor. But now, the old liberal constituency has shrunk in size and lost its confidence. Besides, environmental constraints on economic growth, the deterioration of urban conditions, and the rise of crime, have made neoconservative priorities recently seem more responsive to the concerns of independent voters.

Beyond this lies a closely related development. Liberalism rests on the possibility of compassionate capitalism, an approach given credibility by the programs of the New Deal and the Great Society. But compassionate capitalism has been blamed (probably wrongly) for the high inflation of the 1970s and the declining competitiveness of the US economy in world markets. The Republicans have been able to offer a way out in the form of their adherence to cruel capitalism (that is, cutting the social dividend, encouraging savings and investment by a series of regressive fiscal policies). The Democrats have not managed to develop a convincing alternative, being unable to make a compassionate posture economically persuasive and unwilling even to contemplate linking compassion with a more socialist attitude toward economic policy and political ethics.

Robert Paehlke's book needs, I believe, to be read against

this background of filling the political vacuum left by the collapse of liberalism. The author is frank to acknowledge that his quest is for "a center" that can hold, and the book reassures us frequently that the moderate progressivism being urged should not be threatening to anyone at all, not even to militarists or advocates of a less regulated market. Environmentalism is seen by Paehlke as the new rallying ground, raising possibilities of new political coalitions, and potentially appealing to all sensible people regardless of their ideological identity.

For Paehlke, the environmental challenge does not pose apocalyptic prospects to survival so much as it generates a new set of policy concerns around issues of health and safety. He argues at length, with careful analysis and documentation, that the main problems of environmental quality arise, in essence, from reliance on polluting fossil fuels as the basic energy source. Paehlke is attracted to Amory Lovins' conception of "soft energy" alternatives to coal and oil, combined with a far greater stress on conservation. He believes that a political program built around a gradual transition away from reliance on coal and oil, together with the promo-



Kirk Conyales Impact Visuals

tion of conservation in all forms, including the market, could appeal to a wide spectrum of the citizenry, including many of those who crossed the line in the 1980s to vote Republican. He believes, along with many others, that the old designations of right and left are outmoded, and regards the politics of the future as "a third way" reoriented around the central ecological truth of evaluating interests and well-being from the perspective of the whole.

Paehlke is convinced that such environmentalism would need to be "progressive" to be successful, as it would have to engage the grass-roots citizenry at all levels of social organization and activity. The adjustments required depend on value-shifts, especially a move away from consumerism and wasteful forms of living. Environmentalism to work must be reinforced by participatory democracy dedicated to a healthful and safe future for all citizens, and beyond this for the peoples of the entire world. The most severe environmental threats--acid rain, global warming, ozone depletion, rain-forest depletion, release of toxic substance--are all of a global scale, and require unprecedented levels of cooperation among the peoples and governments of the world. In effect, Paehlke rehabilitates compassionate capitalism as a necessary fix in a world threatened by environmental decay.

In my view, *Environmentalism and the Future of Progressive Politics* is a challenging, well-researched, cogently argued, informative book that is in the end unconvincing and somewhat misleading with respect to its main thesis. In brief, the author never really acknowledges the degree to which his use of the word "moderate" to describe the adjustments he proposes is itself sustainable. In my view, capitalist practice, especially here in the United States is hooked into a consumerist ethos and fossil fuel permissiveness. The market can certainly generate profitable anti-pollution technology, possibly to an impressive degree, but can it move from the perspective of buyer and seller to the long-run overall interest of the whole? The postulated compatibility that underlies Paehlke's argument resurrects Adam Smith's invisible hand in a less plausible form--it seems unabashedly utopian to expect the present generation of Americans to opt for life styles that are shaped for the benefit of distant and numerous Third World peoples and for the sake of remote, unborn generations. What is implied is the Native American time frame stretching in each direction for seven generations. Such an approach to politics seems fabulously disjoined from the time cycles of accountability of current politicians that rarely extend beyond four years.

Paehlke does not use the language of liberalism to describe his political stance, but relies on the terminology of moderate progressivism. To me, a rose by another name! The distinguishing feature of liberalism is the Michelob ad-- "...you can have it all!" In this instance, practical solutions, human dignity, and the existing capitalist framework of values and distribution. Such an orientation can soften some of the hard edges of capitalism, but it cannot alter underlying structures of belief and behavior. Paehlke's environmentalism implies that sufficient adjustments can be made, and with the add-on of decency toward the global poor as a practical necessity, without any basic reorientation of mar-

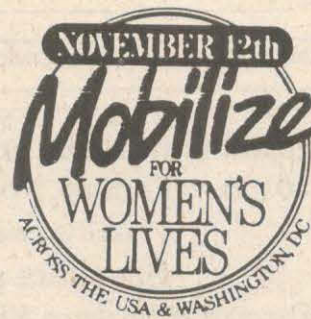


Anthony Varus Impact Visuals

ket or political culture. Such a vision is in the end, I believe, an exercise in wishful thinking that badly understates the magnitude of environmental danger and the awesome difficulty of responding successfully at this stage of history.

In the end, environmental decay will either generate a radical response, or we will not make it. By radical I mean extending Jesse Jackson's emphasis on helping those who are victims of "the system" to encompass both socialist and ecological values. I think this is the type of progressive political perspective, with all its variations, that has given the European greens their main impetus, which is avowedly radical in scope and vision. Liberalism cannot be saved by environmentalism, but possibly it can be reconstituted to lend support to an American version of green politics. Anything less will deepen despair and solidify the hold of both ecocatastrophists and ecofascists upon our political imagination. The environmental torments of the contemporary world will grow worse, as will inevitably happen if we go on as if the existing framework is resilient enough to absorb the shocks!

Richard Falk teaches at the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs' Center of International Studies.



DSA will participate as a contingent at the Mobilization for Women's Lives in Washington, DC. Contact the DSA office at (212) 962-0390 to find out where we will be gathering on Sunday, November 12.

JANIE HIGGINS REPORTS

Anti-Union Violence on the Rise. Nearly 650 labor union members were killed and more than 6,500 were arrested worldwide last year. The death toll in 1988 was almost double that reported in 1987, the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions reported in an annual survey citing anti-union actions in seventy-nine countries. The Confederation represents 142 national trade union groups in ninety-seven countries.

Contracting-Out Not Such a Rosy Option. "Issues and Answers," a newsletter published by the Public Employees Department, reports that state, local, and federal efforts to contract-out may be on the decline. Workers in Racine, Wisconsin will get their jobs back, along with back wages, lost benefits, and a 12 percent increase after initially having lost their jobs to Kelly Services. The VA Memorial Auditorium in Des Moines, Iowa will move its food service operation in-house because management feels it can generate more revenue for the building by doing it themselves. And competing with private industry for base operating support jobs at the Minneapolis/St Paul Airport, the in-house bid won the contract saving eighty civilian jobs.

Poverty Perceived as Increasing. The American public overwhelmingly perceives poverty to be increasing and the living conditions of the poor unimproved, a recent Gallup

Poll has found. Over 80 percent of those polled thought that the number of those living in poverty is increasing, while only 33 percent of the public approved of the way President Bush is handling the problem of poverty and homelessness.

Thought the McCarthy Era was Over? A new bimonthly newsletter is doing its best to blacklist liberal-minded entertainers. The newsletter, *TV, etc.*, criticizes certain primetime television shows for their "liberal bias," and lists those television performers and film and music personalities who donate to liberal causes or politicians. The American Federation of Television and Radio Artists and the Screen Actors Guild are battling *TV, etc.*

Corporate Irresponsibility. According to Citizens for Tax Justice, last year's tax returns showed several corporate polluters not only paid no taxes, but got refunds for deductions carried over from previous years: General Motors got a \$742.2 million refund, IBM received a \$123.5 million, and Hewlett-Packard a \$15 million refund.

Shining Republican Example. Newt Gingrich pocketed close to the limit, \$26,800 of \$26,850, allowed per year in honoraria. "The idea that a congressman would be tainted by accepting money from private industry or private sources is essentially a socialist argument," explains Gingrich in a recent issue of *Mother Jones*. And what's wrong with that?



Give Some Thoughts to Your Friends*

It's not too early to think about holiday giving, and what better choice than a bundle of ideas delivered to the door four times a year? Each issue of *Dissent* is filled with thought-provoking comment and analysis. And because we want to help you spread those ideas to friends and debating partners, we are making a special holiday gift subscription offer. While you're at it, why not a subscription for one of the best minds you know -- you.

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