

THE HOW

ANNUAL REPORT

2003

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**The work of the
Drum Major Institute
needs to become
a more urgent priority
for our nation.**

”

—President William Jefferson Clinton

**DRUM
MAJOR**
INSTITUTE FOR PUBLIC
POLICY

“If you want to say that I was a drum major,
say that I was a drum major for justice;
say that I was a drum major for peace;
say that I was a drum major for righteousness.
And all of the other shallow things
will not matter...I just want to leave a committed
life behind.”

DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.
EBENEZER BAPTIST CHURCH
FEBRUARY 4, 1968

2003

The Drum Major Institute 2003 Annual Report

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**DRUM
MAJOR**
INSTITUTE FOR PUBLIC
POLICY

Drum Major Institute for Public Policy
110 East 59th Street 28th Floor
New York NY 10022

phone 212.909.9663 fax 212.909.9493
drummajorinstitute.org

Fernando Ferrer
President

Andrea Batista Schlesinger
Executive Director

Malik Lewis
Policy & Communications Associate

Steven Presser
Assistant to the President

Hannah Major-Monfried
Intern

About DMI

The **Drum Major Institute for Public Policy** is a non-partisan, non-profit organization dedicated to challenging the tired orthodoxies of both the right and the left. The goal: progressive public policy for social and economic fairness. DMI's approach is unwavering: We do not issue reports to see our name in print or hold forums for the sake of mere talk. We seek to change policy by conducting research into overlooked, but important social and economic issues, by leveraging our strategic relationships to engage policymakers and opinion leaders in our work, and by offering platforms to amplify the ideas of those who are working for social and economic fairness.

Originally called the Drum Major Foundation, DMI was founded by Harry Wachtel, lawyer and advisor to Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. during the turbulent years of the civil rights movement. DMI was relaunched in 1999 by New York attorney William Wachtel, Harry's son, Martin Luther King III, and Ambassador Andrew Young. Today, energized by the nationally recognized leadership of Fernando Ferrer, DMI is committed to adding a rigorous progressive voice to compete in the marketplace of ideas.

Conservative think tanks and foundations spent \$1 billion to influence public opinion and thought from 1990 to 2000. Their investment has clearly paid off. From tax cuts inspired by "trickle-down" economics to disinvestment in public institutions to the silence that remains the norm in the face of the poverty crippling our society, conservatives have reshaped this nation. Progressives remain on the defensive, communicating their ideas only to the choir or resigning themselves to caring for victims of unjust policy instead of also changing bad policy. The institutes that do exist produce research and analysis that too rarely reach the policy makers who could act on it, the advocates who could use it to support their agendas, or the public whose opinions could be informed and energized.

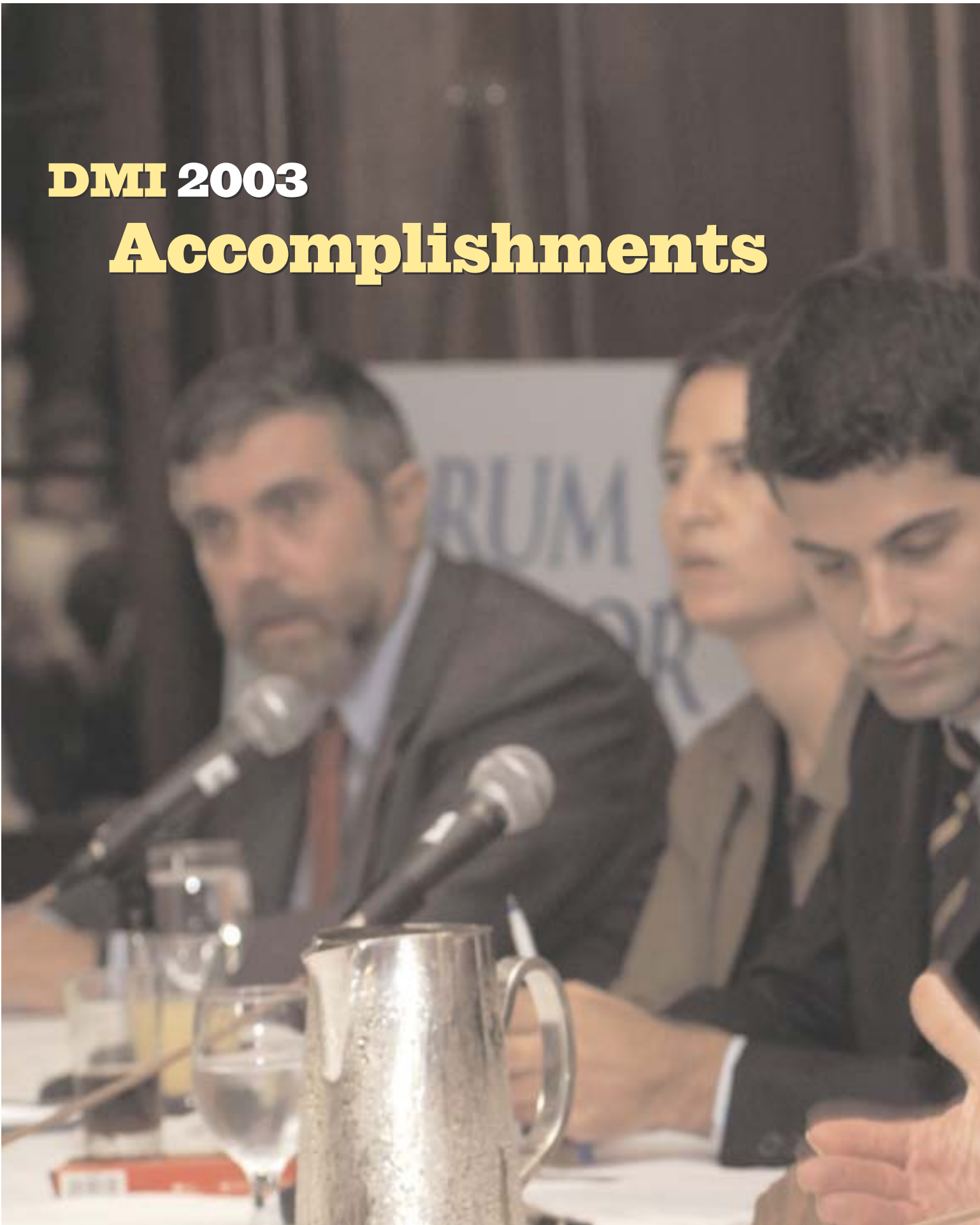
The left laments the lack of presence of progressive thinkers in the media, though relatively little time and energy is spent cultivating those thinkers or providing them with a platform to disseminate their thoughts and to promote their successes. Many thumb their noses at the right's emphasis on messaging, despite the clear success it has had in packaging issues to promote its policy agenda in a way that resonates with the public.


The Drum Major Institute, an organization with a rich legacy in the civil rights movement, has a very present-day approach. We utilize the successful elements of the right's strategy to promote progressive public policy. We unite the best ideas with the best research and the best messages and messengers to convey them. We measure our success exclusively by our impact on public policy.

"There is one thing stronger than all the armies in the world, and this is an idea whose time has come," said Victor Hugo. The time for the Drum Major Institute for Public Policy, retooled as a non-partisan, non-profit organization dedicated to promoting social and economic fairness through progressive policy, has come.

DMI 2003

Accomplishments





In May of 2002, President William Jefferson Clinton said that, “The work of the Drum Major Institute needs to become a more urgent priority for our nation.” This year, we have attempted to heed this call. In a remarkably short time, we have built an organization that has already begun to influence public policy and thought. From releasing nationally recognized studies into the relationship between schools and communities and the impact of changing demographics on politics to launching an exciting and frequently visited web site that serves as a source of ideas and argument, DMI has demonstrated the strength of its mission and strategy.

We have engaged national leaders including President Clinton, former Senators Bill Bradley and Bob Kerrey, New York State Attorney General Eliot Spitzer, Congressman Charles Rangel, *New York Times* Op-Ed columnist Paul Krugman, and Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton, among others.

Several thousand people visit our web site each day. Our public events have drawn close to 2,000 participants, including former New Jersey Governor Jim Florio, New York City Comptroller Bill Thompson, Former NASDAQ President Richard Ketchum, author and columnist Pete Hamill, American Bar Association President Dennis Archer, and hundreds of progressive activists and citizens.

In 1963, Dr. King said that, “We will have to repent in this generation not merely for the vitriolic words and actions of the bad people, but for the appalling silence of the good people.” The Drum Major Institute has attempted to end that silence—in board rooms, voting booths, and even on the Internet—that remains so deafening forty years later. There is much work to be done, and many drum majors required to do it. Here’s what DMI did to get out in front in 2003:

From left to right: Paul Krugman, *New York Times* columnist; Sara Horowitz, founder Working Today; Jonathan Rosen, DMI Senior Fellow; Timothy Marshall, Jamaica Business Resource Center; Dan Cantor, Working Families Party. Sept. 16, 2003.

2003 Accomplishments

LEADING THE DISCUSSION ON PEOPLE AND POLITICS IN AMERICA'S BIG CITIES

The face of America is changing. The profound population shifts under way in our largest cities has resulted in a growing “representation gap” between elected officials and those they represent. When cities failed to appreciate the importance of such gaps in the past, they paid a heavy price. With urban democracy at a crossroads again today, which path will we take?

To answer this question, and others critical to the future of our cities, DMI released the nationally recognized “People and Politics in America’s Big Cities.” Written by leading experts on urban politics John Mollenkopf and John Logan, “People and Politics” is an important investigation into the impact of the demographic transformation now under way in New York City and Los Angeles. It traces black-to-white succession in big cities and shows how immigration has produced new racial and ethnic contours in metropolitan America that make the possibility for progressive coalitions more complex.

By looking at the factors that cause the “representation gap” in diverse cities—electoral systems, potential conflict and competition among native and immigrant minority groups, and larger patterns of racial inequality—steps can be taken to create a new, multi-ethnic, better-functioning urban democracy.

The study culminated in a one-day conference featuring former Detroit Mayor Dennis Archer, Los Angeles City Councilmember

Antonio Villaraigosa, author and columnist Pete Hamill, and academics and political strategists. DMI will organize a similar conference in Los Angeles in 2004.

DEBUNKING THE MYTH OF THE MIDDLE

Where is that solid middle class that used to embody our sense of fairness, of mobility, of the American dream? Instead, we see CEOs go from making 40 times that of their employees to 400, taking a license to accumulate wealth not seen since the Gilded Age.

Increasingly fragile, told that money is better off in their pockets than in their schools, unemployed or underemployed, afraid of losing their health insurance, applying for bankruptcy at unseen levels—the middle class is suffering.

“The Myth of the Middle,” results of polling commissioned by DMI of New York City voters and released in September, demonstrates this increasing fragility. While many New Yorkers identify themselves as members of the middle class and say they feel secure in their financial situation, they are rarely able to save for the future and find it increasingly difficult to make ends meet. They are worried about education, health care, affordable housing, and want those critical services protected. And they don’t see how tax cuts will benefit them.

DMI is following up on this survey with a profile of New York’s middle class, a group too often neglected by progressives despite their struggles in the face of the regressive economic policies of the current national administration.

MAKING SCHOOLS ACCOUNTABLE TO COMMUNITIES

The schools that have succeeded against the odds have a shared ingredient: meaningful involvement with parents and communities. Why? Because students whose parents are involved are more likely to succeed, and schools that collaborate with parents and communities create cultures of success that attract additional investment. Despite the public preoccupation with them, governance reforms alone do not change schools. And so, at a critical moment in the shaping of the New York City public schools system, the Drum Major Institute released “From Governance to Accountability: Building Relationships that Make Schools Work,” by Kavitha Mediratta and Norm Fruchter of the NYU Institute for Education and Social Policy.

In this report, we called for a shift in the discussion from governance to accountability. We proposed a series of performance standards to help schools, districts, and the central system evaluate how well they are engaging their most important partners. Soon after its release, Mayor Michael Bloomberg announced, “The entire school system, from principals up to the Chancellor, will be held accountable for effectiveness in engaging parents, and responding to their concerns. Every school will become parent-friendly. Administrators and teachers will be expected to exhaust every avenue in making parents part of the school environment.... Parent engagement also will be a significant factor in principal performance reviews. This will ensure that it is viewed as a core responsibility, not as an “add-on” or optional activity.”

ON PEOPLE & POLITICS IN AMERICA'S BIG CITIES

“As the various speakers acknowledged, we have to embrace our collective humanity and build coalitions around issues, not categories. We have to see where we’re going, and we have to make sure all of us go there—and that there is no segregated seating.”

—Stanley Crouch, *New York Daily News*, May 19, 2003

“Produced by John Logan and John Mollenkopf, it [People and Politics in America’s Big Cities] details the vast impact of immigration and the extraordinary transformation of New York City’s whites from a majority of the population to a minority. It looks at the sparring for political primacy that will arise from this change—as whites are forced to share power not just with blacks but with Latinos and Asians and countless other newcomers.”

—Joseph Dolman, *Newsday*, June 21, 2003



Our success in turning a proposal into policy was the result of a process that is emblematic of DMI's approach: We combined high-quality research, forums with experts, editorials, and briefings with our city's leaders to secure a commitment to create change.

RECLAIMING THE PROGRESSIVE BANDWIDTH WITH WWW.DRUMMAJORINSTITUTE.ORG

Where is the voice of progressives, so many lament, as we cede more and more of the public dialogue to the well-funded, well-organized conservative right? We have designed www.drummajorinstitute.org as a resource for intelligent, passionate discourse on the most important issues facing our nation. DMI produces the ProgBlog, a witty and incisive look at the news from left to right predigested for the busy progressive; the DMI E-Journal, compelling policy pieces each month from progressive thinkers on social and economic justice; the DMI Injustice Index, the real "state of the union," by the numbers; as well as links to DMI's latest research and polling.

CREATING PROGRESSIVE PLATFORMS

DMI launched its Speaker Series to provide a platform to progressives who have been able to put their values into practice with success. Instead of arguing theory, DMI connects a diverse audience of thinkers, activists, media, and public officials with people who have successfully worked for social and economic fairness in our public institutions. Since its inception, we've heard from Paul Krugman, economist and *New York Times* Op-Ed columnist, on the vanishing middle-class; Howard Dean, former



Vermont Governor, on his efforts to get near universal health care in Vermont; Eliot Spitzer, Attorney General of New York State, on successfully pursuing corporate malfeasance; and Steven Bingler, architect and former advisor to the United States Secretary of Education, nationally recognized for his innovations in community-based planning and design of public school buildings.

COMMUNICATING THE MESSAGE: "IF YOU DON'T VOTE, YOU DON'T COUNT."

With voter turn-out at all-time lows, DMI launched "If you don't vote, you don't count," a national public service campaign reaching 23 million households and contributing to record turn-outs in Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, and Newark in the 2002 elections. A print version also ran on the side of public telephone kiosks throughout New York City. DMI will continue to promote this effective message in the time leading up to the 2004 presidential elections.

CULTIVATING PROGRESSIVE VOICES

While there is no shortage of progressive thinkers, there is little packaging and dissemination of their ideas. Conservatives have used polling data to sharpen their message to make it resonate effectively with the public and emphasized dissemination of their work, resulting in their near ubiquity on editorial pages. Progressives need to unite the success of their strategy with the strength of our vision. Seeking to meet the need for effective messengers from the progressive perspective to counter the well-prepared voices of the right, the Drum Major Institute for Public Policy began its Senior Fellows program. DMI provides a platform, as well as supportive research and polling, to up-and-coming progressive activists and entrepreneurs. In 2003, DMI was joined by two senior fellows who will focus on income inequality and civil rights.

Dennis Rivera, President of 1199 SEIU New York, and Roger Touissant, President of the New York City Transit Workers Alliance, at April 30 DMI Speakers Series event on expanding access to health care.



DMI really is what we need more of in this country—a think tank dedicated to creativity when it comes to progressive politics. The intellectual ferment has been from the other side of the isle. That is not a healthy thing. In the long term, ideas do matter. The Drum Major Institute is going to be over the next decade the foundation for the ideas that hopefully will drive New York and national politics.



—Eliot Spitzer,
New York State Attorney General

2003 Accomplishments

A Closer Look at the DMI E-Journal



The E-Journal is an on-line hybrid—part public policy report, part op-ed—offered free of charge to the Drum Major Institute’s several thousand registered online subscribers and visitors to our daily-updated web site.

From non-citizen voting to business outsourcing to gay marriage to indigent criminal defense, the DMI E-Journal tackles the issues Americans are talking about, offering a new progressive perspective on public policy-as-usual, in a style that is as informative as it is accessible. At the same time, DMI’s E-Journal offers a critical platform to progressive thinkers and practitioners.

Excerpts from recent editions of the E-Journal:

From “Non-Citizen Voting: Pipe Dream or Possibility?”

by Ron Hayduk

Previously excluded groups have gained access to the franchise principally through political struggle. They fought their way into the polity through political agitation, sometimes using the courts as a tool. Ultimately they needed the support of other sectors in society to win political rights. The agitation of the propertyless encouraged sectors of the propertied to extend the franchise; the abolitionist movement and civil rights movements led whites to enfranchise blacks; the suffragettes compelled men to include women among the voting citizenry; and younger adults, whose participation in the social movements of the 1960s and 1970s, were granted voting rights by older adults. Why not for immigrants too?

From “Unemployment Insurance: Keeps Jobs, Creates More”

by Jonathan Rosen

Policy makers from City Hall to the White House have trotted out well worn ideological prescriptions to address the national and local recession: tax cuts, interest rate cuts, and government spending. Republicans want more tax cuts. So do many Democrats. Republican stimulus plans, currently being debated by the House, cut taxes mostly for wealthy Americans. Some Democrats want to cut the first \$5,000 in federal payroll taxes, a big part of the money withheld in worker’s weekly paychecks, in order to put more money in the hands of middle and low-income people. And then there’s the obvious: if you’re unemployed—you don’t benefit from tax cuts at all.

From “Good Business: Why New York’s Business Community Should Defend Public Universities and their Students”

by Malik Lewis

New York public university graduates overwhelmingly live and work in New York. They earn more than their non-degree holding cohorts, work more than their cohorts, and contribute more to the New York State economy in the form of taxes than their cohorts. Policies that build barriers between the average New Yorker and a college education crumble the foundation of a sound New York State economy, and weaken the state as a whole. The New York business community should rally to the defense of New York’s public universities and their students because it’s just good business. They are your board members, work force, consumer-base, and children. A defense of public higher education in New York State is a capital investment in the future of New York State businesses.

From “Tough on Crime or Smart on Crime: Jobs Not Jails Make our Streets Safer”

by Carolina Cordero Dyer

If the goal of our criminal justice system is to keep people safer and communities stronger, it is failing. Prisons are a very expensive revolving door. We imprison many, and spend a great amount of money doing it, and then welcome them right back in. They don’t become productive citizens, and there are more victims of crime, not fewer. If we want to keep our streets safer, we need to pay as much attention to what keeps pushing people through that jail door, as we do to what happens when they get out.



Working families desperately need the independent voice Drum Major provides.



—Dr. Elizabeth Warren,
Harvard professor and author of
*The Two-Income Trap:
Why Middle Class Mothers
and Fathers are Going Broke*



New York City Councilman Bill Perkins and others at DMI forum with Attorney General Eliot Spitzer. April 9, 2003. Inset: Governor Howard Dean and DMI President Fernando Ferrer at April 30, 2003 event.

A Closer Look at the DMI Speakers Series

DMI's Speakers Series provides a critical platform to practitioners who have incorporated progressive values of equity and fairness into their work with success. By highlighting these individuals and their accomplishments before an audience of current and future opinion, policy, and community leaders, we help to reclaim what is possible—a discussion too often controlled by those who believe that government has no positive role to play in peoples' lives.

Former Governor Howard Dean on creating near universal health care in Vermont, while the remainder of the country has written it off as all but impossible. Panelists: Roger Touissant, President of the Transit Workers Union Local 100; Irwin Redlener, President and Co-Founder of the Children's Health Fund; Jennifer Cunningham, Executive Director of the SEIU New York State Council. April 30, 2003. (see above)

Paul Krugman on the increasing fragility of the middle class and why progressives should care. Krugman, a *New York Times* op-ed columnist and Professor of Economics and International Affairs at Princeton University, has written and talked extensively about the rapidly shrinking middle class in America, and the widening gulf between the wealthy and the poor. Panelists: Dan Cantor, Working Families Party; Sara Horowitz, Working Today; Timothy Marshall, Jamaica Queens Resource Center. September 16, 2003.

Attorney General Eliot Spitzer on his prosecution of corporate malfeasance that illustrates the positive role that government can play in protecting the interests of the people. Panelists: Arianna Huffington, syndicated columnist and author; Richard Ketchum, President and Deputy Chairman of the Nasdaq Stock Market; Dennis Rivera, President of 1199 SEIU New York's Health and Human Service Union. April 9, 2003.



Remarks from DMI President Fernando Ferrer

AT THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY MARCH ON WASHINGTON

A. Philip Randolph, whose brainchild the 1963 “March for Jobs and Freedom” was, might look down on this march in the 21st Century and say, “It’s about time; so much remains unfinished.”

Congressman John Lewis might make the observation that there are still too many “cheap political leaders who build their careers on immoral compromise and ally themselves with open forms of political economic and social exploitation.”

And Martin Luther King might actually weep at the spectacle of the enemies of social and economic justice hijacking the very language of the Civil Rights Movement to justify their efforts to impoverish the many, while enriching the few.

And all who were in attendance that historic day, might regard the daily assaults on hope and opportunity as something the powerful and privileged must, by now, see as their unique entitlement.

Our public schools are increasingly re-segregated and scandalously under funded. Adequate health care and decent housing are still unkept American promises. And while the last, great rising economic tide lifted many boats, too many were left high and dry, or simply sank.

But now the tide has ebbed, crushing the poor and impoverishing those who just got to the middle class. The apologists for this weird theory of economics—I believe it was the President’s father, who once correctly called this “Voodoo Economics”—have actually stolen the language of the Civil Rights Movement to attack those of us who, as we do today, question and challenge this un-American policy.

They call it “class warfare” when we march for jobs and hope—for justice and opportunity. There isn’t much good in finally being served at an integrated lunch counter, but not being able to read the menu or pay the check. If this is “class warfare,” it was declared on us!

I learned a lesson from Dr. King: *unity can only come from truth.*

We spend more on four-year sentences for our young men at jails than at four-year colleges.

Health insurance remains out of reach for growing numbers of under- and unemployed people.

It becomes clearer and clearer that economic mobility in our nation remains that returned check marked “insufficient funds.”

It’s not just the one in ten Americans who is born into poverty. It’s the working people who can’t afford to make sure that their parents age in dignity. It’s the middle class families who can’t save, who are a mere paycheck away from poverty.



Drum Major Institute President Fernando Ferrer

Our American Nation wages war, bungles the peace, and starves its cities.

Our nation has increasingly become one of the very rich, and the rest of America.

Unity can only come from truth.

So many of us have dedicated our lives to caring for the victims of unjust policy. And that remains important work.

But there can never be enough of us working to change those policies.

Dr. King understood that change happens at the ballot box, in the courthouse, and in the statehouse.

Unity can only come from truth.

So we have to tell the truth about the representatives who remained silent—from both parties—and voted for tax cuts to enrich the already rich.

We have to tell the truth about the changing nature of our cities where too many live without a home, without a job, without a skill, without a vote or even a reason to vote, without hope, without opportunity.

Unity can only come from truth.

FROM THE CHAIRMAN: **Andrew Young**



Martin would often say that the civil rights movement didn't happen sooner because of the silence of good people.

Regrettably, as we end 2003, this silence has once again enveloped us. With it, we are all complicit in the implementation of a mis-directed national agenda. This silence says, Yes, it is okay that we spend billions to rebuild Iraqi prisons while we close firehouses in Brooklyn. It says, Yes, we should suspend civil liberties in the name of homeland security. And, Yes, to tax cuts skewed towards the rich so they can get richer while the poor get poorer.

As we end 2003, this silence of complicity is unacceptably deafening.

Worst of all, this silence is greater on our side of the spectrum. Indeed, the voice of conservatives has never been better honed and organized. They have aggressively pursued their vision of how the world should be—a place where the institutions that belong to the public are starved until government itself becomes irrelevant. One look at the policies of President Bush's administration and you can see that they are winning—on everything from tax cuts to a hawkish foreign policy of striking first and exercising diplomacy later. They are winning.

Why? The budget of the Heritage Foundation is \$30 million a year, the American Enterprise Foundation and the Cato Institute each work from \$15 million. The top 20 conservative think tanks in America spent \$1 billion to influence public opinion and thought in the 1990's. They win, while the people pay the dividends of their ideological investments.

Still some say conservatives' views resonate with the American people because they talk about the things we care deeply about. Well, they may talk the talk, but.... This year, the number of unemployed Americans rose to 9 million, with more than 40 million lacking basic healthcare. As we sent more than 135,000 young Americans to fight in the streets of Baghdad, more than double that number of U.S. war veterans made a home on American streets. And without even a word from the President, 1.4 million more Americans slipped into poverty in 2003, sending the total

number of impoverished Americans to 34.6 million—including 12.2 million children, 23 million white people, 9 million black people, and 3.5 million elderly.

I cannot sleep at night knowing that my grandchildren's futures have been jeopardized by reckless fiscal and international policies. I am embarrassed to get a tax refund, when I know it is a tool to mislead the middle class into thinking that taxes are their enemy.

I have now achieved the status of elder statesman, and that's why I am grateful that there are younger, more energetic people out there. They are my friends and colleagues at the Drum Major Institute whose very mission is to set the beat for the ongoing work of the movement. DMI provides legislators with the tools to enact progressive policy. We provide a platform for the young progressives whose talent we must cultivate today if we want to see them leading our country tomorrow.

You can see on the pages of this report that DMI is serious about its mission, about speaking truth to power, and that we have accomplished a remarkable amount in such a short period of time and with limited resources. Even my friend President Clinton has acknowledged the importance of our work. But we cannot continue that work without your help. **There is much work to do, and many drum majors required to do it. Join us.**

“We will have to repent in this generation not merely for the vitriolic words and actions of the bad people, but for the appalling silence of the good people.”

—Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Drum Majors for Justice

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DMI Founder Bill Wachtel and President Fernando Ferrer presenting awards to Congressman Charles B. Rangel and HIP President Anthony Watson. June 6, 2003.





Board member Rosanna Durruthy, President of Aequus Group, at DMI gathering May 12, 2003.

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Andrew Young, III
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Fernando Ferrer
President

“

**Every American city
will face major hurdles
in the coming years
as we are all being challenged
to do more with less—
but fairly.**

**We need imaginative
approaches and new thinking
for some very old problems
that won't go away
by themselves.
The Drum Major Institute
is a fountain
of progressive thinking and
a much needed voice
in the debate.**

”

—Charles Phillips
President, Oracle Corporation