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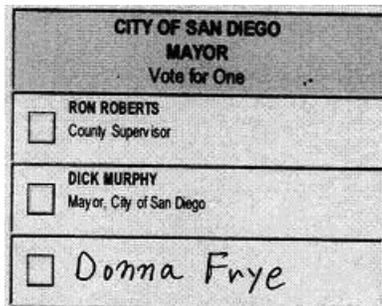
AFL-CIO's Stanley Gacek on the new Brazil

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The Ballots for San Diego's Mayor

By Herb Shore and Virginia Franco

In the election of November 2, 2004, thousands of San Diegans cast their vote for mayor like this:



As of this writing their votes didn't count. There is an ongoing saga related to this story that should be of interest to all of us.

The California Primary Election was held way back in March 2004. At that time it looked like Mayor Dick Murphy was a shoo-in for reelection, so Donna Frye, the most progressive member of the City Council, did not file as a candidate for mayor in this nonpartisan election. The result was that Murphy and another pro-developer Republican came in one and two.

Then, during the summer, interesting facts came to light. The city of San Diego was on the verge of bank-

ruptcy; the independent accountants said they could not accurately check the city's books and the pension fund was woefully under-funded. The *New York Times* ran a story under the headline: "San Diego, Enron-by-the-Sea." Donna Frye was the only member of the city council that had voted against the funding formula that was going to bankrupt the city pension fund.

A few words about Donna Frye: She is in the middle of her second term in the City Council. She is a genuine populist and progressive who frequently casts the lone dissenting vote on questions relating to the environment, downtown gentrification, corporate welfare, etc. She and her well-known husband, Skip, own a surf shop; she first entered politics from a desire to fight ocean pollution and other longstanding concerns about the environment. In the new situation created by the city scandal, and the fact that none of the mayoral finalists was a Democrat, Donna's supporters urged her to run as a write-in candidate for mayor. She filed as a write-in candidate only five weeks before the election.

Frye's decision to run for mayor resulted in the most exciting grassroots political campaign that San Diego had experienced in years. Hundreds of volunteers turned out. Money for door hangers and other campaign materials was raised overnight. Endorsements from the Labor Council, Democratic

Statement of Ownership, Management, and Circulation		
1. Publication Title: Democratic Left; 2. Publication Number: 701-960; 3. Filing Date: 12/23/2004; 4. Issue Frequency: Quarterly; 5. Number of issues Published Annually: 4; 6. Annual Subscription Price: \$10.00; 7. Complete Mailing Address of Known Office of Publication: 198 Broadway, Ste. 700., NYC, NY 10038; Contact person: Frank Llewellyn; Telephone: 212-727-8610 x30; 8. Complete Mailing Address of Headquarters of Publishers: Democratic Socialists of America, 198 Broadway, Ste. 700, NYC, NY 10038; 9. Full Names and Complete Mailing Addresses of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor: Publisher: Democratic Socialists of America, 198 Broadway, Ste. 700., NYC, NY 10038; Editor: Frank Llewellyn, 198 Broadway, Ste. 700., NYC, NY 10038; Managing Editor: Frank Llewellyn, 198 Broadway, Ste. 700., NYC, NY 10038; 10. Owner: Democratic Socialists of America, Inc., 198 Broadway, Ste. 700., NYC, NY 10038; 11. Known Bondholders, Mortgagees, and Other Security Holders Owning or Holding 1 Percent or More of Total Amount of Bonds, Mortgages, or Other Securities: None; 12. N/A; 13. Publication Title: Democratic Left; 14. Issue Date for Circulation Data Below: July;		
	Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months	No. Copies of Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date
15. Extent and Nature of Circulation		
a. Total Number of Copies (Net press run)	7,000	7,000
b. (1) Paid/Requested Outside-County Mail Subscriptions Stated on Form 3542	4,326	3,973
(2) Paid In-County Subscriptions Stated on Form 3541	193	—
(3) Sales Through Dealers and Carriers, (4) Other Classes Mailed Through the USPS	—	—
c. Total Paid and/or Requested Circulation	4,535	3,989
d. Free Distribution by Mail		
(1) Outside-County as Stated on Form 3541	—	—
(2) In-County as Stated on Form 3541	—	—
(3) Other Classes Mailed Through USPS	177	113
e. Free Distribution Outside the Mail	850	600
f. Total Free Distribution	1,027	713
g. Total Distribution	5,562	4,702
h. Copies not Distributed	1,438	2,298
i. Total	7,000	7,000
j. Percent Paid and/or Requested Circulation	81.54	84.84
16. Publication of Stated of Ownership: publication required will be printed in the Winter 2004/2005 issue of the publication.		

Democratic Left

(ISSN 1643207) is published quarterly at 198 Broadway, Suite 700, New York, NY 10038. Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY (Publication No. 701-960). Subscriptions: \$10 regular; \$15 institutional. Postmaster: Send address changes to 198 Broadway, Suite 700, New York, NY 10038. *Democratic Left* is published by the Democratic Socialists of America, 198 Broadway, Suite 700, New York, NY 10038. (212) 727-8610. Signed articles express the opinions of the authors and not necessarily those of the organization.

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

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elected officials, community organizations, and prominent individuals poured in. San Diego DSA members' main electoral effort was the Donna Frye campaign.

As this article goes to press, the results of this effort are not fully determined. The San Diego County Registrar of Voters determined that Murphy won with 34.5% of the vote, and Frye came in second with 34.1% of the vote, a difference of 2100 votes. However, thousands of San Diego voters cast their ballots as shown in the figure above; that is they wrote in her name but did not fill in the bubble. The optical scanning machines did not count those votes as valid write-ins even though the intent of the voter was perfectly clear. The Registrar of Voters interpreted the law so that these votes were not included in the totals. An initial lawsuit by the League of Women Voters to count the ballots was rejected by a Republican judge.

The latest development is that three news organizations, the Los Angeles Times, the local public television station, KPBS, and another local station are going to pay for a manual recount, including the "un-bubbled" ballots. It is very likely that when this count is completed, it will become clear that more people actually voted for Donna Frye than for Dick Murphy. We don't know what will happen then. To date, Donna has not filed any legal actions of her own. However, she has not conceded defeat even though Murphy was sworn in as mayor December 6.

The issues raised here extend beyond this immediate election; specifically, should the intent of the voters have more weight than the technical requirements of the voting machines? The story of the Donna Frye campaign is not yet over. The possibility of a Mayor Frye in the not too distant future is still alive. If that happens, we will see a large and growing community with a city government unlike any other in the US.

The *Democratic Left* editorial committee, DSA's National Political Committee, and the DSA staff would like to thank Kathy Quinn for her tireless (and often thankless) work on this publication. From her time on the National Political Committee, 1999 to 2003, though this issue, she has provided invaluable input into this magazine. Whether it was her incisive and highly informed commentary, her peerless editing skills, her creative new ideas for format and content, or, perhaps most irreplaceably, her talents in laying out articles and graphics and making them fit together practically and aesthetically (and taking the significant time to do so), she has consistently helped make this a professional periodical.

She is leaving the committee after this issue. We will miss her.
Thanks, Kathy.

SAVE THE DATES

November 11-13, 2005

DSA National Convention

Los Angeles, California

with

Pre-Convention Conference on Wal-Mart

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Turnouts, Turnoffs, and the National Election

By Harold Meyerson

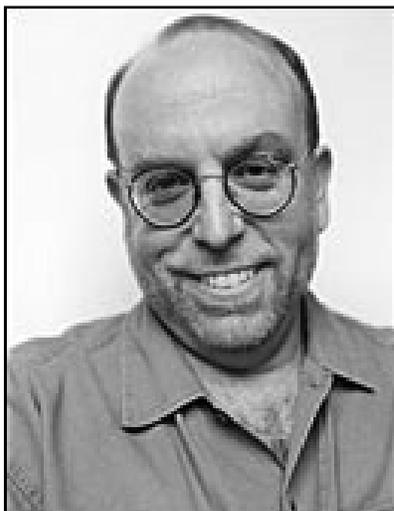
On November 17, the DSA Vice Chair and Washington Post, American Prospect and LA Weekly political journalist shared his observations in a talk with members of the DC-Maryland-Northern Virginia local of DSA. The following is excerpted from that talk.

Michael Harrington, the founding chairman DSA, used to say the space in the political spectrum we should occupy is the “left wing of the possible.” The problem with America has become what is possible, given the national election results. I know there are people still looking into the results and whether election technologies and counts were accurate or fiddled, but we don’t yet have definitive data on that, and may not at all. So I’m going to work off some polling data that has been done by exit pollsters and some pretty good progressive pollsters on the Democratic side – Celinda Lake, Stan Greenberg and some others.

The most disheartening conversations I’ve had since the election have been with people I met while covering the election in Ohio and Florida – people who were running get-out-the-vote operations on the Democratic side, almost all of whom say “we really hit our target.” And, you know, we really *did*. The good news is that turnout soared in this election, with estimates of turnout at a few hundred thousand higher than 120 million. That’s a substantial increase of 15 million over the last election, and it will be the highest percentage of people who voted since 1968. Our side got its people out, which is one reason why the totals are so high. Unfortunately, the other side got their people out, too, and apparently in somewhat larger numbers.

Among Latinos, the estimates are that about 5.9 million voted in 2000; somewhere between 7.5 and maybe more than 8 million voted this time. There’s internal debate

among Latinos and pollsters as to what the Latino vote actually was, but, in two national exit polls, anywhere from 42 to 45 percent support seemed to go to Bush, which was considerably higher than any-



We may not have so much of a mobilization problem as we have a persuasion problem.

one, including the Bush campaign, anticipated, and probably 7 to 9 percent higher for Bush compared to four years ago.

Youth voting increased, as did African-American voting, which for Kerry was pretty rock solid, except in Ohio, where Bush’s African-American vote went up to 16 percent. Single women increased their Democratic vote. Alas, the percentage of those voting groups who actually voted for Kerry was not as high as Democrats thought it would be. We may not have so much of a mobilization problem as

we have a persuasion problem, shorthand for a program problem, a platform problem, a connection problem, a “who the hell are you?” problem – which is at the root of Bush’s victory and Kerry’s defeat. Compare the vote that Gore got in 2000 and the vote that Kerry got in 2004 and it’s pretty disheartening. Gore got 58 percent of working women, Kerry 51 percent.

Battlegrounds

The Democratic vote in battleground states went up about 3.5 percent over what it was four years ago, so that raw numbers for Kerry are 3.5 percent higher than the raw numbers for Gore four years ago in states like Florida and Michigan, but only up 1.5 percent in the non-battleground states. Among Republicans, though, the Bush vote was up 4 to 4.5 percent in battleground states and 4 percent in non-battleground states. Look at this as a basketball game and don’t follow the guy with the ball: In non-battleground states, the GOP built up their popular vote and Bush was able to run up a million-vote margin over John Kerry. There were record turnouts on election day in Alabama, where there was not much else on the ballot, and in Georgia, where there was a nominal Senate campaign. In Tennessee and Virginia, turnout soared, where there was no particular investment of Republican or Democratic national resources. Turnout went up everywhere except Arizona, for some strange reason. But turnout didn’t go up very much in California and New York, which are

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Brazil's New Global Vision

By Stanley Gacek

As we begin the new year, the world faces a hunger and poverty crisis of staggering and unprecedented proportions. Extreme privation affects over 1.2 billion people attempting to eke out an existence on less than one dollar per day. Over 3 billion people live on less than 2 dollars a day. Fifty-four of the world's nations are poorer now than they were in 1990, and the wealthiest one percent of the globe's population receives as much income as the poorest 57 percent. Millions of children perish each year due to a lack of health care, clean water, decent housing, and adequate nutrition, and over 20,000 people are dying every day from hunger-related causes.

One world leader who has made the war on hunger and poverty central to his domestic and foreign policy is Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva - metalworker, leader of his nation's "new unionism" movement emerging in the late 1970's, and a key founder of the democratic left Partido dos Trabalhadores (PT - Brazilian Workers Party). As he noted in his 2003 inaugural speech, Lula sees it as his "mission in life" to ensure that "every Brazilian has at least three square meals a day" by the end of his presidency.

Even the most cursory reading of Brazilian reality would show that this mission confronts overwhelming odds. Some form of serious hunger or malnutrition affects nearly a quarter of the nation, and over 53 million of Brazil's 175 million inhabitants are living below the poverty line.

Moreover, Lula is trying to achieve economic stability, the confidence of the international financial markets, economic growth and social justice, all at the same time. In fact, left-wing commentators from both within and outside of Brazil have launched bitter attacks on Lula's careful and measured steps in the area of fiscal and monetary policy, accusing the Brazilian president of selling out to neo-liberalism.

But such judgments fail to take into account the fiscal and economic crisis facing Lula as soon as he assumed office. Brazil was at an unprecedented level of vulnerability to external economic pressures and the global financial system, its debt burden was over 63 percent of GDP, its bonds were being sold at less than

38 percent of their face value, and international credit for Brazilian exports had evaporated. The value of the Brazilian currency had plummeted to nearly 4 reais to the dollar, with inflation predicted to exceed 40 percent in 2003. Brazil's risk coefficient (based on the spread between US Treasury and Brazilian bonds) had skyrocketed to 2400 points.

One world leader who has made the war on hunger and poverty central to his domestic and foreign policy is Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva.

As Guido Mantega, Planning Minister during the first two years of the Lula administration and President of the Brazilian National Bank of Social and Economic Development, has noted, Brazil was not far

from default in 2002, and a unilateral declaration of moratorium (as in Argentina and Russia) would have dashed any hope for economic sovereignty, independence, and the capacity to finance a war on poverty and hunger. Accepting the default option would have increased the high risk of negative GDP growth in the first two years of the Lula administration and led to a violent drop in national income.

Notwithstanding the costs of continued high unemployment and no real growth the first year, Lula has succeeded in squaring the public policy circle. Inflation has been kept under control, lines of international credit to Brazilian exports are flowing again, bond values have recovered, liquid public debt as a percentage of GDP has dropped substantially, and Brazil's risk coefficient dropped from 2400 to 400 points.

As a result, Brazil is working its way toward economic prosperity and social justice. Its economy is nearing 5 percent growth, and national unemployment has dropped from 13 to 11.7 percent as of June 2004, with over 2 million new formal sector jobs being created by the end of the year. The government increased public expenditures in health and education by over 1.43 billion in US dollars at the end of 2003, and will augment that figure by an additional 1.76 billion before 2005. Primary budget surpluses being generated by Lula's fiscal policy will mean even higher investments in social programs and services by the end of 2006.

Bolsa Familia, the administration's consolidated social assistance program providing subsidies to poor parents to keep their children in school and out of the labor force, as well as offering subsidies for

continued on next page

Brazil

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vital food and energy expenses, reached over 4 million families living below the poverty line in 2004. And Lula's Fome Zero (Zero Hunger) project has rescued well over 5 million Brazilians from starvation.

Nevertheless, anti-hunger and anti-poverty programs run the risk of maintaining very costly transfer payments that ultimately fail to deal with root and structural causes, such as unemployment and regional underdevelopment. Moreover, direct assistance payment regimes (known as "assistencialismo" in Portuguese) always face the crisis of limited fiscal sustainability.

The PT and progressive Brazilian civil society were very much aware of these dilemmas and pitfalls when they formulated the Zero Hunger concept in the decade prior to Lula's presidential victory. As the late sociologist Herbert ("Betinho") de Souza, a key architect of Fome Zero, eloquently commented in 1993, "Attending to immediate needs without paying attention to structural causes will only postpone misery. But focusing only on the structural without dealing with the immediate is to engage in short run cynicism in the name of long run philanthropy."

Lula's Brazilian anti-hunger campaign has endeavored to meet the needs of both immediate social assistance and structural change by focusing on several key dimensions: providing incentives and support to family farms, expanding the nationwide food coupon program at the workplace by offering more tax incentives for business to participate, providing direct cash subsidies (by means of a special Bolsa Familia credit card) to the poorest families to purchase basic and nutritious foods, developing special nutritional programs for indigent pregnant women through municipal health care centers, dramatically increasing the production of water tanks and cisterns for the chronically drought-afflicted Northeast, extending food and nutritional education to the poorest communities, creating employment opportunities for recently settled landless farmers by having them produce for Fome Zero, expanding "people's restaurants" and community garden projects to gener-

ate jobs as well as satisfy immediate nutritional demands, and expanding purchasing authorities at the federal, state and municipal levels to further national food security policy as well as stabilize prices in the public interest.

Fome Zero is not an exclusively governmental program, and that is one of its greatest strengths. It relies greatly on trade unions, business, the churches and progressive NGOs to gener-

ate invaluable multiplier effects in the private sector. These civil society organizations are involved in the program's continued formulation and application by their direct participation in the National Council on Food Security.

And a joint effort involving both governments and civil society is also Lula's vision for fighting poverty and hunger at the global level. In September 2004, Lula initiated and organized the Global Leadership

Conference On Action Against Hunger and Poverty, held at the United Nations. Over 50 heads of state participated in this special summit, which was co-sponsored by Presidents Zapatero of Spain, Chirac of France, and Lagos of Chile.

This conference drafted a declaration signed and endorsed by 111 nations representing much of Europe, Africa, Asia and Latin America. The conference docu-

ment recognizes the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs; see sidebar) designed to address global poverty and established by

the Monterrey Consensus of 2002, as well as the commitment by some donor nations to devote at least 0.7 percent of their GDP to official development assistance (ODA).

However, the conference document also emphasizes the stark reality that many donor nations are not living up to their ODA commitments, and that there is a great likelihood the world community will fall short of raising the additional 50 billion U.S. dollars per year required to fulfill the MDGs by 2015, as demanded by the Monterrey Consensus. Accordingly, the New York



Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva (in foreground) with Gabriel Jorge Ferreira, President of the Brazilian Federation of Banks (FEBRABAN), at the opening of Expo Fome Zero in February.



Declaration concludes that serious attention must be paid to “innovative mechanisms of financing – public or private, compulsory and voluntary, of universal or limited membership,” as set out in the report of the Technical Working Group on the Implementation of the Millennium Goals that met in Geneva on January 30.

Not surprisingly, the Lula government actively promotes and encourages all of these “innovative mechanisms,” including the taxation of international financial transactions (Tobin tax), the taxation of the arms trade, special drawing rights from the reserves of international financial institutions (i.e., the IMF) for development purposes, an international campaign to end tax evasion and tax havens, strategically directing revenues raised from fees on immigrant worker remittances to support social development objectives in the home country, credit-card based donations to fight hunger and poverty, expanding socially responsible investment opportunities, and creating an International Financial Facility (IFF) that would produce a frontloading of aid disbursements by permitting donor governments to securitize increases in future ODA directly on the bond market.

Only one government spoke out against these innovative measures at the September 20 conference – the Bush administration. U.S. Agriculture Secretary Ann Veneman complimented Lula for his commitment to fighting starvation and poverty worldwide, and then characterized taxes on international transactions as “unviable and undemocratic.”

In direct response to Secretary Veneman’s remarks, dozens of leaders from four continents intervened in support of the innovative measures, saying that viability was simply a matter of political will. Later, Lula told me, AFL-CIO President John Sweeney, and International Confederation of Free

Trade Unions (ICFTU) General Secretary Guy Ryder, that “it is very difficult for President Bush not to be in favor of ending hunger in the world.”

Indeed, in a world plagued by irrational religious fanaticism from the West as well as from the East, by fears of international terrorism, both real and imagined, by an endless nightmare in Iraq and by an emboldened Bush administration attempting to destroy any remaining vestige of New Deal consensus and social democracy, it is truly inspiring that President Lula is advancing an issue and cause that even the most reactionary and neoliberal of regimes have a difficult time opposing. And as the debate at

the UN in September so vividly illustrated, the world majority may very well prevail in guaranteeing the creative and effective means necessary to help Lula fulfill his global mission.

Stanley Gacek is a labor attorney and AFL-CIO International Affairs Assistant Director, responsible for the Federation's relations with Latin America and the Caribbean. He has spoken and written extensively on Brazilian labor and politics and has been a friend and adviser to Lula and the PT for twenty-four years.

The Millennium Development Goals of the Monterrey Consensus

Goal 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger. (Indicator: Halve the proportion of people living on less than a dollar a day and those who suffer from hunger by 2015.)

Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education. (Indicator: Ensure that all boys and girls complete primary school by 2015.)

Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower women. (Indicator: Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education preferably by 2005, and at all levels by 2015.)

Goal 4: Reduce child mortality. (Indicator: Reduce by two thirds the mortality rate of children under five by 2015.)

Goal 5: Improve maternal health. (Indicator: Reduce by three quarters the maternal mortality ratio by 2015.)

Goal 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases. (Indicator: Halt and begin to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS and the incidence of malaria and other major diseases by 2015.)

Goal 7: Ensure environmental sustainability. (Indicator: Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programs and reverse the loss of environmental resources; by 2015, reduce by half the proportion of people without access to safe drinking water; by 2020 achieve significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers.)

Goal 8: Develop a global partnership for development. (Indicator: Rich countries are responsible for establishing equitable access to their markets and technology and for creating a favorable financial environment. Good governance and a focus on social needs and human capital are essential for developing countries to achieve the goals within their own territories.)

How Did Our Candidates Do?

By Theresa Alt

We reported on the candidates that DSAers were supporting in the last issue of *Democratic Left*. How did they do?

In many of the swing states, getting out the progressive vote helped win the state for Kerry and Edwards.

Michigan is a success story. Both state senate candidates, the long-shot insurgent former farmworker John Espinoza and the labor-backed but Republican-targeted incumbent Aldo Vagnozzi won.

Pennsylvania presents a mixed picture. Long-time progressive state legislator Allyson Schwartz easily won an open U.S. House seat, and Lois Murphy only narrowly lost her race for congress in one of the closest races in the country. Unfortunately, healthcare and education advocate Tim Kearney and newcomer Ginny Schraeder lost handily to much better funded Republican insiders.

In Wisconsin, progressive incumbents Feingold, Baldwin and Obey won. In a race for an open state senate seat, the favored Mark Miller won handily. However, progressive insurgent Bryan Kennedy lost badly.



Central Ohio DSAer
Bob Fittrakis

Many DSAers not only in Ohio but around the country have come to love Dennis Kucinich and are delighted that he will be back in Congress. As for the presidential race there, every day's news only makes those crucial results murkier. Central Ohio DSAer Bob Fittrakis says:

The Republican party won in Ohio with old-fashioned voter suppression. In Franklin County (Columbus) 29% of the precincts had fewer machines than in 2000, despite a 25% increase in voter registration. It is estimated that 7800 potential voters left the polls before they were able to vote - in mostly African American areas [that] voted overwhelmingly for Kerry. In Cincinnati 105,000 people who hadn't voted in two Federal elections were dropped from the rolls; their right to vote was cancelled. I still believe there was vote shifting in southern Ohio, in Butler, Warren and Clermont counties. Warren County booted out observers during the count. There's going to be a backlash against these tactics.

Fittrakis has written several articles on voter suppression in *The Columbus Free Press*, www.freepress.org, and has testified before Congress about voting irregularities in Ohio.

Alas, there were no breakthroughs in the conservative states. Although Indiana DSAers' favorite, Julia Carson, easily regained her House seat, it did not swing the state. Longshot progressive insurgents Al Weed in Virginia, Lin Whitworth in Idaho, Dave Franker and Tom Fiegen all lost.

New York State looks like politics as usual on the surface. Naturally, Kerry won. Longtime left labor advocate Frank Barbaro, who took on a challenging congressional district; Socialist Green David McReynolds, whose longshot campaign was really about educating for a more peaceful and wiser foreign policy; and labor activist Dan Cleveland, who made a state senate bid in rural Republican western New York, all lost. But under the

surface are stirrings. David Soares, backed by both Democrats and the Working Families Party, won his race for District Attorney in Albany County, a victory that is seen as a blow against the punitive Rockefeller drug laws as well as against the Democratic establishment. Moreover, several seats in the State Senate shifted from Republicans to Democrats, with one race still too close to call. (One of these new winners, Diane Savino, was featured in the earlier *DL* article.) Only a few more seats are needed to shift the majority in the Senate, and it will be a whole new ball game in New York State, where the Democrat-dominated Assembly passes a single payer health insurance bill year after year, only to have it ignored by the majority-Republican Senate.

In California, Proposition 72, which would have required large and medium sized companies to pay for employee health insurance, lost by a heartbreaking 49.3% to 50.7%.

In San Francisco, however, a proposition calling on the Federal government to bring the troops home from Iraq won. The new system of ranked-choice voting (also known as instant runoff voting) delayed the results for Board of Supervisors until the computers could be reprogrammed, but in the end most of the candidates DSAers were pushing for won. "Because of the IRV, I think there was much less bad blood between lefties running for the same spot," observes Ross Boylan.

In San Diego, longtime progressive Congressman Bob Filner won handily. Third-party candidate Lawrence Rockwood got 3.3% in his protest run against a centrist. And the San Diego mayoral race got really interesting (*see page 2*).

National Election

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the places Democrats, if they're going to build up a popular vote margin, have to start.

The Republican infrastructure, existing largely in churches, was worked like crazy. The Democratic infrastructure, which was centered more in the usual suspects that we have - labor, environmentalists, women's rights organizations and so on - largely weren't community based, with almost all resources directed to battleground states. And the 527s that were created quickly for this election functioned only in the battleground states. The Republican breadth and depth of institutional commitment enabled the GOP to play battleground and non-battleground states beyond what we had. We truly concentrated the effort. They concentrated their efforts, too, but they still had all these churches and NRA chapters that were nailed down, that weren't mobile, that weren't going into Florida, that weren't going into Ohio, and the GOP outperformed the Democrats in states that weren't hotly contested.

The reported swing on "moral values" - which of course is code for cultural reaction and the punitive "thou shalt not" aspects of the Old Testament - had a limited definition in this election. In a Celinda Lake poll of female voters, the top issue for Democratic women was economic security, and the top issue for Republican women and Independents was really homeland security and terrorism. The reason I'm stressing the women's vote is because it really killed John Kerry. He only carried the women's vote by 3 percent or so, and it was a huge falling-off from Gore. In particular, working-class white women were where Kerry lost the most compared to 2000. Interestingly, "homeland security" and "terrorism," not "moral values," were the

top issues these voters cited again and again.

Economy, "Morals"

Perhaps Democrats need a candidate who is less easy to culturally tag as a flip-flopper or Massachusetts liberal? Voters who were in play at the end in 2004 and broke heavily for Bush in the last couple of weeks included white working-class women and rural voters who believed that the economy was in bad shape, and who never thought that Kerry was offering anything better on the economy than Bush.

There was an election-eve Greenberg poll in which 52 percent of respondents said the economy was in bad shape, and, asked who would better handle the economy and keep America prosperous, showed Kerry and Bush running

even. That's death for a Democratic candidate. When Democrats win, they have somewhere between a 7 and 10 percent lead on the question of who's better on economic issues, yet Kerry did not convey that as previous Democratic candidates have, and failing to see a distinction, it became easier for those folks to break to Bush on, quote, "morals issues" and certainly on terrorism and homeland security. Greenberg is particularly critical of Kerry's decision in the last week not to bring it all back home and do the traditional Democratic closing on differences on bread-and-butter issues.

Kerry's reluctance to do that says something not only about the lack of strategic focus in his campaign as to what the election ought

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Victor Reuther, 93, died in June - ironically, the same weekend as Ronald Reagan. Reuther, the son of a West Virginia steel worker, helped found the United Auto Workers (UAW) with his brothers Walter and Roy. In the 1940s, he served as European representative and director of International Affairs of the CIO and later as director of International Affairs and head of the

Education Department of the UAW. In 1979, he was awarded the Order of the First of May, Venezuela's highest union honor; in 2002, he received the Knight of the Polar Star, Sweden's highest civilian award, and an Honorary Doctor of Laws from the University of West Virginia. According to Eric Lee (Labor Start, 6/14/04), Reuther, a lifelong democratic socialist, "came from that wing of the American trade union movement which promoted 'social movement trade unionism.'" As such, he was one of labor's major voices against the Vietnam war.

National Elections

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to have been about, but also about the predilections of the candidate himself – who always seemed to feel a little more comfortable talking about foreign policy and the world. There are only so many bread-and-butter issues that come up, actually, in the context of national politics in Massachusetts. But if you look at how Democrats win in the Midwest, and how Democrats win when they do win in the South, or how Democratic governors have won across the country (admittedly with a different issues set), those are the issues Democrats tend to make gains on in the kinds of states Democrats need to win most.

In hindsight, the Democratic convention message was: people know who Bush is, what Bush has done wrong; we don't have to emphasize that. We simply have to emphasize who we are and that you'll feel safe with us. Unfortunately, August became the most slanderous attack month in American political history in a long time, when Rove's Swift Boaters systematically undermined Kerry before the media got on to this as a story worth debunking, which it eminently was. I don't think a clear profile of John Kerry the opponent of economic plutocracy was communicated, as the Bush campaign painted Kerry as the personifica-

tion of cultural plutocracy. Kerry, in fact, opposed Bush on any number of issues on tax policy, and labor policy. But he himself never really found the language to connect on that, which may require playing down some of the cultural commitments the Democrats have made – not repudiating them, but taking a more distant perspective. In hindsight, was it a good thing for the election, never mind civil rights in the U.S., that the Massachusetts Supreme Court legalized gay marriage? Probably not, in terms of the election outcome. Would they have used another message to demonize Kerry? Of course.

Only two Democrats, Carter and Clinton, have been elected president since Lyndon Johnson – himself a Southerner, who from the White House signed transformative legislation on race relations that eventually reoriented the South. If the next Democratic nominee was a Southern governor, there's no guarantee he'd carry that particular part of the country, but it might make it easier to reach out – not in Mississippi so you'd win it, not in Alabama so you'd win – but in parts of Ohio, parts of Iowa, and maybe in parts of Arkansas. It's difficult to see, absent issues that redefine concerns Americans have at play in their heads as they go to vote, how Democrats can prevail without a candidate who has greater cultural entrée – fair or unfair as that may be – into the swing regions of American politics.

2006, 2008?

What does that mean for 2008? It means that Hillary Clinton's candidacy has real problems. Essentially, caucus and primary voters in Iowa and New Hampshire were the ones who selected John Kerry, pragmatically handicapping the voting process. They looked at the field and said war and terrorism were seen as central issues, Kerry has the biography to best withstand potential attacks on those issues, so they strategically gave him the nod.

My hunch is that Democrats in Iowa and New Hampshire, given the same constellation of core issues in four years, will strategically pick a candidate who can carry Red states and a few more in the general election. The Democratic institutions that play this game, like labor, will likely also have such considerations in mind.

As all DSAers know, when you talk about the future of the Democratic Party, you're talking about an abstraction that's hard to pin down or define. One of the great points of hope and confusion this year was this upsurge of activism among progressive activists channeled into the election campaign.

In Orlando I met a kid from Oregon State who came down during spring break and stayed for seven months; people uprooted their lives to go far from home or campus. So progressives come out of this campaign with an enhanced infrastructure from all the major progressive institutions that have lists of activists and volunteers, be it the Sierra Club, the League of Conservation Voters, NARAL, Planned Parenthood, NAACP or the unions. All have a much enlarged network of people they have called upon, have done all kinds of work for them, and who have learned things. That was always one of the secondary but real strategic prem-

Harry Fleischman, national secretary of the old Socialist Party from 1942 to 1950 and biographer of Norman Thomas, died in November 2004 at the age of 90. Fleischman was one of the founders, along with Michael Harrington, of DSOA, which along with NAM, became DSA in 1981 and served as a member of the board and many other committees in the 1970s and 1980s. He continued to help build the organization throughout his lifetime. A tireless supporter of labor and civil rights, Fleischman served for many years as the Chair of the Workers Defense League. His book, *Norman Thomas: A Biography*, was published in 1964.

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Toppling Economic Idols

The Raw Deal: How Myths and Misinformation about the Deficit, Inflation and Wealth Impoverish America. By Ellen Frank. Beacon Press, 2004. 224pp. \$24.95

Reviewed by David O. Knuttunen

Despite the author's radical credentials, Ellen Frank's book, *The Raw Deal*, published last June by Beacon Press, is solidly rooted in neo-classical economic theory. This is why the book has so much utility value for left activists. Frank demolishes, one after the other, the myths and shibboleths foisted on us by most of the mainstream press and corporate-oriented economists.

Idols toppled in the book include the myth that the stock market can provide long-term prosperity and wealth to all Americans, the myth that high deficits "crowd out" investment and raise interest rates, and the fairy tale that inflation is more "painful" than the prescribed remedy of high unemployment (at least to the financial industry).

Frank points out that when stock prices rise at a rate many times that by which the underlying output of goods and services in the "real economy" increase, the "stockholder wealth" so created is largely illusory, and the bubble must eventually burst. Frank explains how corporate executives and other insiders, better placed to time the bubble, play the stock market essentially as a huge confidence game - an engine for sucking wealth from investors, especially small investors, and transferring it to the pockets of the privileged few. Corporate executives ensure favorable regulatory environments by steering some of this wealth to their political cronies, like Ken Lay or Dick Cheney.

The "free market" is the remedy of choice, today, for everything from improving health care to replacing Social Security. "Defined contribution" retirement plans, such as 401Ks, have been touted as improvements over "defined benefit" plans such as traditional pensions and Social Security. Frank explains how the promise of 401K plans is based on the myth that stock prices can continue to grow faster than the economy in general. As retiring workers begin to cash-out more and more of their portfolios, this increase probably can't be sustained - and to the extent it can, it will be only by squeezing worker wages.

Her analysis of Social Security shatters a few cherished icons of both left and right. She points out that

bonds held in the Social Security Trust Fund cannot "save" Social Security. The Fund, initiated during the Reagan administration, is a way to mask a shift in funding of

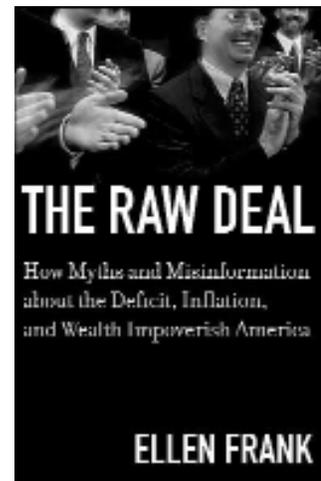
Federal expenditures from the still vaguely progressive income tax to a regressive payroll tax. The author suggests that the real reason for political opposition to Social Security is that general revenues will eventually

have to be used to pay Social Security benefits - which means that retirees will start being supported in part by taxes on interest, stock dividends and corporate profits, and not just on the wages of other workers. Frank

If there is a central theme to Frank's book, it is that politics and economic policy are never separable.

points out the error in expanding a concept of a "pre-funded" retirement plan to an economy-wide program such as Social Security. The Social Security Trust Fund, like all money and securities, really just consists of marks on paper, representing claims on the real economy. No amount of paper saving, whether in public or private accounts, can change the fact that more output will be required of fewer workers as the ratio of retired to current workers grows. Real retirement security depends on investing any surplus now in ways that improve productivity or provide durable enhancements to quality of life, so that, as the population ages and a declining percentage must support the whole, their combined output will be equal to the task. Also useful would be egalitarian political reforms, so our claims on those resources will be more secure.

If there is a central theme to Frank's book, other than the notion that bad theory makes for bad policy, it is the idea that politics and economic policy are never separable. This is probably no surprise to most DL readers. But the conceit is still far too prevalent that economics is a strictly "technical" discipline and that the public is best served if economists are kept "free" from political interference. In fact, the



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Healing American Democracy

Democracy Matters. By Cornel West. The Penguin Press. 218 pp. \$24.95.

Reviewed by Bill Mosley

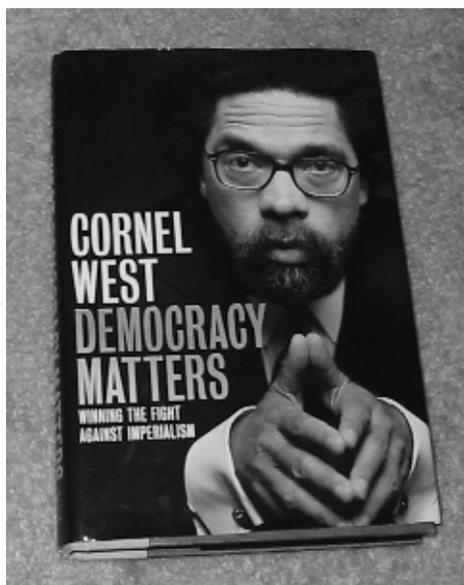
I first read Cornel West's *Democracy Matters* during the final phase of the 2004 election campaign. At that time I nodded in recognition at his description of the sicknesses that infect American body politic, but also drew hope from his prescriptions for treatment. Now that the election is over, it is the sickness that lingers, and West's voice rings more urgently than ever.

West, a DSA honorary chair, author or co-author of 26 other books and a distinguished professor (now at Princeton University) envisioned *Democracy Matters* as a sequel to his 1993 book *Race Matters*, an analysis of the crisis of African-American society. In his current work, West sees American democracy as plagued by many of the same ills that he explored in the earlier book. He writes with urgency and clarity, employing language that often rings with the impact of a well-honed sermon, as he returns to the theme of much of his life's work - defending and expanding American democracy.

West sees American democracy threatened by three major phenomena: free-market fundamentalism, aggressive militarism and escalating authoritarianism. He is not the first to refute the claim that the "free" market and democracy are inseparable, but he does so forcefully, writing that

[t]he fundamentalism of the market puts a premium on the activities of buying and selling, consuming and taking, promoting and advertising, and devalues commu-

nity, compassionate charity, and improvement of the general quali-



A deep democratic tradition lies beneath American cynicism and apathy

ty of life. How ironic that in America we've moved so quickly from Martin Luther King Jr.'s 'Let Freedom Ring' to 'Bling! Bling!' - as if freedom were reducible to simply having material toys . . .

All three phenomena have grown more prominent since (and to some extent, because of) 9/11/01, but West shows that they have deep roots in American history, from slavery, to genocide against Native Americans, to Jim Crow and the age of the robber barons, up to today.

The unfulfilled promise of American democracy, West argues, has exacerbated a turn away from civic engagement and community and toward a form of *nihilism*, which he terms a "monumental collapse of meaning, hope and love." Just as in *Race Matters* he saw nihilism afflicting the African-American community in the form of anti-social behavior, so he sees the same phenomenon in the larger society in the form of political nihilism - a "lack of belief in the power of principles" as material values are exalted, civic action seems futile and people struggle "to preserve a livelihood, raise children, and live decent lives."

Nihilism is fueled by both Republican and Democratic political leaders, the former with their "might makes right" philosophy, the latter by lacking the ability "to speak with full candor or attack the corruptions of the system at their heart" - and West identifies John Kerry and Hillary Rodham Clinton as among the most cynical nihilists among Democrats.

Meanwhile, the news media fuels apathy through superficial treatment of serious issues and an obsession with the bottom line.

Nevertheless, a deep democratic tradition lies beneath this cynicism and apathy, one that West sees reflected in American literature. He points to the writings of Ralph Waldo Emerson, Herman Melville, Walt Whitman, James Baldwin, Toni Morrison and others as expressing a deep disdain of privilege and imperial ambitions and a close

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National Elections

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ises of some groups that hugely increased their activism this year.

Certainly no organization in the U.S. had more going out there or did more than the Service Employees International Union. The frequently quoted figure of \$65 million in SEIU funds spent on the election may be way too low - I think it was substantially higher. They had 2,000 people working full-time on this campaign, many of whom were shop stewards or rank-and filers but were able to take time off and go into battleground states. I spent a day in Cleveland with an SEIU nurse's aide from Washington Heights in Manhattan, a Dominican immigrant, who, while appalled at the slowness of the tempo of life in Ohio, was out campaigning. There are lots of such folks who have, in some cases, acquired new skills and interests, who have been able to do things they've never done before as a result of participation in this campaign.

What happens to these organizations, to the 527s? As time goes on, and ignoring the reform liberal orthodoxy of the last 70 years, I sometimes miss old organizations like Tammany - because rotten as some of their politics were, and pre-modern, and paternalistic - they had one signal virtue: they were there the day after the election. Some people in 527s talked like they invented precinct walking and ward heeling - and while more people did have their doors knocked on in this election than before, no one on our side of the fence is knocking on doors now.

Does that mean the Republicans were concentrating on new exurban developments that the Democrats weren't going into? I don't think so. Where there was hope of results, the Democrats sent people. Comparatively, much

Republican mobilization, in terms of individual voter contacts, really did go through churches and, secondarily, NRA chapters. The GOP is not dependent on George Soros, and they're not dependent on Andy Stern. They're still there, and our progressive and Democratic shoe leather, which was constructively injected back into American politics, may be a sometime thing, while the institutional presence and power of conservative churches is not.

If you look at the whole horizon of institutions in the U.S. and how you turn this around, it may be possible that liberal, mainstream

No one on our side of the fence is knocking on doors now.

Protestant congregations will have clergy who try to push congregants in a more active direction, but I don't know that there's going to be any huge transformation. Unions remain a real source of, above all, different voting behavior. If you analyze all exit polls for elections back to the invention of exit polls, there's always been this marked advantage for Democrats among union households and union-member voters, even before Steve Rosenthal arrived at the AFL-CIO and more attention was given to political operations. This alternative source of information does matter. But unions aren't really growing very much, to put it mildly.

Bush may well now in fact use the National Labor Relations Board to go after Card Check, which is essentially one of the few ways that some unions have been able to grow at all over the last 15 years, by winning union recognition through submission of union cards from a majority of workers in a bargaining

jurisdiction. The Bush people will probably also go after other Democratic institution strengths, using mostly false issues like medical malpractice, about which they don't give a damn - they just want to restrict available funds that trial lawyers have to make contributions to Democrats.

If voters really don't really see any difference between John Kerry and George W. Bush on the economy, that's partly Kerry's fault. But it's a broader problem of how Democrats address problems in an economy which is now so open to global influence that some of the older remedies that Democrats and European Social Democrats had for many years are harder to apply. It's a problem because of the ideological delegitimization campaigns that Republicans have waged against government, which is a virus that is hugely widespread in the US and hard to combat.

At a moment when the historic responsibility of employers to cover health insurance, for instance, is eroding everywhere, the Democrats could and should be able to make more of an issue of it. Democrats, and more broadly, progressives - us - have failed to connect with the American people sufficiently on that issue. That's a particular challenge because Bush really is going to continue to mount the clearest assault on the New Deal ever.

In the next two years we have to fight that - not simply by defending the status quo that has to a certain degree been destabilized, illustrated by many Americans who now believe Social Security is not going to be there in 30 years, "so why not privatize?" We have to put on our thinking, message and activist caps and figure out how we can most effectively intervene in this debate. The American people are not libertarians. They're not clamoring to be out there on their own. But neither have we laid out a clear path for them.

Toppling Idols

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goals that are to be achieved determine the techniques which are best applied. Monetarist and Keynesian economic prescriptions can each work pretty well - but they have different objectives. The goal of Keynesian policies is general prosperity, with a leveling of incomes to a more egalitarian structure. One generally unstated goal of monetarism is to maintain and enhance the wealth and power of the wealthy and powerful. The choice between two economic philosophies is thus a political choice about what kind of a society we want to live in.

Ellen Frank has solid credentials as an activist left economist. She is a member of the collective that publishes *Dollars & Sense* magazine, for which she also writes the regular "Doctor Dollar" column. She has been active in the Union for Radical Political Economics (URPE), and the Center for Popular Economics. She was a professor of economics for many years at Emmanuel College, in Boston, and is currently Senior Economic Analyst at the Poverty Institute at Rhode Island College. She is also a member of DSA, and often makes herself available as a speaker at events sponsored by the Boston local.

If Ellen Frank's new book can provide us with the ammunition we need to help a few more people understand *political* economy, it will be an accomplishment for our side.

David Knuttunen is a former NPC member and former chair of the Boston DSA local. A self-employed structural engineer, he is a high school dropout, MIT graduate, and a dabbler in history, philosophy, economics and computer science.

Healing American Democracy

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engagement with American society.

The American church - an institution West knows intimately - has at times been democracy's ally and at other times its nemesis. West attacks the "Constantinian" thread in Christianity, beginning with the Roman Emperor Constantine's conversion in 312 A.D. and his forging of a church-state alliance. Today's Constantinians include the Christian Right, who aim to use the power of the state to impose their views - on such matters as gay rights, school prayer, abortion and school vouchers - on the entire public (as demonstrated by the voters who crowded the polls in the recent election in support of so-called "moral values").

Nevertheless, there is another tradition in the church - the "prophetic," characterized by "deeds of justice and kindness that attend to the unjust sources of human hurt and misery" - that has bolstered democracy through its critical roles in the abolitionist, women's suffrage, trade-union and civil rights movements.

A chapter on the Middle East conflict and its manifestations in the United States (of which 9/11 was only the most dramatic) calls for a renewal of the Jewish prophetic tradition as a challenge to the militarism of the Sharon government. Meanwhile, West argues, the United States must encourage democratic voices in the Middle East, including the Islamic world - not through force as in Iraq, but by framing democracy in Islamic terms.

This chapter, as engaging and well-argued as it is, nevertheless seems a diversion from the larger theme of democracy in the United States.

How do we reclaim our democratic heritage? Engaging youth -

and youth culture - in civic activism will be essential for democratic renewal, West says. Unlike many left thinkers he does more than talk about it; he has recorded CDs aimed at bringing hip-hop back to its political roots, as well as appearing as "Counselor West" in two *Matrix* films.

These and other extra-academic activities while on the Harvard faculty led West into a well-publicized dispute with Harvard President Lawrence Summers, described at length in the book, leading to West's move to Princeton. Those who followed the shoving match may find West's account engaging gossip, but it has the effect of interrupting the flow of the book's message.

Most of all, West says, lovers of democracy need to embrace three traditions: the *Socratic* - recognizing the citizen's duty to question authority; the *prophetic* - as described above, a commitment to battling injustice; and the *tragicomic* - the ability to express "righteous indignation with a smile and deep inner pain without bitterness or revenge," the spirit that gave birth to the blues but runs back to the Roman satirist Lucian through Cervantes, Chekhov, Twain and Toni Morrison. As such, his prescription is largely inward-looking and light on policy.

Yet as we embark on the second Bush administration and a period of continued all-Republican rule, a good place to start is to rededicate ourselves to the struggle ahead - and to take to heart this important book. "Democracy matters" do indeed matter.

Bill Mosley is a member of the DL editorial committee and of the DC/MD/NOVA local of DSA.

Multilateral Future

continued from back cover

sion channels were full of election spots, so the event topic could not have been more immediate, emphasizing the importance of a genuine multilateral approach to international crisis and the need for international leadership on human rights and peace and justice issues. The war and occupation of Iraq dominated much of the discussion, even though there was general agreement among the panelists on the topic.

Robert Goebbels began the discussion by pointing to his native Luxembourg just having celebrated its six-



Former U.S. Congressman and Mayor of Minneapolis Donald Fraser prepares to speak.

tieth anniversary of liberation from Nazi occupation - an anniversary that celebrated the U.S. role. He explained how Europeans stood united behind the U.S. following 9/11, and supported U.S. efforts in Afghanistan to bring to justice al-Qaeda and their Taliban supporters. However, Bush's unilateralist approach toward

Iraq changed attitudes, especially after the weapons inspectors' work was cut short. Goebbels went on to argue that the weapons inspectors program was an example of a successful multilateral program. He was very doubtful that much progress could be made on building multilateralism if Bush were reelected, although most governments would have no choice but to attempt to find some common ground with such a government. After a long history of wars, including two world wars, and the Holocaust, Goebbels felt most Europeans just had it with rushing to wars.

Jo Leinen also cited the history of the area he represented in the European Parliament - a border region between Germany and France; in both world wars, it was not entirely uncommon for relatives to fight relatives, some being drafted into the French army, others into the German army. Since then, however, a multilateral approach has maintained peace in Europe, and the European Union itself is an example of multilateral diplomacy that has in effect redrawn the map of Europe. But multilateral diplomacy was also important in addressing many other global issues, besides Iraq: global warming, AIDS, human rights, poverty, and terrorism. He cited the Kyoto Agreement, which came into effect with Russian ratification, as an example of multi-

lateralism working. He also argued for an agenda for a new world order that included reform of the UN and expansion and reform of the Security Council as well as revisions in global trade arrangements, collective global security measures and a global New Deal for the developing world that included debt relief.

Donald Fraser agreed with Goebbels and Leinen on Iraq and criticized a U.S. foreign policy that says "might is right." He stated that Bush's approach will leave a legacy of hostile attitudes toward the U.S. internationally and that America's long-time belief in multilateralism, which had contributed to European unification, is now being replaced by pre-emption and unilateralism. Fraser went on to argue that the United States needed to emulate European social programs, especially national health care. He called for a new social compact with expanded job and educational opportunities. He also cited the need for the Democrats to create strong institutions to educate the electorate.

Following the panel, the audience of 150, which was mostly students, peppered the panelists with questions.

The dialogue was the centerpiece for the Midwest Regional DSA retreat, and also had wide support from other organizations. It was initiated by the DSA International Commission and the DSA FUND and co-sponsored by the Minnesota Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party (DFL) Education Foundation; the Freeman Center at the University of Minnesota's Humphrey Institute, which donated the meeting space; and the Washington office of the German Friedrich Ebert Foundation, which provided the travel costs for the speakers. Professor Don Ostrom, president of the DFL Education Foundation, welcomed the panel and the audience on behalf of Minnesota's progressive community, while I acted as moderator.

The dialogue involved more than the Saturday panel at the Humphrey Institute. On the Friday before the event, the two Europeans, DSA's national director and I met with the deputy editorial page editor of the *Minneapolis Star Tribune* for two hours in a far-reaching discussion of politics and internationalism.

With Bush's reelection, such dialogues between progressives become even more important. DSA hopes to organize more of them over the course of the next several years. Thankfully, there is a genuine interest in both the developed and the developing worlds for such contacts.

By working to link progressives around the world now, DSA, along with others, can counter some of the impact of Bush's unilateralism while building opposition to it at the same time.

Stephan Peter is a member of Twin Cities DSA's Executive Committee and a co-chair of DSA's International Commission.

Building a Multilateral Future

By Stephan Peter

On October 9, three weeks before the November election, DSA co-hosted the first of what we hope will be a series of international dialogues that unite American progressives with their counterparts from around the world. The topic, the future of multilateralism, could not have been more relevant. The participants were Robert Goebbels, member of the Luxembourg Socialist Labor Party (LSAP) in the



DSA National Director Frank Llewellyn, DSA International Commission Co-Chair Stephan Peter, and European Parliament members Robert Goebbels (Luxembourg) and Jo Leinen (Germany) in front of Minneapolis' "spoon and cherry" sculpture.

European Parliament, vice president of the Party of European Socialists grouping in the European Parliament, and previously Foreign Minister of Luxembourg; Jo Leinen, member of the Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD) in the European Parliament, chair of its constitution committee and member of the committee for foreign affairs, human rights, common security and defense policy; and, representing American progressives, Donald Fraser, former member of the U.S. House of Representatives and its committee on international relations, and former mayor of Minneapolis.

Alexa McDonough, the Canadian New Democratic Party's peace and international development advocate in the Ottawa Parliament and former leader of the NDP, intended to participate in the panel, but was called away to tend to a crisis in her riding (district). McDonough did send a statement to be included in the dialogue that concluded "Many of you here today believe as I and

my party do, that global commitment to human rights, peace and justice can only be achieved within a multilateral context. I wish I could be present as you explore and develop new ideas on how we build broader support for multilateral responses to global challenges. We also need to explore how we enhance and strengthen existing multilateral institutions in the face of growing unilateral approaches to international conflicts, as well as humanitarian and environmental crisis."

Minnesota was a "swing state" and the televi-

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- Yes, I want to join the Democratic Socialists of America. Enclosed are my dues (includes a subscription to *Democratic Left*) of:
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