

# CHANGE

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nature." The union's remaining activities center on such questions as eliminating the vestiges of censorship, winning access to radio and television, safeguarding the independence of educational institutions, and defending unjustly arrested political activists.

What is particularly striking about the Polish Solidarity movement is its many similarities with the American civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s. In both movements dignity is a constant and all-pervasive theme. Both movements had strong religious roots. The American civil rights movement, like the Polish movement, was built upon a foundation of non-discrimination and tolerance. And both movements have deeply rooted traditions of non-violence.

Nor is this comparison merely superficial. A number of Poles I spoke with mentioned how inspiring the televising of ROOTS was. "It told us that you have to struggle to win your dignity," one worker told me. Others mentioned having seen films on the life of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

"They were almost like an instruction manual on how to build a movement," one Solidarity activist suggested.

Clearly the dream of a free and just society is universal. It has lived and flowered in Selma and Montgomery. Today it lives and thrives among the workers of Poland. It can never be silenced by guns or tanks, for man's will to freedom can never be fully suppressed. It is this will to freedom that unites us in the West with those who are in the East.

The 'Polish people are transforming and humanizing their society. Only the possibility of Soviet invasion looms as an obstacle to their progress. For this reason, it is incumbent on the democratic countries of Western Europe and North America to exert coordinated pressure upon the USSR to prevent the tragedy that would follow a Soviet invasion. Western firmness in the face of Soviet aggressiveness throughout the world is one of the most important factors in safeguarding the promise of Solidarity. And Solidarity's continued existence is one of mankind's greatest hopes for lasting peace.

# BUDGET

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The military is slated for a big jump in spending, even as social welfare programs are slashed. Yet, there is evidence that much of the increased spending will be wasteful, and that necessary weapons systems could be paid for by eliminating waste from the Pentagon.

Recently, the outgoing comptroller general of the U.S. identified fifteen areas of

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Pentagon mismanagement amounting to "an absolute minimum" of \$4 billion a year that could be saved.

Defense spending should not be untouchable, especially when there is confusion about the military mission and the best means of enabling it to accomplish that mission. Many defense experts, for example, say that present strategic bombers will suffice until a new advanced plane comes on stream about ten years from now.

But the Administration plans to produce an interim plane, the once-rejected B-1, which will not be operational until 1987. The cost? About \$12 billion before the inevitable cost overruns, for a plane many believe will not be necessary.

Then there is the MX

missile, something common sense dictates will never be built, but which will consume billions in advance costs.

Many of the present proposals for cutting social welfare programs are shadow cuts; they are illusory. For example, knocking out federal job programs, ending long-term unemployment benefits, reducing eligibility for many programs, and increasing subsidized rents, are likely to push people on to welfare.

Cutting spending on child nutrition, health and education programs means ultimately paying far more to cover preventable health care costs, special education programs, and the like.

The sad thing is that these heavy cuts are unnecessary. Not only could they be replaced by alternatives like closing tax loopholes and eliminating military waste, but revitalizing our economy does not depend on lower federal spending levels.

The United States takes a much smaller tax bite than other industrial countries, including high productivity nations like Germany and Japan. And it spends far less on social welfare than do most other countries. We have greater income inequalities than they do, as well.

So not only are the

# RIGHTS

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elected public officials and has forced many such officials to respond to the needs of minority constituencies. Of equal importance is section 5 of the Voting Rights Act which is designed to prevent discrimination by requiring that state and local governments show that changes in voting or election procedures do not discriminate against minority voters. This is a vital measure because it protects blacks and other minorities from discriminatory changes before such changes are put in place. Once voting procedures are in place they must be challenged through lengthy and expensive court proceedings. Section 5, therefore, protects minorities from discrimination before it can distort the electoral process.

The significance of the Voting Rights Act is further heightened when one takes into account that a number of reapportionment and redistricting changes will take place in com-

planned cuts wrong, but the premise behind them is wrong as well. The price for those mistaken economic assumptions will be paid by those least able to bear them — families who will eat less and work less because of today's budget-chopping.

pliance with the 1980 census. With a strong Voting Rights Act in place at this critical time, it will be possible to prevent discriminatory reapportionment and the gerrymandering of districts which results in weakening the impact of the minority vote.

As critical as the particular features of the Voting Rights Act are, what is equally important is the symbolism of this piece of legislation: The Voting Rights Act is an essential indicator of the U.S. government's commitment to due process and full participation.

It would further suggest that the conservative forces swept into power in 1980 are seeking to undo those progressive elements of our legal system which seek to promote full participation. Such a signal would be a chilling effect upon minorities and would serve to exacerbate racial tensions. As a result it would be a disservice to all Americans, black and white.

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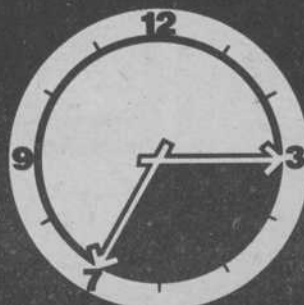
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