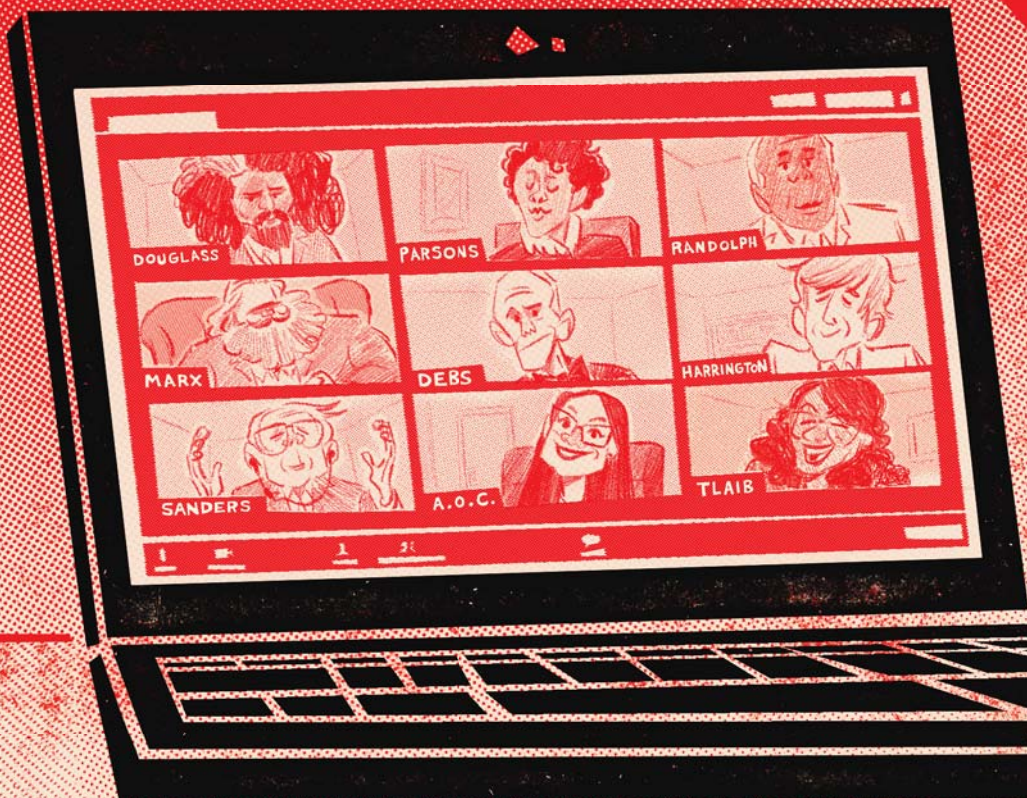


DEMOCRATIC LEFT

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Reasons for hope

BY MARIA SVART

COVID-19 has killed more than 160,000 of us as I write this, but the worst economic contraction in U.S. history was a capitalist-made disaster. It did not have to be this way.



Politicians could have taxed the rich to fund direct relief, enabling an extended lockdown early on. They could have provided Medicare for All, an army of contact tracers, and Personal Protective Equipment for essential workers. We saw what they did instead—the bidding of the bosses.

I won't catalogue the horrors around us as the poor and working class, the sick, people of color, and the elderly are sacrificed and the political condition further erodes. Nor will I pretend our fightback is destined to win. But I will focus on the reasons for hope.

First, the need for an alternative to capitalism is undeniable. Jeff Bezos adds \$13 billion in one day to his net worth while 30 million workers depend on unemployment checks that are held hostage by rich politicians. The staggering scale and visibility of this crisis cries out for a collective solution.

Second, our people are on the march—literally. DSA chapters were in the streets from the start of the uprising, and coordinated with the Movement for Black Lives on the Six Nineteen day of action in June. DSA tenants are organizing to block landlords from evicting families and clogging housing courts, and are coordinating through DSA's Housing Justice Commission. Patients

and healthcare providers are fighting for Medicare for All. And we're demanding a Green New Deal to meet the climate challenge and rebuild our economy with millions of union jobs. Congress dragged its feet on COVID relief, but we know that street protest and pressure from the base are more strategic than insider maneuvering. They are also the best way to move past our fear and rage.

Third, democratic socialists are winning elections. In July, NYC DSA swept our nationally endorsed slate of five state senate and assembly candidates in the Democratic primary. Jabari Brisport joined Julia Salazar in the state senate and Marcela Mitaynes, Phara Souffrant and Zohran Mamdani stormed the state assembly. These wins cement DSA's reputation as a formidable enemy to the real estate industry and the New York Police Department. Now the "socialist squad" in Albany will join the "socialist six" on the Chicago city council in exploring the power of tag teaming on legislation and influencing the public discourse. Chapter-endorsed candidates also did well, with Jose Garza winning the race for district attorney in Austin; Gabriella Cázares-Kelly winning the primary for Pima County, Arizona, Recorder; Abe Aiyash winning a primary for the Michigan State House; and Shadia Tadros winning a race for judge in Syracuse. Memphis-MidSouth DSA swept all three of its races, with Marquita Bradshaw winning the primary for Tennessee's U.S. Senate seat despite being outspent 250-1, and Gabby Salinas and Torrey Harris winning primaries for the Tennessee House. Detroit DSA member and incumbent Congresswoman Rashida Tlaib easily defeated a business-backed primary challenger.

And St. Louis DSA member Cori Bush toppled a long-time incumbent.

Finally, we're building power in the economy by organizing our workplaces. Whether it's teachers and other school support staff striking to make schools safe, or restaurant and healthcare providers demanding PPE, when we stick together we can win, because otherwise the economy won't run.

Hundreds of people join DSA every week. The neoliberals tell us to go it alone, to take personal responsibility for solving structural problems imposed from above, but socialists know we are stronger together. Collective solutions are necessary, and we can only win them through collective action. We have built this organization accountable to no one but ourselves. Because all of our work is funded by member dues and fueled by your creativity, I hope you jump into our national recruitment drive this fall.

But more than building our power by growing DSA, there are other ways we need to prepare for November. It's clear that Donald Trump will do anything to win, including destroy the Postal Service and hire thugs to intimidate voters. That's why we must save the USPS so we can mail in ballots, and be prepared to strike alongside unions and civil society this fall. We need to build deeper ties in our communities to groups with a working-class base, and build stronger and faster mechanisms to communicate across chapters, regions, and the country, to ensure we can move as a powerful national organization when the need arises. Al Gore's failure to demand a county-by-county recount in Florida in 2000 in the face of on-the-ground bullying from the Right, thereby handing victory to George W. Bush, is an important lesson about what happens when we depend on cautious and conciliatory leaders who capitulate to bullies. If the pandemic has taught us anything, it's that only we can save ourselves. Let's get to it! ■

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Democratic Socialists of America promotes 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 people. We are dedicated to building truly international social movements—of unions, environmentalists, feminists, and people of color—which together can elevate global justice over brutalizing global competition.

Can we save the U.S. Postal Service?

BY RONALD DE YOUNG AND
PARKER JAMES

The U.S. Postal Service (USPS) topped a Harris Poll list of 100 essential and most trusted companies during the current pandemic. But as we go to press, Donald Trump's refusal to authorize emergency funding means that the USPS as we have known it could disappear. Because it was an early target of privatization, USPS does not receive any tax dollars for operating costs. It must rely entirely on revenue from sales of postage, supplies, and services while at the same time ensuring that even the most remote parts of the country receive service. Even so, it could be profitable except for the coronavirus pandemic and the Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act of 2006, which requires it to pre-pay \$72 billion in post-retirement health care costs for its employees. No other employer, public or private, faces such a requirement. Without this burden, the agency would be financially solvent and self-funding, even profit-making.

The crisis is twofold. In the short run, the postal service needs emergency funding as part of a stimulus package. We have to save the postal service if we want to save mail-in voting and fend off privatization efforts by large corporations. In the long run, as Bernie Sanders and others have proposed, we have to change the onerous restrictions, and re-imagine the postal service in ways that could benefit even more people.

DSA's Labor Commission (the DSLC) has launched the #DSA4USPS campaign to save the postal service, and urges chapters to engage in coalition work. Our own chapter, Southwest Michigan DSA, brought more than 50 people to the Arcadia Post Office in downtown Kalamazoo on June 23. The event—a vigil co-sponsored by the American Postal Workers Union of Southwest Michigan, Save Our Postal Service, Communities and Postal Workers United, and the Southwest Michigan Chapter of the DSA—coincided with the APWU's National Day of Action to save the post office.

"[W]e knew we wanted to do something locally, but didn't feel we had the time or energy to pull it off," said Dave Staiger, a Kalamazoo letter carrier and member of the National Rural Letter



Carriers Association. "We contacted Southwest Michigan DSA and asked for help. They assisted in organizing, publicizing, making signs, bringing materials, showing up, taking pictures and writing up a report on it... We couldn't have done it without them!" Attendees held signs, donned masks that read "Save our Postal Service!" and received supportive honks and raised fists from those driving by. Supporters sent postcards to Michigan senators Debbie Stabenow and Gary Peters, as well as to the White House, in support of emergency funding for USPS.

Vigil participants shared their vision for the agency's future and the potential of the postal service to assist the country's most underserved communities, many of which are also at high-risk for the coronavirus. An expanded postal service could offer supportive and sometimes life-saving services such as

- Expanded mail-in voting, which not only decreases the risks associated with in-person voting this year, but also serves working people everywhere who are often unable to get to the polls because of restrictive working hours, lack of child care, lack of transportation, or other reasons;
- Increased delivery of prescription medications for those unable to get to a pharmacy;

- Publicly funded postal banking, which can offer basic, low-cost banking services such as savings and checking accounts, bill paying, and check cashing for underserved rural and urban communities; and
- Information services for residents in areas where broadband internet connections and mobile data service are unavailable or cost-prohibitive.

DSA chapters can seek to collaborate with USPS trade unions, lead local and regional media campaigns to spread the word about the dangers the USPS faces, and pressure local government bodies and labor councils to pass resolutions in support of the postal service. Find groups that depend on the postal service and turn them into allies.

Looking to November, chapters and individuals can urge senatorial candidates to support the USPS and the half-million union workers it employs. These efforts can be the building blocks for a postal service for the 21st century. ■

Ronald De Young is a native of Kalamazoo, Michigan, and graduate of Western Michigan University. Parker James is co-chair of the Southwest Michigan chapter of DSA.

IDEOLOGY MATTERS

BY DON MCINTOSH

Are we witnessing the birth of a new global hereditary aristocracy of wealth? All the trend lines have pointed that way since the 1970s, according to over a decade of painstaking research by French economist Thomas Piketty. In his groundbreaking 2014 book *Capital in the 21st Century*, Piketty showed that the era of relative income equality from 1945 to 1975 was a historical exception. Since then, societies around the world have been returning to a historical norm in which a tiny handful own almost everything, and the rest of us spend our lives working for them and paying them rent.

This year Piketty published a 1,000-page sequel, *Capital and Ideology*, in which he expands his previous analysis to regions of the world where new data has become available. He applies the same rigorous data-crunching to decades of election exit polling, discovering that left parties around the world have moved away from being parties of the working class and are now parties of the educated. He also surveys what pre-modern, slave, and colonial societies told themselves to justify extreme inequality. He concludes the book by laying out the kinds of policies we'll need to enact in order to prevent the dystopian future of extreme inequality that we're currently headed for.

Piketty makes clear that the growth of inequality he described in his 2014 book isn't the outcome of some mysterious law of economics; it's the predictable result of specific policies that were enacted when a particular ideology took hold. But a surging egalitarian ideology called socialism could prove to be the motor force of a counter-trend. A lifelong commitment by tens of thousands of socialists to patient, strategic organizing will make that more probable.

Piketty spoke with me by Skype July 24 about his new book.



Why did you decide to write *Capital and Ideology*? My previous book, *Capital in the 21st Century*, contributed to a rise of public interest in inequality. But *Capital in the 21st Century* is very centered on Western Europe, North America, on rich countries. This new book puts inequality and the history of “inequality regimes” into a much broader comparative perspective, looking at India, China, colonial periods, and Brazil and Russia. And this book proposes ideology as a true driving force behind inequality.

You write that major crises—wars and financial crashes—sometimes become “switch points” in which society changes course. Could the coronavirus epidemic be such a switch point? Yeah, I think it could. You can see the political impact already of the crisis in many countries. But you know, crises will happen again. What I want to say is this: We need to take ideas about the ideal society we would like to have more seriously. And that's the main message of my book: Ideas and ideologies are important, so if we care about moving toward a different economic system, then we have to articulate a view of the ideal economic system we want. Which does not imply that we will get there next week, but if we don't even know where we would like to go ideally in the long run, then we're

not going to go anywhere. So at the end of the book, based on the lessons of the 20th century and what worked and what didn't work, I try to articulate a view for a decentralized, participatory socialism, based on the circulation of property and power—through voting rights for workers in corporations, and through more progressive taxation of income, wealth, and inheritance—in order to allow everybody to access a minimal amount of property. It's not *instead* of the welfare state but together with a pretty ambitious welfare state in terms of public health and basic income and public pension and public education, etc. One of the problems of recent decades is that there was a very clear market agenda, articulated by Friedrich Hayek, by Milton Friedman, which was taken up by Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher and across the world. But there has never been sufficient attention by the other side to articulate where *we* want to go. The pandemic is important, but it won't solve these big intellectual problems for us.

In *Capital and Ideology* you show that parties of the Left that historically got support from those with the lowest incomes now get their support from those with the highest education. Why do you think parties of the Left lost the support of working people? Because

they were unable or unwilling in the end to renew their political platform. After World War II they had a platform based on a policy of redistribution, which came with more workers' rights, with setting up the welfare state, with promoting universal access to primary and then secondary schooling. And then after this huge egalitarian push was achieved, the Left was not really able to renew itself. In the era of higher education, it's more difficult to define what equality means. You cannot just say we want 100% of a generation to get a Ph.D. You have to accept that there's going to be some diversity in educational outcome, and at the same time, you want the system to be fair. Left parties have become what I describe in my book as the "Brahmin Left," the parties of the winners of the educational game. In a way, the people who were the most successful in this education competition remained faithful to the Left, whereas the people who were left behind were less and less attached. But I think the biggest responsibility is with the parties themselves. There is also the general lack of conviction about how you transform the capitalist system of property relations. I think for a long time, especially in Europe, the left parties like the Labour Party in Britain or the Socialist Party in France, they wanted to nationalize a very large part of the economy, and then after the 1980s and after the fall of the Soviet Union, they dropped the nationalization policy and they did not replace it with anything. They dropped, in effect, any ambition to transform the system of property relations. In social democratic countries like Germany and Sweden, at least they kept workers' rights and voting rights in corporations that they had put in place. And the third limitation of the Left is the attitude toward globalization, which I think is probably the most important mistake. In many countries at the time of Tony Blair or Bill Clinton, the Left basically was promoting pure free trade, free circulation of capital flows—without any common taxation, without any common regulation. At some point we have to trust democratic deliberation about limiting the free circulation of trade and capital flows. This must be based on principles of economic justice and fiscal justice. You can put sanctions on a country that wants to benefit from free trade but has zero corporate tax, zero tax on carbon emissions. But if the Left continues to appear as pro-globalization, and we leave it to Donald Trump to complain

about globalization, that's not going to work. We know what's going to happen.

Do you have any particular message to convey to members of DSA? Well, first I want to congratulate DSA for using this name—Democratic Socialists of America—and promoting the agenda. I'm aware it's more complicated to use the word socialist in the United States than it is in Europe. So I think it's very important for all of us in Europe and across the world that we have people like DSA in the United States to promote an agenda for replacing capitalism as an economic system with a different, socialist, economic system. I hope that DSA will be even more influential in the coming years. Of course I was disappointed that Bernie Sanders was not more successful than he was. But I think the battle of ideas is even more important.

Your work is often compared to the work of Karl Marx. What do you think of Marx and of Marxism?

Marx died 150 years ago, so he couldn't see the Bolshevik revolution, the Great Depression, the rise of Nazism, World War II, the social democratic agenda of the post-war period. But today we know what happened in the last 150 years. So we cannot just repeat what Karl Marx said, because if we want to be serious (and this is what he would have wanted us to do), you have to take into account these 150 years, and what didn't work, what worked, and try to build on this, to build a new kind of socialist agenda. The main limitation of Marx is that he spent more time analyzing the capitalist system of his century, the 19th century, than he spent thinking about the socialist systems that would be built after that. The texts of Marx that I prefer are those where he talks about the 1848 revolution in France, the abolition of slavery, the situation of China, of colonial exploitation. He is the best when he talks about his time, which he understood very well. The problem is that he has been used by bureaucrats in Moscow or in Beijing to pretend that what they were doing to keep power is a continuation of Marx. I think the way to respond to this kind of misinterpretation of Marx is to be very explicit about the kind of socialism that we would like to build. ■

This interview has been edited for space. See the full interview at dsausa.org/democratic-left/piketty



Gerard Dalbon

5-step program

The ideas outlined in his two major volumes don't fit easily on picket signs, but here are Piketty's five core proposals to reverse extreme concentration of wealth and enable a new era of participatory socialism:

1) TAX INCOME In the 1950s, 90% top tax rates on the highest incomes prevented runaway executive pay. We must return to that, with high taxes of up to 90% not just on salaries but on all income, including capital gains, dividends, and rents.

2) TAX WEALTH We tax wealth today—the property tax—but it's a "flat" tax averaging 1% on only one kind of wealth. To restrain the largest fortunes that are now growing at up to 10% a year, we must make the annual property tax "progressive" too. That means higher rates for those with larger holdings, and it means taxing wealth in all its forms, not just land and buildings.

3) TAX INHERITANCE Invent an app or star in a movie that makes you a fortune? Good for you. But no just society can let that result in opulence for all time among your descendants. We must return to the 80% tax rates we had in the '50s and '60s on the biggest inheritances.

4) GIVE WORKERS A SAY It's unjust when those who own have all the say and those who labor have none. In all but the smallest firms, workers should elect half the board members, as they do in the largest firms in Germany today.

5) CAPITAL FOR ALL Ever heard of land reform—redistributing large estates to smallholders who'd work the land? Proceeds from the wealth and inheritance taxes could be used in a similar way—to give a universal capital endowment of \$140,000 to every citizen when they turn 25.

Ageism is real. It's time we fought it.

Let elders die for the sake of the economy? No, thanks.

BY CHRISTINE RIDDIOUGH

We're all tired of the coronavirus by now—ready to get back to our real lives. But even as restaurants and movie theaters, hair salons, and gyms reopen, there are some of us who will find it more difficult to carry on as before, and many who aren't around even to try. For those of us over 65, simply going to the store can be terrifying. And the numbers justify that terror.

Data from the Centers for Disease Control show that through mid-June the overall cumulative hospitalization rate in the United States was 94.5 per 100,000 population. Among adults aged ≥ 65 years it was 286.9, or more than three times the overall rate. If you live in a nursing home, your chances of getting and dying from the coronavirus are even higher. The rates for African American seniors are almost three times as high as those for seniors overall.

While these numbers may bring terror to older people, they shouldn't cause surprise. They've been accompanied by comments like those of Lieutenant Governor Dan Patrick of Texas, who called for the reopening of Texas by saying that there are "more important things than living." In March, Patrick callously said that he thought "lots of grandparents" would be happy to give up their lives to keep the country afloat economically. COVID-19 has simply exposed the ongoing disregard of old people.

"Talk of age-based rationing also subtly reinforces the idea that shortages of equipment and other resources are inevitable, and that older people will 'make way' for more deserving patients," wrote Nina Kohn in *The Washington Post* May 8. "In the absence of vocal objection, this reduces pressure on policymakers to pull out all the stops to provide such resources."

Beyond COVID-19, older people in America have always been expendable, from Hollywood's lack of decent roles for older women actors to public health's calculation of a person's value based on age. Life may begin at 40, but it definitely ends at 65, even if you're not dead yet. And it's not just among capitalists in the



Danielle Bailey

United States. Ageism exists on the Left as well (think "OK, boomer").

Nursing homes are a problem-filled case in point. Although there are regulations on the books, they are often flouted, and when caught, nursing home proprietors (most of them for-profit) are typically given a slap on the wrist. A 2014 report by the Department of Health and Human Services found that "An estimated 22% of Medicare beneficiaries experienced adverse events during their [skilled nursing facilities] stays" and another 11% of Medicare recipients experienced "temporary harm" events. Physician reviewers found that some 59% of these events were "clearly or likely preventable" and could be attributed to "substandard treatment, inadequate resident monitoring, and failure or delay of necessary care."

Ageism is not restricted to nursing homes, though it may be most obvious there. Everywhere in our culture we can see signs of it. Although one-third of U.S. residents are older than 50, 90% of marketing spending is aimed at people younger than that. And while there are laws on the books prohibiting age discrimination, it remains difficult for someone over 50 to get a job in many industries.

Citizens over 65 are eligible for Medicare, but it's definitely not Medicare for All Health Needs. Hearing aids are not covered, for instance, nor is in-home long-term care. The AARP (American Association for Retired People) is supposed to be an advocate for older people, but one look at its website shows that it's primarily in the business of selling supplemental insurance to cover gaps in Medicare. If you can't afford the extra coverage, you're out of luck.

What can we do to address these issues? First we must admit that ageism is an issue, even in our own ranks. Then we have to fight for changes in laws and culture to end ageism. In the 1970s, there was an advocacy group for old people called the Gray Panthers. Started by Maggie Kuhn, it successfully advocated for an end to forced retirement. While the group still exists, it is not nearly as visible as is needed.

Let's remember that the changes we seek are not just for our parents or grandparents, but for everyone. If we're lucky, old age will come to all of us. ■

Christine Riddiough is a member of Metro-DC DSA and has been active on the Left for 50 years.

Everybody In, Nobody Out

What to tell everyone you know about Medicare for All

BY MICHAEL LIGHTY

COVID-19 provides the most compelling rationale in our lifetime for winning Medicare for All. With M4A we could address the systemic racism and other healthcare inequalities revealed by the pandemic by

- replacing employment-based private insurance with a publicly financed and administered system of guaranteed healthcare for all, including undocumented workers;
- expanding treatment of existing chronic conditions and the toxic stress disproportionately affecting Black and Latino communities;
- expanding preventive care, instituting culturally competent care, and redirecting resources toward robust public health;
- establishing a new social solidarity that guarantees housing, jobs and food security to address the social determinants of health.

Critics say that such a program is too expensive and that we must move incrementally. But we must take financing out of the hands of private insurers. Hospitals face losses of \$350 billion due to the pandemic, yet insurance companies report undiminished profits.

If we establish single-payer financing that controls costs in part by providing “global budgets” to hospitals and clinics, these facilities will have the operating resources they need to re-open and stay open in rural areas and inner cities even when not profitable or “paying customers” do not show up, as when elective procedures are cancelled during a pandemic.

Under single-payer financing, the hundreds of billions siphoned from healthcare services in the form of administrative waste, profits, and high executive salaries (typically \$22 million per year for insurance CEOs) would be redirected to primary care, prevention, public health, and essential supplies. Shortages of Personal Protective Equipment are

not an accident; they exist by design. To maintain cash flow, supplies are limited and produced by an outsourced supply chain “just-in-time.” Nobody has stockpiled them for exactly the purpose for which they were needed and still are needed, because it’s not profitable to plan ahead. During a pandemic, especially for healthcare workers, that’s a fatal flaw.

“If all this sounds too good to be true, that’s because our expectations have been lowered by false claims of political infeasibility.”

Under the present fragmented system or the “public option,” patients change plans, and plans restrict access to providers through limited networks, thus disrupting continuity of care. The “everybody in, nobody out” approach of Medicare for All creates incentives for preventive care. Drugs developed with public funding would be available at no or low cost to the public.

Because Medicare for All would provide a single standard of quality healthcare free at the point of service without financial barriers in the form of co-pays and deductibles, patients will get the care they need, not just the care they can afford. This in turn provides resources for patient education, as well as the ability to educate more culturally competent providers. Well-funded public health programs can address other barriers, such as access to reproductive health services, including publicly funded abortions. With guaranteed healthcare, those with the least ability to get care now will benefit the most.

Other benefits provided by Medicare for All, but not by incremental piecemeal reforms, include the following:

- complete choice of doctors, hospitals and other providers;
- long-term care with a preference for home-based care;
- the medical portion of workers

compensation;

- dental coverage;
- in-patient psychiatric care, substance abuse rehabilitation and out-patient therapy, covered equally to physical health conditions
- peace of mind.

Because employers will save an estimated one-third to one-half of what they currently spend on healthcare, those savings can be redirected to wages and pensions, as mandated by programs accompanying the national Medicare for All legislation.

Those workers whose jobs are eliminated when we transition to Medicare For All will receive income maintenance, a bridge to pensions, job training for new clinical positions or placement in comparable administration positions, funded by 1-2% of revenues for five years.

Overall funding for the program comes from progressive taxes, including payroll and income taxes that are substantially lower for 95% of people in the United States and replace the premiums, deductibles and copayments we currently pay.

If all of this sounds too good to be true, that’s because our expectations have been lowered by the false claims of political infeasibility. In fact, since the pandemic began, support for Medicare for All has increased by nine points to 55% of registered voters, per a March 27-29 survey. Guaranteed healthcare for all undermines the politics of resentment that currently poisons the debate—as some people get subsidies for coverage while others struggle to get the care they need.

Imagine if every politician, union, and advocate who expresses support for improved Medicare for All actually worked to enact it. Ours is a movement to save lives. Join us at medicareforall.dsausa.org, where we organize a pressure campaign to win national Medicare 4 All, nothing less! ■

Michael Lighty is a former national director of DSA (1989-1993), served as the Healthcare Constituency Director for Bernie 2020, and is national spokesperson for DSA’s M4A campaign.

How should labor organize for Black lives?

Rank-and-file unionists are calling for cop-free schools and labor councils.

BY ASHLEY PAYNE

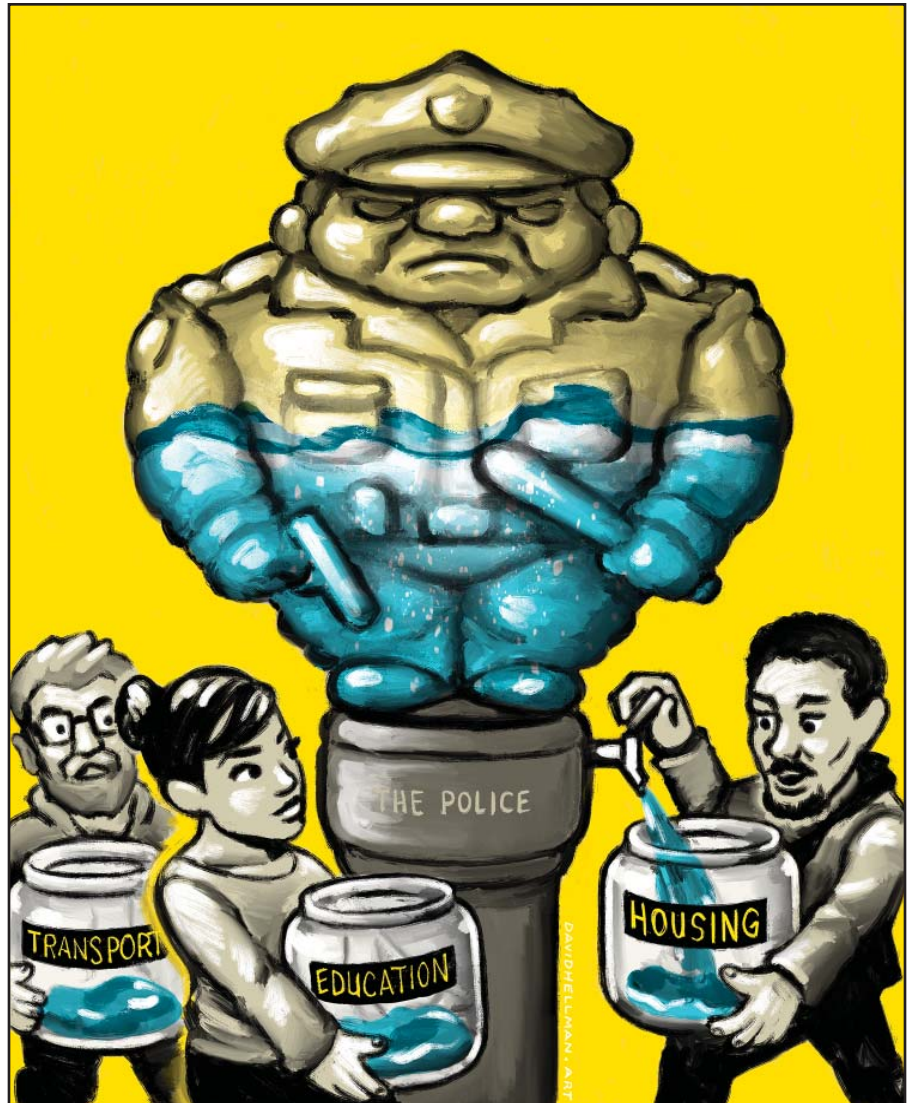
The multiracial working class has an unprecedented opening to push for what we on the Left call “social justice unionism” or “bargaining for the common good.” Depending on the industry or sector, both organized and unorganized workers can link health and safety struggles to larger issues such as Medicare for All, housing protection, food security, and now—after George Floyd’s murder on Memorial Day—police brutality and racism.

The last two items raise thorny questions that go beyond easy statements of solidarity. What concrete steps should the labor movement take to organize for Black lives and racial justice?

The answers vary widely depending on context. Teachers’ unions throughout the country are organizing for police-free schools. United Teachers Los Angeles (UTLA) overwhelmingly endorsed a resolution calling for police-free schools, thus helping to push the L.A. Unified School District to cut 35% of the budget for police in schools and redirect it to student services and plans for police-free schools. The Oakland Education Association worked with other groups in a long battle that ended this summer with the dismantling of the school resource officer department in the district.

Another popular demand is to remove police locals from central labor councils and persuade the AFL-CIO to disaffiliate nationally from the International Union of Police Associations. (Although only a fraction of unionized police belong to the IUPA, the move would be significant.) One recent success was the MLK Labor Council’s expulsion of the Seattle Police Officers’ Guild. Police and other law enforcement unions such as corrections’ officers vote conservatively on endorsing legislation and political candidates. This has led some unions to revise their endorsement criteria so that they do not endorse candidates who take police union money.

Some unionists are expanding the



DavidHellman.art

call to disaffiliate to all law enforcement, such as corrections officers. These calls for wider disaffiliation raise strategic considerations. What do we in the rest of labor accomplish by pushing the unions out of the labor federations? At a time when all workers face major threats to their collective bargaining rights, and many public-sector workers don’t even have them, is this a slippery slope that could cause the entire public sector to lose collective bargaining rights?

After Rayshard Brooks was killed by an Atlanta Police Department officer, I was heartbroken to learn that APD is represented by SEIU-NAGE (National Association of Government Employees). SEIU is my union. In addition to their own organizations, many law

enforcement and correctional officers’ classifications are embedded in larger unions like mine. These include Teamsters, the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW), the Communications Workers of America, and others. There are many questions here. First, we have to parse through all the different job classifications and types of law enforcement. We do not want to harm those who work closely with law enforcement, such as clerks, parking enforcement personnel, 911 dispatchers, and others whose jobs depend on those department budgets.

There have been calls to re-civilianize some of that work to other depart-

ments. Do we really need cops at the scene of a car accident, for instance? There have been calls for a just transition as well, similar to what some have talked about in Medicare for All. What this “just transition” would look like is still unclear, but it could involve giving police officers opportunities to transition into different jobs after their forces have been disbanded. It can also mean a transition for those whose jobs depend on police budgets and who support law enforcement, such as clerks.

Should expulsion be limited to those who carry guns or expanded to include those who carry potentially lethal weapons such as tasers or clubs? And, of course, Eric Garner and George Floyd died from physical maneuvers that should be outlawed everywhere.

To date, unions have resisted calls to cut ties with dues-paying members. But even if the total of dues-paying union members takes a significant hit in the short run, the union movement will be strengthened in the long run by being on the right side of history. Workers are in the streets, and the labor movement should be in sync with the multiracial working class. The organized labor movement is small, but it can't afford to protect union pocketbooks over Black lives. ■

East Bay DSA and SEIU member Ashley Payne is on the Steering Committees for the DSA Democratic Socialist Labor Commission, the Growth and Development Committee, and a co-chair of EBDSA's Racial Solidarity Committee. This article is based on a talk given at East Bay DSA's Socialist Night School in June.

Democratic Left is online!

Find more socialist writing about organized labor, the uprisings, and a hundred years of votes for women at dsausa.org/democratic-left

Wanted: An army of organizers

A joint project of DSA and the United Electrical Workers is taking a page from the Bernie playbook.

BY SAM DATLOF

Employers have shown which side they're on. As the COVID-19 pandemic rages around us, bosses have chosen to put short-term profits over the health of their workers and the community.

The Emergency Workplace Organizing Committee (EWOC), a joint project of Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) and the United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America (UE), recognizes that the costs of employers' greed are disproportionately borne by people of color. If we want to build a multiracial working-class movement that can win a good life for us all, we have to organize from the shop floor up.

Inspired by the Bernie Sanders campaign's distributed-organizing model, EWOC relies on an army of motivated socialist volunteers to take on work traditionally done by paid union organizers. By putting its faith in ordinary Americans who wanted to make Bernie's vision for the country a reality, the campaign mobilized millions of people to build working-class political power together. EWOC takes the Sanders model from political organizing to workplace organizing. EWOC is built on the belief that, with the right training and commitment, any member of DSA can help workers organize their workplace.

Of course, it won't be easy. Workplace organizing is time-consuming, delicate, and complicated—and now it needs to happen almost entirely virtually. EWOC has recruited a team of longtime workplace organizers and developed extensive training programs for workers and new organizers. It has developed new forms of worker outreach and new processes to support workers virtually as they begin to organize their workplaces. Training workers and new volunteers to take on serious responsibility—and thrive doing it—is key to EWOC's success.

The strategy is working. Only a few months from its founding, EWOC has

helped close to a thousand workers in ten workplaces across the country win their demands. Workers assisted by EWOC have won hazard pay, paid sick leave, personal protective equipment, and more. And we're just getting started. Now, EWOC is involved in campaigns that are in the works or under way in 20 states, and more are getting off the ground every week.

One recent campaign began when a worker requested EWOC's assistance in organizing his workplace through our website (workerorganizing.org). He and his coworkers at a Taco Bell franchise in Michigan received guidance on organizing their colleagues; writing a petition demanding that management implement reasonable safety precautions and fairly compensate them for the risk they took every day by showing up to work; and then making their demands public. The workers won hazard pay (including back pay for time they'd already worked during the pandemic), paid sick leave, and more. They won their demands not just for themselves, but for their full franchise—which employs hundreds of workers.

To hold on to this momentum, EWOC needs your help. Whether you're coming to EWOC to organize your own workplace, as a new organizer ready to support comrades engaged in shop-floor struggles, or as an old-hand organizer with years of experience to contribute, we need you. As we expand across the multiracial working class, we will particularly need organizers who speak languages other than English. The EWOC model is built to meet you where you are, to develop your skills, and to give you the responsibility you are ready for. All you need is the belief that every worker deserves democratic control over their work, and the commitment to make that belief a reality.

If that sounds like you, get in touch for help organizing your workplace or to sign up to be an organizing volunteer at workerorganizing.org. ■

Sam Datlof is a nonprofit lawyer who represents migrant workers in Pennsylvania.

How to Stay Safe at a Protest

Since May, multitudes who never demonstrated before have flooded the streets to protest racism and police violence. Protests can be unpredictable. Here's how you and your comrades can stay safe.

Before

SUPPLIES Bring water in a squirt bottle, a snack, phone charger, permanent marker for writing phone numbers on your arm. If you are tear gassed or pepper sprayed, use only water on your eyes.

PHONE SECURITY Turn your phone security setting to lock every time you close it. Turn off the thumb and facial recognition unlock. Turn banner notifications off so that nobody can see who is writing to you. If you are comfortable and know your surroundings, turn off location tracking.

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS Know what is legal to carry. Don't take anything illegal with you or anything that you don't want to lose. Write the number of legal support on your arm.

PLAN AHEAD Who will call in to work if you're arrested? Who will care for your children, walk your dog or feed your pets? Who will call a lawyer, show up in court, wait for you? If you require medication, carry it in the prescription bottle in which it came. It may still be taken from you if you are arrested.

During

BUDDY SYSTEM Have a "buddy" that you arrive with and leave with. Have a plan for if you get separated. Make sure your buddy knows key information in case anything happens to you (your address, birth date, contact numbers).

DON'T RUN Walk, don't run unless absolutely necessary. Running leaves behind those who can't run, and escalates the situation.



Devon Manney

BE RESPONSIBLE Be Responsible for Yourself and Others. An unplanned arrest is not good for you or the movement. Unless you have a plan, try to avoid it. If you see someone being arrested, get their key information (date of birth, name, person to notify). Decide beforehand whether you can risk arrest, i.e., will your job be in jeopardy, your immigration status? If you are at risk, notify the marshals. Even if you are not at risk, do not put others at risk by your actions unless they consent to it.

If the situation looks dangerous, leave!

LISTEN TO MARSHALS Marshals have been trained in de-escalation. Take marshal training yourself.

After (if there are arrests)

ASK FOR A LAWYER, AND DON'T TALK TO THE POLICE You do not have to give them any information except to identify yourself. This is not the time for you to tell them what you think of them or the system. You do not want to escalate the situation and endanger yourself and others.

YOU WILL BE SEARCHED Your cell phone and all personal items will be taken for safe-keeping and returned

to you at the end of the process. Never consent to a search of your personal belongings. They will check for outstanding warrants. You may either be given a ticket for an appearance in court or kept for up to 24 hours for an arraignment.

SUSTAIN OTHERS Each person reacts differently to being arrested. Stay calm and supportive. Be proactive to get help for anyone with a medical emergency.

DO NOT POST ON SOCIAL MEDIA ABOUT YOUR ARREST And definitely do not post about anyone else's arrest without their consent.

HELP WITH JAIL SUPPORT Find out where arrestees have been taken. Notify the legal team. Stay in the precinct house or courthouse. Be in the courtroom or waiting whenever your comrades come out. ■

Adapted from "Protesting: Rights, Risks, Responsibilities," a pamphlet developed by the DSA National Red Rabbits team.

DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

On Page 8 of our Summer issue, the photo credit should have read **Tim Olin**.

How to Organize in Rural America

With humility and an open heart, socialists can make change in rural spaces, too.

BY ALLISON CLOO

Whether you're talking to your own family or friends and neighbors or strangers, here are some factors to consider when you're in rural spaces.

- Align with the groups and efforts already in place. Who else is active in the area? How can you show up for them and establish a shared sense of purpose and commitment? What resources are already available or in short supply?
- Avoid jargon and theory. Your use of leftist jargon and theory can be ineffective at best and alienating at worst. Chances are there are local traditions of organizing and solidarity to which you can appeal rather than name-dropping theorists and movements. There's a long tradition of socialist organizing in the Midwest and South. Draw on those names.
- Aim for conversations rather than debates. For many people, difficult topics of politics or social justice operate at two speeds: complete avoidance or full-on debate. It is impossible to build a movement without addressing the issues, but we are equally unable to create change if our interactions flare out with arguments. The goal is to keep the pot simmering and not let it boil over.
- Ask questions and be ready to incorporate what you hear. Part of establishing trust and reciprocity is listening and responding appropriately. If someone you're talking with can feel that you are waiting for the chance to interject your own opinion or dismiss their experience, they have no reason to spend their time with you. Even if you have lived in the same area as that

person, they may have a different view of what is happening and what needs fixed. Age, race, gender, sexuality, ability, class—these differences exist everywhere, and solidarity can't exist if those differences are flattened or excluded.

“There is a history of leftist organizing in rural spaces and ‘Middle America’ that has been obscured since the mid-20th century.”

- Anticipate challenges, but apply compassion. We spend a lifetime developing our ways of thinking and living in the world. External circumstances and information have led community members to the politics or lifestyle that seems to work best for them. Workers might be opposed to the idea of protesting the company that signs their paychecks every month. They may even feel more loyal to that company than someone appealing to the interests of working classes. The only way to swing that loyalty is to prove that you care more than the company about the long-term well-being of that worker, their family, and their community.
- Accept that differences will persist. Let's say that you make progress with an individual or an overall campaign—unity in the face of one exploitative company or law doesn't mean that you will agree with every idea represented within your coalition. There are too many ingrained biases and systems of power to “win” every issue at once. You could be excluding potential help or never getting an effort off the ground for fear of including someone

who does not meet a purity test.

Note: It is essential to make sure that people feel safe in your organizing. Vulnerable individuals should not be forced to work alongside anyone who wishes them harm or debates their humanity. When in doubt, organize around the needs and desires of the people most at risk in your community.

- Appeal to common values. In conversations and local tactics, organizing benefits from appealing to the common values that exist between individuals and groups in spite of apparent differences. This is the core of the most successful connections, because it allows you to agree on something, to have them say “yes” when they are used to saying “no” about certain issues.

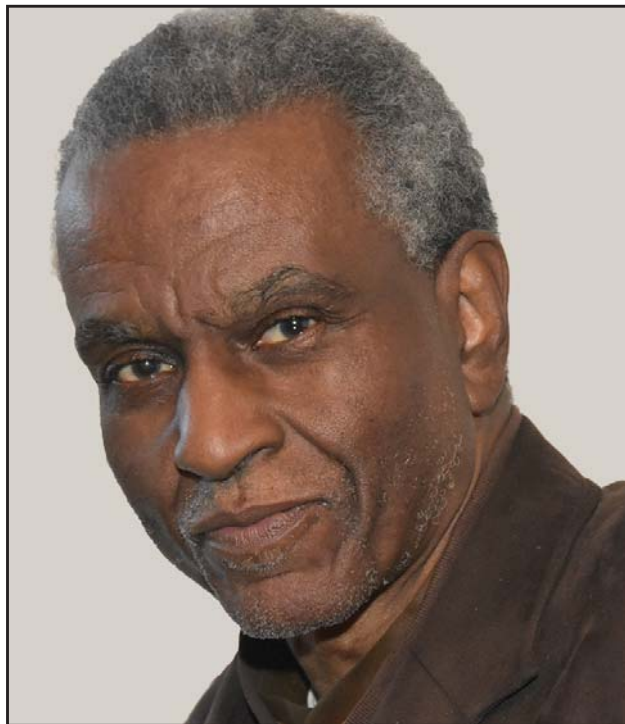
Right-wing politicians and conservative institutions have spent decades trying to corner the market on tradition, work ethic, family values, rural identity, religion, agriculture, and even things like disaster preparedness. Leftists in rural places have as much a claim to these areas as any mega-church, corporation, or politician.

For every objection to an issue like “political correctness” or unions, there will be an example of something more familiar to rural life that operates on the same principles. People already censor their language when they don't swear around their elders or tell dirty jokes at church. Farmers understand the good of bargaining as a collective when they operate as a co-operative or commission for better prices on certain crops. There is a history of leftist organizing in rural spaces and “Middle America” that has been obscured since the mid-20th century. Countering decades of propaganda and marketing will be challenging, no doubt, but rural America needs socialism, can be reached by socialism, and will be an asset for other socialists.

Portland DSA member Allison Cloo lives with her husband in Clackamas County, Oregon. She organizes with local groups around racial justice and community safety in the face of far-right threats.

From settler colony to slaveholder republic

Gerald Horne—an organizer, activist, and scholar—holds the Moores Professorship of History and African American Studies at the University of Houston and is the author of more than 30 books, including *The Dawning of the Apocalypse: The Roots of White Supremacy, Settler Colonialism, and Capitalism in the Long Sixteenth Century* and *The Apocalypse of Settler Colonialism: The Roots of Slavery, White Supremacy, and Capitalism in Seventeenth-Century North America and the Caribbean*. *Democratic Left* editorial team member Stephen Magro spoke with him about the controversial 1619 Project initiated by the *New York Times*, the history profession, and the need for socialists to be antiracist and internationalist in their theory and practice. This interview has been edited for length and clarity.



The 1619 Project—and much of your work—puts settler colonialism, slavery, and white supremacy at the center of the unfolding history of the United States. It seems straightforward, so how do we account for resistance to the Project among some historians?

The 1619 Project stirred controversy in part because it unsettled the widely accepted “creation myth” of the founding of the United States. Countless numbers of those of European descent profited handsomely from the founding. They—along with historians who have shaped the dominant narrative—have managed to convince too many that this “immaculate conception” idea of the creation of the slaveholders’ republic is also a universal and undeniable “truth.” This “truth” ignores the immense losses suffered by Native Americans after the republic was founded. In effect, 1776 overturned the Royal Proclamation of 1762-1763, wherein London cast doubt on the continuance of the settler model of moving west, seizing the land of the indigenes, and expending immense amounts of blood and treasure for the ultimate benefit of real estate speculators, such as George Washington. Likewise, the ruling in *Somerset v. Stewart* in 1772 [in which Somerset, who had

been purchased in Boston and escaped in England was declared to have the right to freedom] was perceived as a threat to the settler model of continuing their lucrative project of mass enslavement. This is one reason among many why Africans sided with the “redcoats” against the so-called “revolutionaries” and continued to do so by participating in the sacking of Washington, D.C. itself in August 1814, alongside British forces. Meanwhile, as early as the 1790s, the United States was the leader in transporting enslaved Africans to Cuba, and by the 1840s, was paramount in transporting enslaved Africans to the biggest market of all: Brazil. At one time, descendants of enslaved Africans were barred from archives, not to mention many universities. Once this situation changed, new stories of the founding emerged. The wonder is that it took so long.

There’s an almost mystical enthusiasm about the founding, as though selected ideals expressed in our Constitution are more relevant to U.S. history than the material conditions that existed over centuries. Why this seeming preference for the abstract over the concrete? There is a felt need to align the odious origins of the republic with today’s conditions. The response is

what I call “Magical Unrealism,” converting an 18th-century document—that spoke of Africans as 3/5 human, that contains a reprehensible “Fugitive Slave Clause” mandating the return of run-aways—into a document that somehow is not only antislavery but is so capacious that it vindicates subaltern rights. And, yes, this skewed misinterpretation is demobilizing. The oppressed and marginalized, instead of relying on their own organizational strength in league with the like-minded in the international community and the fair-minded at home, are enticed to place their faith in the Constitution. The idea still holds among all too many that in the face of injustice, instead of mobilizing masses, one should simply file a lawsuit.

You have had praise for the 1619 Project, but your recent work seems to locate the origins of North American racism earlier still—in the 16th century. It’s true that in my latest book I explore the 16th-century origins of enslavement of Africans in North America. But objectively, the 1619 Project is a response to massive discontent among African Americans, across class and status lines. This has driven a search for a new story that will explain the current mess of structural racism and inequality,

an unchecked pandemic, and stunningly incompetent and bigoted leadership, which the “creation myth” assuredly does not. The 1619 Project is also a response to the reality that too many in the United States seek to discredit virtually every revolution since 1776, especially those in the 20th century—including in Moscow and Havana—that led directly to the liberation of much of Africa. Thus, Blacks are expected to be critical of those who aided us and laudatory of those who held us in chains.

You’ve written of the settler colonial project and subsequent white supremacy as a cross-class collaboration among whites. Can you say more about that? In my 16th-century book, I explore the diverse class origins of the 1580s settlement in what is now North Carolina and the 1607 invasion of what was termed Virginia. From the inception, settler colonialism was grounded in class collaboration, in the collective desire to dispossess the indigenous and, eventually, keep enslaved Africans in line. In my 17th-century book, I

speak of “The Spirit of 1676”; that is, Bacon’s Rebellion, wherein a diverse group of settlers revolt against London’s rule in Virginia, because England was not moving with sufficient dispatch to dispossess the indigenous and redistribute the land to the settlers. This involved a retreat from the religious wars that beset Europe and a rebranding—once the Atlantic is traversed—into “whiteness,” a militarized identity politics that continues to prevail, so far. Class collaboration among those of European descent is also an explanation for the presidential election of 2016 and Republican politics preceding same.

Now that we are witnessing a powerful Black-led uprising against police brutality and white supremacy, what are the implications for socialist strategy? As I write, the press reports that the uprisings post-George Floyd’s murder may rank as the largest mass movement in U.S. history. It remains questionable, however, if the decentralized model of Black Lives Matter is sufficient to meet the moment. But even

there, one espies a creative adaptation to what befell centralized organizations with a similar platform—the Black Panther Party—which was bludgeoned by dint of imprisonment, forced exile, even murder. An opportunity was missed when the Human Rights Council of the United Nations debated in June a motion filed by the African Union in Addis Ababa, demanding a “Commission of Inquiry” into “systemic racism” in the United States. The motion did not prevail in part—I think—because there was insufficient lobbying by a U.S. movement unaccustomed to seeking global support for our besieged movement. Socialists in theory are thought to be globally minded, and here is an opportunity to display our value by enticing the likeminded abroad to weigh in on our behalf. In turn this should improve the domestic climate, making it more feasible to advance on the all-important front of labor organizing. Therein lies a way out of our current situation. ■

CHAPTER AND VERSE

After the murder of George Floyd on May 25, DSAers across the country stood up to defend Black lives and defund police to re-fund our community services. Members attended and provided security for mass protests, coordinated jail support, supplied protesters with food and water, and raised money for bail funds.

In Minneapolis, **Twin Cities DSA** joined local actions immediately after Floyd’s death, then continued to support their community by providing hot meals, fresh produce, and other food supplies to South Side residents when grocery stores were shuttered during the protests.

In Houston, where Floyd grew up, **Houston DSA** joined area protests, then co-hosted a Juneteenth weekend Essential Workers Car Caravan for Black Lives with unions and other labor organizations.

In partnership with Black and indigenous families affected by police violence, **Seattle DSA**’s AFROSOC caucus led a march of over 1,000 people through Seattle’s wealthiest neighborhood to Mayor Jenny Durkan’s mansion, with speakers from the Family of



DSA members march in support of NYC-DSA’s #DEFUNDNYPD campaign.

Charleena Lyles, Missing and Murdered Indigenous People & Families, Decriminalize Seattle, and many more.

In California, **DSA San Francisco** and **East Bay DSA** joined the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU)’s West Coast port shutdown to celebrate Juneteenth, end systemic racism and police terror, and stop the privatization of the Oakland port.

After a month of street protests throughout the five boroughs, members of **NYC DSA**’s Afrosocialists and

Socialists of Color Caucus became part of the organizing committee of a weeks-long occupation outside City Hall demanding that the city defund the NYPD.

On what would have been Breonna Taylor’s birthday, **DSA North Texas** joined In Defense Of Black Lives Dallas in protest. And on Juneteenth weekend, they held a Defund the Police event to talk about what Dallas’s future might look like without so many cops in the streets.

photo courtesy instagram.com/nycdsa

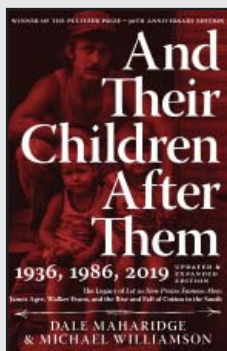
The Painful Legacy of King Cotton

BY BRIAN SIANO

Henry Luce had intended his *Fortune* magazine to be a *Vogue* for American industry, showcasing it at its most impressive and powerful, so he needed skilled photographers. At the top of the list was Margaret Bourke-White, known then for her striking photos of steel mills and hydroelectric dams. Further on down was Walker Evans, who in 1936 took an assignment after working with the Farm Security Administration: He and writer James Agee would travel to Hale County, Alabama, for an article on the poverty of sharecropper and tenant-farmer families during the Dust Bowl.

After several weeks, Agee and Evans located three families (the Gudgers, the Woodses, and the Rickettses, all pseudonyms), and turned in a 30,000-word article that *Fortune* declined to run. Agee's own ambitions for the piece grew into *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*, the details of life among the rural poor, illustrated with Evans's photographs. It finally saw print in 1941—by which time the Great Depression was nearly over, the Second World War was underway, and similar books by Erskine Caldwell, John Steinbeck, and even Margaret Bourke-White had come and gone. Its reputation grew in part because Evans's photos became useful emblems when teaching about the Great Depression, and Agee later won a Pulitzer for *A Death in the Family*. Aaron Copeland composed the opera *The Tender Land* after reading it. And there's a moment when the Gudger family says their good-nights that must have informed the TV show *The Waltons*.

Agee's writing reflects a lot of the work performed under the various New Deal projects, which put artists and writers to work capturing America. One chapter might be a list of daily details and possessions; another might be a description of a school or family gathering; another might be Agee worrying that he's an interloper who's



AND THEIR CHILDREN AFTER THEM: James Agee, Walker Evans and the Rise and Fall of Cotton in the South (Seven Stories Press, revised edition 2020)

spying on these simple lives of hard-scrabble dignity. For many readers, most of whom discovered the book after the Second World War and during the prosperity of the following thirty years, Agee and Evans's book was a document of a very different time. Even the fact that Agee's three families were white acquired some significance as the civil rights movement brought attention to the lives of Black Southerners: at the time, the vast majority of tenant farmers, like the book's characters, were white.

Fifty years later, in 1989, Dale Maharidge and photographer Michael Williamson decided to follow in Agee and Evans's footsteps... to a point. The title's original quote may have been "Let us now praise famous men, and our fathers that begat us," but Maharidge and Williamson continued the phrase with *And Their Children After Them*. They began their own book with Maggie Louise Gudger, the ten-year-old girl who'd enchanted Agee with her dream of becoming a teacher: we witness her suicide in front of her children. As this 30th-anniversary edition ends, they've revisited the Gudger family in the 21st century, inviting us to look at the country that capital is still creating.

As iconic as Agee and Walker's book has become, Maharidge and Williamson brought invaluable historical perspective to this project, which won a Pulitzer Prize for nonfiction in 1990. Their opening chapter is a succinct, comprehensive survey of how capitalism shaped the South. The

cotton gin made cotton a viable cash crop, its economic benefits palpable for landowners. Vast plantations took over smaller farms like an antebellum Archer-Daniels-Midland. Rural whites became an underclass because they were isolated, long unable to underbid their labor against actual slaves. After the Civil War, as African Americans moved out of the South and poor whites moved to the cities, the cotton industry needed cheap labor to pick the stuff. So a system of tenant farming and sharecropping was instituted. Landowners offered to rent land to aspiring farmers, but kept them on the hook for equipment, supplies, shelter, and everything else. In 1936, this system collapsed when John Rust invented a machine that could actually pick cotton. (Rust was a populist who'd hoped his machine would free tenant farmers from labor, and tried to limit his patents so that only those farmers would benefit. It didn't work. International Harvester quickly developed better machines, and Rust's efforts to provide financial trusts for farmers came to nothing.)

And while Agee had to confine himself to a portrait of how his families lived at that time, *And Their Children After Them* can tell their stories over the years between 1936 and 1989...including comments about what was perceived as their snobbery and coldheartedness. This irritated a number of 1989 reviewers who thought the two were being blasphemed.

It may be possible to read *Famous Men* as an account of a way of life erased by progress, and Agee's optimism for his subjects' future might encourage that. But some of the towns Agee and Evans visited in 1936 were virtually unchanged as late as the 1980s. Industrial farming took over the cotton industry and, while a few holdovers stuck to their land and farms, making futile efforts at switching to other crops, their siblings and descendants moved on.



Photo by Michael Williamson

The melancholy and loneliness that suffuse Maharidge and Williamson’s account overwhelms even the spots of progress. There’s substantial material improvement—education, plumbing, lateral career moves from farming to trucking, emigration to the nearby cities. Some even got into

college. But for the most part, this is a chronicle of sadness, struggle, poverty, and tragedy. Most of the people have moved on, found new lives, or died: The 2019 coda is less about the surviving interviewees than it is about the authors’ own ruminations about the area, including attempts to

sell a screenplay about the project in the early 1990s. One wishes that they could have continued their work more fully, with an examination of poverty as it currently exists in the South. Or even just Alabama—a “right to work” state with the worst poverty in the developed world.

Still, a bit of hope comes into this close-to-final paragraph:

“Before Michael and I left the couple, I had one last question for Detsy. We’d chosen to use pseudonyms in part to riff off of Agee, but also to protect the children of the sharecropping families. We made that decision for them. I wanted to give Detsy agency. What did she desire? ‘I want my real name,’ Detsy replied, fast. ‘I’m proud of what we come up through.’” ■

Brian Siano is a videographer and writer living in Philadelphia. His film *The Wissachickon Creek* is available through streaming video.

NEW LEADERSHIP

National Political Committee

DSA is overseen by a 16-member National Political Committee (NPC), elected by delegates chapters send to the DSA convention every two years. Between conventions, the NPC is DSA’s highest decision-making body. From among its members, the NPC elects a five-member Steering Committee to plan NPC meetings and to make decisions between NPC meetings.

In May and June, NPC members Tawny Tidwell, Erika Paschold, and Sauce resigned. The NPC invited members to apply via a national email, and appointed three replacements at its July 11-12 meeting. NYC DSA member **Justin Charles** is a rank-and-file member of UAW 7902, and a member of the Emerge Caucus and AFROSOC. Philadelphia DSA member **Keon Liberato** is president of Local 3012 Pennsylvania Federation BM-WED-IBT and a member of the Bread & Roses caucus. NC Piedmont DSA member **Kevin Richardson** is a leader in AFROSOC and a member of Socialist Majority Caucus.



Jen McKinney
Eugene, OR

Paschold was also a member of the Steering Committee, and the NPC chose **Jen McKinney** to replace her on the Steering Committee and as secretary-treasurer.



Justin Charles
New York, NY



Keon Liberato
Philadelphia, PA



Kevin Richardson
Piedmont, NC

Welcome!

DSA’s newest chapters:

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- Greensboro, NC
- Winston-Salem, NC
- Coulee, WI
- Northern Indiana

Comrade, this is your publication.

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