

DEMOCRATIC LEFT

EDITED BY
MICHAEL HARRINGTON

Dec. 1979 Vol. VII No. 10 \$1

INSIDE

Democratic Agenda, p. 4

Does the Democratic party still have a left wing? More than 1700 activists gathered in D.C. to say yes.

Socialist Notes, p. 5

Nancy Kleniewski finds DSOCers generating a lot of energy over energy.

Community Organizing, p. 6

Jack Egan knows his way around the wards of Chicago and the Catholic Church. Harry Boyte asks him to reflect on decades of organizing in both.

Labor Education, p. 7

Jose LaLuz and Christine Mulligan look at the country's first labor education program geared toward women and minorities.

Special Report: Education, p. 8

Equal educational opportunity is as hard to be against as apple pie, but Ken Carlson finds flaws in current proposals.

What's Left to Read, p. 12

Eurosocialism Conference, p. 13

Worker management, control of runaway plants. . . . A major conference will bring European socialists to the U.S. to share strategies and programs.

Throwing Money, p. 14

When they were "throwing money" at programs in the 60s no one ever got enough. However, some programs have made a significant difference. Harrell Rodgers looks at one.

Campus Holds Promise in 80s

By Dick Flacks

ON THE EVE OF THE EIGHTIES, many of us sense a considerable hunger among idealistic and socially concerned students for avenues of political effect. A more visible and sustained student political mobilization seems likely in the coming decade. I've never shared the widespread perception that the students of the Seventies, as opposed to those of the Sixties, were complacent, conservative, privatized, or that this decade was marked by a virtual absence of student political activism. There have been major shifts in student feeling away from collective action and social concern, and a nearly complete loss of the heady Sixties feelings of "youth class" solidarity. But at least on my campus, and I suspect on many others, each year of the Seventies has witnessed some massing of students in protest, and a fairly continuous involvement of activist nuclei in a wide variety of concerns. Indeed, one big difference between the Seventies and the Sixties has been the degree to which the media in this decade have underreported protest, and have refused to "read" instances of collective action as more than isolated events. There has been, for example, a national movement of sorts against university investment policies regarding South Africa—but this development has hardly been noted by the mainstream media.

We tend to forget how dependent all of us have become on the mass media



Candy Freeland/LNS/1971

“Students, more than other mass constituencies, are likely to be able to make apparently remote and abstract issues subjects for grassroots democratic action.”

for definitions of social reality that foster a sense of movement solidarity and collective potential. In the Sixties such definitions were widely broadcast; in the Seventies, media-defined "trends" were in the opposite direction, and so stirrings on the campus never gathered the momentum they might have, had the media chosen to define them as part of a "rising tide of protest." The dependency of mass mobilizations on their media portrayal is a deep dilemma for movements in our time, and one that must somehow be overcome if grassroots activism is to have any staying power.

The particular strength of students

as a political and social force is their capacity to take action around broad issues. Students, more than any other social group, are relatively free of the responsibilities and preoccupations of daily life—while at the same time their daily experience, in class, campus plaza and cafeteria bull-session, is more likely to be preoccupied with global processes, international crises, prospects for the future. Students, especially in the more "elite" colleges are more likely to hear about and have to confront problems of global hunger, third world revolution, U.S. foreign policy, technological peril and the like. Thus students, more than

any other mass constituency, are the ones likely to be able to make apparently remote and abstract issues subjects for grassroots democratic action. If it were not for this student potential, there would be very little "popular base" for most questions of foreign policy, civil liberty and ecological balance. Moreover, students have the time and freedom not only to contemplate such questions but to devote energy to action around them. The enclosed social world of many campuses makes it particularly easy for students of like mind to find each other and to communicate with and persuade the uncommitted. These circumstances en-

LETTERS

To the Editor:

The article by Robert Howard, "Organizing the South: Ambiguous Victories," and the book review of Herman Benson's *Democratic Rights for Union Members* by William Kornblum in the Labor Day issue may offer some classic evidence that the left—democratic as much as nondemocratic—has a myopic vision of labor and the apparent declining prospects of organizing the unorganized, especially in the South.

Howard's failure to note the success of the United Steelworkers of America (USWA) in southern organizing is difficult to understand. I would suggest that the history and current involvement of the USWA in the Old South has had a ripple effect that has created a more productive seedbed for recent activities by other industrial unions, notably the Auto Workers and the Rubber Workers, whose successes all unionists applaud.

The USWA has 135,000 members in the states of the Old South, counting Texas and Oklahoma. The Steelworkers have been organizing in the South since 1937. Nobody writing about organizing in the South who has been

awake for the past two or three years could have missed the USWA election victory at Newport News Shipbuilding in 1978 where the union won bargaining rights for 18,300 workers, subsequently struck for 10 weeks and since November 5 has been in negotiations following a definitive court victory in October. There is no way a writer could take note of an occasional UAW win in the South while ignoring the steady USWA organizing success unless he has ignored NLRB election reports.

Item: The USWA's win at Kingsport Press at Kingsport, Tennessee, in the spring of 1979, at the same plant where the company smashed the printing trades unions in a strike 17 years ago. The election win has been contested by challenged ballots but the shock of the majority is still reverberating around east Tennessee.

Items: Since 1975 the USWA has organized Revere Copper at Scottsboro, Ala., 1100 workers; Superior Coach, Kosciusko, Miss., 740 employees; Ohio Fer-aloy, Montgomery, Ala., 700 members; Murphy Oil, Chalmette, La., 200 members; Amax, Braithwaite, La., 500 mem-

bers; Chicago Bridge and Iron, Birmingham, Ala., 650 members, with scores of smaller election wins in the South.

In District 35 (Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia) the Steelworkers currently have 20 organizing campaigns under way. The Steelworkers have local unions in every state in the old Confederacy in the major metals industries of steel, can, aluminum and nonferrous metals including U.S. Steel, Republic Steel, J & L, Armco, Bethlehem, Alcoa, Reynolds Metals, Kaiser Aluminum, Revere, Olin, Continental Can, American Can, National Can and a score of other nationally known corporations.

This is not playing any numbers game, but the fact remains that the Steelworkers have conducted a consistent and determined campaign to organize, have achieved victories in the jurisdictions which have large black and women workforces and have made available organizers to other unions both through the AFL-CIO Industrial Union Department and the USWA district structure. Few of these organizers may use terms

Continued on page 15

DEMOCRATIC LEFT

Formerly the
Newsletter of the
Democratic Left

Michael Harrington
Editor

Maxine Phillips
Managing Editor

Jim Chapin
National Director

DEMOCRATIC LEFT is published ten times a year (monthly except July and August) by the Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee, 853 Broadway, Room 617, New York, N.Y. 10003. Telephone: (212) 260-3270. Subscriptions: \$10 sustaining and institutional; \$5 regular; \$2.50 limited income. Signed articles express the opinions of the authors. ISSN 0164-3207. Second Class Permit Paid at New York, N.Y.

able students to play a particularly creative and catalytic role.

But these very same circumstances create serious limitations for student politics. To the degree that students are not engaged in the work and family responsibilities of other adults, they can become unrealistic and dangerously ignorant about the realities of daily life that most people have to confront. To the degree that the campus is a closed social world, a student movement based there, though quick to mobilize and potentially rich in solidarity, can find itself unable to communicate with and discover common ground with grassroots constituencies and movements on the outside. The key lesson of the Sixties for future student movements was just this—a student movement runs real risks of isolation, of self-destructive extremism, of rhetorical self-indulgence. Ultimately it is unable to sustain itself or the long-term commitment of its members so long as it stays within the campus enclave and defines itself as a *generational* revolt.

Isolation in Sixties

To a large degree, the student movement of the Sixties could not avoid this problem of isolation. The domestic effects of the cold war years had left young people precious few allies for a struggle against established power. A strategy of trying to patiently communicate with the majority of Americans would not have been as effective as the strategy of generational confrontation in forcing an end to the Vietnam war. A new student movement will have much greater opportunity to link up with more mainstream political currents; much less reason for defining itself as a generation in revolt.

For one thing, many veterans of the Sixties are now scattered throughout the institutions and locales of the society, and this, coupled with the much closer cultural affinity between the campus and the wider society today, compared with 15 years ago, provides many more openings for communication between students and leadership people in labor, community organizations, and other key settings.

Second, the general political climate is much more receptive to challenges to the wisdom of established power and status quo policy. Students today are not particularly more skeptical of politicians and "special interests" than are people

in the street, not simply because students have become more moderate, but because political distrust has become generalized. This more universal unrest is due to the fact that the majority no longer experience the "system" as working for them.

General vs. Generational Issues

It is likely that much of the ongoing political involvement of students in the Eighties will be cooperative work with political efforts begun and led by other forces. To a great extent the role of student organizers in the Eighties will be to educate students to needs and realities understood better off the campus than on. Indeed, many of the focal concerns engaging student energies are not being defined as student movement issues at all. For example, the antinuke



David Fenton/LNS

Member of Weatherman "women's militia" arrested, Chicago, Oct., 1969.

“A student movement runs real risks of self-destructive extremism.”

movement, although clearly powered by a growing army of youthful adherents, is rightfully defined as a general, not a generational, concern. A range of economic issues that have sparked organized protest, such as the question of housing and rents in California, have mobilized student interest, but the initiative and sense of urgency surrounding these issues comes from community and labor, rather than campus, sources.

As I've already suggested, there are types of issues that students, because of their special position, can and should take the initiative in raising. These are issues whose immediate effect is not on the material conditions of daily life but that have moral impact. In fact, the more engaged the democratic left is in mobi-

lizing Americans around a program of domestic economic reform, the more necessary it may be for students to keep alive what might be called the international social questions. It is disturbing to note the U.S. left's weak response to the current situation in Southeast Asia, when it appears to have both the responsibility and the opportunity to demand immediate effective relief for famine and a more longterm movement toward normalization of U.S.-Southeast Asia relations. Similarly, students have already played an important part in raising awareness about Southern Africa in this country—and may be the only substantial nonblack constituency that can provide the basis for popular education about the unfolding situation there. A final example—the campus may well be the prime arena for restarting grassroots support for nuclear disarmament and opposition to new militarism and nationalism—a major recent area of default for most of the democratic left.

In short, new ventures in building a student socialist organization and a wider student movement have the delicate problem of simultaneously linking students with majoritarian political currents while building on students' capacity to take the lead on key issues that seem too remote or too moralistic to be actively pursued by mainstream oriented groups.

Student Syndicalism

There's a final point I want to make about the changed context of the Eighties compared with the Sixties. Paradoxically, although students are capable of acting on "Big Issues," the Sixties also witnessed a growth of what is called in other countries, "student syndicalism"—that is, students organized to defend their interests as students. The trouble with such mobilization, especially among white upper middle class students, is that it often gave the appearance of being an effort to expand privilege. Nevertheless, whatever its ambiguities, the "student power/university reform" current in the Sixties certainly had the positive effect of opening up the campuses intellectually, and of gaining students rights as full adult citizens.

I think the Eighties offer some new grounds for student syndicalism rooted in the decline of social investment in education and knowledge. The decline

Continued on page 13

1700 Rally in Washington For Democratic Agenda

By David Hoffman

A MAJOR EFFORT TO DRAFT AN "issues yardstick" for the 1980s—a "Democratic Agenda" aimed specifically at the Democratic party national convention in New York City next August—brought 1700 activists to Washington, D.C. in mid-November under the leadership of the DEMOCRATIC AGENDA. About 40 percent of the attendees were unionists.

"We meet on the eve of the 1980 presidential campaign," DSOC National Chair Michael Harrington told the delegates in a keynote address. "Some of us are for Carter, some for Kennedy; others have not committed themselves to a candidate.

"Yet we speak with a single voice when we say to *all* the candidates: We demand that you put forth a program to deal with this unprecedented plague of soaring prices and chronic high unemployment that now produce the third recession in ten years and the worst peacetime inflation ever.

"We will not accept mere charisma," added Harrington. "I'm for Kennedy, but I'm here to help light a bonfire under any candidate." In an interview, Harrington stressed that while Kennedy was "the natural choice of the broad democratic left in the nation, he's certainly not a socialist, but an imperfect liberal. It's a mistake just to focus on the candidate. This is not a coronation. This is a political process."

International Association of Machinists President William Winpisinger told the crowd: "When Jimmy Carter came down from the mountaintop (Camp David) last summer, he told the American people: 'the leadership and strength we need will not come from the White House.' He's right, the leadership we need will not come from the White House, not with him as the occupant."



Affiliated Graphics

Speakers chat before the opening session: l. to r., William Lucy, secretary-treasurer, AFSCME; James Gripper, AFSCME; Barry Commoner; Congresswoman Barbara Milkulski; Robert Georgine, president, AFL-CIO Building and Construction Trades Department; Ed Donahue, vice president, Graphic Arts International Union; William Winpisinger, president, International Association of Machinists.

"If we are talking about a campaign based on personalities, count me out," said convention speaker Jerry Wurf, president of AFSCME. "But if you are talking about a campaign about principles and issues, then count me in. Unless we can put something together in the next six months, we will have only a tweedledee-tweedledum choice."

"No Democrat can be elected President," declared Harrington, "without the support of the people gathered here today, of our movements, our networks and commitments.

The DEMOCRATIC AGENDA coalition began in January 1976 as "Democracy '76," when 500 people gathered in Washington, D.C. to plan for the primaries and the Democratic convention later that year. Next, 1000 activists met in the capital in November 1977 under the banner of DEMOCRATIC AGENDA to

push Carter and Congress to keep the 1976 platform pledge to full employment. At the Democratic Mid-term Conference in Memphis in December 1978, DEMOCRATIC AGENDA organized close to 40 percent of the delegates to push Carter and the party to stick to their pledges and fight cuts in social spending. Now, on November 16, a crowd of 2000 assembled at the Metropolitan AME Church in Washington to hear AGENDA speakers assail corporate power and urge ways to combat it.

The conference met during the same time as the AFL-CIO convention. A letter distributed to all AFL-CIO delegates from DEMOCRATIC AGENDA initiator and DSOC vice-chair William Winpisinger invited them to attend both the conference and an IAM-DSOC sponsored festival of labor films.

Continued on page 14

SOCIALIST NOTES

By Nancy Kleniewski

AS A RESULT OF DSOC'S WORK, CALIFORNIANS WILL be able to vote on an initiative that, if passed, would create a state-owned oil corporation. The initiative, which has also been introduced as a bill in the state assembly, provides for the creation of a publicly owned corporation with a board of five members elected from different areas of the state.

The corporation's functions would be to develop and market oil on state-owned land not presently being leased to private oil companies and to act as a yardstick for oil prices. If created, the corporation would control between 7 percent and 18 percent of the oil now being bought in California, making it the state's third largest producer.

Supporters must collect a half million signatures between now and the 1980 election, to assure the 366,000 needed to put the initiative on the ballot, and obtain massive union support to overcome the expected counterattack by the private oil companies.

Burt Wilson, DSOC member from Los Angeles, was the first to suggest that the original assembly bill be made into an initiative, and it was Burt who redrafted it for DSOC and the California Democratic Council. Another DSOCer, Wally Knox, convened a coalition in Los Angeles to support the bill in the state assembly. DSOC locals throughout the state are collecting signatures, convening or participating in broad-based support coalitions, and publicizing the initiative.

Harold Meyerson, DSOC activist from L.A., notes that even in the wake of Proposition 13, "nationalization of oil is seen as a way of gaining power and stopping price increases." From 50 to 75 percent of oil in the U.S. is estimated to be on publicly-owned land. Since prices have risen steadily for several years, Harold believes that conditions may be right to begin to press for public ownership of public oil.

■ ■ ■

DSOC LOCALS IN MANY OTHER AREAS OF THE COUNTRY ARE also working on energy issues, particularly oil prices, utilities, and nuclear power. . . . The *New York Local* is working with the Alternative Energy Coalition to collect 30,000 signatures on petitions for democratic control and public ownership of utilities and energy companies. DSOC members did support work for the Citizen/Labor Energy Coalition (C/LEC) Day of Outrage Against Big Oil on October 17, the MUSE anti-nuclear concert, and are working with a coalition exploring the municipalization of Con Edison. . . . *Detroit DSOC* is working with C/LEC and the Machinists on a petition drive to reimpose price controls on domestic crude oil. The petitions are aimed at U.S. Representative John Dingell of Dearborn, chair of the House Subcommittee on Energy. Dingell, previously considered to be a friend of labor, is preventing the issue of controls from coming to a vote and reaching the house floor. Much of this and other energy work has been coordinated by Keith Kelleher, DSOC national board member and staff person for the Michigan Coalition on Utilities and Energy. Another DSOC member, Marianna Wells, has helped consolidate several antinuclear and environmental groups. . . .

In *Champaign-Urbana, Ill.*, DSOC helped the Central Illinois Consumer Energy Council (CICEC), which is fighting winter utilities shutoffs. The CICEC has organized hearings to influence the Commerce Commission's decision on winter shutoffs, will monitor shutoffs, and is working toward having the Commerce Commission elected. Within the Coalition, which includes such groups as a Machinists' local, the Champaign-Urbana Tenant Union and several senior citizens groups, DSOC and the New American Movement have formed a caucus for the public ownership of utilities. . . . The *Long Island Progressive Coalition*, which contains two DSOC locals, distributed 40,000 Big Oil Discredit cards as part of the C/LEC Day of Outrage activities. This summer, DSOC member David Sprintzen organized the Progressive Coalition's hearings on energy. . . . In *Washington, D.C.*, DSOC members participated in a protest march on the American Petroleum Institute as part of the C/LEC Day of Outrage. DSOC members are also working with Environmentalists for Full Employment for job creation through the development of alternative energy sources. . . . *Colorado DSOC* member Skip Roberts, of the Colorado Coalition for Full Employment, was instrumental in planning a November conference on job development, growth and renewable resources. . . . *New Haven* and *Harvard* DSOC groups both had energy teach-ins on October 15. . . . *Kalamazoo* DSOC members have written a position paper on oil price decontrol and inflation.

RESOURCES

SANE Conversion Planner: special issue on conversion of nuclear weapons facilities to peaceful uses (July-Aug. 1979). Available from SANE, 514 C St., N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002.

Primer on Nuclear Power. \$2.50 from Anvil Press, Box 37, Millville, Minn. 55957. Outlines the operation and hazards of nuclear power and the movement against it.

■ ■ ■

ENERGY AND HEALTH TASK FORCES

At its October meeting the national board of DSOC mandated the creation of national task forces on health care and energy. Their task: to inform and activate the membership on these issues as well as aid in the development of DSOC program and resources/literature in these two areas. Both task forces—Health Care convened by Patrick Lacefield of New York City DSOC and Energy convened by John Keefe of New Jersey DSOC—hope to publish newsletters within the next several months and will sponsor DSOC presences at appropriate conferences and conventions. Both task forces held sessions on November 18 at the DEMOCRATIC AGENDA conference in Washington and the Health Care Task Force shared an exhibit with the New American Movement's Health Commission at the annual convention of the American Public Health Care Association in New York November 4-8.

All DSOCers—especially those with special skills or expertise—who are interested in working with the health and energy task forces should write to them at DSOC, 853 Broadway, Suite 617, New York, N.Y. 10003.

Interview

Egan on Organizing

By Harry C. Boyte

THE FOLLOWING INTERVIEW with Father Jack Egan is the first in a series of discussions with well-known community organizers. Egan is director of the Center for Pastoral and Social Concerns at the University of Notre Dame. Since the mid-1960s, he has been a central figure in two distinct, but at points overlapping, progressive movements in America: community organization and the Catholic Church's social justice ministry. Here Father Egan reflects on both and speculates about their future.

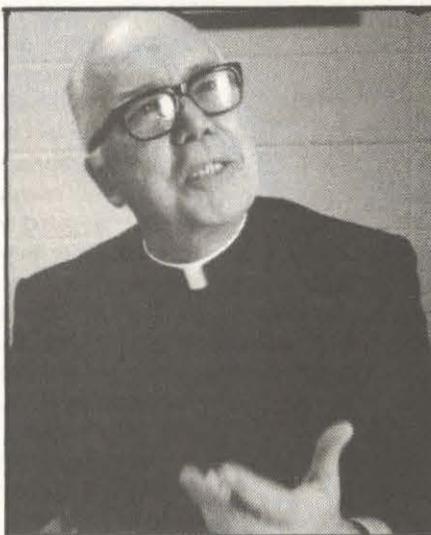
DEMOCRATIC LEFT: Heather Booth once said that Saul Alinsky stands to community organizing much as Freud stands to psychoanalysis. There's a famous story of how you first met Alinsky. That might be a good place to begin.

Father Egan: It was in 1935 when I was in seminary in Chicago. A group of us were invited to a meeting in his office. We were jammed in, firing questions. Then, as the meeting was about to end, somebody asked Saul to sum up several hours of conversation in a sentence. He looked at the young man with some disdain and also a smile. And he said, "Son, the day you're ordained decide whether you want to be a priest or a bishop. Everything else will follow."

DL: Catholic churches were the backbone of Alinsky's first major organizing effort, the Back of the Yards Organization in Chicago. Why was that?

Egan: It was a question of self interest. From Alinsky's point of view, the church was the key to organization in the area. This was an area of first generation immigrants searching for identity, opportunity, acceptance. And the church was the center of people's lives—central to the family, the culture, jobs, welfare. From the church's viewpoint, the parishes wanted stability in the community

and saw organization as needed for that. It was a marriage of convenience.



Jean Claude Lejeune

“Today more and more people are looking at socialism across the world.”

DL: In the mid-fifties in Chicago, you, Nicholas Von Hoffman and several others set up the Woodlawn Latin American Committee. Then you helped organize the fight against the University of Chicago's urban renewal plans on the South Side. Both of those led to The Woodlawn Organization, Alinsky's next, famous community organizing effort in the city. Why did you get involved in this kind of organization yourself? How did you see it related to the church?

Egan: I got involved directly through my work with Puerto Rican families in the Woodlawn area. I'd been in family work for a long time, and I saw veterans coming home after the war and many getting rooked by real estate operators. The FHA was building up the suburbs and cutting off the city. All this affected family life. Then, I also just didn't like to see people getting pushed around. I'd always

been supportive of union organizing, since the Depression. I remember the days when company goons would talk about "getting that union organizer," when people would be injured with ball bearings, when motorcoach buses would be fired at during the bus strike of 1933. It was unbelievable. It affected me and my thinking for life.

I saw community organization—turf organization—like unions, as a way for the individual to have his or her dignity recognized, of getting a voice, a buffer between themselves and the establishment. I had studied Father Ferree's theses that said "the act of social justice is organization." I believed that.

DL: Where do you see community organization going today?

Egan: I don't see there being only one strategy. What COPS (the Communities Organized for Public Service) and UNO (United Neighborhood Organizations) are doing in San Antonio and Los Angeles is terrific. So is what Heather Booth and the Midwest Academy are doing. Community organization is better today than during Saul's time. There are more, better organizers, in it for the long term. Community organization is much better established, which is good and bad. The danger is that the romance is lost, the excitement of seeing people get started, seeing the light in people's eyes when they win their first victory. To last and really be successful, organizations must belong to the people. People must have real ownership in them.

That does happen. And I think community organization will have a tremendous impact on American politics at every level. People will be able to see that they can have a voice. The lobbying voices are so powerful now that without strengthening the people's voice through organization, we'll just give the country over to the power groups.

DL: You have also been a major force in the broader social justice ministry of

the Catholic church, especially through CCUM, the Catholic Committee on Urban Ministry, which you helped found and guide. CCUM has been very important—though its work is not always known to progressives outside the church. It helped get the Catholic funding organization for social justice underway, which has given over \$50 million to citizen and community organizing efforts in the 1970s. It has educated thousands of Catholic activists in different social action fields. It helped organize for the 1976 "Call to Action" conference on "liberty and justice for all" which passed milestone resolutions on women's rights, poverty, international relations and other issues. Why do you think CCUM has been so successful in the 1970s, compared, say, to the relative decline of social activism in the Protestant denominations? What has been your conception of CCUM?

Egan: Traditions of social action always existed in the church—groups like the Catholic Worker, the Catholic Trade Unionists, civil rights groups. But in the 1960s the international voice of the church began to make a major impact—through Vatican II, the Latin Church, and the African church. And we had developing an international body of thought which said the church should relate to the world, that social justice is central to the very mission of the church.

We have always seen CCUM as a way to educate people on issues, the very best thought about social action and theology. For instance, we had a series of workshops on environmental disease several years before it was a national issue. But CCUM's major purpose has been to connect people and care for them. I felt there were hundreds of organizations across the country working on specific issues. There was no organization or network that was caring about the people involved in social action, giving them support, fighting for them, connecting them to each other.

DL: In a number of parts of the Catholic church today there seems to be a kind of politicization at work, producing more attention to questions of social justice. Why is that? Where do you see that leading?

Egan: There is an increasing sense that dignity of the human person is central

to our faith. That wherever people are being oppressed, wherever people can't

“Community organization is much better established, but the danger is that the romance is lost.... To last and be successful, organizations must belong to the people.”

grow to the fullest of their potential, it constitutes an injustice, whether it be in Nicaragua or San Salvador or South Side Chicago. At our very best, there is a growing understanding that we must be servants of the poor and oppressed, and that we have to be poor and just ourselves.

I think more and more people in the Roman Catholic church, as well as other churches, are beginning to examine our relationship to capitalism and the roots and application of capitalism and its abuses. Scholars, places like the Center of Concern, and also activists, community organizers, are doing this reflection. I feel that Christianity must stand apart from any system—be it capitalism or Marxism, and ask what is most conducive to the common good. Today more and more people are looking at socialism across the world. I also feel that because of what's happening with the church—in Latin America, with John Paul—people are going to be looking at Catholicism again. And after John Paul's visit, the church in this country will never be the same. ■

Harry Boyte is a writer and activist in Minnesota.

Labor Education

By Jose LaLuz and Christine Mulligan

HISTORICALLY, WOMEN, HISPANICS, blacks, and other minority group members, have been some of the most isolated segments of the trade union movement. Through programs that provide leadership skills training, a pioneering labor education project is attempting to provide some tools for women and minorities to use to assume a presence in their unions.

The Union Minorities/Women Leadership Training Project (UM/WLTP) is funded by a \$200,000 appropriation from the Michigan State Legislature to a consortium of six state-supported universities with established labor education services. A Title I grant of the Higher Education Act supports administrative and coordinative functions among those universities.

The project, which began in October 1978, is unprecedented in terms of its scope and the degree of cooperation among the universities and the labor movement. Under the guidance of a policy committee of labor program directors and state labor leaders, project activities

operate out of each university on a regional basis. The project provides constituents of the programs with an opportunity to participate in developing, implementing and recruiting for the programs. It has held training conferences on such topics as union administration and stewardship, drawing more than two thousand participants.

Reflecting the project's special emphasis, other conferences have dealt with breakdowns in communications due to language or cultural differences, assertiveness training for women and sexual harassment on the job.

Despite some reservations on the part of some local labor leaders who questioned the need for programs aimed specifically towards women and/or minorities, overall enthusiasm for the project is high.

Jose LaLuz is director of the Leadership Training Project and a member of the Hispanic Commission of DSOC. Christine Mulligan is on the staff of the Project. For information, contact them at 401 Olds Hall, c/o Justin Morrill College, MSU, E. Lansing, MI 48824.

A SPECIAL REPORT

Equal Education Myths, Problems and Strategies

By Kenneth Carlson

THERE MAY BE NO PRINCIPLE in America more sacred than that of education as equalizer. The belief that hard work and education will open doors for even the most disadvantaged persists despite persuasive evidence to the contrary.

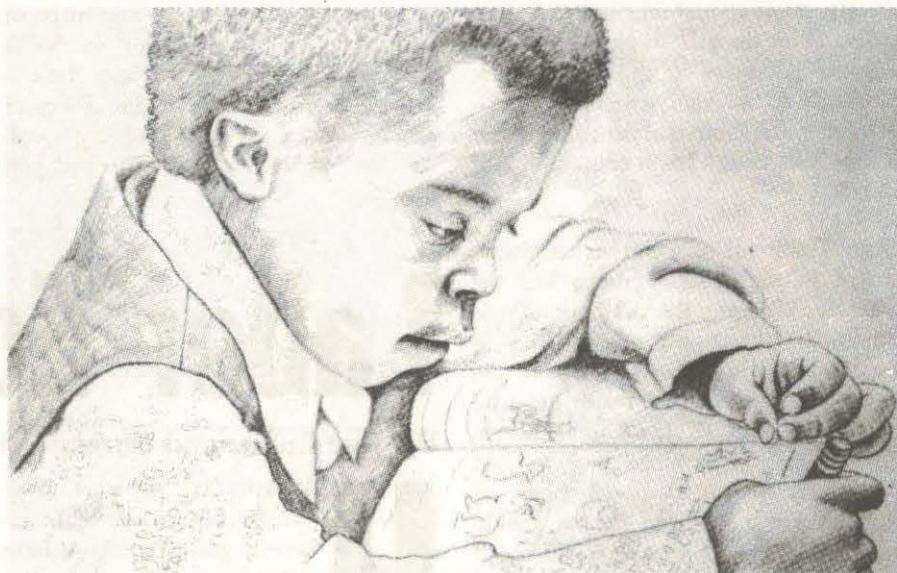
An important corollary holds that all children should have equal educational opportunities. If everyone starts out with the same education, then the disadvantaged can compete with the more affluent on an equal basis.

Since the Sixties court cases have been argued in almost 30 states to bring about greater equality of educational opportunity. Many of these have focused on school financing as the means to achieve equal educational opportunity. The U.S. Supreme Court, in *Rodriguez v. San Antonio School District*, ruled that financing schools through property taxes was not unconstitutional.

When the courts have not provided relief, reformers have turned to the legislative process. Through courts and legislatures, many states have made efforts to equalize the amount of money spent on the education of students and to help raise all students to acceptable achievement levels. Nevertheless, the judicial and legislative attempts have consistently fallen short of their announced goals. Space does not permit a thorough discussion of all the approaches to equalizing educational opportunity. This report will touch upon a few, with the understanding that it does not treat many of the tangible and intangible factors that make up a good education.

The Equal Dollars Approach

Many people think that the simplest way to equalize educational opportunity



Rachel Burger/cpf

is to equalize the amount of dollars spent to educate different kids. There would be as much money spent on a poor child in Harlem as on a rich kid in Scarsdale. The courts themselves prefer to deal with dollars because these are terms on which judges can pretty easily decide if someone's equal rights have been denied.

Problem One. However commonsensical it may sound, there are serious problems with the equal dollars approach. First, since the Constitution gives states the responsibility for education, this approach applies only within states. Thus, New York State can spend, on average, three times as much per public school student as Mississippi.

Problem Two. It applies only to public schools. If rich parents do not want their children equalized with the poor in this way, they can transfer their children to private schools. Just as many

white parents used the private school alternative to evade equalization through integration, many rich parents can be expected to seize this option to avoid the equalization of school dollars.

Problem Three. If an equal amount is to be spent for the education of all public school students within a state, it can be that which is now being spent in the highest spending district, the lowest spending district, or any other conceivable amount. To push all districts up to the highest spending district would cost the state taxpayers a lot of money. State legislators have been unwilling to impose so heavy a burden, and thus the equalization is usually pegged to a middle spending district. Some districts are equalized up and others are equalized down. In the latter, the push toward private schools is great. To prevent this, states have taken to equalizing poor dis-

tricts up to the middle spending districts and leaving the high spending districts alone in their favored status. The taxpayers in the high spending districts contribute to the elevation of poor districts.

Problem Four. The equal dollars approach assumes that it costs the same to educate all children. It is likely that the child in Harlem will require more than the rich kid in Scarsdale. Exactly how much more is a question that cannot be answered with scientific precision. The disgrace is that currently children in poor communities actually have less spent on their education than do kids in affluent areas.

Problem Five. Since Hawaii is the only state with a single statewide school system, the fifth problem with this approach can only be guessed at. Complete state determination of how much local districts can spend may cause people in the districts to lose interest in their schools. In the equal dollars approach, districts no longer control how much money they spend, but only the ways in which they spend the amount provided by the state.

The Marketplace Approach

It has been suggested by some liberals and conservatives that the best thing to do is to give educational money—a voucher—directly to parents and let them pick the kind of school they want their child to attend. If parents had a voucher for \$2000 for their child's education, they could select a school and use the voucher to pay the tuition. Vouchers would give poor parents the kind of educational choice that rich parents already enjoy. The voucher system has never been tried on any but an extremely limited experimental scale. However, there is a voucher proposal now being put to the voters of California for their possible adoption throughout that state.

Problem One. Giving poor parents and rich parents vouchers worth the same amount does not take into account the extra cost of educating a poor child.

Problem Two. If rich parents can add to the amount of their vouchers out of their own pockets, they will still be able to buy their child a better education than the poor parents can afford.

Problem Three. Some schools may charge more than the amount of the voucher so that only families that can afford to pay more will be able to send their children to those schools. The rich

may get vouchers—public money—to help them pay for the cost of educating their child at an exclusive prep school.

Problem Four. Poor parents may not be able to afford the cost of transporting their child to the school of their choice if it is some distance from their home.

Problem Five. Many shoddy schools may spring up to attract voucher dollars. Parents may be conned out of their voucher money by educational hucksters.



Jam Today/cpf

"Two plus two? Well, like most questions facing our society today, there's no easy answer."

Problem Six. Narrow interest academies may emerge, causing society to lose the democratizing influence of the present public schools.

All but the last of these problems is dealt with in the "regulated" voucher systems proposed by people like Christopher Jencks at the Harvard Center for Policy Studies. The voucher system, thus, can be a force for either good or evil depending on the way it is designated and regulated.

The Equal Power Approach

This approach attempts to preserve local control of spending. It does not tell local districts how much they can spend; it only tries to assure that they have equal capacity for spending. Let's say that when all the property wealth, on which school taxes are based, is divided among all the children in District A, the tax

base comes to \$100,000 per pupil. In neighboring District Z, it comes to \$10,000 per pupil. District A is a rich district that can afford better schools.

Under the equal power approach, the state artificially raises the tax base in District Z to \$100,000 per pupil, equalizing it with District A. Then when District Z sets its tax rate, that rate yields as much revenue as it would in District A. The state would make up the difference. For example, if the tax rate were \$1 for every \$100 of property value, it would raise \$100 per pupil in District Z (\$10,000 per pupil to be taxed). In District A, the same tax rate would yield \$1,000 per pupil since there is \$100,000 in property value behind each pupil. (A lower rate, say \$.50, will still yield more money per pupil than in District Z.) The state has to give \$900 per pupil to District Z to have its \$1 tax rate produce as much revenue as a \$1 tax rate in District A.

Problem One. As with the equal dollars approach, the dilemma is deciding how high the state should raise the tax base of the poor district. To raise all districts to the level of the richest would necessitate such an increase in state taxes that a taxpayers' revolt might well result. The typical political compromise is to raise the poor districts to the level of the middle districts and let the rich districts remain rich.

Problem Two. The approach only attempts to equalize one kind of power—a particular tax base. Poor people may have had their property values artificially inflated, but nothing has been done about their incomes. Our power to pay property taxes depends on how much income we have. A castle owner with no cash cannot pay taxes on the castle. Even though the state is prepared to kick in money to give the poor a greater yield on their tax rate, the poor still cannot afford as high a tax rate as the rich.

Problem Three. No allowance is made for the fact that the poor have special tax burdens that the rich do not. The urban taxpayer has to support city services that include large police and fire departments, sanitation and transportation departments, welfare services, and public works projects. The suburbanite who comes into the city to work or play gets the advantage of these services but makes no direct contribution to them. Moreover, the suburbanite is spared the cost of much of this in his or her own hometown. The police department is

small and there may be a volunteer fire department. Welfare services are relatively cheap because there aren't too many welfare clients. In short, the rich do not need public services precisely because they are rich. The poor who do need these services have trouble paying for them precisely because they are poor. What this boils down to is that the poor person has little income from which to pay school taxes, and numerous nonschool demands on that income.

Result of the Problems. We can see the results in New Jersey, a state that adopted power equalization. The rich suburb of Bedminster had about a dozen times more property value behind each public school pupil (\$219,510) than did the poor city of Camden (\$18,706) in 1973-4. This allowed Bedminster to spend twice as much per pupil as Camden at much lower tax rates than existed in Camden.

When New Jersey equalized the property value in Camden up to approximately \$90,000, the property value in Bedminster had rocketed to \$388,448 for every public school pupil. As a result, Bedminster in 1976-77 spent almost \$1,000 more per pupil than Camden.

The reason for the failure of New Jersey's system lies in the fact that people in poor communities do not use their artificially increased property value to generate more revenue for schools. They use it to lower their tax rates and relieve themselves of an onerous, practically confiscatory tax burden. Even if the people in poor communities were to forgo tax

“If more money does not mean better education, the poor have as much right to be disappointed by this fact as the rich.”

relief, they would still be far behind communities like Bedminster. In fact, because of its tremendously increased property values, citizens of Bedminster were also able to enjoy some tax relief—and still pay a total property tax rate that is only about one-fourth of that paid by the poor folks in Camden. These communities are typical. None of the studies of New Jersey's attempts to equalize educational opportunity show success.¹



LNS/cpf

Minimum Achievement?

The equal dollars approach and the equal power approach are both concerned with the monetary inputs into schools. The minimum achievement approach is concerned with an output from the schools, that is, the performance of the pupils. This approach makes the most sense since it gets at the real purpose of equal educational opportunity: helping previously disadvantaged children to do better. It looks at actual results and strives to raise everyone to a minimum achievement level. A student below minimum is given remedial assistance to rise to at least the minimum level.

Problem One. Among educators, this is called the mini-max problem. There is a danger that once a child is brought to the minimum, all the pressure will be off and everyone will sit back. For the child, then, the minimum is the maximum he or she ever achieves. This danger is heightened by the fact that the child stops getting remedial assistance when he or she reaches the minimum.

Problem Two. This can be called the mini-mini problem. If the minimum standard is a fairly high standard, a lot of students will fall below it initially, and a lot of money will have to be spent on remedial assistance. Keeping down the costs means having a low minimum that will not produce a lot of sub-mini-minimum kids.

Problem Three. This is the skinny-mini problem. It means that a state has minimum standards in only a narrow range of skills, usually math and reading.

Disadvantaged kids are raised to a level of semi-literacy in math and reading at the expense of other kinds of learning and interests. Art, music, the humanities, and the social sciences are allowed to wither, even though some of these may be the subjects that have kept a student in school.

The above discussion highlights some of the more important issues in order to illustrate the difficulties in equalizing educational opportunity. In summary, it can be said that there are still huge disparities in educational spending across school districts and across states. The attempts to reduce these disparities have been generally feeble because there has been a simultaneous attempt not to offend the people who are benefiting from the disparities. The rich can confer many educational benefits on their own children at low tax rates, without bearing financial responsibility for the poor.

The attempts to improve the performance of low achieving pupils through the use of state minimum standards and remedial assistance have also been compromised politically. The standards are quite minimal, and funding for remedial assistance is at a minimum. In New Jersey, for example, only \$160 is appropriated for the remediation of a below standard pupil. In one urban school district it was found that a mere \$7 of this amount actually got to the needy pupil in the form of extra assistance.²

Recommendations

The progress has been unsatisfactory, but that at least indicates that there

has been some progress. Given all of the problems, what steps should be taken to further that progress?

1. The present inequalities in spending among school districts must be abolished altogether and replaced with a uniform statewide per pupil expenditure.

2. Additional amounts must be calculated and expended on students with special needs, especially the poor.

3. To preserve local interest and involvement in the schools, personnel and program decisions should continue to be made at the local level. It may also be desirable to allow the locals the leeway of adding a small amount from local sources to the school budget provided by the state.

4. The state tax from which the schools will be financed should be a graduated tax, taking into account at least the most obvious impediments to the taxpaying ability of the poor.

5. The federal government should use its own educational moneys to reduce the spending differences among the states. (This recommendation was made by President Nixon's Commission on School Finance almost ten years ago.)

6. Although there are serious civil liberties issues to be considered, perhaps it is time to reexamine the role of private schools and colleges to which all do not have economic access. Equal educational opportunity is compromised when some people are able to purchase more of the opportunity than others.

7. The minimum pupil performance standards that states are now adopting should be expanded to include more skills and higher levels of expected achievement. This will require both national discussion as to what educational objectives should be as well as better means to assess them. Too often poor and working class children are "tracked" on narrow, skill-oriented programs while the more advantaged schools offer cultural and scientific curricula.

8. There must be a redistribution of wealth in America. Since education (and educability) does not take place in school alone, the educational opportunity of the poor can be equalized by equalizing the wealth in America. Tax transfer policies, such as that mentioned in recommendation 4, presently appear to be the most palatable way of effecting this redistribution. The onus of undeserving must somehow be eliminated for the recipients of the transfers.

Some of these recommendations may be brought about in the courts and others in legislatures and voting booths. The recommendations can be worded to appeal to the better instincts of Americans, who from time to time demonstrate a willingness to act in the long-range public interest and against their own short-term selfish interest. The argument may be raised by the haves that more dollars may not and often have not translated into better education for the poor, and that therefore the present inequalities should be maintained until the relationship between dollars and education is better understood. The best reply to this argument was given by Coons, Clune and Sugarman, who said that if more money does not mean better education, the poor have as much right to be disappointed by this fact as the rich. ■

Kenneth Carlson is an associate professor in the Rutgers University Graduate School of Education and chairman of the Rutgers College Education Department.

NOTES

1. Goertz, M. *Where Did the 400 Million Dollars Go? The Impact of the New Jersey Public School Education Act of 1975* (Princeton: The Educational Policy Research Institute of the Educational Testing Service, 1978).

Joint Committee on the Public Schools. *The Impact of State School Aid on Property Taxes in 1977* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Bureau of Government Research, Rutgers University, 1978).

Rubin, L. *The Public School Education Act of 1975: Has It Measured Up to the Court's Fiscal Criteria?* (Newark: The New Jersey Education Reform Project, 1978).

2. Lord, J. *An Examination of the Fiscal and Programmatic Impact of the State Compensatory Education Program on Selected Districts in New Jersey* (a study done under the National Institute of Education Grant G-76-0105, June 1979).

3. Coons, J., Clune, W., and Sugarman, S. *Private Wealth and Public Education* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970).

RESOURCES

For periodic updates on what the states are doing in the way of school finance reform and minimum competency standards, the best source is the Education Commission of the States, Suite 300, 1860 Lincoln Street, Denver, Colorado 80295 (tel. 303-861-4917).

For federally funded studies on school finance reform and minimum competency standards, the best source is the National Institute of Education, 1200 19th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20208.

Discover Democratic Socialism

Do you think of yourself as a socialist? Do you belong to a socialist organization? If you answered yes to the first question and no to the second, then you should join the Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee (DSOC). DSOCers are active in unions, minority, community and feminist organizations, the anti-nuclear movement and the left wing of the Democratic party. We do not separate our vision from practical politics. It is because we are socialists that we have a unique contribution to make to the democratic left, showing how incremental reforms must be extended toward a structural transformation of society. By joining thousands of DSOC members in 40 locals and every state you can be part of the resurgence of the American left.

I'd like to join the DSOC. Enclosed find my dues. (\$50 sustaining; \$20 regular; \$10 limited income. Dues include \$5 for DEMOCRATIC LEFT.) Send to: Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee, 853 Broadway, Room 617, New York, N.Y. 10003. Tel.: (212) 260-3270.

I want to subscribe to DEMOCRATIC LEFT. Enclosed is \$10 for a sustaining subscription; \$5 for a regular subscription; \$2.50 for a limited income subscription.)

Name _____

Address _____

City/State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Union, School, Other Affiliation _____

WHAT'S LEFT TO READ

By Ronald Radosh

Foreign Policy Number 36, Fall 1979, \$3.00. (P.O. Box 984, Farmingdale, N.Y. 11737).

WASHINGTON'S SAD RESPONSE TO AUTHENTIC social revolution in our hemisphere is the topic taken up by Professor Richard R. Fagen in "Dateline Nicaragua: The End of the Affair," featured in the current *Foreign Policy*. The Nicaragua experience showed again that a unified national rebellion against corrupt and tyrannical rule doesn't win America's friendship.

Since 1933 the corrupt Somoza dynasty was always "welcomed in Washington as a solid pillar of pro-American and anti-Communist strength in an otherwise troubled area."

The long-standing policy of U.S. support for Somoza began to be deficient when the Somozas' domestic hegemony started to collapse and the revolutionary Sandinistas began to gather vast popular support in the mid-1970s. Although the Carter administration looked less favorably on Somoza than had previous administrations, it too "feared any alternative to Somoza that would not be firmly controlled by the most conservative of the anti-Somoza forces." Hence it sought a political solution "dominated by persons it considered to be acceptable moderates."

This strategy failed. Somoza bombed his own people's cities; civilians were killed by the thousands; and hundreds of young people died at the hands of the hated National Guard. Nicaraguans united behind the Sandinistas, who forged links with business and the middle classes and announced a conciliatory and moderate twelve-point program for a post-Somoza Nicaragua. Still the U.S. tried to stand behind a "centrist, electoral, non-Sandinista solution." Washington attempted to find a Cuba-Sandinista tie and to undercut acceptance of the Sandinista provisional government by labeling three of its members as Marxist, although "most other observers" described the body as "quite moderate in both membership and program."

Washington, however, "consistently applied pressure for the most conservative and ultimately unworkable solutions," as "Cold War perspectives coupled with the presence of Marxists in the Sandinista movement congealed into a persuasive fear of an other than pro-U.S. post-Somoza regime." A popular, partly spontaneous and organic insurrection against tyranny was viewed as a triumph of Communism; its "essential legitimacy" was denied and the failure to understand the reality was total. Fagen quotes a high White House official who urged that the U.S. work to restore the National Guard, which he said was needed to preserve order and prevent anarchy. This at the very moment that the Guard was looting, bombing and executing!

Where does the U.S. go next, given the final defeat of Somoza and the Sandinista triumph? Washington, Fagen cautions, talks the language of democracy but seems unwilling to accept the politics emerging from the ruins of decades of U.S.-backed dictatorships. His sober plea for understanding: "A people that fought for two decades against the Marines, and then for 46 years against the Somozas will

not easily allow its future to be stamped 'made in U.S.A.' " Democratic socialists, I think, can endorse his call to be both supportive and noninterventionist, and to urge that grudging acceptance of the Sandinista government be transformed into more substantial approval, of which the litmus test will be U.S. aid for reconstruction.

■ ■ ■

Short Takes: The November 12 issue of *Inquiry* contains a fascinating piece by Czech emigré Radoslav Selucky, a Marxist economist. Selucky argues that democratic socialism requires "a planned exploitation of the market economy," a "synthesis of plan and market" that is the opposite of the centralized Soviet bloc command economies. "A restricted market," he writes, "is a sine qua non of democratic socialism," and he presents the case that such indeed was the economic program of the Prague Spring; its great themes having been "market socialism, economic and political pluralism, self-management, and individual freedom." . . . I am reviewing it elsewhere, but I did want to mention what I find to be one of the most important books written about the Communist experience, Jorge Semprun's *The Autobiography of Federico Sanchez* (Karz Publishers). It is a biting account of the process of Stalinization, the weaknesses of Eurocommunism, and the authoritarian character of the Communist tradition. A book that is on the level of the works of Orwell and Silone. . . . *Socialist Review* (No. 46) features a long interview with Michael Harrington. DSOC members seeking information about the theoretical/political basis for DSOC practice should not miss it. SR editor David Plotke asks the tough questions.

STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT AND CIRCULATION

1. Title of publication: Democratic Left. A. Publication No.: 701960.
2. Date of filing: November 13, 1979.
3. Frequency of issue: monthly except July and August. A. No. of issues published annually: 10. B. Annual subscription price: \$5.00.
4. Location of known office of publication: 853 Broadway, Rm. 617, New York, N.Y. 10003.
5. Location of the headquarters or general business offices of the publishers: 853 Broadway, Rm. 617, New York, N.Y. 10003.
6. Names and complete addresses of publisher, editor, and managing editor: Publisher: Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee, 853 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10003; Editor: Michael Harrington, 853 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10003; Managing Editor: Maxine Phillips, 853 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10003; 7. Owner: Name, Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee; Address, 853 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10003.
8. Known bondholders, mortgagees, and other security holders owning or holding 1 percent or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages or other securities: None.
9. For completion by nonprofit organizations authorized to mail at special rates. The purpose, function, and nonprofit status of this organization and the exempt status for Federal income tax purposes: Have not changed during preceding 12 mos.
10. Extent and nature of circulation:

	Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months	Actual No. Copies of Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date
A. Total no. copies printed (Net Press Run)	6500	7000
B. Paid circulation		
1. Sales through dealers and carriers, street vendors and counter sales	1400	1500
2. Mail subscriptions	4007	4641
C. Total paid circulation (sum of 10B1 and 10B2)	5407	6241
D. Free distribution by mail, carrier or other means. Samples, complimentary, and other free copies	593	600
E. Total distribution (sum of C and D)	5800	6841
F. Copies not distributed		
1. Office use, left over, unaccounted, spoiled after mailing	700	159
2. Returns from news agents	NONE	NONE
G. Total (Sum of E, F1 and 2—should equal net press run shown in A)	6500	7000
11. I certify that the statements made by me above are correct and complete.		

Frank Llewellyn, Business Manager.

of educational investment has been tied to projected declines in student enrollments in higher education. Enrollment declines increase the bargaining power of students as educational consumers, while threatening quite dramatically the viability of many schools. Academia is entering genuinely uncharted waters, and the worst case scenarios are quite grim in terms of the ability of typical colleges to survive. A new student syndicalism, led from the left and allied with concerned faculty, could be an important force in reshaping the social meaning of education. The danger is that in a buyer's market, students will mobilize for short-run, self-interested and probably anti-intellectual ends, while established faculty members unionize around similarly narrow efforts to defend their salaries and "perks" in the face of declining budgets. The outcome could well be a new higher education, rooted in vocationalism, and shorn of most of its remaining capacity to contribute to social enlightenment. Meanwhile, a very large stratum of marginal intelligentsia will continue to grow in size and be wasted in terms of humanly productive work.

There is an alternative possibility. This would be a student-faculty demand to use the era of declining enrollments to really enhance the quality of education in the society. At the heart of such a demand would be an effort to deliberately reduce student/faculty ratios so that colleges could actually provide opportunities to maximize the development of the skills and creative potentials of each student. A second goal would be to provide the opportunity for all who were trained and qualified to teach and do scholarly work to be able to do so. A third goal would be to extend accessibility of higher education to class and age sectors

■ ■ ■
CLASSIFIED

Now you can reach 4600 left and liberal politically aware people and their friends through a classified ad in DEMOCRATIC LEFT. Rates are \$2 per line, two line minimum. Display ads: \$50 per column inch. Payment in advance. Copy must be submitted by the first of the month preceding publication, i.e., January 1 for February issue. Place your ad more than twice and receive a 20 percent discount. Seven words per line average. We reserve the right to reject ads.



Howie Epstein/LNS/1969

now excluded, by creating educational sabbaticals and subsidies for workers, expanded extension programs, etc. Such a program is justified not simply to save higher education and its budgets, but because of the links between the future of education and the future of the society as a whole. First, if present budgetary policies continue, the result will be a disastrous waste of human resources; if, on the other hand, such resources were employed in education the coming period would be one in which there would be a substantial *improvement* in the quality of education. Second, such a program could be an essential element in reformu-

lating the left's own vision of the future. One way of understanding socialism is to see it as a society in which social investment is designed to maximize the self-development of all members. A student movement based on such a goal would be both profoundly progressive and also capable of acting in the more immediate interests of its constituents in the educational sector. ■

Dick Flacks is chairman of the Department of Sociology, University of California, Santa Barbara. He was in the early leadership of Students for a Democratic Society.

Eurosocijalism Colloquy

The Institute for Democratic Socialism (IDS) will sponsor a major conference on Eurosocijalist programs in December of 1980, in Washington, D.C. The conference will examine the programs proposed by the socialist and social democratic parties of Europe for the management of their economies. It will focus on three specific areas: capital formation, industry relocation and rationalization, and worker self-management.

"The decline of Keynesian economics as a viable method of managing the American economy has led to an openness to new economic theories and practices," said Michael Harrington, IDS president. "So far," he continued, "when Americans have looked to Europe, they have focused on things like the value added tax or the level of investment tax credits that European governments generally provide, without focusing on the

controls that these governments have on the investment decisions of private corporations. This conference will look at those European proposals that provide for an even greater public control of the private sector in order to determine their relevance and applicability to the American situation."

Funding for the conference is being provided by a \$53,000 grant from The German Marshall Fund of the United States. The conference will be planned by an advisory committee consisting of prominent Americans and Europeans. "We think that this conference will be particularly well-timed," said Project Director Nancy Lieber, "coming as it does in the hiatus between the American election and the inauguration of a new Administration. The politicians will be looking for programs to fulfill their promises." ■

Building and Construction Trades Department President Robert Georgine, referring to the building trades convention in San Diego earlier this year, where he won support for a program of alliance with groups fighting union-busting and other abuses of corporate power, told DEMOCRATIC AGENDA attendees, "We have placed the issue of corporate monopoly power at the top of our agenda for the 1980s."

On the second day of the conference, 25 workshops on topics ranging from organizing for the primaries to understanding inflation put activists in touch with each other.

What will the next steps be? Local and state AGENDA coalitions may continue to meet, suggests Ruth Jordan, DSOC vice chair and AGENDA coordi-

nator. In addition, says Harrington, "We want to distill the broad democratic left program into four or five specific proposals that would unite us all, like the Ford-Riegle plant-closing bill."

As the DEMOCRATIC AGENDA convention disbanded, plans were already laid for the next steps, which include mobilizing people, state by state, to run for Democratic Convention delegate seats as well as to influence who is picked for the party's platform committee.

Looking to next August in New York City, Ruth Jordan imagines a major rally: "We hope that thousands of people will convene at a DEMOCRATIC AGENDA meeting to put some muscle into making our program heard and understood during the Democratic Convention."

David Hoffman is a congressional staffer.

MICHIGAN LABOR CONFERENCE
"Labor in the 80s: Plight or Prosperity?" is the theme of a major national conference on the future of the American labor movement in Ann Arbor, Michigan, January 18th and 19th, 1980.

For more information, contact SEED (Students for Employment and Economic Democracy), 4120 Michigan Union, 530 S. State, Ann Arbor, Mich. 48109. (313) 668-0425.

■ ■ ■
VANDALS HIT NATIONAL OFFICE
DSOC's national office was vandalized twice this month. The exterior phone wires were slashed and the mailing list stolen. At this time we don't attribute any special significance to these incidents. However, new security precautions are being instituted. Members and subscribers should notify the office if they receive any unauthorized mailings.

Food Programs Partial Success

By Harrell Rodgers

IN MUCH OF THE PUBLICITY ABOUT the 60's, critics maintain that social programs did little to alleviate the plight of the poor. The right wing decries them for "throwing money at the problem," while the left holds that they refuse to deal with core issues.

It is true that the root causes of poverty cannot be directly confronted by a government committed to laissez faire capitalism, the free enterprise system and other myths. But the picture is not totally bleak. Congress did, in the last decade, agree to treat one of the most overt symptoms of poverty—hunger—and succeeded to some extent.

The turbulence of the 60s produced a significant expansion of existing food programs and the enactment of over a dozen new ones. Of the major programs, between 1968 and 1979 expenditures for food stamps increased from \$288 million with 2.8 million recipients, to \$6 billion with 16 million participants (down from a high of 19 million in recent years). School lunch expenditures expanded from \$42 million with three million recipients to \$1.2 billion with 12 million recipients. School breakfast expenditures increased from \$.5 million

with 300,000 participants to \$200 million with three million participants. The Women, Infants and Children (WIC) program enacted in 1974 with a \$14 million budget and 206,000 recipients, now has an authorization of \$550 million with 1.5 million beneficiaries. Annual expenditures for all food programs are currently in the \$9 billion range.

Throwing Money

The right maintains that "throwing money" accomplishes nothing, but the evidence shows that the symptoms can be treated even when the malignancy remains unexcised. The Field Foundation, which originally produced much of the damning evidence, recently retraced its 1967 steps and found far less hunger and malnutrition. Poverty remained as rampant as ever (a point documented even by government figures), but many of the poor are no longer hungry and malnourished. Head Start children and the aged poor, in particular, showed significant nutrition and health improvements. Food stamp families had better diets than non-participating poor families, and women participating in the WIC program delivered healthier babies. The infant mortality rate for WIC participants and food stamp families is down. Food stamps also lifted four million people above

the government's artificially low poverty standard.

In addition to continuing poverty, the Field Foundation doctors found many problems. They found some hunger, considerable malnutrition and poorly functioning food programs. Only about half of all eligible food stamp recipients participate in the program. Many of the poor are embarrassed by the stamps. Some do not know they are eligible. Some cannot obtain the transportation necessary to apply and continue to meet the conditions of certification. Some despair of the red tape and invasions of privacy. Two recent Government Accounting Office studies also criticized the quality of school lunches. The WIC program is funded so poorly that only 40 percent of the nation's counties have made it available, and it currently serves only 15 percent of eligible citizens.

While inadequate, the programs have been wasteful only to the extent that expenditures and efforts are not directed toward the elimination of the systemic factors that cause poverty. But this deficiency is one of purposeful design, not execution, fraud, or characteristics of the poor.

Harrell Rodgers is a professor of political science at the University of Houston.

like "commitment to changing the power structure," but I can assure you that the power structure in the Commonwealth of Virginia, for one state, is quite aware of the implications of the Steelworker presence in the Tidewater of that state, with organization of its largest private employer and the biggest government contractor. The viciousness of the assault on USWA members in Newport News earlier this year is a reflection of this concern, and the absence of this event in the account by Mr. Howard is a disservice to DEMOCRATIC LEFT readers.

The other cheap shot comes in a mention of the Steelworkers in the brief Kornblum review on the Benson effort. One need not evaluate the efforts of Mr. Benson and his organization to make a judgment about his literary work, which is a tortured attempt to categorize the Steelworkers in the seemingly sordid company of Tony Boyle's Miners and Frank Fitzsimmons' Teamsters. It won't work. Herman Benson and Victor Reuther, who wrote one of the two introductions to the book, were partisans and advocates of one of the two campaigns that waged an election contest in the USWA's 1977 International Union Referendum.

Theirs is hardly a dispassionate and objective view, in that they have exhausted their appeals in an election result that was upheld by the Department of Labor after its own supervision involved the most extensive monitoring of any union election since the enactment of the Landrum-Griffin Act. This was done at the request of the USWA, and verified the honesty of the election process in which over half a million participated. For Kornblum to attempt to equate this experience with internal union democracy with that of past and present dissident movements within the UMW or the Teamsters—where violence and corruption are accepted by knowledgeable left people as much as by the unknowledgeable public—is not only bad scholarship: It is lousy journalism.

The South won't be organized by manifestos. Nor will an understanding of the unions who will do it be enhanced by superficial reviews of advocacy studies of internal union politics. The democratic left's vision must be broadened on both counts before it can approach the thresh-

old of alliances with organized working people who also seek change.

Russell W. Gibbons
Editor, *Steellabor*, USWA

Robert Howard replies:

In a 1500-word article some struggles inevitably had to be left out. For this reason, I welcome Russell Gibbons' information on the USWA's victories. I chose not to write about the Newport News strike because I felt it had already received a great deal of press attention in the months immediately preceding my article. Those who want to learn more about what has gone on at Newport News might look at Phil Wilayto's "Battle at Newport News" in the June issue of *Southern Changes*, the magazine of the Southern Regional Council.

To the Editor:

David Vogel's article (November) gives a useful historical view of confrontations with socially irresponsible corporations.

A current attempt to influence corporate responsibility not mentioned in Vogel's article is being engineered by the Organization of Chinese-Americans, Inc. and The American Coalition Against *Opium* and Drug Abuse. The target is the multinational pharmaceutical company, Squibb Corporation.

Squibb is marketing Yves Saint Laurent's *Opium* perfume. The advertising and marketing campaign for *Opium* uses images of the drug opium as indigenous to China, erotic and mysterious.

Opium is neither erotic, mysterious, nor native to China. The British brought death along with opium to the Chinese people. Nearly half of China's population died because of the gross negligence of British merchants. Last year over 1,200 Americans' deaths were related to opiates. Heroin is a derivative of opium.

Opium is a killer.

Yet, Squibb is spending millions of

dollars to market *Opium* and has given little response to protests against it. *Opium* was recently reported to be the world's fifth best selling perfume.

Squibb and St. Laurent have made the decision to edit the history of Asia; they mock the millions of opium victims by giving the drug a chic legitimacy. Boycotts, demonstrations and possibly legal action against Squibb may help educate the public about the real past and present of opium, the Orient, and Chinese culture, and bring *Opium* sales down to zero.

T. Erick Dittus
New York, N.Y.

To the Editor:

Clancy Sigal presents a highly opinionated view of the Tory victory in your October issue. According to him, virtually everybody, and particularly the Labor Party's leadership, is to blame—except the unions.

Actually, public opinion polls have shown that it was the rash of strikes—particularly public service strikes—which caused a sharp turn to the right immediately before the election, particularly among such traditional "swing" voters as working-class housewives.

In an effort to avoid acknowledging this obvious rightward turn in British public opinion, Sigal cites the poor showing of the National Front. This poor showing was hardly surprising. Voters who might otherwise have supported the Front, in municipal elections for example, did not choose to "waste" their votes in a general election.

The unions did have provocation for striking. But they had a choice to make. They could not have both strikes and a Labor victory. In the end, they chose to strike and bring the Tories back in.

David C. Williams
Summer, Md.

Letters to the editor must be signed. We reserve the right to edit for brevity. Please limit letters to less than 250 words.

CAPITAL QUOTES

“What is evil about business?” he asked. Business is the heart of America. Business is the heart of government.”
John Connally, quoted in the Washington Post, October 1979

JIMMY HIGGINS REPORTS

WE WISH IT WERE TRUE DEPT.—“Kennedy would be a disaster as President. I think he’s a socialist . . . and socialism is not what we need. Under Kennedy, we’d have more government involvement in our daily lives, such as socialized medicine. . . . I could see some industries, first health, then energy, actually being nationalized . . . and I don’t even want to think beyond that.” Those are the sentiments of Dow Chemical chief executive Paul Orefice, as quoted in the November 1 N.Y. *Daily News*. Not surprisingly, Orefice favors John Connally for President.

SOCIALIZATION OF INVESTMENT—It’s a mouthful to say and often difficult to explain simply. Democratic socialists favor it as a transitional step leading away from private and corporate decision-making and toward democratic control over key economic matters. The labor movement is providing some concrete and specific examples of how we can move toward that transition. The most recent and best publicized breakthrough was the decision of the ailing Chrysler corporation to add UAW President Doug Fraser to its board of directors. Confounding critics who said he’d simply be coopted and Chrysler management, which said he was added as an individual, *not* as a union representative, Fraser has vowed to be a workers’ representative and a public interest representative on the Chrysler board. Among the roles he defines for himself: a whistle-blower on corporate actions against the public interest. That’s the kind of representation people like us have been advocating for a long time.

FRASER’S LEAD could be followed by other unionists taking positions on boards of directors or seeking other ways to influence investment decisions. At recent conventions of both the

Industrial Union Department and the Building and Construction Trades Department, AFL-CIO, leaders pledged to make use of ample pension funds as “an untapped source of worker power,” in the words of Robert Georgine, leader of the Building Trades Department.

IN ANOTHER AREA of economic policy, the new AFL-CIO President Lane Kirkland argued forcefully for social rather than private decision-making. Criticizing the Federal Reserve’s recessionary monetary policies, Kirkland insisted that steps be taken to “shelter areas of great social need” from the “chill winds” of Fed interest policies. Specifically, the AFL-CIO leader called for adequate access to money at a reasonable rate for housing and urban construction. And he cited the early October accord between the White House and organized labor to back his view.

SOME EXPERIENCED TRADE UNION STAFFERS have put together a resource center for local union activists. It’s called the American Labor Education Center, and its first project is a newsletter entitled *American Labor*. Volume I, No. 1, offers advice on how to begin a Committee on Occupational Safety and Health and information on how some local unions have led campaigns against soaring local utility rates. There are listings of resources on safety, on pregnancy benefits and on plant closings (subject of the soon-to-be-published second issue of *American Labor*). Besides publishing the newsletter, the Center plans to hold workshops and produce films and other educational materials. A subscription to *American Labor* costs \$15 a year (\$50 for profit-making corporations) and more information on the Center is available by writing: American Labor Education Center, 1835 Kilbourne Place N.W., Washington, D.C. 20010.

DEMOCRATIC LEFT

853 Broadway, Room 617
New York, N.Y. 10003

412



SECOND CLASS
POSTAGE PAID AT
NEW YORK,
NEW YORK