

DEMOCRATIC

EFT

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DSA vs. IMF



SHRUB vs. VEEP



Structurally Adjust This

Electoral Politics As Tactic

The National Political Committee consciously chose not to endorse any major party presidential candidates. While understanding that for pragmatic reasons many progressive trade unionists, environmentalists, and African-American and Latino activists have chosen to support Al Gore, DSA's elected representatives believe that Gore, like the now defeated Bill Bradley, represents a centrist, neo-liberal politics which does not advocate the radical structural reforms — such as progressive taxation, major defense cuts, and real universal health and child care — necessary to move national politics in a genuinely democratic direction.

Gore's strong support for "free trade" fails to integrate the need for international solidarity and global regulation of transnational capital required for egalitarian politics at home and abroad. Nor is it sufficient to talk of getting "soft money" (unlimited contributions directly to the political parties) out of politics. Corporate influence over electoral politics can only be curtailed through public financing of campaigns and access to free media. It is a sad commentary on the state of American politics when dyed-in-the-wool conservative John McCain is portrayed by mass media as a "progressive reformer" of campaign law.

Some DSAers may support Ralph Nader for president, if he appears on the ballot in their state. Others may support our Socialist Party comrade David McReynolds. Nader's campaign is likely to appear on more state ballots and it has the potential to harness the energy of the protests in Seattle and Washington against the WTO and IMF. This time around, *DL* hopes he runs a serious campaign and does not again dismiss issues of racism and sexism as "divisive" or "gonadal" politics.

But in states where the presidential race appears close next November, it is likely that DSA members with ties to mass constituencies will engage in pragmatic lesser-evilism and hold their nose and vote for the Democrat. These are all understandable tactical choices. DSA Vice-Chair Harold Meyerson's electoral analysis in this issue concludes with a case for "critical support" of Gore. This position is by no means an official DSA "line," but a perspective held to by many in the organization, but dissented from by numerous others.

It is inaccurate to describe DSA as primarily working within the "left-wing" of the Democratic Party." The 1993 DSA convention in fact resolved "that the imperative task for the democratic Left is to build anti-corporate social movements which are capable of winning reforms which empower people. In so far as such social movements and coalitions wish to influence state policy they will, at times, intervene in electoral politics. The fundamental question for DSA is not what form that elec-



A little dim, but be's mine.

toral intervention takes, whether it be through Democratic primary races, non-partisan local elections, or third party efforts. Rather, our electoral work aims at building majoritarian coalitions capable of not only electing public officials, but capable of holding them accountable after they are elected."

DSA's main task is to build grassroots, multi-racial, progressive coalitions. There is no short-cut to doing so other than the hard work of "education, agitation, and organizing." Neither flying the flag of a third party which lacks a mass social base, or placing uncritical faith in isolated progressive Democratic politicians will build a powerful Left. A successful third party would have to command sufficient strength in mass constituencies that it could split one of the two major parties.

DSA is no more loyal to the Democratic Party — which barely exists as a grassroots institution — than are individuals or social movements which upon occasion use its ballot line or vote for its candidates. The peculiar nature of the American constitution renders third party politics difficult at both the national and state level. Myriad structural factors mitigate against viable third parties, and various constitutional blockages are exceedingly difficult to amend: executive-based federalism makes parliamentary-style coalition-governments impossible, winner-take all districts, absence of proportional representation, open primaries in which party membership is regulated by states not parties themselves — allowing both Klansmen and Communists to be members of the Democratic Party.

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LETTERS



Gusanos keep me here.

Republicans who have threatened public hearings on the seizure of Elian Gonzalez need to start worrying about this country's children. They are cutting poor children off welfare and not helping their parents get a job. They are cutting disabled children off SSI. They are cutting school work programs for poor school children. Republicans are doing nothing for our homeless children. Republicans are trying to pass tougher jail sentences for children (even for minor offenses), yet they are against crime prevention

programs for children!
I think there should be hearings on the child-hating Republicans!

GERALD HERALD
Combs, KY

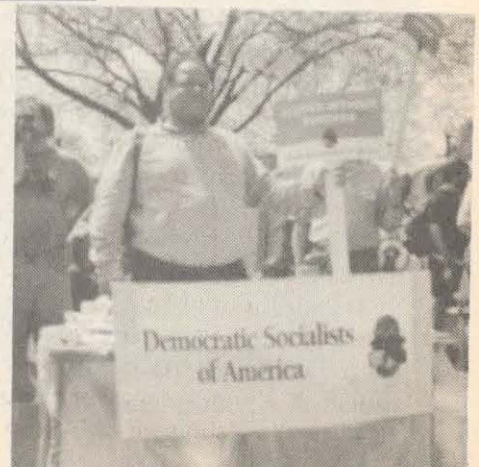
I just wanted to thank you for the excellent article John Mason wrote in the last issue of *DL* on DSA and the Socialist International. Your article left me wanting more. What does DSA do next in order to move out of the margins? Who in the SI can we work with? What kind of resources will DSA have to invest in order to be taken more seriously? Kinnock's humiliating sarcasm can be interpreted as reacting to the threat to the "Third Way" that "Harrington's ghost" still represents. Why would someone so powerful even bother giving such a tiny insignificant grouping any attention at all?

STEVE TARZYNSKI
Los Angeles

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Democratic Socialists of America share a vision of a humane international social order based on equitable distribution of resources, meaningful work, a healthy environment, sustainable growth, gender and racial equality, and non-oppressive relationships. Equality, solidarity, and democracy can only be achieved through international political and social cooperation aimed at ensuring that economic institutions benefit all people. We are dedicated to building truly international social movements — of unionists, environmentalists, feminists, and people of color — which together can elevate global justice over brutalizing global competition.

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A better Congress would be nice.

Editorial/ *continued from page 2*

In the GOP, white libertarian upper-middle-class suburbanites contend with white working-class fundamentalists for influence in that party. Veterans of the left will remember that the 1968 Peace and Freedom Party and the 1980 Citizens Party arose at moments of greater left-wing strength and did not significantly alter the national electoral landscape. Nor has, unfortunately, the New Party, which many DSAers work with in states where "fusion" of third party and major party votes is possible (such as the DSA co-sponsored Working Families Party in N.Y. State).

DSA recognizes that some insurgent politicians representing labor, environmentalists, gays and lesbians, and communities of color, may choose to run under Democratic auspices, as in the 1988 Jesse Jackson campaign, or operate as Democrats like Senator Paul Wellstone, and the 59 Democratic members of the Congressional Progressive Caucus, one-half of whom are Black and Latino and all of whom possess strong la-

bor backing and operative social democratic politics.

Electoral tactics are only a means for DSA; the building of a powerful anti-corporate and ultimately socialist movement is the end. Where third party or non-partisan candidates represent significant social movements DSA locals have and will continue to build such organizations and support such candidates. DSA honored independent socialist Congressperson Bernie Sanders of Vermont at our last convention banquet, and we have always raised significant funds nationally for his electoral campaigns. At the same time, we were pleased to have Democratic Congressperson and Progressive Caucus member Bob Filner of San Diego introduce Sanders at the convention, and note that Progressive Caucus member Jan Schakowsky (D-IL) will be honored at our annual Debs-Thomas-Harrington dinner this Spring in Chicago.

DSA is a modest, sometimes effective organization, whose members have greatest influence in community-level electoral politics. DSA is not an electoral organization, but rather a democratic socialist political organi-

zation which aims to bring socialism into the mainstream of American politics. We endeavor to do so through a two-pronged strategy of education and organizing. Much of our work is cultural and ideological: forums, debates, publications. But our voice can only be heard if we simultaneously play a central, activist role within struggles relevant to working people, communities of color, women, gays and lesbians and other oppressed constituencies. We operate within progressive coalitions as an open socialist presence and bring to these movements an analysis and strategy which recognizes the fundamental need to democ-

ratize global corporate power. We do not see ourselves as a vanguard speaking for the masses nor do we romantically believe that a small socialist organization can unilaterally transform the U.S. electoral map.

DSA strives to be a crucial socialist leaven within a mass movement for social justice. In the 2000 elections, most electorally-active, progressive constituencies will endeavor to elect progressives to Congress and to the state legislatures. These state legislatures will engage in the post-census redistricting which will influence electoral politics throughout the coming decade. For better or worse, it is unlikely that presidential politics in the year 2000 will structurally transform the landscape of American politics, however important the outcome.

DSA will continue to be a voice inside — and outside — the electoral process, to argue against panaceas of 'fixed' markets, and for a bottom-up democratic, decentralized and environmentally sane economy.

The Veep, The Shrub, and the Left

BY HAROLD MEYERSON

Okay, what's a four-letter word for "our next president"? If you said Gore, you have about a 50 percent chance of being right next November, but it's early yet.

Vice-President Al Gore emerged from the primary season relatively unscathed, and certainly with far fewer scathes than GOP nominee-to-be George W. Bush. Pre-convention national polls are, at press time, inconclusive. As November shapes up, the Veep looks strong in the Northeast and Pacific Coast states, while W can claim the South, the Rocky Mountains, and some of the Plains states. The swing-states that will determine the election run pretty much from Jersey City to Kansas City — the old industrial heartland states of New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Michigan, Illinois, Wisconsin and Missouri.

The problem for W. was that he ended the primary process well to the right of where he started. His electoral weakness was found chiefly among women and Catholic voters, two constituencies that were less than thrilled with his right-turn during the primary process. That he knows he needs to re-center was clear from his Super Tuesday victory speech, where he not only sought to cloak himself, however improbably, in the raiment of reform, but also relegated his tax cut to the fourth item on his list of things he'd do with the surplus (after shoring up social security and boosting spending on the military and schools). For his part, Gore began trolling for unmoored McCainites, avowing his support for campaign finance reform, as early as his last debate with Bill Bradley.

Neither Gore nor Bush is a natural fit for the McCain malcontents come November. But someone (not Pat Buchanan or Ross

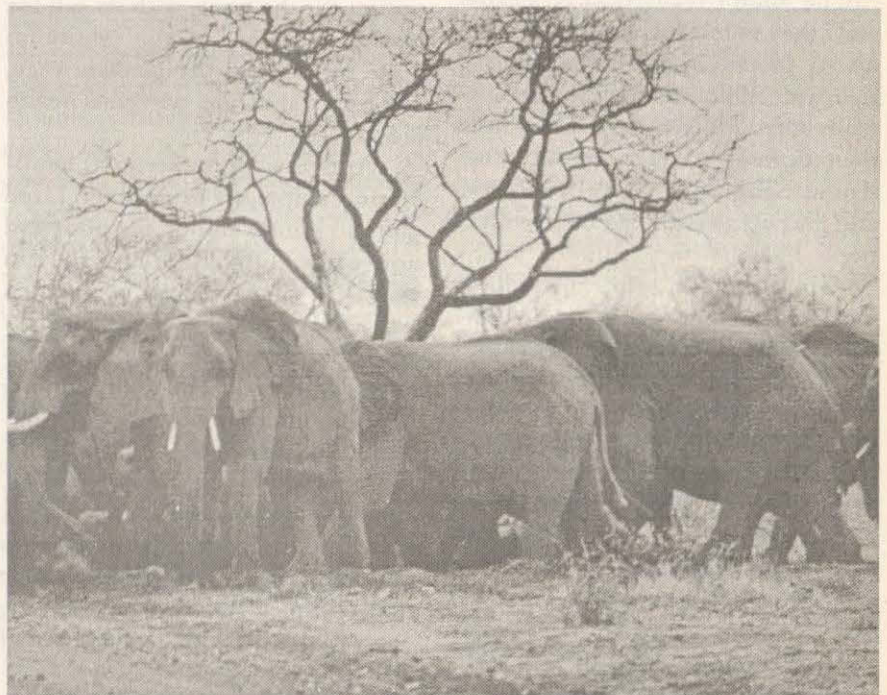
Perot) will lay claim to most of them, and Gore's positions on choice, guns, and the environment — and his ability to claim some credit for the state of the economy — may ultimately attract wavering centrists, particularly if Bush attempts to personify the cause of moral regeneration. Should the election come down to a test between Gore's credibility as a steward of the economy and Bush's credibility as a midwife of moral rebirth, the Dems should prevail. It's easier to see the Veep as a banker than it is the Guv as a minister, let alone a prophet.

Cross-Over Dems

When historians look back on the brief, intense primary season of campaign 2000, they will doubtless note that John McCain proved himself a far more compelling challenger in his party than Bill Bradley did in his. But they should also note that

February's bizarre primary calendar artificially inflated McCain's stature, and further deflated Bradley's in the process.

The weirdness of February was that Republican contests were scheduled in several key states that had no corresponding Democratic contests. As a result, Democrats, having no place else to go, flocked to crucial GOP primaries. Republicans constituted only 48 percent of the voters in their own Michigan primary, where McCain got enough support among independents and Democrats to overcome Bush's two-to-one advantage among Republicans. The McCain problem come Super Tuesday, however, was that Democrats finally had their own Democratic primaries to vote in, and only a relative handful of Dems were willing to go behind enemy lines when they could easily vote in their own party. In Ohio and Missouri — two states



Shrub: Back to what center?

where the Republican primaries were open to Democrats — fully 70 percent and 61 percent of the voters in the GOP contest were Republican, and Bush carried these states overwhelmingly. McCain simply couldn't win anywhere that the Republicans constituted a clear majority of the Republican voters (well, anywhere except New England, where Republicans are the ideological equivalents of center-left Democrats anywhere else).

The reasons for McCain's considerable appeal to Democrats and independents were legion. He was the onetime hawk who made friends — who made a show of making friends — with onetime doves. He made war not just on the cultural rightwing of Pat Robertson and Jerry Falwell but on the economic rightwing of the *Wall Street Journal* editorial page. His attacks on W's tax cuts for favoring the rich (38 percent goes to the wealthiest one percent) were every bit as heretical as his affront to the Christian Right. Indeed, I suspect part of McCain's appeal to Democrats was that he confirmed their hitherto unvoiced suspicion that reasonable Republicans, freed from the confines of party discipline, didn't really believe all that stuff they voted for, and didn't even want to associate with those rightwing movement types who normally surrounded them. Left to their own devices, serious Republicans would hang with liberal reporters and end up as tribunes for moderation.

In hindsight, the amount of wishful thinking that went into the McCain phenomenon — on the part of both the campaign and its Democratic supporters — was staggering. No presidential campaign can prevail that flatly rejects its party's core program, let alone that insults the party's activist cadres. McCain's only chance, coming off his Michigan upset, would have been to find some way to appeal more directly to the Republican base. Problem was, the Republican base already had a candidate, and almost everything

McCain said after Michigan — his attacks on the Christian Right especially — only increased the determination of core Republicans to vote for Bush. On Tuesday, the religious right cast their vote for Boy George over McCain by margins ranging from three-to-one to eight-to-one.

Dollar Bill

McCain, at least, can comfort himself with the knowledge that he himself provoked his obliteration at the hands of his party base. Poor Bill Bradley, on the other hand, fared even worse among hard-core Democrats than McCain did with the Republican right, and these Democratic cadres were precisely the voters that Bradley targeted most of all. From the day he first intimated he was thinking of seeking the presidency, Bradley said his number-one concern would be to shine a light on American racism. No presidential candidate had ever before decried the racial profiling that is common practice among police, or the disproportionate effect that the war on drugs has had on non-white communities. No mainstream campaign since Robert Kennedy's has ever exhibited such a strong preferential option for the poor, with its call for linking increases in the minimum wage to those in the median wage, and for establishing universal health insurance.

And few mainstream Democratic campaigns have ever fared quite so poorly among the poor and non-white. One Bradley problem was that Black America remains fiercely loyal to Bill Clinton, and was not about to vote for anyone but his Veep. Bradley lost to Gore among African-American voters by margins of six-and-seven-to-one; in Georgia, it was a breathtaking 11-to-one. Similarly, the poorer the Democratic voter, the more likely he or she was to vote for Al Gore; in every single state, Bradley ran strongest among voters with incomes in excess of \$100,000.

Bradley also proved to be a hugely underwhelming candidate. As

the Gore campaigning was savaging his health plan in much the same manner that industry lobbies had savaged the Clinton-Gore health plan of 1994 (Gore, in essence, became his own version of Harry and Louise), Bradley seemed unable to respond. Independent analysts galore, from the Urban Institute to *Consumer Reports*, were on record preferring Bradley's plan to Gore's — it would insure far more of the uninsured than Gore's, while mainstreaming the poor into universally-available programs that weren't means-tested. Bradley cited none of his defenders, though, opting instead simply to accuse the Veep of lying. This was surely true, but it was neither as good a debating tactic or as effective a way to run for president as a simple comparison of his plan to Gore's.

However inexpert his campaign, Bradley deserves credit for resurrecting the notion that in an era of surpluses, the government might just want to spend resources on fixing problems. Bradley's challenge forced Gore to come up with health and education programs of his own — relatively modest efforts, but at least a clear alternative to the policy of returning the surplus to wealthy taxpayers, or using it all to pay down the debt. And during the week before the California primary, state legislators representing heavily Latino and immigrant districts, where the rate of medical uninsurance exceeded 50 percent, held hearings to shape a state health insurance program that looked suspiciously like Bradley's. Like most Democratic pols in California, they had endorsed Gore nearly eight months earlier, but when it came to how to address their constituents' most glaring problems, they were Bradleyites.

The Bradley Problem, ultimately, was that he wasn't much of a Bradleyite himself. At a typical Bradley campus rally, Cornel West and Senator Paul Wellstone would work the crowd to a fever pitch, then Bradley would come on and immediately cool them down. One of the

lines he used on the stump to express the sentiment that this new era of Surplus politics created a major opportunity to remedy social ills was Hillel's third question: If not now, when? But after covering Bradley throughout his campaign, I wonder if the more germane question for the candidate isn't Hillel's first: If I am not for myself, who shall be for me?

Labor

Bradley also declined to offer a fair-trade alternative for Democrats in general and unionists in particular who opposed the Administration's free-trade policies, who doubted that NAFTA and Fast-Track and China's admission to the WTO pointed the way to a more just global economy. When a plausible fair-trade candidate is available, labor is beginning to show that it will move heaven-and-earth on that candidate's behalf. In the only really notable Democratic congressional primary of this spring, labor provided key support to California State Senator Hilda Solis, a labor-progressive who unseated 18-year Democratic congressman Marty Martinez in the San Gabriel Valley. Martinez was a cosmically lackluster pol who was the only Democratic member from California to oppose background checks on purchasers at gun shows, but what infuriated labor was his decision to give his support to the Administration's fast-track trade proposal a few years back in return for White House backing for a freeway extension. "Labor has said for half a decade, at least, that center-right politics is not something that the Democrats should put up with," L.A. County Labor Federation political director Fabien Nunez told me on election night, "but this is one of a very few instances where we've made that rhetoric into a reality." Though unions almost never back a challenger to a fair-to-middling Democratic incumbent like Martinez, they identified 15,000 Solis supporters among their members within the district. On election day,

Solis clobbered Martinez by a breathtaking 69 percent-to-31 percent margin.

To be sure, the L.A. County Fed is the most adept and battle-tested union political apparatus of the Sweeney era. Labor was crucially helpful on a national level to Gore's nomination, as well. That labor could almost by itself put Gore over the top in the Iowa caucus was no surprise. In sparsely-unionized New Hampshire, however, unions delivered hundreds of out-of-state volunteers; about half of Gore's ground troops were union activists, and his percentage among union household voters in the exit polls was 62 percent. Insofar as he dispatched Bill Bradley by a four-point margin, the union support was critical.

In essence, New Hampshire saw the mobilization of the Democrats' two key campaign-worker constituencies — labor and students — on behalf of Gore and Bradley respectively. Not surprisingly, perhaps, the spirit of Seattle — Teamsters and Turtles Together At Last — lapped over into the streets of Nashua and Manchester. As Bradley and Gore volunteers walked the same blocks or held placards at the same intersections during the campaign's final week, I noticed several instances where they put aside their candidate disagreements to affirm a common sentiment that when it came to trade, each of their candidates was godawful. On the one issue most dividing the Democrats in 2000, that of the nature of the globalized economy, the fundamental dividing line in the Democratic Party, so to speak, is horizontal rather than vertical. Within the party's activist base, support for a mixed global economy is pervasive. At the level of the presidential candidates, it was invisible.

Triangulate

And yet, electing Al Gore is labor's number-one priority for 2000, even if defeating China's entry into the WTO is number-two. This means that the Teamster-Turtle

alliance will be tested, and on occasion disassembled, in the course of the year.

The challenge facing labor supporters of Al Gore is that there are really two Al Gores. Confronted with conflicting positions that divide New Democrats from Old, the Vice-President at times seems unable to fuse the elements of both into a distinct third way, but rather shuttles back and forth between contradictory postures. The split in Gore, moreover, is mirrored by a split in his campaign. Intellectually — as personified by his policy operatives Elaine Kamarck, Bruce Reed and William Galston — his campaign is New Democrat all the way. Politically — as personified by his campaign manager, former Congressional Black Caucus and Rainbow Coalition staffer, Donna Brazile — his campaign is inclined toward and even invested in the core Democratic constituency groups.

If triangulation seems harder for the Veep than for the Pres, it may be because Gore is more deeply rooted than Clinton in both sides of the divide. Intellectually a creature of the DLC, Gore is at the same time politically a creature of the Beltway Democratic Party — which first and foremost means labor.

Throughout the Clinton presidency, Gore has frequently played a center-right role on matters of economic policy. As is well-known, he counseled Clinton in 1996 to sign the Republican bill ending welfare. He was also a deficit hawk right from the start, in the 1993 policy debate that set the course for the Administration's fiscal conservatism. He is now, apparently, a debt-retirement hawk as well, telling the *Wall Street Journal* in a January interview that the federal budget should stay in balance even during a recession, that "just as a corporation has to cut expenses as revenues fall off...[a downturn] should be viewed as an opportunity to push that change [eliminating middle managers from the government] further before any other options are considered." (This

trashing of Keynesianism was too much even for John McCain to bear; told of Gore's comments, he responded: "One of the options to stimulate the economy is to make investments, and that may entail deficit spending.") On macro-economics, Gore seems to have moved beyond the fiscal austerity of such DLC paladins as Al From, and not because there's any notable political pressure in the land for debt retirement as the north star of public policy. Left to his own devices, Gore is becoming our first Andrew Mellon Democrat.

Gore was hardly a tribune for labor issues either in the early years of the Clinton White House. With Mack McLarty, he was a champion of extending NAFTA to all of Latin America. Depending on whom you talk to, he was either an outright opponent or a lukewarm advocate of the minimum wage hike of 1996 when it first surfaced in White House deliberations in 1995.

And yet — Gore was the unions' go-to guy in the White House. "Whenever the Clinton Administration got really bad on specific union issues," says one former AFL-CIO official, "you went to Gore. He had a political sense of the need to accommodate labor. He has a better sense of the institutional relationship of labor to the Democratic Party than Clinton's ever had."

Gore spent the first six years of his vice-presidency assuming that his most likely primary opponent in 2000 would be Dick Gephardt, whose claim on labor's allegiance might well have trumped his own. And as he saw labor in the Sweeney era was turning itself into the one truly effective operation in American electoral politics, Gore concluded that ingratiating himself to the unions was a matter of utmost urgency.

That meant that when a union needed help, in public policy or in the brave new world of organizing, Al Gore, like Tom Joad, would be there. He campaigned against California's Proposition 226, the initiative that would have defunded unions' political programs, when it

was trailing by a 70-to-21 percent margin; he helped raise money for the opposition effort. When L.A. County Supervisor Gloria Molina, who is Vice-Chair of the Democratic National Committee, was reluctant to establish the public authority required to grant collective bargaining rights to L.A.'s 74,000 home care workers — a campaign SEIU had been working on for 12 years — Gore called Molina at least twice to suggest she might re-think her position. (She did.) He leaned on the Defense Department to break off its contract with Avondale Shipyards, the New Orleans facility that refused for half-a-decade to negotiate with the union its workers had voted in. Gore even phoned major property-owner associates who owned buildings where janitors were attempting to win union recognition, and suggested he'd help facilitate negotiations. The list goes on.

Right to Organize

In one very significant particular, though, Gore has managed to fuse policy and politics in a distinctly pro-union way. In what is probably the most surprising twist of his career, Al Gore over the past half-decade has become the nation's foremost champion of workers' right to organize.

The change here began not with Gore but John Sweeney, and his own reinvention of the labor movement. Unions' involvement in politics, said Sweeney from the first day he became federation president, was chiefly a means to help organizing drives, to create a better climate for the movement to reverse the decline of four decades. Elected officials who got labor support would in turn be expected to support unions in struggle. The unspoken corollary was that the person who got labor's support for president would be expected to support unions in struggle more than anyone else.

And so the federation began to bring workers who'd been fired for daring to organize, or harassed by supervisors, or denied basic rights

in the workplace, and took them around to meetings of the Democratic congressional delegation, or to meet with candidates in their own states. And wherever Al Gore went to talk to a union, the rule was, have him meet with the workers. Let him see what they're going through.

In his speeches to unions, Gore now routinely brings to the podium the workers he's met, and tells their stories. He goes on to say that organizing is a basic American right, and that as president he'd strengthen it — though he gets no more specific than to say that he'd favor increasing the penalties on employers who find it cheaper to violate the terms of the National Labor Relations Act than to grant their workers a raise. Gore even goes so far as to discuss the right to unionize in speeches delivered to groups other than unions, though that is still more the exception than the norm.

People who worked with Gore in the administration differ on Gore's about-face on labor issues. "I believe Gore's conversion on labor questions is relatively sincere," one former high-ranking administration official says, "but it's a sincerity born of necessity. He was suspicious of labor; they hated him; but over time they came to see that they needed each other — an archetypal co-dependent relationship."

In the end, unions are counting on being able to do business with the Political — not the Intellectual — Al Gore. "Gore understands politics the way many labor leaders do," says one Washington-based political consultant who works with a number of unions and Democratic elected officials. "Their world is one where one performs favors and expects favors in return. Gore will infuriate labor periodically," as he has done on the recent Permanent Normal Relations with China bill, "and Labor knows what those issues will be. But unions have a sense that this guy will play ball with them."

Nader?

For those on the left who don't

RU Ready 4 R2K?

The Republicans coming to Philadelphia this summer for their National Convention (July 31-August 4) are expecting all the spotlights to be on them as they “pick” their next presidential contender. But if the R2K network has its way, the Convention won’t be the only Philadelphia event in the media limelight. Since last summer, representatives of various groups, convened by the Pennsylvania Consumer Action Network (PCAN), have been meeting to plan a progressive response to the arrival of the Republicans. Known as the R2K Network, the group has been elaborating plans to take advantage of the media presence surrounding the Convention to get progressive messages out to the country.

Activities already planned include:

March for Universal Health Care: This is being coordinated by the Philadelphia Ad Hoc Committee to Defend Health Care and will take place on Saturday, July 29.

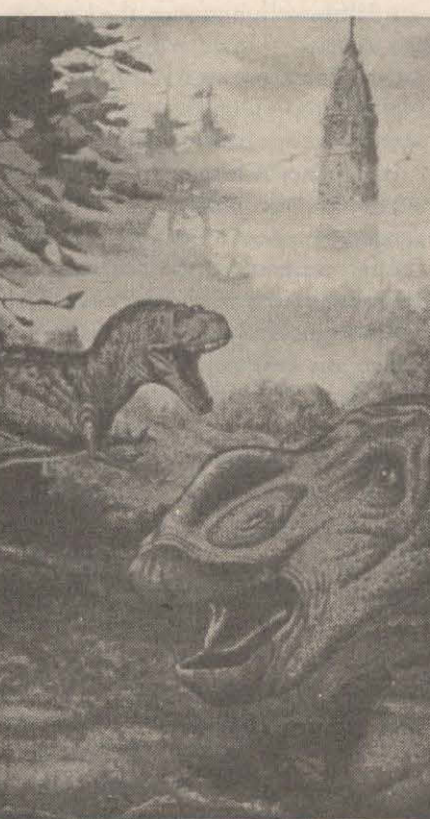
Unity 2000 Rally and March: This multi-issue, multi-constituency rally is being planned by a still growing coalition. Labor, environmentalists, feminists, LGBTQ groups, anti-racism activists and others will be joining in to call for a different direction for the country. It will take place on Sunday, July 30.

March for Economic Justice: Called by the Kensington Welfare Rights Union, this event will follow up on the themes of its ongoing Campaign for Economic Human Rights. It will coincide with the first day of

the Convention — Monday, July 31.

Many other events, both connected to and outside of the R2K’s Unity 2000 umbrella, are sure to take place during the week. To get the news out as these events happen, and to coordinate information beforehand, the coalition has formed the In-

dependent Media Center of Philadelphia, a non-profit organization that will create an actual media center similar to that in Seattle, with its comprehensive website, a centralized production and distribution operation, daily newspaper (*Blind Spot*), and video facilities.



Phila: Keynote speakers.

dependent Media Center of Philadelphia, a non-profit organization that

will create an actual media center similar to that in Seattle, with its comprehensive website, a centralized production and distribution operation, daily newspaper (*Blind Spot*), and video facilities.

The Center will facilitate exchange between activists and journalists, and

provide media training for activists in press release preparation, interviewing and speaking skills, media production techniques. In addition, the IMC will engage in media criticism and advocate for democratic media. Ideally, the IMC will continue as a progressive media hub after the Republican Convention.

One hurdle that organizers of all the marches face is the city of Philadelphia’s offer to Republicans first right of refusal over the use of every public space of any consequence in Philadelphia. The city’s position was unacceptable to the R2K Network. So various organizations, assisted by the Philadelphia ACLU, took the city to court and have now reached an accommodation with the City so that we can demonstrate and dissent in public.

The list of endorsers for the Unity 2000 March already includes many state and international organizations, including DSA. The DSA National Steering Committee recently voted to endorse both the Unity

2000 March and the March for Universal Health Care.

For R2K general info and action alerts, send an email to:
philly2000-subscribe@listbot.com

For discussion of July 30, send an email to:
july30-subscribe@listbot.com

For info about the media center, send an email to:
R2K_Media-subscribe@listbot.com

There is also a website at <http://www.unity2000.com>.

Another group is beginning to plan actions around the Democratic Convention in Los Angeles in August. For further information about these activities, contact (323) 660-3249 (voice); (323) 292-7405 (fax); or fithiani@igc.org.

IMF and the World Bank

BY KATHY QUINN

In November 1999, tens of thousands of people converged on Seattle to protest the undemocratic procedures and decisions of the World Trade Organization. Anger over the effects of a globalization process geared towards the interests of large transnational corporations, finally erupted into a major US protest. Yet the WTO has existed only since 1995. Another undemocratic international organization, which was founded over 50 years ago, has been wreaking havoc upon economies around the world for the past two decades — causing massive unemployment and impoverishment; contributing to environmental degradation; encouraging the transfer of wealth from poor to rich; and exacerbating ethnic and racial conflicts. That organization is the International Monetary Fund.

Most Americans don't know much about the IMF, despite the fact that the US has been the major player in the organization since its founding. This ignorance is partly because the workings of the IMF, like those of the Federal Reserve Board, have been presented as involving the application of "value-free" technical economic knowledge, impenetrable to the average layperson. Another reason is that IMF actions have in the main only directly affected other countries. But the lack of knowledge is also intentional: The IMF works in secret, even keeping information from government officials in member countries. In the past few years, however, the IMF has been subjected to increasing criticism from both the left and the right in the US. What is the IMF and what does it do?

Founders

In July 1944, as World War II was coming to an end, 44 representatives

of Allied countries met in Bretton Woods, New Hampshire, to create international institutions that would encourage free trade among nations and avoid the beggar-thy-neighbor protectionism of the Great Depression. The IMF was one of these institutions, its major mission being enforcement of fixed system of currency exchange rates based on the gold standard. This fell by the wayside in 1970 when the Nixon administration, under pressure from Vietnam-era balance-of-payments deficits, unilaterally abandoned the fixed exchange system and declared that the US would no longer redeem dollars with gold. Since that time, the IMF's primary function has been lending money to developing nations and former Eastern-bloc countries that have difficulty meeting their international payment obligations. The IMF's loan authority is supposed to help keep countries who are in trouble from resorting to trade and investment restrictions.

Votes

At first glance, the activity of the IMF seems benign: lending money to countries in trouble. Certainly, countries hastened to join; 182 countries are now members. However, the real purpose of the IMF is not to help individual countries, but rather to keep trade and investment flowing. Furthermore, the IMF is not democratic in any sense of the word. Voting power is based on the contributions made by each member country. Those contributions, in turn, are based on the size of the country's economy. The US, with the world's largest economy, has always held the most votes (currently over 18 percent), followed by the other Western industrialized countries and Japan. This means that a

handful of countries really control the IMF.

In practice, the influence of the US and like-minded countries over the IMF has meant that its activities have been geared towards the interests of Northern-based transnational corporations. In exchange for assistance, the IMF requires developing countries to adopt "structural adjustment policies" (SAPs) that usually include cutting government spending; keeping wages low; privatization and deregulation; eliminating trade barriers and restrictions on foreign investors; devaluing the currency; and raising interest rates. These measures are supposed to lay the basis for sustainable growth. In fact, they simply encourage production for export instead of internal development and produce favorable conditions for foreign investors and lenders

Debt Crisis

During the 1950s and 60s, when developing countries were experiencing extraordinary growth, most nations were not interested in subjecting themselves to the restrictions of SAPs; but the situation began to change with the oil crisis of the 1970s. As major importers of oil, most developing countries suddenly had difficulty paying their bills. At first, they got by with commercial loans from European and American banks, which were flooded with money deposited by the newly wealthy oil-exporting countries.

For a time these loans proved to be extremely cheap since escalating inflation throughout the 1970s sometimes made the interest rates charged on the loans lower than the inflation rate. In effect, the debtors were making money on the deal. But by 1979, stagflation in the US — the combination of inflation and increasing unem-

ployment — caused Paul Volcker, the new chairman of the Federal Reserve Board, to put the brakes on the US economy by raising interest rates sharply. By 1981 the US and the rest of the world were in a major recession. Suddenly, most of the developing world found itself with massive debts at interest rates that, in the absence of inflation, were extremely high. At the same time, the worldwide recession sent the prices of basic commodities, the major exports of many developing countries, to bargain basement levels. With their huge debts and decreased incomes, developing countries were no longer attractive targets for commercial lenders. Unable to get further credit, and unable to make the interest payments on their outstanding loans, even large economies such as Brazil and Mexico were threatening to default on their debts. Enter the IMF.

In exchange for the adoption by debtor countries of SAPs, the IMF promised direct short-term loans and also arranged new lines of credit from commercial sources. Faced with the alternative of defaults that would effectively cut off essential imports, many countries entered into SAP agreements. The immediate results were usually widespread unemployment and falling living standards. Forced cut-offs of government food, transport and housing brought widespread unrest. Riots broke out in several African and Latin American countries. Countries often ignored parts of their agreements in the face of public uproar.

But the IMF would have many other opportunities to put on the pressure, because SAPs did not work as advertised. Even countries that seemed to be making progress kept falling back into trouble and needing further aid. Mexico, a prime example, has needed large-scale financial assistance

four times since 1976, each aid package larger than the last. Each time the IMF's prescription has been more of the same; each time poverty has intensified in Mexico. In fact, although the Zapatista uprising in 1994 has usually been associated with NAFTA, the devastating effects of long-term "structural adjustment" were an important source of the unrest.

World Bank

Another international institution shares the responsibility for the results of these policies: the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, or World Bank. The World Bank was also conceived in 1944 as part of the Bretton Woods system, and at first focused on aiding in the reconstruction of war-torn Europe — for which it proved to be totally inadequate. Like the IMF, the World Bank turned its attention primarily to the developing countries, where it was supposed to give longer-term assistance that would help countries reach the point where they would be capable of independent economic development.

From the 1960s on, the World Bank was criticized for perpetuating

dependency in the developing world by preferring projects geared towards export industries, a policy that only increased the reliance of the developing world on trade relations with the industrialized countries of the North. It was also criticized for funding environmentally destructive projects such as huge hydroelectric dams, criticisms that continue today.

Under the leadership of Robert McNamara, president from 1968 to 1981, the Bank shifted policy towards human development and the provision of basic human needs. This policy proved difficult to sustain, however, since the loans given by the Bank, as well as those from the IMF and international commercial lenders, eventually came due, and programs providing education, health care, etc., did not earn the foreign currency necessary to pay back these loans. By the time of the Eighties debt crisis, with McNamara out as head of the World Bank, and Reagan-Thatcherism at its height, the World Bank joined with the IMF in enforcing structural adjustment programs as conditions for aid. The Bank also began to give shorter-term aid which, like much of the aid from the IMF, went for interest pay-



DSAers at April 16 demonstration in Washington, DC

ments to international commercial banks. And, finally, the Bank again focused on projects geared towards exports, especially exploitation of natural resources and the use of low-wage workers.

Moral Hazard

For a decade, the structural adjustment policies of the IMF and the World Bank seemed to serve the purposes of Northern elites. According to Jerome Levinson, a former official of the Inter-American Development Bank, "It has been calculated between 1984 and 1990 'developing' countries operating under SAPs transferred \$178 billion to Western commercial banks...." Low wages were welcomed by transnationals, which not only benefited directly by shifting operations to these countries, but also used the situation to put pressure on the working classes of their own countries by the threat of plant relocation. At the same time, privatization, the removal of trade barriers, and the elimination of investment restrictions opened up an array of commercial opportunities for transnationals.

Nevertheless, since the Mexican recovery package of the mid-1990s the IMF has come under attack from the right. In April 1998, Edwin Feulner, president of the conservative Heritage Foundation, testified unsuccessfully before the US Congress against an increase in the US's IMF quota. The right argues that the IMF's ever longer-term and ever larger loans distort the market by creating a "moral hazard" — that is, an incentive for an economic actor to engage in "imprudent" behavior. The right contends that IMF low-interest loans to countries in danger of default encourage private lenders to make riskier loans than they would otherwise consider. Countries, on the other hand, may take out loans more readily, relying on IMF aid if they have repayment problems.

Conservatives like Feulner certainly don't disagree with many IMF prescriptions such as low wages, privatization and encouragement of foreign investment; and, if the effects

of IMF policies were uniformly good for the capitalist system, it is unlikely that they would be concerned about moral hazard. However, the obvious failure of IMF policies has begun to threaten the stability of the world economy. Feulner summed up the results of IMF loans:

Of the 89 less-developed countries that received IMF loans between 1965 and 1995, 48 are no better off economically today than they were before receiving IMF loans. Of these 48 countries, 32 are poorer...; and of these 32 countries, 14 have economies that are at least 15 percent smaller than when they received their first IMF loans.

For those Northern firms engaged in exporting to the developing world, this is a dangerous situation. As the economies of these countries contract, the benefits of IMF loans go more and more only to the banking and financial sectors, since most of the money goes to make loan payments rather than to pay for exports or make other investments. As Feulner put it, "IMF bailouts aid international investors, well-heeled domestic businessmen, and others with connections to the ruling party."

As bad as the results of IMF policies are in terms of human poverty and misery, the results can be even more deadly. There is a great deal of evidence that the social upheavals caused by these policies are contributing to, if not setting off, ethnic and racial conflicts. Several analysts, such as economist Criton Zoakos, Canadian author Michel Chussodovsky, and Susan Woodward, have traced the conflicts in the former Yugoslavia to the structural changes imposed by Western creditors, led by the IMF. Under this restructuring, which forced the closing of hundreds of public enterprises, currency devaluations and wage freezes, the standard of living in Yugoslavia fell by 40 percent between 1982 and 1989, while Yugoslavia's external debt stayed almost the same. In the first six months of 1990, real wages dropped by 41 percent. The ethnic conflicts that developed have to be seen against the

backdrop of hardships that crippled the Yugoslavian economy. Warfare traceable to the IMF probably goes beyond Yugoslavia: almost all of the countries of sub-Saharan Africa, many of which are currently involved in warfare, have been subjected to the ministrations of the IMF.

Solutions

What can be done about the IMF? A commission appointed by the US Congress has recently called for major reforms in IMF policies, including large-scale debt forgiveness. But it is questionable whether an institution structured as undemocratically as the IMF can be reformed so that it serves the interests of developing countries instead of the interests of the Northern governments and the transnational corporations that have so much influence over them. Assistance to developing countries needs to be funneled through democratically constituted international organizations, or at least through responsive international non-governmental organizations free from corporate interference. Aid also needs to be in the form of grants and not in the form of loans that, no matter how low the interest rates, dig countries deeper into debt and force them to focus on export industries in order to earn the foreign currency needed for repayment. Finally, prior loans must be immediately forgiven, as urged by the Jubilee 2000 movement, so that developing countries can be relieved of the huge burden of debt service they now bear. Such a transfer of resources from North to South is fully warranted in view of the history of transfers of natural and financial resources in the other direction. Only then could these countries begin to focus on the needs of their citizens and build healthy economic actors that could become true trade partners instead of subjects of exploitation.

Kathy Quinn is a member of the National Political Committee of DSA and is on the executive committee of Greater Philadelphia DSA.

Labor Fights Corporate Globalization

Mark Levinson Talks to Joe Schwartz

Perhaps more than any other union in the United States and Canada, UNITE (Union of Needletrades, Industrial, and Textile Employees) is involved in the struggle against exploitative, low-wage production both at home and abroad. They have played a leading role in building international solidarity among unions internationally and building coalitions between trade unionists, environmentalists, students, women's and indigenous people's groups fighting low-wage industrial production around the globe.

Just after the Spring protests in Washington, D.C., against the IMF and World Bank, and in the midst of the fight against granting China permanent normal trade relations, DSA National Political Committee and DL editorial committee member Joseph Schwartz sat down with Mark Levinson, long-time DSAer and senior economist for UNITE, to discuss the politics and strategy of the emerging international movement for global justice.

DL: Tens of thousands of student, environmental, and labor activists protested the policies of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank in Washington, D.C. How are the policies of these institutions detrimental to the interests of both people in the developing world and advanced industrial societies?

ML: Both the IMF and World Bank demand "structural adjustments" as a condition of their loans. These policies promote privatization, cuts in corporate taxes, balanced budget austerity, and gutting of the social safety net, cripple economic growth, hinder economic development, and increase misery and poverty in the developing world. Labor and others affected by these policies have had no say in their implementation.

DL: Last November, both you and your union joined over fifty thousand people protesting the current structure of the World Trade Organization (WTO). How do you see the struggle against the WTO, relating to the fight to create democratic alternatives to the IMF and World Bank?

ML: The struggle against the practices of the IMF and World Bank, on the one hand, and the WTO on the other, are linked in that these institutions all set the rules for the economy. For example, the WTO protects intellectual property rights and patent rights, yet is completely silent on labor rights and environmental standards. These international economic institutions are all involved in setting the rules for the global economy. Currently these rules pro-

tect corporate interests and ignore the interests of labor and the environment. This is as true of the WTO as it is of the World Bank and IMF.

After the WTO Seattle protests, there was an attempt by conservative commentators to drive a wedge between workers in the industrialized countries and workers in the developing world. For example, Paul Krugman, in the *New York Times*, wrote, "it is a sad irony that the cause that has finally awakened the long dormant American left is that of — yes! — denying opportunity to Third World workers." For anyone who is serious about developing an alternative to the WTO, this is a serious challenge. The danger here is that the two major constituencies who are critics of the existing global system — the trade union movement of the advanced industrial democracies and the Non-Governmental Organizations and the workers of the South — will be pitted against one another. If we allow this to happen, it will disenfranchise both groups. It is extremely important that critics of the WTO in industrial nations build alliances and find common ground with unions and human rights activists in the developing countries to make the WTO more accountable, transparent, and supportive of worker rights and environmental protections.

DL: How do you respond to "leaders" of developing countries who in Seattle opposed inclusion of worker rights in the WTO framework?

ML: We have to realize that in developing countries there are different political interests, just as there are in the United States and other industrial nations. Those leaders were not speaking for the interests of workers in their nations. At the labor rally in Seattle, worker representatives from Mexico, the Caribbean, Malaysia, Africa, and China all spoke in support of including labor rights in the WTO and were enthusiastically received. It is hard to find other examples of this type of international solidarity. But I think it grows directly from the realities of the global economy, in which working people in all parts of the world are put into competition with each other in a race-to-the-bottom.

The countries losing out from increasingly bitter competition for a share of the global marketplace are the developing countries which are striving to improve living and working conditions. Thus, the workers who are most affected by India's failure to address child labor in its carpet sector are the exporters in Nepal who are striving to make carpets under good working conditions. Those most affected by the suppression of trade union rights in Indonesia's coal mines are the coal miners in India whose strong trade unions obtain decent wages for them which are then undercut by imports of Indonesian coal. The entire developing world suffers from China's violation of all the core labor standards, enabling it to act as a magnet for transnational corporations to



World Bank doesn't help us.

uproot their production from other developing countries in order to produce at low cost in China's export-oriented "special economic zones." Tackling these problems, which result so demonstrably from globalization, requires action at the global level by the WTO. What about those who simply want to abolish the WTO and other global regulatory institutions?

The problem with this strategy is that I don't see how global capital can be regulated by national institutions alone. We want to preserve a role for national sovereignty and relatively autonomous national economic policy, but we need international institutions, supported by democratic sovereign governments, to regulate international capital.

DL: What else is needed in a democratic international regulatory system?

ML: We need a global financial architecture which supports growth in the global economy. Labor rights is one important component of that. We also need an institutional structure which would support "global Keynesianism," an economic strategy which sees that supporting economic improvement for the world's poor and working classes would in fact be extremely beneficial for the entire global economy, and promote equitable increases in living standards both North and South. This means is that the IMF and World Bank would have

to be democratized and fundamentally change their response to economic crises. Currently, it is the most vulnerable who bare the burden of "adjustment" to current global economic imbalances. That must change. Right now, to rectify trade deficits in the developing world, the IMF and World Bank require massive cuts in social welfare expenditure, exports at all costs, and serious curtailment of domestic consumption. These "adjustments" all come at the expense of the most vulnerable in the developing world. A truly democratic international economic order would require countries in the developed world to import more and bare the adjustment costs. This would not only be more equitable but would help alleviate the massive excess capacity in the global production system which directly contributed to the East Asian economic crisis.

DL: On campuses around the nation, students, including many Young Democratic Socialists — the youth section of the DSA, are involved in fighting against college-logo goods being made in sweatshops. What connections might these students make between the structure of global regulatory institutions and the persistence of sweatshop industries, both abroad and, increasingly, at home?

ML: The rules of the global economy do little or nothing to protect labor rights and raise labor standards. But because the freedom of capital to move is protected, such protections perpetuate the sweatshop system, in which capital is free to search the globe for the lowest wages, most vulnerable workers, and fewest environmental regulations. Let's be clear about one thing: there is nothing wrong with a country attracting investment because it is poor and its wages are low. That country and those workers need jobs. What is not acceptable is for a government in complicity with transnational corporations to artificially suppress wages by denying workers internationally-recognized rights — by which I mean the right to free asso-

ciation, the right to collective bargaining, the abolition of forced and child labor.

DL: Some might say that the fight for "labor rights" is too narrowly focused on the interests of the already organized, those current members of trade unions. In what way are such issues in the interest of the vast majority?

ML: Labor rights are not the solution to all of our global economic problems, but are a necessary precondition to end the brutal race-to-the-bottom of the global economy. There is considerable evidence that where labor rights exist they are a powerful tool to raise living standards and promote more equitable development. Economist Danny Roderick has made the crucial point that countries with democratic institutions, particularly independent trade unions, pay higher wages. In four instances, where military dictatorships replaced democratically elected governments, labor's share of economic output fell dramatically, while in eight other instances where governments moved from authoritarianism to democracy, labor's share increased. For example, Roderick estimates that all else being equal, Mexican workers would receive thirty percent higher wages if they had democratic institutions and truly independent unions.

DL: The entire AFL-CIO, and your union in particular, made a major push against Congress establishing permanent normal trade relations (PNTR) with China? Why is preventing "normalized" trade with China of interest to working people worldwide?

ML: The fight against PNTR for China is the fight for worker rights in the global economy. It's not just about China, it's about the WTO and the rules for the global economy. China is among the worst violators of labor rights, and advancing the pro-corporate globalization agenda hinges on getting China into the WTO. Not only will that insure that the WTO never makes progress on labor rights, it will also guarantee that

transnational corporate investment in China will be protected by WTO rules. And, of course, as of now, there are no labor rights components in the WTO.

Putting pressure on China to support labor rights is crucial to support workers in China, hundreds of millions of whom are terribly exploited — and thousands of whom have been imprisoned for trying to form independent unions. This struggle is also crucial to the fate of millions of workers around the world who must compete with workers in China who are denied the most basic human and labor rights. There has been a tremendous amount of spontaneous labor unrest in China, in response to the inegalitarian economic reforms. The Chinese government has zero tolerance for independent trade union organization or activity; even attempting to organize a union will land one with a lengthy prison term and put one's life in danger. The world trading system simply can't tolerate these kinds of abuses.

DL: What does this mean for the corporate global agenda?

ML: This is exactly what they want: a huge labor force with no rights, the existence of which will be used to undercut labor standards around the world. Remember, this is a country of 1.2 billion people, whose future will significantly influence the fate of workers in the entire developing world.

We all have an interest in Chinese workers raising their living standards, given the weight of China in the world economy and its role in export production. External pressure on China to end the brutal denial of even the most minimal workers' rights is a crucial tool for influencing a regime which if left to its own devices will continue to be one of the most anti-labor regimes in the world.

DL: Some on the left worry that the struggle against PNTR for China may degenerate into xenophobic appeals to keep out goods made by "cheap Asian labor?" What effort is the labor movement making

to prevent such fears from becoming a reality?

ML: We've been clear from the beginning that the issue in this campaign is support of economic globalization which benefits workers or operates for the benefit of corporations and narrow elites. I think the trade union movement, with few exceptions, understands that we need to make common cause with workers around the world. If we don't do that there will never be an alternative to the corporate global agenda. That means that the US trade union movement should support increased market access for countries that do respect worker rights.

DL: A standard criticism of the left is that we know what we oppose, but we fail to offer feasible alternatives. Could you sketch out what a democratic alternative regulatory mechanism for governing the international economy would look like?

ML: First of all, we need a global trading system in which representatives of workers have an influential seat at the table and in which labor rights are as important as property and investment rights. More than that, we need to construct new democratic international economic regulatory institutions which would fulfill Keynes' original vision for the global economy after World War II. This might mean a radical reform or reconstitution of such institutions as the IMF and World Bank. Keynes' original vision involved a leveling-up of global living standards in which more prosperous, surplus-producing nations' policies facilitated, rather than denied, an enhancement of living standards and labor rights in developing nations.

We also need mechanisms to regulate the enormous international capital flows, and structures that don't put the burden of adjustment to imbalances in the global economy upon poorer nations. The surplus countries — those with trade and capital surpluses — should be importing more and expanding their levels of public provision and invest-

ment rather than demanding that developing nations gut their levels of public provision, privatize, balance their budget, and warp their economy towards primarily export-oriented production to get their payments in balance.

DL: Besides being a trade union researcher and strategist, you've been an open and active democratic socialist for your entire adult life. You helped found the DSOC Youth Section in 1977, and served on the NPC from 1981-1993. You are also an editor of Dissent. Is there anything unique that socialists — and democratic socialist parties and organizations — bring to the struggle for global justice?

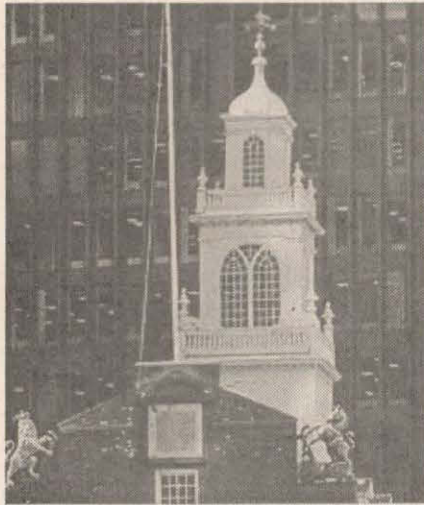
ML: The socialist movement has always stressed the need for democratic structural change. We need it in the US and also in the global economy. What Mike Harrington taught me was that one had to connect the long-run vision to today's practical politics. We need to understand the type of global institutions we want so we can fashion immediate reforms that move us in that direction. Even though any given reform by itself may be insufficient to achieve global democracy. A socialist analytic framework enables one to see that structural transformation of the world's economic and political system is what's at stake, not simply beating up on bad corporations.

Furthermore, socialists know that what is at stake is the distribution of power between corporate elites and ordinary citizens. That means democratic forces have to influence the policies of nation-states and build international solidarity among social movements, progressive nation-states and regional blocs, such as the European Union. Socialists bring an insight into the very nature of the social structure of power we are fighting and a vision of how international solidarity is needed if we are to democratize the economic structures which govern our daily lives.

DSA Activism at the Grassroots

BOSTON

Boston DSA's biggest ongoing project is the Working Family Agenda, a state-wide coalition effort to raise the minimum wage — which passed the State House with help from



former Boston DSA Chair, State Representative Jim Marzilli. Boston DSA also organizes with housing project activists in Somerville, where our members go door-to-door, and try to get out the vote. In addition, local holds monthly talks on different aspects of the global economy, including recent presentations with Barry Bluestone on "Wall Street vs. Main Street;" a discussion of genetic engineering and corporate agriculture; and a meeting on "Global Warming: the Heat Is On." These forums are listed in Boston DSA's bi-monthly newsletter, *Yankee Radical*, which has been regularly published now for over thirty years.

Boston DSA held its annual party and reception for City Councilors it has endorsed, and a forum with members active in unions. In June, we will be having a fundraising dinner featuring Bob Haynes, President of the state AFL-CIO, with whom we frequently work.

Local Contact: Harris Gruman, (617-354-5078).

CHICAGO

Chicago DSA organized members and friends to participate in the April IMF-WB demonstrations in Washington. Chicago is one of the cities around the country where follow up demonstrations are scheduled. A weekend of educational activities is also being developed. With the Open University of the Left, an informal collection of organizations and individuals with whom Chicago DSA has developed a close working relationship.

Chicago DSA's large annual Debs-Thomas-Harrington Dinner will gather the city's broad left in one place, for the fortieth year in a row, while our new Queer Commission has been quite active in protesting anti-gay violence in Chicago. Some of this involves picket lines outside of businesses that have a record of tolerating such behavior. The local also raised money for the campaign against the Knight initiative in California.

The University of Chicago Young Democratic Socialists have continued their work in the Anti-Sweatshop Coalition. The campaign to get the University to adopt a responsible monitoring process for the goods it sells should be coming to a head. The YDS chapter has also been active in the Student Labor Action Project, and with financial assistance from Chicago DSA, sent several van loads of students to the YDS Fight Back Conference at the University of Delaware — and from there to the April 16th demonstrations in DC. With some hard work, we may see several new YDS chapters in Chicago by this time next year.

Local Contact: Bob Roman (robertmroman@earthlink.net).

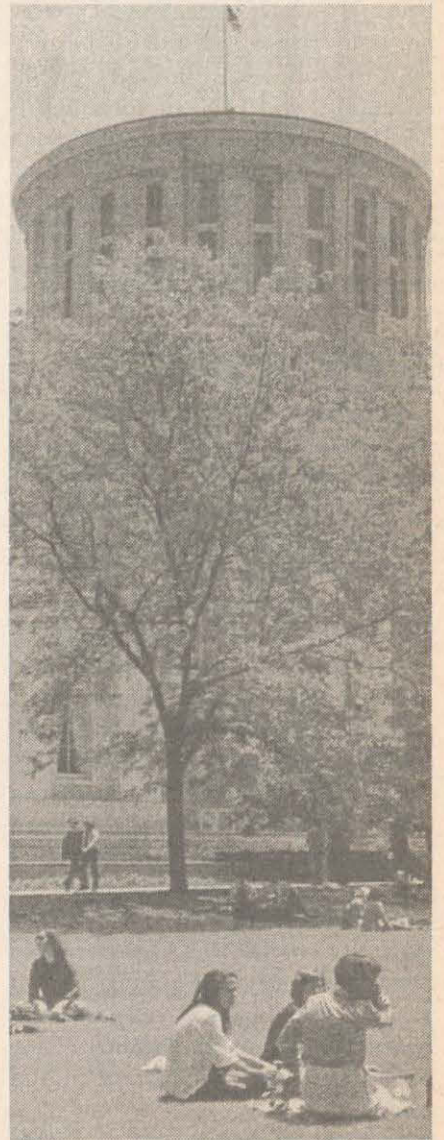
COLUMBUS/CENTRAL OHIO

1999 was a good year for Democratic Socialists of Central Ohio. Our annual Debs-Thomas-Harrington

Awards dinner was successful. It help finance our activities in support of the Farm Labor Organizing Committee (AFL-CIO) in their boycott of Mt. Olive Pickle Co.

The local continues to build a living wage coalition, and sponsor annual International Women's Day and May Day events.

We have active members, and monthly meeting attendance averages twenty people. Our Activist Committee is developing a strategic plan to enact a Living Wage ordinance and identifying other local struggles in



which DSCO should be present. We hope to initiate two local demonstrations this year as a follow-up to the energy unleashed in Seattle and Washington. A main priority in 2000 will be to increase our complement of activists and develop a new member education program to provide the training and skills people need to become self-confident activists.

*Local Contact: George Boas
(georgenancy@earthlink.net;
614) 297-0710).*

METRO DETROIT

Detroit DSA is organizing for electoral work this summer and fall. We are coordinating efforts with the state Democratic Party to retake the state legislature from the Republicans. We consider this effort critical not only because we have a reactionary governor who wishes to make Michigan a right-to-work state, dismantle public education, and prevent meaningful healthcare reform, but also because the next legislature will determine how Michigan's Congressional districts are drawn.

*Local Contact: David Green
(DSAGreen@aol.com).*

GREATER PHILADELPHIA

Philadelphia DSA played host to DSA's National Political Committee, and staged a reception at the AFSCME district council with activists from other progressive organizations. GP-DSA's recent large public outreach event was a well-attended, "Real Discussion of Poverty" forum, which featured a panel of local notables, including a city councilman, a radio host, and several political leaders. The forum, part of a national DSA initiative to respond to President Clinton's tepid "initiatives" on poverty and race, featured a discussion of how the structure of capitalism increases and perpetuates poverty. Attendees also viewed a clip from the recent film *Michael Harrington and Today's Other America* (a video cassette is available from the national office for local house parties and public meetings).

The local holds regular bi-monthly membership meetings (open to the public) with a speaker on an activist issue in which members can then become involved. Recent speakers have included a Green Party candidate for City Council; an organizer getting out the vote in poor communities; and City Council staff opposed to public funding of stadiums for private teams, an issue in which a number of local members have been heavily involved.

GP-DSA helped organize an anti-sweatshop rally outside Banana Republic and at the Gap, on the anniversary of the Triangle Shirtwaist Fire.

The Philadelphia DSA banner, with fist-and-rose logo, garnered CNN camera time during coverage of the April 16th DC demos.

Philadelphia DSA co-sponsors the Independent Media Center of Philadelphia, which recently showed *The Battle in Seattle*, featuring YDS staff organizer Daraka Larimore-Hall as the final speaker/image in the film. 150 people attended the screening.

GP-DSA has also been instrumental in the recent re-election of Philadelphia's two progressive City Council members; an anti-sweatshop resolution, and a death penalty moratorium resolution.

Local Contact: John Hogan, Co-Chair (jhogan@law.penn.edu).

SACRAMENTO VALLEY

Sacramento DSAers returned from the national convention determined to implement our organizational goal of re-building DSA locals. In that spirit, our local played host to a Hate Crimes Panel at California State University, and supported African-American faculty who had received bomb threats. A student group

emerged from these efforts which has become a campus DSA chapter. A key part of our work was to focus on defeating Proposition 21, the anti-youth "Juvenile Justice Initiative," and Proposition 22, an initiative banning state legal recognition of gay and lesbian marriages. Our local provided the Sacramento area core of the "No on Proposition 21" campaign and major contributions to the "No on Proposition 22" campaigns. Information on these campaigns is on the web site www.dsausa.org/antiracism

When we take on a campaign, we try to build a DSA recruitment plan into our work.

*Local Contact: Duane Campbell,
Chair (campd227@pacbell.net).*

SAN DIEGO

San Diego DSA is involved in two particularly significant coalitions. The DSA-inspired WTO Alert Coalition, a continuation of the MAI Alert, meets regularly and is drawing increasing numbers of people. We recently presented the film *Showdown in Seattle* in area libraries, and sent several people across the continent to the IMF/World Bank demonstrations in Washington, DC.

Since mid-February, we have been meeting with other Left organizations to talk about building a more ethnically and racially diverse left in the region. This resulted in a speaker tour of campuses, and recruitment of young people, including several Asian-American students from UCSD, to DSA. The group is planning a public forum with name speaker to discuss, from a socialist perspective, a topic relevant to a diverse community. One of our priorities is to address how to come out as a publicly-identified so-

Democratic Left would love to hear from any active DSA locals, organizing committees, and Young Democratic Socialists chapters about their activities. Send a short, pithy report, along with contact information for our readers, to Solveig Wilder, Managing Editor, *Democratic Left*, at DSA, 180 Varick St., NY, NY 10014 or e-mail her (attention: DL Editor) at dsa@dsausa.org We want to hear from every organized DSA group, no matter how small or fledgling - or large and powerful!

Special thanks to Greater Philadelphia DSA Chair Kathy Quinn, whose printshop provided the large national DSA delegation at the Washington IMF/WB rallies with photogenic DSA placards.

cialist. Other socialist organizations are often less shy about being open about who they are, even though DSA's political orientation may well be more attractive to a broad range of citizens.

Local Contact: Virginia Franco
(vfranco@inetworld.net).

TWIN CITIES

Twin Cities DSA co-sponsored "May Day 2000: College Students, Labor Movements, Political Action," a conference at Anoka Ramsey Community College. DSA National Director Horace Small was the highlight of this event, and DSA had a literature table. Other speakers included Billie Davenport, President, Teamsters Local Union 2000, and Mary Rosenthal, State Director for the National AFL-CIO. Our local is meeting monthly, and seems to expand gradually. To get the word out, TC-DSA is in the process of putting together a modest newsletter.

Local Contact: Dan Frankot
(mndsa@hotmail.com).

Twin Cities DSA is one of several locals that are in the process of rejuvenation. We urge any members who wish to revive a local or start a new one to contact the national office for information, literature, and assistance.



Over 100 YDSers attended the recent youth conference at the University of Delaware.

LETTERS / continued from page 3

To the Editor:

It was quite a fascinating juxtaposition to find Paul Buhle's "Tragedy and Hope in Labor" in the "Ideas for the New Century" issue of *Democratic Left*. Buhle's essay had nothing to say about the crucial issues facing the American labor movement in the coming years.

If this issue of *Democratic Left* was indeed a "millennium issue that would present ideas from luminaries of the Left on the Prospects for Democratic Socialism," couldn't the editors find someone who was actually involved in the labor movement to address one or two of the many strategic issues it faces today? In an era when the emerging knowledge-based economy is establishing a new system of production, surpassing industrial capitalism, and marginalizing industrial unions, was there no one who might have written on what form post-industrial knowledge-based unions might take? In an ever more tightly integrated global economy, was there no one who might have written on how to develop meaningful, transnational solidarity among labor?

LEO CASEY

(United Federation of Teachers)
Brooklyn, N.Y.

Dear Leo:

There were two nice articles on labor in Part II of the Millennium Issues by David Moberg and Arthur Shostak.

And there's good news: More DSA members and alumni of DSA's Youth Section are moving up through the administrative and organizing reaches of AFL-CIO international unions, and global labor solidarity groups, than ever in recent memory. The bad news, however, is that many of them are constrained by their employers in what they can write for publication.

It has been DSA's position that the new 'Greeny-Sweeney' revitalized labor movement, of which we consider ourselves the supportive, participating left troops, is still at a huge disadvantage given the mobility and vi-

sciousness of global capital. So finding the inspiring, dynamic new reproducible organizing models — and there are some — is not so easy.

However, your challenge Brother Casey, *should* be met. DL's Editorial Committee vows to find and publish more articles on innovative transnational labor strategies.

Dear Editors:

Just wanted to tell you that the "Millennium Issue Part Two" of *Democratic Left* was the best issue I can remember. Finally, a series of articles about Socialism and what it means in the current era. I hope you'll do more of these articles, especially articles relating to currently relevant socialist economic alternatives, rather than limiting the publication to the kind of single-issue or social welfare articles that usually appear.

CHUCK FLIPPO
Alexandria, VA

Dear DSA:

What exactly do you do and are you doing? I get letters throughout the year asking for money.

As an AFDC mom, your annual dues are out-of-reach. Many low and fixed income people barely eat and survive. How about a low-income sliding scale membership (\$5 to \$20)? We need to organize welfare moms and dads.

RANDI DALTON
Laytonville, CA

Dear Randi:

Consider yourself a DSA member in good standing. Thanks to DSA sponsors, sustainers, and lifetime members, DSA does not have to exclude *anyone* on account of income. We have quite a few members who are financially strapped, are on public assistance, or shut away by the prison-industrial complex. We even recently had a member join who is homeless.

A Democratic Left Interview with DSA National Director Horace Small

Playing To Win

DL editorial committee member Charity Crouse, editor of *Streetwise*, NPC member, and co-chair of DSA's Queer Commission, recently interviewed DSA national director Horace Small. Horace has been on the job since late June 1999. He has brought energy and enthusiasm to the job, and has inspired many DSAers around the country.

DL: *What qualifies you to lead DSA?*

HS: For me social change is not a job, it's a lifestyle, and I've been doing it since I was 14 when I co-founded Students Against the War, a Philadelphia high-school group and one of the biggest high school anti-war organizations in the nation. My whole adult life since then has been devoted to organizing — issues organizing, community organizing, labor organizing. I've won campaigns: beat the NRA with an assault weapons ban in Philadelphia, and I was a leader in the campaign for the first mortgage assistance bill in this country. I know what it takes to get people fired up and mobilized. I know how to bring diverse communities together. I know how to make things happen.

DL: *How did you come to identify as a socialist?*

HS: As Organizing Director for the Philadelphia Unemployment Project (PUP) from the late 70's to mid-80's many of the campaigns we focused on always tried to move legislation, to make real lasting change. It doesn't take long to sit in public meetings with corporate heads and find out that they have no soul and no compassion for working-class people, for poor people, when all we're trying to do is fight for decency and simple human justice.

DL: *What hooked you into DSA?*

HS: What always appealed to me about DSA was the fact that they talked about an egalitarian society, giving people ownership, workers' control, and a sense of democracy. I jumped into that like a fish into water. One of my dearest friends has

been for the better part of 20 years Stan Shapiro [of Greater Philadelphia DSA]. Stan would always give me info on DSA when I was frustrated with general politics, or material on Mike Harrington, or give me some position papers that had been written. I came to DSA from a very deep sense of right and wrong, and Stan Shapiro helped educate me.

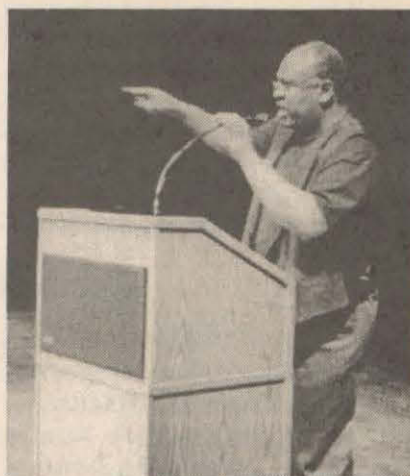
DL: *What are some of the challenges facing DSA?*

HS: Unfortunately, one of the challenges we have as an organization is that we are racially and 'genderedly' challenged. We have not figured out how to talk to people that don't look like us. We have not made the kind of inroads we need to make in black and Latino communities, Asian communities, and gay communities.

The challenge for us is to develop clear and specific plans, ideas and programs that appeal to them. We are working to create those programs. Our commissions have been empowered to do things and go out and publicly develop ideas and programs to reach out to these particular communities.

I also think that we have not marketed ourselves well enough to be able to talk effectively to mainstream America about cooperative economics, about worker ownership and control. Americans will buy into it, poor working people will buy into it if they can be reached. Another challenge for us is developing the next generation of organizers, so that the struggle can continue. We're trying to do that with the Michael Harrington Institute.

DL: *What do you envision for the Harrington Institute?*



Horace at Socialist Scholars 2000.

ROGER LEISNER, RADIO FREE MAINE

HS: Through the Harrington Institute we will begin to start training many of the Left's activists and grassroots leaders in various specific technical skills that will give people the opportunity to do what Stan Shapiro did many years ago — introduce individuals to DSA and its ideas, and show how very open and comfortable DSAers are to work with.

DL: *What type of leadership role can DSA play in rebuilding the left?*

HS: The Left's been sick and if we're really going to work for justice then it's incumbent upon us to find out how to make it well. Leadership is giving people the skills that they need to stand up for themselves. We need to be able to lead and influence discussion on issues that affect Americans. We need to be able to say what our position on rebuilding urban America is. We need to be able to articulate what our position is in rebuilding the educational system in this country. We have to be able to start doing more media work, spending more

time marketing ourselves.

DL: What place do locals have in DSA's strategic plan?

HS: We are not a national organization unless we take care of our locals. Until they rebuild we can never really be effective. I have the sense that we still want to be an activist organization — that's where our power comes from and where our members live. We need to help them identify their problems, help with planning, identify fundraising needs and provide them with the leadership they need to go forward.

I meet regionally with heads of locals so we can develop strategies that are relevant to particular locals. We have to be looked upon as able partners to local progressive organizations looking to create change to build a network of workable coalitions.

DL: What does it take to make coalitions work?

HS: For organizations to successfully work in coalition, there has to be some real clarity as to what each organization is willing to do. You also need to recognize that you're not going to agree on everything and everybody does this for whatever particular institutional or self-interest they have. There are some people within coalitions with absolutely no problem starting down the police, and you'll have some people who have a lot of problems with that. So, before coalitions are formed there have to be some things that are understood ahead of time.

DL: How do we engage more young people in DSA?

HS: Reaching out to young people is DSA's highest priority. I think that right now the youth section, YDS, is being building on our very early, credible role promoting a global trade/fairness agenda, and playing a key part in the worldwide challenge to corporate power.

We also have to start organizing young people beyond college cam-

pus, and figure out how to get past the class stuff between the working kids and the college kids. I want to make sure that we hire an organizer to work with young people who work in the retail chair store down the street, who don't have a college degree, who may not have finished high school, and who hang out in the malls.

DL: How do we recruit more members into our organization?

HS: Recognize that people get involved in organizations for one reason and one reason only: self-interest. There's this fallacy that if our positions are correct people are just going to flock in from all over the place. It doesn't happen like that. People become members of an organization either because you provide them with a service, they think that you organization can have some ultimate impact

on the political process. In that sense DSA is a long-term investment. But DSAers have to get in people's faces, go out and table, speak as out-of-the-closet democratic socialists. If we're serious about upping DSA membership levels, we have to recruit new blood, and reactivate our large retiree contingent — while simultaneously addressing the socialist baby boom so that our 30s/40s DSA age cohort can find a way to be active while providing childcare and juggling work. I hope that we mobilize effective members that can move an agenda forward, who can do things with skill and aren't afraid to lose and take risks.

DL: What do you see as DSA's long-term goal?

HS: Comfort the afflicted, afflict the comfortable, play to win!

DSAAN WANTS YOU!

DSA ACTIVISTS NETWORK

We are actively recruiting volunteer members to assist the national staff in ongoing DSA projects.

We need to utilize your skills — wherever you live in the United States.

Contact I. Epstein at DSA:
dsa@dsausa.org

Rockin' the Boat

BY ROBERT SAUTE

The eighteenth annual Socialist Scholars Conference took place in New York before about 1,800 participants from more than a dozen countries. The Conference theme was "Rockin' the Boat: Building Coalitions for a New Century," but the haunting specter this year was globalization.

Meeting right before the Washington, DC mobilization against the International Monetary Fund and World Bank, the weekend panels and plenaries focused on resistance to global corporate domination. The Union for Radical Political Economics, *Dollars & Sense*, *Monthly Review*, *New Political Science*, New York Student Environmental Action Coalition and community college students all held panels analyzing the economics and politics of the integration of trade and investment. Gone were the sterile debates of past years over the whether globalism was a new phenomenon or just another name for imperialism.

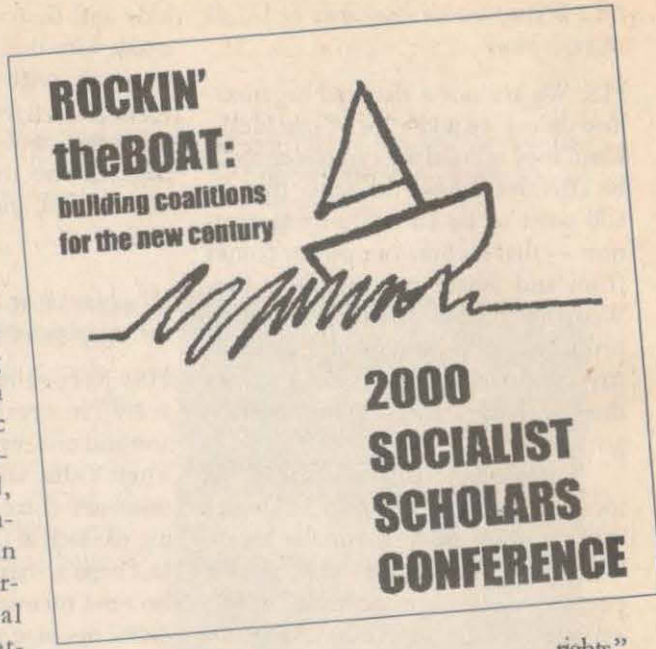
CUNY DSA, the primary organizer of the Conference, sponsored major sessions that included DSA Vice-chair Frances Fox Piven, DSA NPC member and Temple professor Joseph Schwartz, Julie Eisenhardt of the Johns Hopkins Student Labor Coalition, speaking to a large audience on the subject of What Next? Organizing Strategies and Tactics for a Humane Globalism. Drawing on her experience as one of the leading strategists of the welfare rights movement, and analyst of social movements, Fran Piven pointed out that the usual way of organizing, individual by individual, to build enduring institutions, join in majority coalitions, and thereby deliver

votes, doesn't work. The social victories that U.S. labor won in the 1930s came about by threatening workplace disruption and the Democratic coalition. New movements, Piven said, "can do what conventional movements can never do." While parties in our political duopoly achieve voting majorities by appealing to the middle ground and doing nothing, "protest movements thrive on conflict. In-your-face politics, like those in Seattle, make social movements grow and encourage mass defiance — the only way that our issues can enter mainstream political discourse and lead to concessions."

Joe Schwartz spoke of how the new campus activism has an ideology of "militant laborism" rather than socialism. He stressed that Left activism can bring its ideological outlook to the anti-globalism movement: "We must build a movement allied with labor, but not submerged in it. We must push for the revitalization and democratization of the public sector as a form of redistribution of life opportunities. . . We need militancy around citizens

rights." Julie Eisenhardt stressed the need for a "humane globalism," but also asked whether coalitions necessarily lead to political compromise. "With our money-soaked political system, the old electoral model of social change is increasingly irrelevant." Recounting her participation in the victorious campaign for a living wage at Johns Hopkins, she pointed out that students now direct their anger at corporations and institutions — not simply conservative politicians. "We should appreciate partial victories," she added and advised DSA activist to "keep 'em guessing."

"The Battle After Seattle: Globalization and Its Discontents" featured Medea Benjamin executive director of Global Exchange, David Abdulah of the Oilfield Workers Trade Union of Trinidad and To-



Labor Chorus leads off.

ROGER LEISNER, RADIO FREE MAINE

bago, Hector Figueroa of the SEIU, and Mark Seddon from the executive committee of Britain's Labour Party. Three of the speakers addressed the challenges and importance of organizing against a seemingly invincible international force at the local level. Figueroa reminded the audience that immigrants will be a crucial component of any coalition fighting for a just globalism. Benjamin spoke of channeling grass roots movements for global justice into battles that are directed at local institutions and are winnable, such as the anti-sweatshop campaigns being waged at universities across the country, and the pressure campaign against Starbucks to promote less exploitative trading agreements. Mark Seddon traced how Thatcherism prepared the way ideologically and politically for the imposition of neoliberalism. His equally pointed criticisms of "Third Way" politics emphasized that domestic politics still matter. David Abdulah eloquently questioned the rhetoric of free trade and democracy that the United States has championed in its quest for global control. He added a bit of reality when he recounted that "Trinidad had a greater degree of internal democracy thirty years before the United States granted all its citizens the right to vote."

Five fresh voices, all immigrants, presented their reactions to globalism in "Students Confront Globalization." The issue that most

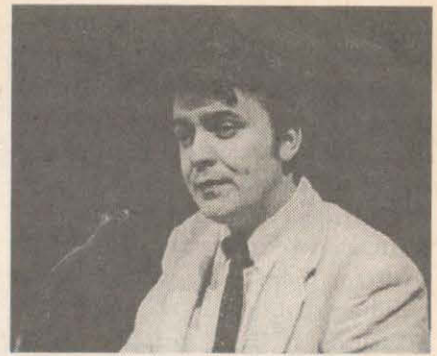


*Bhairavi Desai:
Organizing immigrants a priority.*

disturbed them was the ecological destruction that comes in the wake of neo-liberal policies. Conference co-chair Peter Kott found them inspiring, "this is what makes the Conference worth doing. A new generation of political activists is being born, and the Conference gives them a chance to be heard. It gives us the chance to learn from them."

Opening Plenary

The Friday plenary attracted an audience of hundreds, hearing the large NYC Labor Chorus (with DSA members) sing classic union songs, followed by DSA National Director Horace Small who chaired the meeting with Robin Kelley, NYU historian and cultural critic, and Steffi Woolhandler, co-founder of Physicians for a National Health Program, and Harvard Medical School professor, on the promise of building coalitions around health care. She cited the single-payer health care as probably the only issue in politics where the Left and the American people are in agreement. Tariq Ali, *New Left Review* editor, and veteran British New Leftist, addressed the importance of values in building coalitions, particularly excoriating the hypocrisy that accompanied the holding of Elian Gonzalez, likening it to kidnapping.



*Mark Seddon,
U.K. Labour National Executive.*

Mark Seddon, executive committee member of the British Labour Party, was upbeat, noting with surprise that there "seem to be so many socialists in the heart of American capitalism, so close to Wall Street but so far in spirit." He chided the audience for not being more ambitious. "Don't worry about rocking the boat; why not sink it."

Conference co-founder and

NO MORE PRISONS TOUR

"The antiprison message is capital S serious, but the beats are as heavy as the politics"

- Details Magazine, 9/99

Prison Moratorium Project and *Raptivism Records* are sponsoring a **NO MORE PRISONS** "raptivist" tour, featuring experienced young prison activists and artists from the Hip Hop CD. The goal of the tour is to raise awareness, train students and youth to get involved, and promote our message. Our artists and activists are available for conferences, workshops, trainings, spoken-word performances and hip hop shows.

For more information, contact:

Kate Rhee or Kevin Pranis

PMP c/o DSA

180 Varick Street, 12th Floor

New York, NY 10014

krhee@mindspring.com

www.nomoreprisons.org

chair Bogdan Denitch reminded us of why we are socialists: "Despite the demoralization and conservatism that has set in in the social democratic parties of western Europe, so distant from their socialist foundations that Bernstein and Kautsky would be considered far leftists in them today, we have to put building democratic socialist organizations at the forefront of our agenda. Regardless of how militant the labor movement might become or how powerful single issue campaigns might be, without a socialist movement that can affect political power, we will be condemned to fighting the same battles over and over. Political power grants permanence to our victories."

Bhairavi Desai, a diminutive, twenty-something organizer of New York City taxi drivers, moved all with her tales of the determination and moxie that immigrant cabbies bring to their fight for justice — face-to-face with ugly xenophobia, class prejudice, and the nations most vindictive mayor.

More Culture, Fewer Cults

Monthly Review sponsored a well attended panel on culture and contemporary capitalism with Marshall Berman and Robert McChesney. In your face publishers Soft Skull Press asked "Can There Be a Resurgent Left-Wing Culture?" Utopian visions with bite were the topic of a panel on science fiction and socialism organized by DSA. Authors Terry Bisson, *Bears Discover Fire*, and Michael Swanwick, *Stations of the Tide*, joined Rutgers professor H. Bruce Franklin and Australian critic Justine Larbalestier. *Nation* UN correspondent and NY DSAer Ian Williams reported that the people at the panel were excited by the fact that "Sci-fi allows one to try out our ideas. Most socialist utopianism is boring, conflict-free, nothing to work out. Sci-fi adds back some of the clash of ideas, interests, reintroduces evil." Next year we hope there will be other panels on detective fiction, movies, maybe sports.

The 2000 conference featured the New York theatrical premiere of Howard Zinn's play *Marx in Soho*. Brian Jones, an LA-based actor and activist, performed powerfully as a time-warped Karl Marx who finds himself in the 20th century Soho of New York instead of 19th century London.

The Socialist Scholars Conference has always been an open forum for ideas on the Left. We have never excluded those with whom we disagree. In the past, that has too frequently meant wading through a swamp of sectarian cults. Of course, the Spartacist League was there, as were the 'any friend of Milosevic is a friend of ours' groupuscles, but they seemed ever more irrelevant. Workers World recycled last years "Truth About Kosovo" panel, reducing the tragic war in the Balkans to a Manichean morality play between US imperialism and an almost pristine socialist opposition. Their panel gives support to Marx's aphorism about history repeating itself, first as tragedy then as farce.

Bright Spots

The conference sported hopeful signs for a revitalized Left, with an appreciable increase in young people, the Student Environmental Action Coalition. SEAC is not a socialist group, but they have organized students in a wide range of colleges to protest ecological destruction and have advocated for a broad agenda of social justice goals. We were proud to have them with us and hope to work with them in the future.

Tariq Ali remarked that the Socialist Scholars Conference is a vital part of the "internationalization of the struggle of against cor-

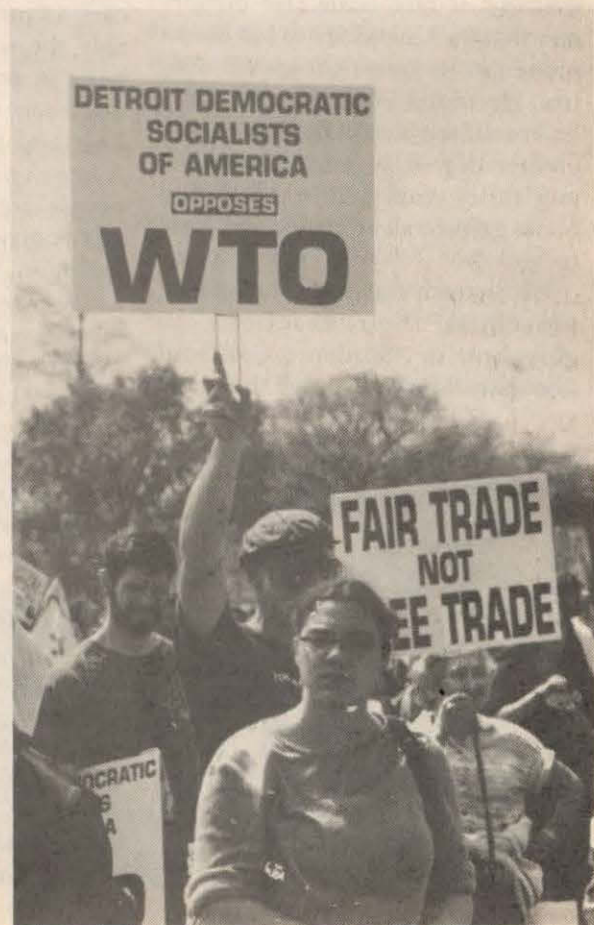
porate globalism: Europe was heartened by the American people's resistance in Seattle. This conference represents a piece of that struggle." Despite the differences that exist on the Left, reflected in sharp debates ("U.S. Intervention is [N]ever Justified"), "the Conference is a space where debate can go on in a spirit of cooperation.

Next year in New York!

Robert Sauté is a doctoral student in sociology at the City University of New York Graduate Center and is co-author of The Part-Time Paradox.

DSA thanks Rob for his years of dedicated work on the SSC, and we wish him well in his impending nuptials.

Thanks to John Mason, Ian Williams and Jason Schulman for their assistance in preparing this article.



Carlo Rosselli: Socialist Heretic and Antifascist Exile

Stanislao Pugliese in Conversation with Solveig Wilder

Throughout my years as an activist, I have often been struck by the realization that I am reinventing the wheel. That realization became particularly acute as I read Carlo Rosselli: *Socialist Heretic and Antifascist Exile* (Harvard University Press, 1999). Rosselli, an Italian socialist intellectual and activist during the years between World War I and World War II, devoted his entire life and considerable fortune to the anti-fascist struggles against Mussolini, Hitler, and Franco. He and his brother, Nello, were eventually

assassinated in 1938 for their work in anti-fascist movements. Such is the stuff of heroes, of course, and not ordinary activists like you and me. But many activists today will surely see themselves in Rosselli as he grapples with Marxism, criticizes the ineffectiveness of the left, and desperately tries to develop new theories and movements that had a real chance of defeating the right. I discussed this with author and DSA member Stanislao Pugliese.

DL: Why did you write a biography about Carlo Rosselli?

SP: In 1991 I was a CUNY graduate student in search of a dissertation topic. Since my field was twentieth-century Italy, I first thought about fascism. On reflection, I decided that while there is still much to say about fascism, little work had been done on Italian anti-fascism in the United States. One group that stood out as anti-fascists was Carlo Rosselli's Justice and Liberty, part of a heterogeneous underground intellectual movement that included Primo Levi, Cesare Pavese and Leone Ginzburg. Rosselli was a charismatic, dynamic, immensely sympathetic character with a dramatic life. I felt that a biography on Rosselli would not only introduce an important figure to an American audience, but that it could help to introduce readers to this critical chapter in Italian history.

DL: The book is written in an accessible and engaging fashion. At times, however, you seem to presume some familiarity with Italian history and culture. Did you have a particular audience in mind when you wrote this book?

SP: This was a major problem: I wanted the book to be as accessible as possible, yet it still had to be a rigorous reading of twentieth-century Italian history. There is nothing inherently contradictory about this; the

problem arises because the history of Italian fascism and anti-fascism is not so well known in the United States. In fact, the book is being translated into Italian but this will require some revision because I had an American reader in mind while writing. Or rather I should say I had several "ideal" readers in mind. There was, of course, the person who regularly reads Democratic Left, The Nation, Dissent, the Village Voice, and the alternative press in general. Then there was the "intellectual" perusing the pages of the New York Review of Books, the New York Times book review, and scholarly journals, and also general readers interested in historical biography and a "good read." Admittedly, this isn't beach reading; one reviewer wrote that the book is "demandingly dense." It is a dramatic human story with tragic overtones, one that might inspire DSA youth section members, or graduate students, to study the people and ideas of Italian anti-fascism.

DL: Rosselli was frustrated by the sectarianism, divisiveness, rigidity, dogmatism, determinism, paralysis, and impotence of the left. He urged not only a revision of Marxism, but a "total repudiation without pity." Toward this end, Rosselli linked the values of collectivism and individualism into a synthesis he called Liberal Socialism. He elaborated on this perspective in numerous journals, and in the postulates of his anti-fas-



Carlo Rosselli

cist organization, Justice and Liberty. Can you explain briefly and simply what this theory was about?

SP: Rosselli had a profound admiration for Marx. He wrote that Marxism had penetrated the consciousness of the modern individual to such an extent that "we are all, in a certain sense, Marxists." But Marxism for Rosselli failed because it was a deterministic philosophy and not humanistic (there is no indication that Rosselli had read the 1844 manuscripts). Socialism, in the end, was a form of humanism for Rosselli. It

was not the socialization of the means of production nor the proletariat in power nor simple material equality. For Rosselli, "Socialism, grasped in its essential aspect, is the progressive actualization of the principle of liberty and justice among men." Liberals refused to accept that liberalism could and should evolve into socialism; orthodox socialists and Marxists refused to accept the sacrosanct status of the individual. Rosselli agreed with traditional socialists and orthodox Marxists that socialism should be conceived as the concrete movement for the emancipation of the proletariat. Where he differed was in his view that socialism was "liberalism in action" and his belief that socialism "means that liberty comes into the life of poor people." Some traditional socialists and orthodox Marxists scorned the civil and political freedoms associated with classic liberalism, but to Rosselli these were necessary to maintain socialism's humanistic character. Without them, socialism degenerates into the dictatorship of the party (not the proletariat) and oppression.

DL: Liberal Socialism was chided by numerous theorists as being "bourgeois," "an oxymoron," an attempt to "reconcile the irreconcilable," "hypocritical," "pseudointellectual," "inconsistent," "paradoxical," and "hazy." Was there any legitimacy to these criticisms?

SP: And those were the polite criticisms! Even Rosselli's admirers are reluctant to claim any originality for his political theories. They are being too humble, however. No one else at the time was making the same arguments. In the context of his day — with classic nineteenth-century liberalism and socialism seen as bitter enemies — his theory of a liberal socialism did indeed seem paradoxical or oxymoronic. Yet it was neither pseudointellectual nor inconsistent.

DL: Rosselli's greatest heresy was that he rejected many aspects of class analysis. He argued that "not all members of the bourgeoisie were exploiters" and that "there were segments of the bourgeoisie that could and

did act as catalysts for the development of liberty." An alliance should therefore be forged "between the proletariat and the enlightened elements of the bourgeoisie." In addition, Rosselli believed that fascism "was not simply class reaction but moral crisis, a human crisis, and crisis of civilization." How well do you think this analysis holds?

SP: Rosselli did not completely reject the element of class in his analysis of fascism. He recognized that the ruling class in Italy — the industrialists, the military, the Catholic Church and the bourgeoisie, supported fascism as a defense of their social and economic privileges. But even a cursory study of history would reveal that the "enlightened bourgeoisie" could be, and sometimes was, a catalyst for liberty and justice. The very leadership of the leftist parties in Europe was evidence of this. Except for the Italian anarchists, led by the worker Errico Malatesta, all the leftist parties were organized and directed by "bourgeois intellectuals." Even Antonio Gramsci came from a petit-bourgeois family. In retrospect, I think Rosselli's analysis of fascism holds up rather well. Even Benedetto Croce, who admired Rosselli yet strongly criticized the concept of a liberal socialism, eventually moved from an analysis of fascism as a "parenthesis" in Italian history to an analysis of fascism as a "moral sickness," similar to Rosselli's formulation. As we recede from the twentieth-century we can see fascism as a pathological attempt to deal with the myriad problems of modernity. This analysis does not deny that class interests had a role in the formation and evolution of fascism; it simply insists that class was one aspect of many that deserve study.

DL: Rosselli was a man of action. He constantly risked arrest by producing and disseminating literature in the streets of Italy. He was imprisoned for years; he escaped into exile; and, following the invasion of Ethiopia, he joined the frontlines in the war against Franco in Spain. The prophets, said Rosselli, "are no longer disarmed. And the descendants of the prophets, with rifle in hand, have acquired a new conscious-

ness." Yet, despite this hands-on approach to the struggle against fascism, Rosselli is still regarded by some as an elitist.

SP: This is ironic. While the Socialists were debating amongst themselves and the Communists were awaiting word from Moscow on how to proceed, Rosselli left Paris immediately upon the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War and went to Barcelona in defense of the Republic. Yet his opponents on the left, especially the Communists, were vicious in their criticism. Rosselli was a "bourgeois intellectual," a "dilettante," even a "dissident fascist." Palmiro Togliatti, leader of the Italian Communist Party, was particularly venomous in his criticism. This was because he saw Rosselli as a competitor for the allegiance of the Italian working class. Because Rosselli rejected a class-based analysis of fascism, he was open to charges of defending his own class interests. Heretically, he wrote that some segments of the proletariat supported fascism, not out of genuine conviction but from political immaturity and that the proletariat alone could not defeat fascism. This was counter to the usual glorification of the proletariat on Europe's left at the time.

DL: You say that Rosselli's books and journals never appealed much to working people and that his anti-fascist organizations had few working class members. On the other hand, there was an incredible outpouring of support for Rosselli at his trials, in the trenches, and at his funeral. Can you clarify how the working people of Italy regarded Rosselli?

SP: Justice and Liberty and its later incarnation, the Action Party, were criticized as "the party of intellectuals." Although Rosselli and others devoted considerable attention to the problems of the peasants and proletariat, Justice and Liberty failed to transform itself into a mass party. This was Rosselli's fault. He insisted that Justice and Liberty remain a "movement" rather than a "party." He reached this conclusion after a brilliant analysis of the nature and

evolution of the political party. He insisted that all party affiliations be abandoned in the struggle against fascism but could be re-established after the defeat of the regime. Justice and Liberty was meant to be an inclusive movement of all anti-fascists, from the Liberals on the right to the Socialists and even the Communists on the left. Unfortunately many of these theoretical debates fell on deaf ears and the working people under fascist Italy had more immediate concerns — like staying alive. Rosselli understood this, yet Justice and Liberty failed to reach the masses.

DL: I thought more attention could have been paid to Rosselli's family, especially his brother Nello. I was fascinated by his mother, his two brothers, his wife, who assisted the anti-fascist struggle throughout, and his three children. Was it difficult to get information about Rosselli's personal life?

SP: John Rosselli, Carlo's eldest son, graciously granted me several interviews and we still correspond. Although I did ask some questions concerning Rosselli's personal life, these were only to illuminate his personality and his struggle against fascism. He himself admitted that he was a poor father. There was some indication that he was something of a ladies' man, but I did not pursue this. The small, personal foibles of an individual don't belong in an intellectual biography.

I gave much thought to the particular problems associated with writing biography, where there is a tendency to engage in easy pop-psychology that I avoid. For example: Why did Rosselli abandon a comfortable life and a promising academic career to join the underground? His wealth and privilege might tempt a biographer to suggest

that Rosselli felt some guilt over his privileged social and economic status. Perhaps. But I didn't want to put Rosselli on the couch.

Because of space limitations, I couldn't devote much attention to Rosselli's mother, a truly formidable woman, or his wife, children, and brother. Nello devoted himself to historical scholarship, and in his works on the Risorgimento (the nineteenth-century movement for Italian unification) one detects an explicit condemnation of fascism. If I had the opportunity, I might have written a dual biography. Nello represents what in Germany came to be called the "inner emigration"; intellectuals such as Victor Klemperer and others who refused to acquiesce or collaborate with barbarism. And although the glory goes to the active participants such as Carlo, the passive resisters deserve to have their story told as well for their resistance, I now believe, was crucial for whatever success anti-fascism and anti-Nazism may have had.

DL: You downplay the fact that Rosselli was Jewish, and you imply that this fact was not particularly important in shaping his views or his sense of urgency. The book mentions little about Rosselli's reaction to the anti-Semitism of Mussolini and Hitler. But Rosselli did say that many of the "universal values" that he defended actually had their roots in the "messianism of Israel." In addition, he strongly urged the separation of church and state, and he was quite critical of the Catholic church. It seems to me that Rosselli's religious background might have been a more significant factor in his life than you contend.

SP: Rosselli was a secular Jew. His criticism of the Catholic Church was strong and historically informed. As much as he may have recognized decent, sincere people in the Church, he saw the institution of the Church as corrupt and keeping the Italian people politically immature. I do argue, however, that Judaism played a role in his ethical and intellectual world-view. I detect the moral indignation of an Old Testament prophet in his condemnation of fascism and

Nazism; his rhetoric rings like a prophet in the wilderness. He constantly invokes the themes of heresy, exile, martyrs for the faith, and the sacredness of sacrifice. Justice and Liberty became known as the "Jewish" movement because it did attract some well-known Jews. But all of them, like Rosselli, were secular, and it is important to recognize that their Judaism was cultural and ethical.

DL: On one occasion, Rosselli told his mother that he thought the family should give away their wealth and live "a poor life based only on what we earned." His mother responded that it would be better to use the family's money to achieve noble goals. Rosselli would go on to use his wealth to fund the publication of several journals, the printing of newsletters, and the renting of planes to disseminate information throughout Italy, and possibly even to make an assassination attempt on Mussolini. Was his mother vindicated?

SP: I alluded to the possibility that Rosselli's wealth was the catalyst for his anti-fascism. But there were other reasons. His participation in the First World War, for example, brought him into contact with the Italian masses — workers, craftsmen and peasants.

DL: Rosselli reminded me at times of George Orwell, who was also regarded as a "socialist heretic" and fought against Franco's fascism in Spain. You mention Orwell only fleetingly in the book. Do you know if Rosselli and Orwell were familiar with each other, or if they met while fighting in Spain?

SP: I was hoping to find evidence that the two met in Spain, but I could find no proof of any dialogue between the two. I did find two passages — one from Orwell's Homage to Catalonia, the other from Rosselli's diary from the front — that were almost identical.

DL: The book is somewhat suspenseful, so I don't want to entirely give away the circumstances surrounding the assassination of the Rosselli brothers and the trials that ensued. But in your opinion, having re-

searched the events extensively, was Mussolini directly involved?

SP: There is no "smoking gun." Yet in such situations we shouldn't be surprised. Mussolini was no fool, and men in power wouldn't leave such evidence behind. It boils down to how one conceives of the fascist dictatorship: was Mussolini the "totalitarian" leader supremely in command or was his a "weak dictatorship" as some social historians have claimed? I believe that Mussolini may have received news that Rosselli was planning on expanding the Spanish Civil War into Italy with a corresponding assassination attempt on Mussolini himself. This was to be a revolutionary, European-wide war against fascism and nazism. Much of this is speculation, but I think it corresponds with Rosselli's thinking at the time.

The Rosselli assassinations are critical to an understanding of the true nature of fascism. Alberto Moravia and Bernardo Bertolucci understood this; Moravia's *The Conformist* (1951) and Bertolucci's film of the novel (1970) are based loosely on the assassination of Carlo Rosselli. Ironically, because of Hitler, National Socialism and the Holocaust, Mussolini and fascism have "gotten off the hook," so to speak, in the twentieth-century. Everyone readily concedes that Mussolini and fascism were relatively 'mild' compared to the German variant of fascism, but that shouldn't obscure the fact that opponents of Italian fascism were arrested (Gramsci), beaten (Piero Gobetti and Giovanni Amendola), and assassinated (Giacomo Matteotti and the Rosselli brothers).

DL: Between 100,000 and 200,000 people attended the funeral of the Rosselli brothers, and they were laid to rest in the magnificent Sala dei Duecento of the Palazzo Vecchio. A torch still burns at their gravesite, and many streets are named after them in Italy. For many years, however, Rosselli's views receded into obscurity.

Why do you think that happened?

SP: This has to do with the particular intellectual and political situation of post-war Italy. The Christian Democrats and the Communists came to dominate cultural and political life. Those who saw themselves in the tradition of "liberal socialism" gravitated to smaller parties or were independent leftists. In Cold War Italy, there was no room for the humane socialism of Rosselli; it wasn't until the 1970s and "Eurocommunism," and now with the end of the Cold War, that scholars and politicians have returned to this tradition. Ironically, while Rosselli was almost ignored in the post-war period, today everyone — including the descendants of the Communists — are claiming him as a political and intellectual ancestor.

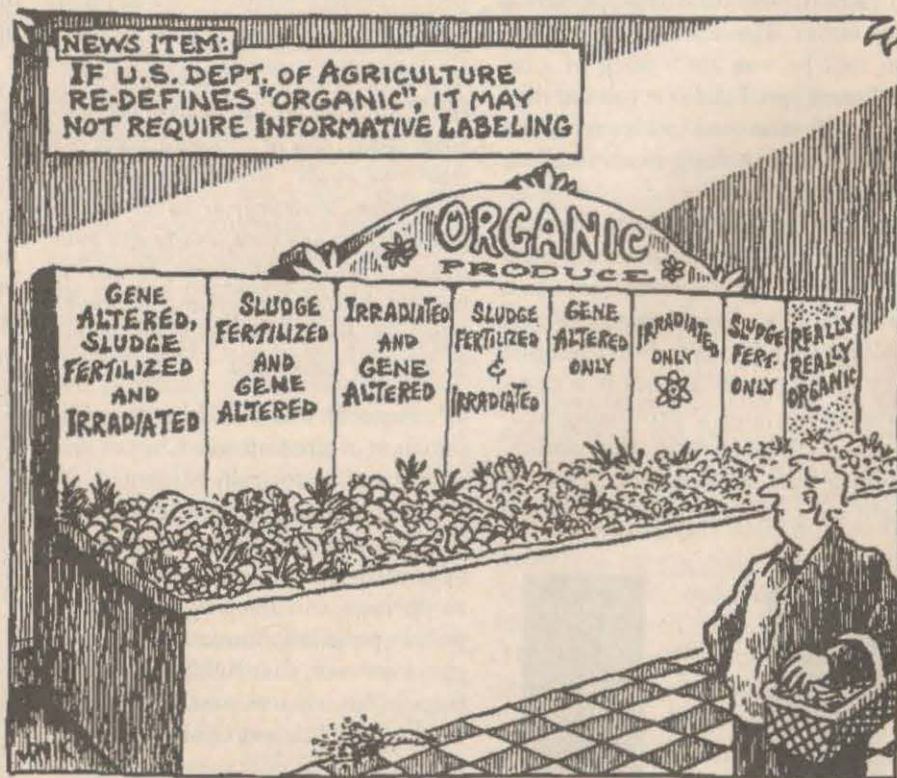
DL: You write that Rosselli was plagued by the "critical demon" of "doubt and relativism" which pushes "socialists into action rather than into passivity, induces a respect for their adversaries, and demands a continuous revision of their theoretical positions and practical actions." This also seems to

be the case with many exchanges I have heard at DSA meetings or read in *Democratic Left*, *Socialist Forum* and *DSANet*. You write that many themes in the book are reminiscent of DSA's founder, Michael Harrington. What lessons do you think DSAers will learn from reading this book?

SP: I would like to think that members of DSA will recognize many of their concerns in Rosselli's writings and actions. And that, notwithstanding the triumphal cries of "the end of history" and the final victory of neo-liberalism, there is a solution that may appear temporarily defeated but which harbors a great hope — perhaps the only hope left — for a truly humanistic and civilized society.

Stanislaw G. Pugliese is Assistant Professor of History at Hofstra. He recently won the 2000 Ignazio Silone Prize for his book, on Carlo Rosselli.

Solveig Wilder is DSA's Membership Services Coordinator, and Managing Editor of Democratic Left.



Failing Schools

BY FORREST DAVIS

In many of our major urban centers today, students of color — African-Americans, Latinos, Asians, Caribbean and Pacific Islanders, and many more — are now the majority in public schools. This demography coincides with a Reading Report Card of the National Center for Educational Statistics which indicated that over 50 percent of Black and Latino children score below fourth grade reading levels, and 47 percent of Black and 46 percent of Latino children score below eighth grade reading levels. Discrepancies in math scores are similarly stark.

That is to say, we do not have a general education crisis in the nation. We have a crisis for poor Black, Latino, Asian and White kids. Extensive analyses of test scores nationwide reveal that — surprise — schools with high concentrations of poor students have very low academic performance rankings. In *The Manufactured Crisis*, Berliner and Biddle show how schools for middle class children fundamentally fulfill their purposes while schools for poor children fail. And though this failure affects all poor children, it disproportionately impacts the children of African-Americans and Latinos. Fully half of their children are failing in school.

The problem is not race, since there is no intellectually defensible evidence of differences in learning abilities by race. It is differences in income and poverty levels that result from our economic and social systems that cause school failure. Lack of employment in one generation leads directly to poverty and school crisis in the next generation. Low quality education and job segregation in prior generations led to a high concentration of African-American and Latino workers in low skilled industrial jobs. Today, in the new economy, these jobs have been transferred to other countries or

non-union suburbs, leaving increased poverty in inner city neighborhoods.

The teachers in poor schools are another factor. Despite dramatic demographic shifts, over 78 percent of teachers remain white. In addition, studies show that the greatest number of non-credentialed teachers are in our lowest performing schools. We also have teachers with degrees in social studies and art teaching math, and in some urban areas, teaching out of field approaches 40 percent of the total. And while we would not dream of allowing a doctor or nurse to practice without a license, we regularly send poor children to study with teachers who have not met the minimum preparation requirements.

Raising standards, holding teachers accountable, and other measures pushed by politicians to avoid having to increase school funding have done little to improve schools. We have significant evidence from school districts in New York City, Los Angeles, Houston, and many other cities that such superficial changes do little to improve student test scores. The Black civil rights leadership, along with labor, has historically been at the forefront of the struggle to demand that

the public schools provide an equal opportunity to the sons and daughters of working people. So we must fight for similar investment in urban schools, smaller class sizes, eliminate dependence on local property tax financing, and the recruitment of a well-prepared teaching force that reflects student populations in these schools.

Affluent suburbanites, in their semi-private social democracies, are not calling for school vouchers or demanding charter schools in their mostly adequately funded districts.

We must insist on equal opportunity to learn, no compromise. When we do these things, we will begin to protect what W.E.B. DuBois called "the Freedom to Learn" for our children and our grandchildren, and to build a more just and democratic society.

Professor Forrest Davis, Professor of Bilingual/Multicultural Education at California State University in Sacramento, is a Chair of DSA's African-American Commission.

Dear Democratic Left Readers:

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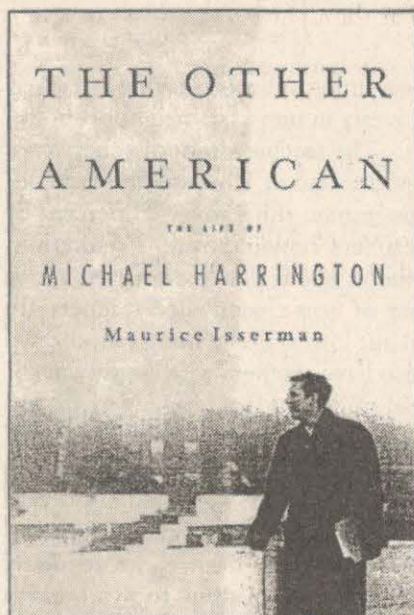
The Other American

The Life of Michael Harrington, Assessed

When Michael Harrington died in the summer of 1989, many DSA members felt both a political and personal pang of loss. Echoing Gore Vidal at the passing bier of Eleanor Roosevelt: "That's that, we're really on our own now." Mike was our most public spokesperson, as Irving Howe said, "our voice," the 'default socialist' in a country, as Maurice Isserman describes in his fine new book, that barely had room for one.

Isserman, a respected historian of the left at Hamilton College, has written *Which Side Are You On?: The American Communist Party in the Second World War*; *If I Had a Hammer*, *The Death of the Old Left and Birth of the New Left*; and *The Civil War of the 1960s* (with coauthor Michael Kazin), among other writings. He has also written tracts for DSA, where he has been a member for many years.

His new biography of Michael Harrington, *The Other American* (PublicAffairs, 2000), is a well-researched, well-written work of scholarship that has been many years in the making. Every DSA member would do well to read it. A complete review will appear in the



Labor Day DL, and it has been reviewed in major publications such as *The New York Times*, *Chicago Tribune*, *The New Republic* and *Publisher's Weekly*.

DSA threw a book party and roundtable in New York City for *Maurice and The Other American*. What follows are personal and political assessments of Harrington's life and work, from DSA comrades of different generations.

Bogdan Denitch recruited Michael to the socialist movement. He is a National Chair of DSA and a professor emeritus at CUNY; Frances Fox Piven is a distinguished analyst of social movements and welfare, is a professor at CUNY, cofounder of Human SERVE, and also serves as a leader of DSA; Maxine Phillips was the talented DSA staff editor of this publication for many years, is an editor of *Dissent*, and member of the editorial committee of Religion & Socialism.

Joseph M. Schwartz, a professor of political science at Temple University, was Youth Organizer for DSOC/DSA, and now serves as a key member of the National Political Committee.

MAURICE ISSERMAN:

"I decided to write this biography the day I got a call from the DSA National Office that Michael Harrington had just died. I'd been kicking myself ever since that writing this bio didn't occur to me before he died. People always ask me about "what Mike would think today?" I am uncomfortable speaking for him from beyond the grave, but I think that he'd like that John Sweeney gave me a book blurb. Neither George Meany nor Lane Kirkland would have done that. Mike would also have been very happy with the events in Seattle last fall, vindication in 3-D of the coalitionist politics that he advocated for so many years. He would also be very happy with the cutting edge of campus activism around labor solidarity and standards, anti-sweatshop activity and international links. Though Mike was a congenial optimist and

determined activist, as an incisive critic he would also find much in this new millennium to displease him.

Michael Harrington is alongside Mark McGuire on the St. Louis Walk of Fame. That is appropriate since he came of age in that Midwestern city, and went on from there to become the "man who discovered poverty," and the "foremost socialist of the United States." My book traces those trajectories

Mike was not born into poverty himself. He was the child of solidly bourgeois Irish Catholic Democrats. He later said that he only discovered the Great Depression when he read about it in the serious Catholic schools in which he excelled. After graduating Holy Cross College at 19, he went on from there to Yale Law to please his parents, did well academically there, but followed his ambitions as a poet to the University of Chicago, and then to Greenwich Village. He

eventually ended up at Dorothy Day's *Catholic Worker*, until he left not only the *Worker*, but the Catholic Church, eventually becoming the acknowledged socialist successor to Eugene V. Debs and Norman Thomas.

That Michael Harrington is so often identified as the "man who discovered poverty" is partially the result of happenstance. He was asked by the then liberal-left magazine *Commentary* to look into the issue of the poor in the U.S. He wrote this article, characteristically diligent in his research, in the tradition of the *Partisan Review* New York intellectuals who prided themselves on their abilities to draw culture, politics and economics into splendid little essays. In Mike's article he married the notions that there were millions of poor Americans out there in the "Affluent Society," to a concept that he picked up from radical anthropologist Oscar Lewis, based on his study of family life in Mexico. This

was the "culture of poverty," which was later completely distorted by the neo-conservative hard right of the following decades.

Harrington's *Commentary* piece attracted more attention than usual to such journalism, helped by the timing of a 1960 presidential primary in which JFK was pitted against Hubert Humphrey in West Virginia, where the media was transmitting images of depressed mining communities. Later, after JFK's election, CBS broadcast *Harvest of Shame*, which highlighted the plight of migrant workers. At this time a shrewd editor at Macmillan asked Mike to turn his *Commentary* pieces into a book, resulting in *The Other America*, which got good but not spectacular reviews. Mike was so certain that the book would hardly sell that he had no trouble going to Paris for a year.

In that year the longest ever *New Yorker* review, fifty pages, was written about *TOA*, by Dwight MacDonald. Reprints of the review sold in the tens of thousands. The review came to the attention of Walter Heller, Chair of Kennedy Council of Economic Advisors, and eventually landed on JFK's desk. JFK's primary economic strategy up to that point had been to seek a tax cut that would benefit the middle class, but Heller suggested that the 1964 campaign would be helped by doing a bit for those that hadn't made it into the affluent society. But 1963 was the year of Birmingham, the March on Washington, and a growing civil rights movement that included a place for the demands of the poor.

Upon JFK's assassination, Lyndon Johnson needed to make the martyred Kennedy programs his own, and he picked up this idea of a war against poverty. So Michael returned from Paris in 1963 to find himself famous. He was summoned to DC to take part in discussions on the war on poverty legislation being drafted by Sargent Shriver's task force. However, what they borrowed from Harrington is this notion of the culture of poverty, that is to say that poor people lived lives with a different set of values and norms from that

of the dominant culture, or the middle class. This, to Harrington, was in part because they were beaten down by structural economic forces, not the thoroughly behaviorist notions that the right later employed to distort this concept and gut the social wage in the 1980s.

LBJ wanted to wage war on poverty—but cheaply. Daniel Patrick Moynihan, then at the Labor Department as Assistant Secretary, was supported by Mike and Paul Jacobs in advocating that jobs programs were the most effective means to raise people up — but they were expensive. LBJ wanted to limit any "war" on poverty to under a billion dollars. By contrast, the initial 1935 appropriation for the WPA was five billion dollars—ten billion in 1964 dollars! Johnson didn't want to spend money. The administration also selectively picked up the 'culture of poverty' argument that suited its purposes, making the values/aspirations aspect of the notion the centerpiece of most programs. Mike always said that you have to spend money, and create jobs. In his 1984 book, *The New American Poverty*, Harrington quite consciously distanced himself from the notion of the culture of poverty.

One of the nostrums of biography is that there are no second acts in American life. Michael really did have

a second act. His first act was as "the man who discovered poverty," missing simultaneous opportunities to play unifier of the scattered legions of the 1960s left. In the 1980s he emerged as a kind of authentic voice of American radicalism. Many people who were not socialists, might not join DSA, would turn out to hear Mike, buy his books or listen to his NPR radio commentaries—because he was in that great American tradition of religious and political dissent. He presented the sharpest, most articulate conscious challenge to the values of Reaganism at a time when most Democratic politicians were lying down and playing dead. Early on in the Reagan administration, Mike spoke at the University of Maine. "Ronald Reagan," he said in that magnetic, inflected voice, "is the first president in years who is actually carrying out his program, putting into effect the policies that he ran on in the campaign. That's refreshing." Then there was a pause: "It's too bad that the program that he ran on was insane and cruel."

That ultimately was Michael Harrington's legacy, speaking truth to power when it was distinctly unfashionable to speak on behalf of the poor."

BOGDAN DENITCH:

"I met a fairly unkempt and hairy Michael Harrington, clothed as most



Isserman with Phillips, Denitch, Schwartz and moderator Jeff Gold.

Catholic Workerists at the time in frocks donated for the poor, on a rainy picket line in 1951. After many political discussions—and drinks—Mike joined the Young People's Socialist League (YPSL) a short while later. As Maurice notes in the book, we did what the mainly Jewish, deeply marginal left did at the height of McCarthyism in those days, we shoved the Waspy-looking (to us, when shaved) Irish-Catholic Midwesterner right to the top and made him YPSL National Chair. The Socialist Party of the time was delighted, particularly since beneath that sweet Irish face lay a steel hard political mind. For the next seven years Mike and I worked very closely together, he as 'good cop' in debates across the country, me as 'bad cop'. And we worked very closely with the growing Civil Rights movement, through our connections with Bayard Rustin, A. Philip Randolph, and with the Sleeping Car Porter's Union.

Maurice noted that Mike was among the few in the top leadership of the socialist movement who was jailed rarely. This was a deliberate choice of the organizations, not Mike's choice. Mike wanted to share the fate of other activists in the civil rights movement, but we decided that Mike could accomplish more out raising bail money, spreading publicity or going to unions. Every once in a while Mike would be jailed to keep his credentials up, so we'd tell him to "bring a toothbrush today. We'll see you in two days after bail is raised."

Michael was that rare phenomenon of which there are too few now, a full time organizer. Sometimes he had a job, but not too often. We were a peculiar variety of full times who were not paid. Mike's full commitment, or Pascal's Gamble, if you will, was: "We don't know if a democratic socialist movement can be built in this country, but we know that if we don't try it won't happen—for sure. If we do try, maybe—just maybe, there's a little hope." For that hope Mike spent decades pounding the pavements at campuses and union halls.

Michael Harrington had a peculiar quality of drawing loyalty in

people, and people like that often have strong loyalties themselves. Mike's two loyalties were to Norman Thomas, the grand old man of the Socialist Party, and, unfortunately, Max Schactman. Schactman was a brilliant, relentless, remorseless factionalist, who started moving right at approximately the time when Mike and I joined the youth wing of his Independent Socialist League. So Mike was unfortunately trapped in this conservative Schactmanite trajectory at the exact time when opportunities for a broad left, particularly among students, began to open up. He consequently ended up on the wrong side of a number of issues which were emotionally devastating to Mike. In the early 60s he even broke for a while with close friends like Debbie Meier over the issue of the Cuban invasion, and our call for total, immediate and unconditional withdrawal from Vietnam.

One of the reasons Mike had a breakdown in the sixties was that all the people he was close to were on different sides. The people he stayed close to he really couldn't stand. In fact many of them later scattered to the pre-Sweeney AFL-CIO bureaucracy, and some much later to the Reagan administration. Max Schactman created some right-wing Bolsheviks, who subsequently tried to publicly tear down Mike's reputation after he finally did break with them, form DSOC, and then DSA. But by this time it was hard to cut off Harrington's access to people; he had become too well known as the poverty-finding "Mr. Socialism" of the U.S.

If I have one fault with Maurice's excellent book, it is the underestimation—which we may have helped ourselves—of the socialist role around Martin Luther King and the civil rights movement, and in some unions. Because our publicly acknowledged *socialist* presence would have been the kiss of political death, the basis on which many civil rights activists were often red-baited, our very credible activism as hard-working, key behind the scenes players (with Bayard,) who got things done—is not well known.

Mike was the closest we had to a 'respectable' public face with oratorical skills, so he got a piece of the credit, but the honorable activity of socialists did a great deal of good, should make DSAers proud of their historical roots, and might well be emulated today.

It speaks a lot for Mike, who was not a natural organization man in terms of administration or temperament, the he devoted so much time and energy to DSA. He would have preferred to be a writer, perhaps an editorial board member of an interesting socialist magazine, spending time in Paris writing poetry and being an intellectual—which he was. For him DSA was almost an act of religious witness or devotion. He ended up building what, for all its weaknesses, is the largest of the midgets, the biggest democratic socialist organization in America since the 1930s. It still is. For Michael, as for all of us full-timers, there was no such thing as an unorganized socialist. The whole notion of socialist politics is to participate in real world efforts to collectively change reality. Otherwise you can be a student of socialism, or a consumer—not producer—of radical politics. Michael preeminently wanted to be a producer of radical politics."

FRANCIS FOX PIVEN:

"I knew Mike in the last two decades of his life. Usually I argued with him, in the first instance over the anti-war movement—which I defended. But through all those arguments Mike was also my friend. In debates inside DSA in which we were sometimes on different sides, we would frequently talk to each other.

Mike wrote *TOA* at a time when the American economy was on a postwar roll. Many expected endless economic growth, creating opportunities for everyone; almost every worker *expected* that their real wage income would increase every year. But other structural changes were occurring in the economy, which Mike picked up: the displacement of rural workers from the South, Caribbean and later mainland Latin America, who

all came to the cities in large numbers in the 60s—the exact places where the manufacturing economy was slipping away. Even the Bureau of Labor Statistics was then warning that the U.S. was running short of good-paying jobs necessary to absorb these new internal or international migrants.

As Maurice wrote, government responses attributed to TOA, which got such a play in the press and in sectors of the Kennedy administration, was not a response to the problem of poverty. In fact, the spreading civil rights movement was creating terrible political problems for a Democratic administration — forced to choose between the allegiance of blacks, often newly enfranchised because of their migration to northern cities, and sometimes of an insurgent bent—and their old allies in the white South. Several of the legislative measures of the Great Society were in response to the new black urban voters, who were helping to expand the influence of insurgents in the civil rights movement, first as voters than as demonstrators. I believe that there was even an advantage to crediting *The Other America* with inspiring initiatives against poverty. No Democratic leader of the 60s wanted to give credit to the black movement.

Mike recognized that we should stop making distinctions between poor and working class people. The poor do form a reserve army of labor, and people on welfare always moved back and forth between irregular labor markets and public assistance—when they could get it.

It is important to appreciate Michael Harrington as a work in progress. He did not make *The Other America* arguments in the 1980s. He was very keenly aware of the changing nature of the U.S. and world economy, its growing tendencies toward polarization. He in fact tried very hard to expand on a very laborist vision of how change could come about in the U.S., taking account of new movements of people of color, feminists and others. He was certainly open to incorporate new insurgencies into his vision of the way in which

movements could transform the U.S.

Mike would be in his element if he were here today. He would be in a sense liberated by recent political developments. The dilemma that plagued Michael for a good part of his life was between his fundamental intellectual and political loyalty to the working class and its organized expression in the unions—he regarded that as a sort of rock-bound loyalty. He was always in the middle between new insurgencies and old unionists adamantly opposed to them. Many of the old conflicts in DSA had to do with that problem. The change in leadership in the labor movement, and the willingness of key leaders and some of the international unions to connect and even embrace social movement politics would have set Michael free. It's too bad that he isn't with us now. He was after all one of the most talented people on the left, a brilliant orator, who could speak and move people so much—even in bad political times. He would have been so happy in today's politics."

MAXINE PHILLIPS:

"I came to this story chronologically later. Years after Mike left the Catholic Worker, he still would return there once a year to deliver a lecture on socialism. I went to hear him, and noticed that he addressed this little group of fifteen—many nodding in their own worlds right off the Bowery—as if he were talking to a room of 500. I started as a liberal democrat, and would never have become a socialist but for Michael Harrington.

In my seven years on staff, I met many people whose lives were touched by Mike, either because they were actually recruited to activism, or because he just made them think in a different way.

I missed most of the intense faction fighting that Maurice chronicles in his book, but saw a bit at its tail end. I think that Mike learned a lot from that excessive factionalism, and made a socialist milieu that might not have been very congenial to the average American more comfortable. Mike kept a lot of people in the or-

**CATHOLIC. SOCIALIST.
FATHER. LOVER.
HERO. ENEMY.
AMERICAN. HUMAN.**

HARRINGTON. THE OTHER AMERICAN

THE LIFE OF
MICHAEL HARRINGTON

A new book by
Maurice Isserman

**He cut his teeth in
the Socialist Party,**
and was there for all the
major movements—from
labor to civil rights. His
book *The Other America*
woke a prosperity-lulled
nation to the ravages of
poverty and ushered in a
new era of social reform.
But his story has never been
truly told—until now.
In this bracingly honest
biography, noted historian
Maurice Isserman
examines the man, his
times, and his legacy.



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ganization, and that fact that DSA is still going years later is in part a tribute to him; we thought it might just last two or three years beyond his death. However, Mike wasn't good at grooming successors. Charismatic leaders don't often reproduce themselves in history, they seem to just come up through the ranks, though Mike did have the advantage of some mentoring from Norman Thomas.

Jim Chapin has said that Maurice's book should have been called "Pilgrim's Progress," because the biggest demon Mike had to face was despair. He rarely gave in to it, despite the rough times for the left in the last few decades. Some people did call him a progressive Pollyanna, but a little bit of hopefulness can go a long way in organizing.

Even though Mike's language paid tribute to his religious background (while denying it in some ways), and perhaps because religious symbols resonate with me, I felt that Mike's Church training was a key to his ability to look on the bright side. I never really felt that he had completely left the Church. Everything he did was so Catholic, and I'm one of those mushy Protestant liberals he playfully disdained. In fact Mike seemed to be a pre-Vatican II Catholic, who left a different Church than the one that succeeded it. He never really caught up with the changes.

Michael Harrington did not need the socialist movement. We needed him. He was capable of being famous on his own. In some ways we used to sit in the office and bask in his reflected glory. He could have done the same public speaking or broadcasting and raked in much higher fees than he got, but he always spoke strategically: "Can I get a gig here, so that we can build a DSOC/DSA local there?" I regret that he didn't live to become the grand old man of the left, instead of 'America's oldest young socialist', which is probably the way he'll go down in history."

JOE SCHWARTZ:

"Those who have heard Michael Harrington speak in public are now

over '35, which is a huge issue for DSA. If Mike were alive today there would be many more young people in this room right now. It's our responsibility to make sure that we don't 'gray' the way that the Socialist Party of Debs and Thomas did.

One of the real strengths of Maurice Isserman's book, is that Maurice is, first and foremost, a great historian of the left. He uncovered some extraordinary material on St. Louis in the 40s, Mike's family origins, and his psychological formation—which created this interesting insider-outsider personality. Mike always wanted to be mainstream, but also a dissident. Mike was fairly proud, for example, that his favorite singer was Sinatra. He was 'conservative' in many ways, didn't have much of an ear for the later sixties feminist movement, or the black liberation movements — though he later tried to embrace them.

Maurice's book poses the question of why Mike stayed with all those right-wing anti-Communist mostly Jewish New York needle trades losers—almost through 1973. That tragedy of Mike's life, that he didn't leave the ossifying old SP with Bogdan and Debbie Meier in 1965, and didn't come out earlier against the war and for unilateral withdrawal. At the same time Isserman identifies the out-of-proportion influence of this small group, in which Bogdan played a key role, of anti-authoritarian socialists who pre-figured in many ways the decentralized, liberatory stands of the New Left, including notions of participatory work, humane uses for technology, and for injecting aspects of the heart in politics. We have to remember that the Stalinist left *did* have an outsized role when Mike and others were foursquare radical democrats in the fifties.

There's a mention in the book that Mike was the socialist you took your parents to hear if they were fairly Middle-American, to show that socialists weren't crazy. In this way he was both a popularizer, and I think, he also wanted to be an academic. In America, by and large, there aren't such public intellectuals bridging both

worlds. I think that for many a book like *Socialism*, or his last book *Past and Future*, did reach more people than the academic tomes that many of us write. Mike was incredibly good at giving an accessible version of Marx's critique of capitalism. That capitalism really was a social system, interdependent and cooperative in the way it produced the world, uncooperative in its governance, and often anti-social. He would always take Marx's German and say "capitalism was a social system governed asocially," a system that should be governed democratically but wasn't. Mike did more to popularize that type of analysis and to resurrect Marx from the dustbin of authoritarianism than anybody else.

Maurice's conclusion in his book is historically accurate: the conditions that would support a socialist movement yielding a Debs-Thomas-Harrington figure have changed. In fact, his chapters on the 70s and 80s give one pause; if you are a DSA loyalist you have to consider Maurice's honest challenge to us: Mike's original inclusive strategy in those years was realignment, building a left social democratic presence around the Democratic Party and unions. Ever since the Democratic Agenda strategy, predicated on a strong liberal trade union left in the Democratic Party, crashed with the Reagan election, we have been in an organizationally weak position. Of course, as Steve Max and others have observed, "we are all now left social democrats," meaning the old faction fights are over and the commitment to liberty and democracy on the broad left is not questioned. Add to that the people who worked with or fought with Mike who now staff high councils of the AFL, like Andy Stern of SEIU, and many others.

In Mike's last book, *Socialism: Past and Future*, written under the cloud of terminal cancer, he addressed the decline of the labor movement, the greater fragmentation of social movements among various identities, and asked if they could unite around a common commitment to radical democracy, or what he and we would

call democratic socialism. At the 1985 DSA convention, he said that "there is no universal class anymore," in the way of the labor movement of the 30s, or as King and the civil rights movement might have embodied universal aspirations for democracy, social rights and justice. He knew back then that all this would present major organizing obstacles into the next (this) century.

DSA has trained many younger people to be nonsectarian radical activists, to go out and do the work. Mike used to go to colleges and his first sentence was that "the revolution is not going to happen in your lifetime," and what he meant was that there was a small, ongoing revolution happening daily below the radar screen. This is a hard message to employ if you want to motivate 18 year olds, who may want to go to the barricades the next morning. But Mike tried to inspire and describe the world as it is, while giving people hope that it could change. Many acted on his call for a life commitment to social justice by action."

Thanks to Miriam Thompson of the Queens College Labor Resource Center, and to Suzanne Gottlieb for their assistance. —Jeff Gold

Miriam Bensman, co-editor of *New York Democratic Socialist* and former NYDSA Chair, recently married Gerry Santora, an engineer who builds housing for the poor in New York City. DSA wishes them both every happiness.

Phyllis M. Llewellyn, 76, died at her home in Alexandria, Virginia on April 2nd, 2000. She was the last of the five daughters born to Woburn residents Harold and Genevieve Marion. She is survived by her sons Frank Llewellyn and Stephen Llewellyn, Stephen's wife Martha, and two grandchildren, Kenneth and William of Alexandria. DSA expresses heartfelt condolences to National Political Committee member Frank Llewellyn on the passing of his mother. Frank asks those wishing to express their solidarity with him to make a donation to DSA.

Mayday / continued from page 36

what we will," argued for a "natural" pace of life in tune with the seasons, rather than the long hours and miserable conditions imposed by the capitalists.

The catastrophe of the day, a police riot in Chicago against anarchists and a subsequent murderous frame-up of their leaders for bomb-throwing, could not entirely overshadow the excitement of the moment. Working people had spoken. For many anarchists but not only for them, the day also retained the special significance of martyrdom, the occasion to mourn the great heroes of Haymarket who had died from the hangman, unrepentant in their revolutionary fervor.

Several melancholy trends later set in. The steady drift of the AFL rightward after 1886 toward exclusionism (and racism) was symbolized by Samuel Gompers' zeal for Labor Day instead of May Day as labor's holiday. Launched independently by several local central labor federations, Labor Day, coming at the height of summer heat and holidays, was perceived as less confrontational. At the height of the Cold War, the US Con-

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gress gave its blessings to May 1st as Law Day, for a few years encouraging high schools to stage imaginary "Communist takeovers" associated with compulsory atheism. This was mirrored by a steady downward drift into bureaucratic military displays in the Soviet Union from Stalinization onward, and mirror offerings in Eastern Europe and Asia: the veritable Law Day over there.

May Days have been pretty modest in recent years, here and abroad. Public rallies are attended mostly by aging radicals and interested youngsters, private testimonials to good deeds done long before. But May Day isn't over by a long shot. Perhaps, in the face of capital's globalization and the exciting recent progressive response, and renewed visions of eco-socialism, its celebration this Spring has only just begun.

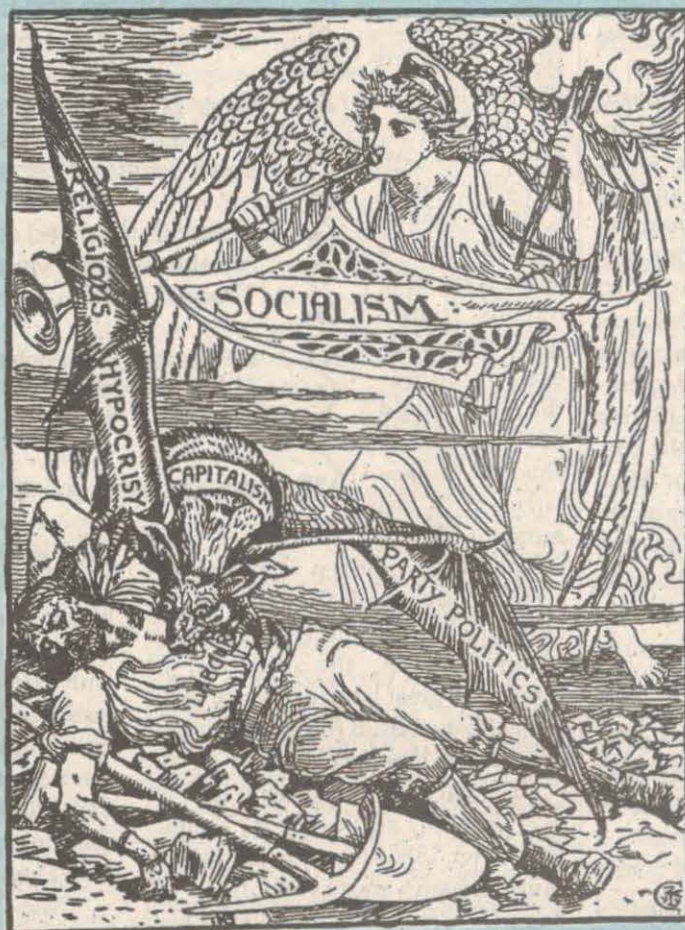
Paul Buhle is author of Taking Care of Business (Monthly Review Press), and editor of The Encyclopedia of the American Left (Garland). He is a member of the editorial committee.

Mayday: A Promise So Hopeful

BY PAUL BUHLE

In 1889, the Paris Congress of the International Socialist movement designated the first of May the eight-hour holiday for workers of the world. Within a few years, May Day became the veritable symbol of class contestation. The occasion for sometimes violent clashes between marching workers and police (especially in Rome), it offered socialists and anarchists worldwide their own holiday. They seized it with gusto. Elaborate ceremonies quickly evolved, with songs, banners, uniforms, even moving dioramas symbolizing the hopeful dreams of a socialist Spring.

Just about a century ago, British socialist artist Walter Crane's May Day drawings echoed the writings of Crane's favorite writer, socialist, and poet



laureate of England, William Morris. The garlands of Spring, the May Pole, tender feelings and tender blossoms symbolizing fertility and rebirth, all took on fresh but not so altered meaning in the May Day holiday. Amazingly, it all restarted in Chicago.

May, 1886: several hundred thousand American workers of the Knights of Labor, the American Federation of Labor, and socialist and anarchist groups all demonstrated for the Eight Hour Day. It was the center of a worldwide movement for shorter working hours. Even the song lyrics of the American movement, "Eight hours for work/eight hours for sleep/eight hours for

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