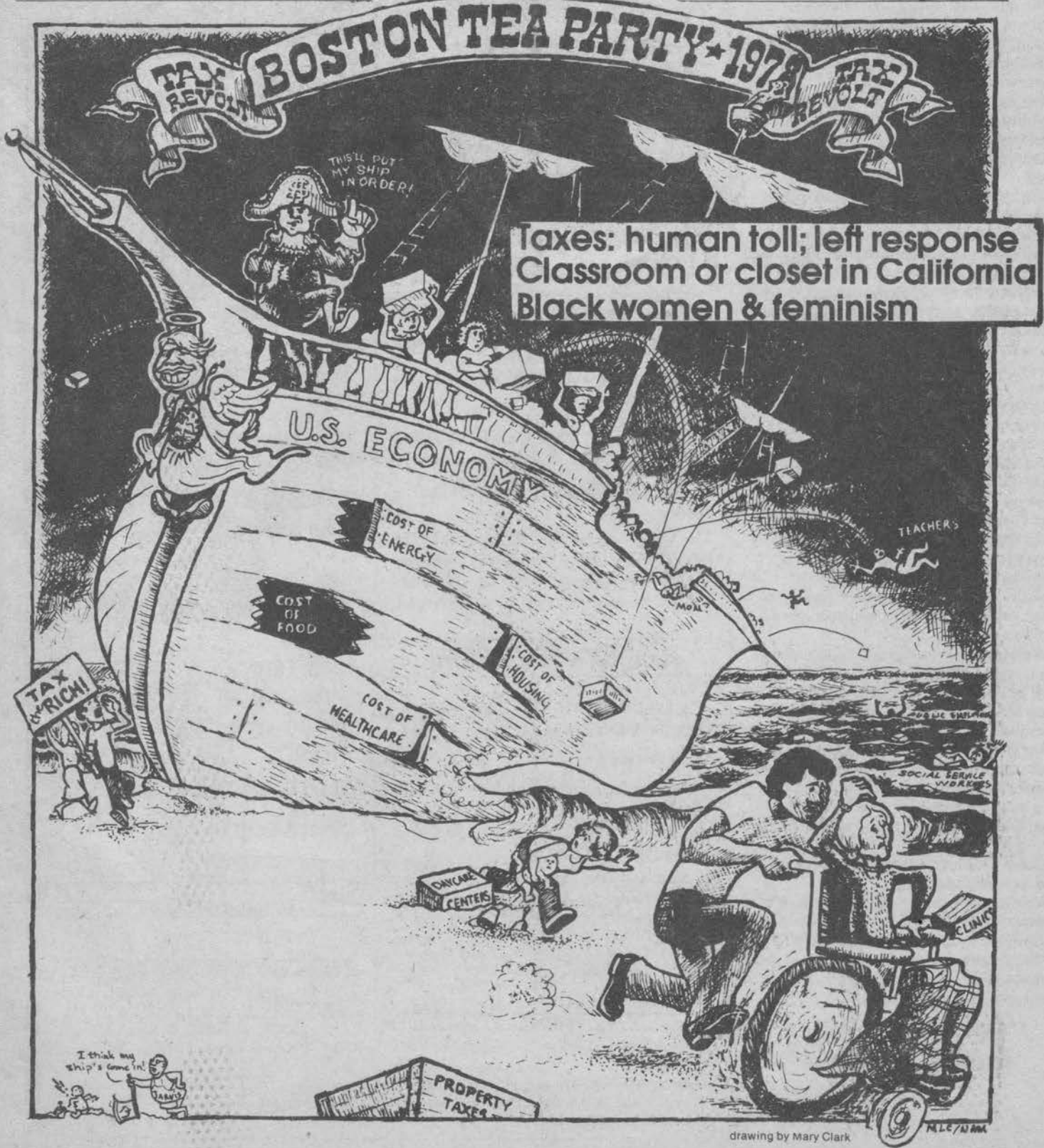


Moving On

MONTHLY MAGAZINE OF THE NEW AMERICAN MOVEMENT



Taxes: human toll; left response
 Classroom or closet in California
 Black women & feminism

drawing by Mary Clark

M.C./J.M.M.

The process of publishing **MOVING ON** is probably pretty different from what happens with most of the other publications that are around today. Because this magazine is part of an organization that is actively working for socialism, it has two relatively unique features.

The first is the democratic structures that are built into its editorial policy. The second is the attempt to choose what we cover based on certain political criteria.

The reason that our masthead may sometimes seem a little top-heavy—crowded with editors of various stripes—is that every effort is made to insure that **MO** is ultimately accountable to the membership of our organization. We are not a publication that is the private domain of two or three individuals.

The Editorial Board is made up of members of our National Interim Committee, which is elected annually at our National Convention. Final authority for disputes that arise over **MO**'s political direction rest with this Board.

The Editors are the Political Committee, **NAM**'s full-time leadership body. They work closely with the Managing Editor and Production Coordinator in making all of the ongoing decisions about **MO**'s content and political thrust. They frequently meet with **NAM** chapters or friends of the organization to get feedback on the magazine, suggestions for articles, etc.

In determining what article to publish, we try to assess current political and social developments—and to determine their relevance for the left and for **NAM**'s priorities.

For instance, in this issue you'll find several articles on the "tax revolt" which our recent National Convention cited as a key issue for further exploration. You'll also find a report on the work against the anti-gay Briggs amendment in California which **NAM** chapters throughout the state are actively opposing.

We also welcome suggestions from our readers on **MO**'s content. Although the magazine is directly accountable to **NAM**, we see it as fundamentally responsible to all those who share our convictions and commitments.

Roberta Lynch

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Taxes – turning the tables

Alternative methods for reform

By Robert Niemann

The overwhelming passage of Proposition 13 in California and the rash of similar measures being pushed around the country have put the development of an alternative tax reform program high on the agenda of progressive forces.

The complexity of the tax system makes taxes a difficult issue to raise above the simplistic, demagogic approach that the right wing has employed. For instance, progressive tax reform ballot measures have been defeated in states such as Massachusetts, partially because when voters are confused by an issue they tend to vote against it. Yet changing the terms of the debate is precisely what's required.

A fair tax is a tax based on the ability to pay. The progressive, or graduated income tax is an example of such a tax.

As the income level increases, the tax rate increases. Thus, higher income taxpayers pay not only a higher absolute amount of taxes proportional to their higher income, but also pay a higher percentage of the higher income.

Regressive taxes are those in which lower income people end up paying a higher percentage of their income than higher income people. The sales tax and property tax are examples of regressive taxes.

Although these taxes are generally set at a constant rate, lower income people spend a higher portion of their income on basic needs such as housing and the consumer goods covered by the sales tax. Thus they generally end up paying a higher percentage of their income to the tax than the rich.

Basic to a progressive tax program is the necessity to meet the demands of

Drawing by Mary Clark

overtaxed working people for lower taxes by reducing regressive taxes. However, it is also essential that the lost revenue be replaced by levying new taxes based on the ability to pay, so that vital public services are not eliminated.

On the local level, the regressive property tax is generally the main source of revenue for city and county governments and is often the main focus of the anger of taxpayers. Given the limited tax base of local governments and the fact that local governments are often prohibited by state laws from instituting certain forms of taxes, achieving property tax relief generally must mean turning to the state or federal governments for revenues. The federalization of welfare and other forms of revenue transfer are thus part of the process of achieving property tax reform.

The extension of the property tax to "intangible property" such as stocks and bonds, is one possible demand for local tax reformers. When the property tax was first introduced, real estate was the main measure of wealth, and thus the property tax was a progressive tax. However, now much of personal wealth is in the form of holdings that escape property taxes.

Another potential alternative on the local level is the anti-speculation tax. In San Francisco, housing activists are pushing a measure that would place an 80% tax rate on profits on residential

property that is purchased and re-sold within a year. If the property is sold in the second year, the profit is taxed at a 60% rate. Such an approach not only produces revenue that can be used to provide tax relief to low and moderate income people, but it also discourages the real estate speculation that is largely responsible for skyrocketing home prices and rent levels.

Several groups are waging campaigns against tax abatements, the property tax reductions given as "incentives" to lure business and industry, exposing the myth that such abatements create jobs. In point of fact, taxes make up only 2-3% of corporate expenses and labor costs are much more influential in determining where businesses locate.

Another common progressive approach is to tie the amount of property tax relief to income. This has been called the "circuit breaker" approach. In a program developed by the Illinois Public Action Council, property taxpayers are given a rebate of 60% of the amount of property taxes they pay exceeding 3.5% of their income, up to a maximum rebate of \$650 minus 2% of income. Thus, as the income level increases, the maximum rebate decreases. Renters are given relief under the same formula, with 30% of rents being counted as property tax payments.

Effective campaigns have also been waged by exposing property tax exemp-

tions on such things as church property and private schools and the underassessment of corporate property.

Closing loopholes

On the state and federal levels, the income tax and corporation tax are the main potential sources of progressive tax revenues. Even though only a few states, such as Michigan and Massachusetts, still have flat rate rather than progressive personal income taxes, loopholes in the law that allow the rich to escape paying even progressive taxes are widespread in most states, as well as on the federal level. Some of the loopholes include:

- Capital gains. When real estate or stocks and bonds are sold for a higher price than their purchase price, the profit is called a capital gain. Capital gains are generally taxed at a much lower rate than regular income.

On the federal level, if a capital asset is held for at least a year and then sold, only half of the resulting capital gain is subject to the personal income tax; the other half is tax free. Right-wing elements in Congress, led by Rep. William Steiger (R-Wisc.), have been making well-publicized and apparently successful efforts to reduce taxation of capital gains still further.

In California, a capital asset must be held for five years to qualify for the preference allowing only half of the gain to

THE WIZARD OF ID



be taxed, but this is still enough to allow hundreds of millions of dollars of tax revenues to be lost. Under California's personal income tax system, an investor who realizes a \$20,000 profit on a long-term real estate deal and has no other income will pay \$80 in taxes. A person who earns \$20,000 in wages pays \$530. Not only should capital gains be taxed as regular income, but a good radical tax demand is that large speculative profits from capital gains be taxed at higher rates.

- Accelerated depreciation. Owners of income-producing buildings are allowed to write off a portion of the value of the building from their income as a "depreciation" deduction, often at an accelerated rate. For example, an apartment building valued at \$500,000 with an estimated life of 25 years is assumed to depreciate at \$20,000 per year, and often as much as twice this amount is allowed as a tax write-off under accelerated depreciation laws.

Not only does the accelerated rate provide extra tax savings, but depreciation itself is only a paper expense which the owner of the building does not actually have to pay out, and almost all real estate ends up actually increasing in value.

- Tax exemptions for municipal bonds. Presently, supposedly to encourage purchases of municipal bonds, income from such bonds is not subject to income tax. Municipal bonds are overwhelmingly held by the rich. For example, the richest 2% of American families hold almost 90% of municipal school bonds. Progressives should demand that income from municipal bonds be taxed as regular income.

Corporate windfall

The corporation tax is another obvious target for a progressive program. Opposition to increasing this tax is often based on the claim that corporation taxes will just be passed on to the consumer in the form of higher prices. However, the fact is that corporations do not pay anything near the present statutory rate because of loopholes. While the federal

corporate tax rate is 48%, a study of 168 international corporations for the year 1976 made by Congressman Charles Vanik of Ohio revealed an average actual tax rate of only 13%, down from 21% in 1975 and 30% in 1971.

U.S. Steel paid no tax on over half a billion dollars of worldwide income; Chase Manhattan Bank paid no taxes on \$144 million; AT&T paid only 9.5% on over \$6 billion in worldwide income. Thus the avoidance of taxes by corporations is a source of windfall profits,

In addition to closing corporate and personal tax loopholes on the federal level, an attack on the size of the defense budget can be a central tax reform.

and closing these loopholes is central to a fair tax system. Some of the major corporate loopholes are:

- Foreign tax credit. Taxes paid by multinational corporations to foreign governments, rather than being treated as business expenses and deducted from income, are given a special tax credit and are deducted directly from taxes. According to Cong. Vanik's study, \$18 billion in taxes were paid to foreign governments in 1976 by U.S. corporations included in the study.

If these taxes had been treated as a deduction against income for the purpose of determining U.S. taxes, the corporations would have saved an amount equal to the taxes on the \$18 billion at the 48% U.S. rate, or \$8.6 billion. By

allowing the entire \$18 billion to be deducted as a tax credit directly from U.S. taxes, the corporations saved the full \$18 billion, resulting in a revenue loss to the U.S. government of over \$9 billion.

- Investment tax credits. In 1975 and 1976, corporations were allowed a direct tax deduction of 10% of the cost of new equipment and machinery. This credit effectively cut corporate income taxes by more than 15% in 1976. Although intended to encourage investment and create jobs, in actuality most purchases of new equipment and machinery would have been made without the tax credit, so that a large across-the-board tax subsidy is given to produce a marginal increase in investment. And, of course, there is no guarantee that the new equipment and machinery will actually create jobs rather than replacing them.

- Accelerated depreciation. Corporations are allowed the same accelerated depreciation deductions for equipment, machinery and buildings as are allowed to individuals for real estate holdings, with the same result in tax avoidance.

- Depletion allowances. Oil and other natural resource-extracting industries are still allowed tax deductions for part of the value of the resource they are extracting as a business expense.

In addition to closing corporate and personal tax loopholes on the federal level, an attack on the size of the defense budget can be a central tax reform demand. Support for the Transfer Amendment to re-direct part of the defense budget into the cities can unify tax reform movements with peace, welfare rights, and environmental groups into a broad, progressive coalition.

Such a coalition is essential to turn the tide of right-wing influence and fight for alternative tax programs that can maintain essential services, provide relief for working people, and bring us a step closer to social justice.

Robert Niemann is a member of Harriet Tubman NAM in Los Angeles and the chair of NAM's Urban Commission.



photo by Jan Becket

Joel Garcia

"We're rocking on the cliff of a very serious set-back, in terms of our capacity to do for ourselves. These cut-backs and lay-offs have meant in most cases that Third World people are the first to go. In time people will become very masochistic or there will be an explosion."

Taxes— the personal cost of proposition 13

by Tim Reagan

When Joel Garcia describes Proposition 13 as giving him gray hair, he is being accurate, not humorous. In fact, very little humor creeps into Garcia's life these days. Sitting in his cramped office, he talks like a man whose job, whose community, whose very purpose in life is under attack from powerful outside forces.

Garcia is director of La Clinica de la Raza, a community health clinic in Oakland's Chicano district, known as Fruitvale. Over the past seven years, La Clinica has grown to become a major source of health care in this poor and working class neighborhood. Funding comes from a patchwork of county, state, and federal contracts and grants. Now the county revenue-sharing contracts have been badly cut in the aftermath of Proposition 13.

The concern is evident in Garcia's words as he lists the effects of the fund-cutting spree on La Clinica and the people it serves. In July, the agency was cut back 15% in medical-dental-optometry services, and 40% in mental health services. August wasn't quite that bad, but heavier cutbacks are expected.

"In a way, this is not a new phenomenon," says Garcia. "We've always had to deal with funding problems on a year-by-year basis, which is bad enough in itself. But now, we almost have to take things on a week-by-week, or if we're lucky, a month-by-month basis."

Keeping up the morale of the staff workers at La Clinica is not the least of the problems that Garcia and others face. "We have always had to deal with some uncertainty around funding, and try not to let this disrupt our service program, but it has been impossible in the last two months. It's constantly in the media, constantly on people's minds. It's a sickening thing. You just can't escape it."

Garcia fears that the program-cutting will have disastrous effects on Fruitvale as a community. La Clinica's office on

Fruitvale Avenue is one of a cluster of community-oriented agencies, most of them receiving some public funding. Central Infantil de la Raza (a child care agency), Central Legal (law counseling) and a school facility and community center called the Emiliano Zapata Street Academy all face debilitating cutbacks.

"We're on the cliff, we're rocking on the cliff of a very serious setback, in terms of our capacity to do for ourselves, which is really what most of these projects represent. With these cutbacks and layoffs, which have meant in most cases that Third World people have been the first to go, our people will have nowhere to go. In time the frustration level will mean, I would think, either that people will become very masochistic or there will be an explosion."

More than most people

Walter Miles has felt the pulls and tugs of Proposition 13's contradictions. As a homeowner, family man, and blue collar worker, he is attracted to the idea of property tax relief. He has also invested his savings and skills to become a small landlord, owning an apartment building and a few other houses.

It would seem that Miles would have much to gain from the drastic tax reductions in "13". But he is also a black man who identifies with the inner city residents. He has taken leading roles in the community and in the elementary school parent groups.

Sitting back in a leather chair in his small but comfortable North Oakland home, and frequently flashing his engaging smile, he speculates on the aftermath of the vote. "With Proposition 13, the concept, I thought, was good, but a lot of the content I didn't like. I thought it was an emotional thing brought about by the suburbanites. It would cut a lot of fat out of the government, but it also cut out a lot of the programs that I think should be there."

Outgoing and energetic, Miles admits that the programs he personally has fought for have not yet been hurt much by Jarvis-Gann. As a key member of a

parent group he has actively pushed for a year-round program at Peralta school, the nearby elementary school.

Children at Peralta go to school for nine weeks, and then receive three weeks of their "summer vacation" time, when they have the option of attending a special activity-oriented intercession. By staggering schedules, Peralta School continues year-round, saving taxpayers' money by getting more use out of a facility and offering something special in education at the same time.

What worries Miles are the services directed toward the people that have no other alternatives—the inner city dwellers, senior citizens, the youth. Parks and Recreation Department programs funded by the city are a particular concern to this man with two school-age children.

Even though Miles owns several pieces of property, he has not carefully computed his property tax savings. Early indications from the banks holding his mortgages tell him that his savings will be fairly substantial on his own home, but almost negligible on his income property.

He explains another reason why he didn't vote for Proposition 13: "It's going to benefit the wealthy, right from the top. As you go on down, the drippings will be less and less." Besides middle income suburban home owners, the winners, explains Miles, are the big apartment house owners, not the small landlords like himself.

As landlord, wage-earner, community activist, and as a black man, Walter Miles has sifted through his mixed feelings on the tax revolt. "Who benefits?" and "Who pays?" are suspicions he retains in the shrill and frantic post-13 atmosphere in California.

Library closes

A white sticker on her pay stub told Elizabeth Talbot that she would be laid off from her job as a librarian with the Alameda County library system, effective June 30th. In typical bureaucratic fashion, the date was later moved up to June 23rd because it was less ex-

pensive for the County to lay off employees at the end of a two-week pay period.

"The sticker was an impersonal thing, the kind of notice they could have run off hundreds of. In fact, they must have run off at least 1100." (Eleven hundred is the number of employees Alameda County has laid off because of Proposition 13.)

It's not the way she was laid off, however, that upsets Talbot. Nor is it even the fact that she personally lost her job. It's more the wholesale cutting of a library system that she was genuinely proud of. And it is the political chicanery of the County Board of Supervisors in the weeks following the passage of Proposition 13.

The Alameda County library system serves the parts of the county that don't have a city system. It had 13 branches and over 250 employees. Now there are only 80 employees in the system.

Talbot shows an obvious enthusiasm about the Alameda County system, about her job, about libraries in general. "Ours might have been the most public service-oriented system in California. Our programs reached out-



Photo by Jan Becker

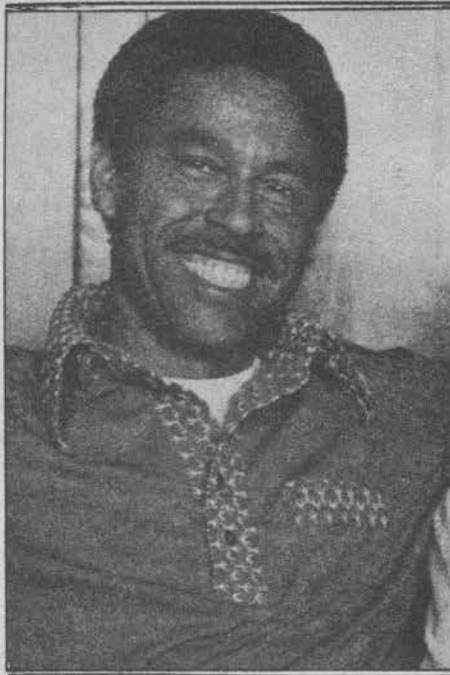


Photo by Jan Becker

As a small landlord, wage-earner, community activist and black man, Walter Miles has sifted through his mixed feelings on the tax revolt. "Who benefits?" and "Who pays?" are suspicions he retains in the frantic atmosphere in California.

side, to the community, bringing them into the libraries."

"My job was senior young adult specialist, dealing with teenagers. We had great programs lined up for the summer: we were going to show "Star Trek" episodes, have musical events, things like that, to bring kids into the library."

Talbot's eyes glow when she's talking about her work. "I loved my job," she says. "But if these cuts stay in, frankly, I don't know that I want to go back to that. Even if the cutbacks are restored to 60% of budget, I'll just be sitting behind a desk, stamping out books. And, I'll be facing people's anger at the re-

duction of services and hours."

Talbot remarks that although the whole library staff knew that the system would be among the hardest hit by the cutbacks, many patrons were shocked and infuriated by what's happened. Before June 23rd, people would come to the desk to check out books and be told that there couldn't be any checkouts, that the library was closing.

"The library seems like mom and apple pie," says Talbot. "The people thought we were using scare tactics before the election. Libraries were not the 'fat' that they had in mind."

The layoffs came at a time when Talbot had just finished paying off her school debts, and was looking forward to moving up in the library system, and beginning to think about buying a house. She has put off job hunting for the summer while working with the Labor-Community Coalition for Jobs and Community Services.

The emergence of this coalition has been one of the few bright spots in the post-13 political situation. Community service agencies, public employee unions, and political activists have joined together to fight the cutbacks and layoffs. Coalition politics may be fragile, but so far—in a very difficult situation—the groups have remained united, resisting the temptation to campaign individually for their own piece of the reduced pie.

Working with the coalition has in itself been a growing experience for Talbot. As part of a core group of dedicat-

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"The library seems like mom and apple pie," says Talbot. "The people thought we were using scare tactics before the election. Libraries were not the 'fat' they had in mind."

Taxes— how does a movement grow?

Three views on the meaning of the tax revolt

Death of the New Deal

by Tom Hayden

Certainly Prop. 13's passage will have consequences which bring joy to the ghouls of the American right: the reduction of human services, layoffs of public employees, setbacks for affirmative action, and the weakening of trade unions.

But it would be a historic mistake to define the success of 13 as a "victory for conservatism." For every sinister operative of the landlord associations, and every member of a neo-fascist organization sprinkling the crowd on victory night, there were at least ten plain, honest frustrated citizens pushed to the edge by the incessant chorus of big business and big government; higher prices and higher taxes.

Millions of Californians were expressing a genuine, militant, populist rebel-

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Smashing the State

by James Weinstein

It would be a mistake to view Proposition 13 as simply a "right-wing" issue. In addressing itself to lowering taxes and raising income, it involves a popular issue on which the right has adroitly cashed in.

For the left, the Jarvis initiative presents endless ironies, not the least of which involve seeing the right make political hay out of issues the left has long been raising but without anything like the right's boldness and current success.

The era of Corporate-Liberalism based on "welfare" through economic expansion instead of the redistribution of wealth and power is coming to an end. The millions of Americans who participate in electoral politics, at any rate, are seeing to its end. We on the left, who have been predicting and hoping for just

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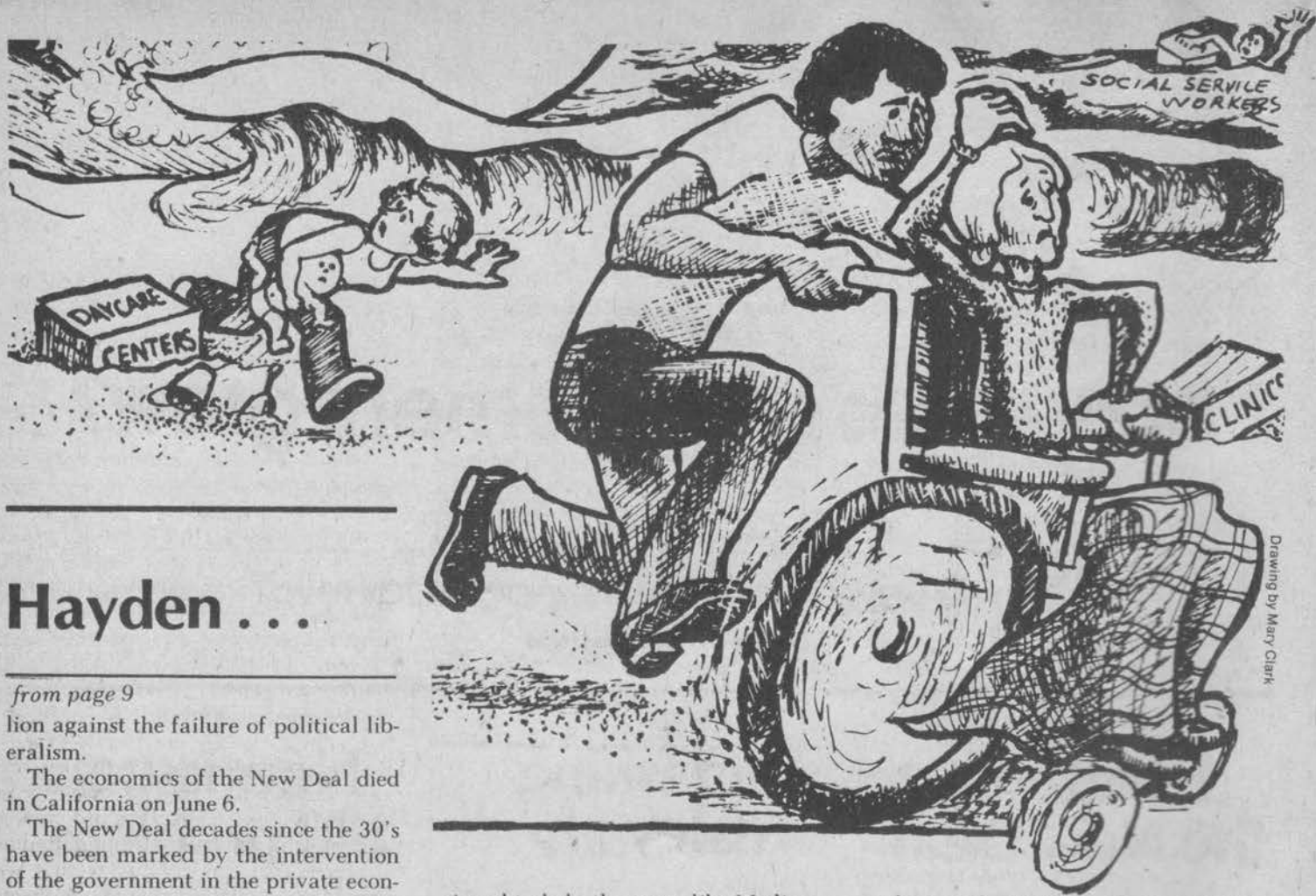
New issue; old problem

by Richard Healey

Does the success of Proposition 13—and the waves it is making around the country—create new opportunities for the left? The simplest answer is that the tax revolt clearly puts pressing items on our current agenda. At the top is the need to defend people against the worst effects of tax-slashing legislation. Our theme should be—simply put—"no cutbacks, no layoffs."

We can certainly admit that there is waste and inefficiency in the operation of government. But our approach should emphasize that the real waste is in the military budget; that the problems in most agencies stem not from too many employees, but from poor administration, planning, and use of personnel; and that most of these bureaucracies fumble because they lack real concern for

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Drawing by Mary Clark

Hayden . . .

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lion against the failure of political liberalism.

The economics of the New Deal died in California on June 6.

The New Deal decades since the 30's have been marked by the intervention of the government in the private economy on a massive scale.

These reforms were only made possible by the immense prosperity which accompanied and followed World War II. In that era of American affluence and global domination, it was possible to finance reform out of economic growth.

With the U.S. empire shattered on the rocks of Vietnam and OPEC, a new and uncertain era of economic relations began. The economy slowed down, and growth tapered off. Productivity went into a tailspin, and the American working and middle classes could no longer afford the insatiable appetite of the Pentagon and corporate social workers.

The big corporations, of course, remained unscathed, and systematically dodged responsibility for the crisis.

The Pentagon devoured billions for covert CIA adventures and nuclear overkill.

This capital intensive military-industrial economy generated fewer and fewer jobs at greater and greater costs while the quality of life deteriorated.

Welfare payments for 10-15 million unemployed Americans continued to rise. Cities decayed. Even programs de-

signed to help the poor, like Medicare, fell prey to the rip-off mentality of hustlers.

By the mid-1970's, we had reached the point where the middle class could no longer afford to be generous. Given the choice between saving their homes and paying for an expanding welfare state—with no end in sight—it was clear where their self interest lay.

Yet liberals went on promoting the welfare state, throwing millions of dollars into programs which had long since lost touch with the community and become bogged down in bureaucracy.

Their program has dwindled from the idealism of Franklin Roosevelt to a fruitless attempt to pick up the human pieces left behind by corporate arrogance, corporate migration, and corporate tax evasion.

We cannot afford another penny for the splitlevel society of insecure affluence and permanent poverty which is all that corporate liberalism offers to the 80's.

There is no need to increase taxes—except on the giants who get away with paying next to nothing. What is needed is a fundamental change of guiding

values and priorities. If we promote profit and greed as our central economic values, we cannot be surprised if government in Jarvis' words turns into a trough for pigs.

Economic Democracy—reconstructing our institutions from within by letting the people make decisions affecting their lives as consumers, workers and taxpayers—continues to be the only viable alternative to the monotonous monopoly of big government wedded to big business.

Reprinted from CED News.

Tom Hayden is a long-time left activist, now a leader in the California-based Campaign for Economic Democracy.

Weinstein . . .

that, need to recognize the genuine article now that it is under our noses and absorb the implications. Not the least of these is a growing political polarization that will skew massively to the right in the absence of a credible alter-

native on the left.

We will have to recognize that we can not serve the cause of an equalitarian and democratic society if we remain a weak or inconsequential electoral force. We cannot deal with the issues pivotal to the polarization process—issues of taxes, prices, employment and social services—simply in workplace or community organizations divorced from the electoral arena. And we cannot become a determining electoral force without a program that both wins a sizeable portion of current voters and brings millions of poor people into electoral politics as new participants and voters.

In short, an effective left will have to be a credible electoral force, and a credible left will have to be explicitly socialist—whatever the label preferred. Nothing short of that is “practical” any longer.

The Jarvis initiative brings home the urgency of the left’s formulating a distinctive program of its own that can combine the quest for greater democracy with effective measures for reducing taxes and stabilizing or improving the real income of the majority.

Short of the commitment to building a popular movement for socialism—public enterprise and social control over the price and investment system—there can be no such distinctive left program.

The crushing burden of the property tax on people with low, moderate or fixed incomes comes not from the tax rate itself but from the rising values dictated by the workings of the private market, which raises the tax bill whatever the rate.

Maintaining and improving essential services, and the salaries and wages involved in delivering them, require public revenues. But as long as private interests own virtually all productive and profitable enterprise, the revenues must come from taxes. If the attempt is made to shift the tax burden to the corporations and the rich, they will either pass the taxes on in higher prices or take their capital elsewhere. The result must be a mix of rising prices, further income erosion, unemployment, and lower public

revenues.

The left can and does match the right in having the courage of its convictions, but more than the right it must have the courage to face up to the *implications* of its convictions. As long as the left shrinks from explicit advocacy of and organizing around a socialist alternative addressed to such issues of immediate concern to the people like taxes and prices, it will, as the Jarvis initiative demonstrates, remain outflanked by the right and co-opted by corporate power.

Reprinted from In These Times.

James Weinstein is editor of In These Times, a weekly socialist newspaper.

Healey . . .

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the people they are supposed to serve.

To suggest, as Hayden does, that it is appropriate to attack “liberal politicians” for “throwing millions of dollars” into welfare programs is at best misleading. For it implies that the budget should be cut—and jobs eliminated—in those areas.

Instead we should argue for an expansion of necessary services that can provide needed jobs and that are efficiently run and genuinely accountable.

More basically, however, it’s important to realize that the tax revolt simply represents an intensification of the fiscal crisis of the state that has been erupting for the past decade. And, as we have already learned, it will take much greater mobilization of labor and community groups, as well as creative and massive alternative economic programs to reverse this trend.

Some labor-community alliances are already taking shape and their programs frequently have an anti-corporate thrust—stopping the real waste of taxpayers’ money in the form of tax breaks for bus-

iness. Such an approach is important for two reasons: 1) it can convince people there is something that can be done about taxes besides simple budget-slashing; 2) it can educate people about the role and power of corporations in this society.

However, high and unfair taxes are only one part of the troubling economic picture. The real issue for many people is not taxes per se, but inflation. Prices are rising on the basic necessities of life faster than almost anything else—and this is what affects people most directly. A left program for tax reform should be part of a larger program that will hold down prices on such essentials as food, shelter, medical care, and utilities.

Coalitions to stop layoffs and proposals for tax reform are hardly new approaches. Nor have they necessarily been successful ones. (Carter’s quite modest tax reform is currently being gutted in Congress.) This is not to say that we shouldn’t continue to work on them. We should. It does mean, however, that we have to grapple with the underlying barriers to their success.

Most people want a fair tax system and they want to stop inflation. The problem is that for the most part they are cynical about the chances for any real changes to occur—and thus hesitant to organize and fight for them.

In the absence of a strong working class movement, conscious of its own interests and identity, they don’t see any alternatives to the current system.

Thus, the tax revolt is not so much a new opportunity for the left as it is a reminder of the basic challenge confronting us—helping to educate and organize a working class movement for change—ultimately for socialism.

Unless it is an organized movement it will not be able to seriously vie for power. And unless it is an educated movement—as Proposition 13 has shown—the right will continue to find a response even among members of trade unions or citizens action groups with its simplistic and individualistic answers.

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By Ellen Reier

In the aftermath of the victory of Proposition 13 last June and the legislative decision in July to cut off MediCal funding for abortion, California is gearing up to meet the next onslaught by the growing right wing. It is Proposition 6—an initiative that calls for the dismissal of homosexual teachers, counselors, aides, and administrators—and their supporters—from the public school system.

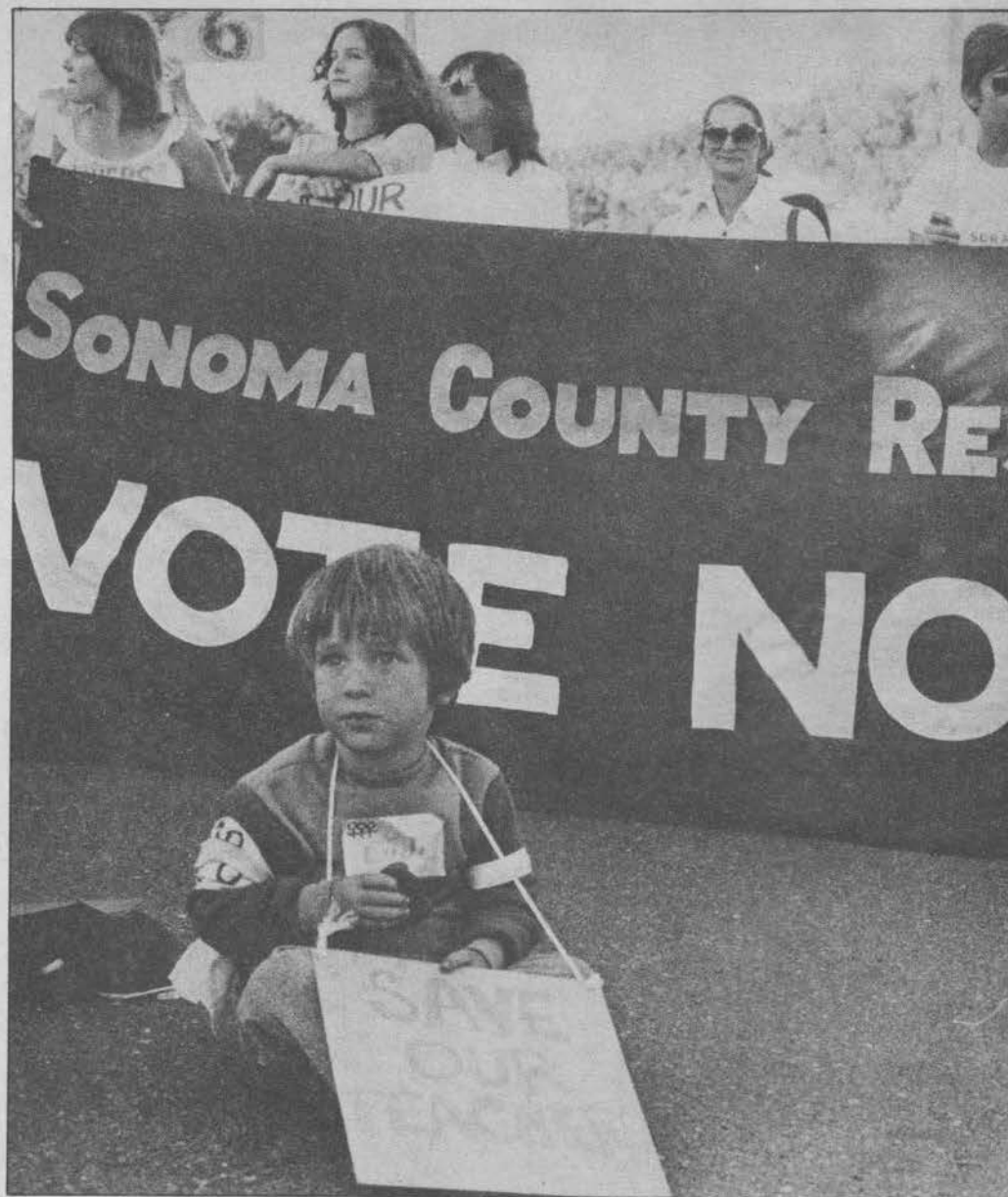
Setting the tone for the whole document, its preamble begins: "One of the most fundamental interests of the State is the establishment and preservation of the family unit. Consistent with this interest is the State's duty to protect its impressionable youth from influences which are antithetical to this vital interest."

The statute goes on to specify that "the State finds a compelling interest in refusing to employ and in terminating the employment of [any employee in one of the above categories] who engages in public homosexual activity and/or public homosexual conduct."

"Homosexual conduct" means "the advocating, soliciting, imposing, encouraging or promoting of private or public homosexual activity."

This initiative comes on the heels of four unsuccessful campaigns this year to uphold gay rights ordinances in Dade County, Wichita, St. Paul and Eugene. The California initiative differs from the previous ones in several important ways. The other ordinances extended rights and prohibited discrimination in such areas as housing, employment, and public accommodations. The California initiative *requires* discrimination and affects straight as well as gay teachers directly.

Proposition 6 has been attacked by everyone from the Young Republicans to the ACLU, from the conservative Libertarian Party to the National Organization for Women. "It is a tool of fear which pits group against group and



Classroom or closet-- Briggs threatens Calif

makes discrimination legitimate," said John Johnck, chair of the Republican Council Central Committee of San Francisco, when that body voted to reject Briggs by 2-1.

Both the American Federation of Teachers and the larger California Teachers Association have issued strongly worded statements against the initia-

tive, saying that it would promote a "witch-hunt climate" and would further promote "guilt by association."

Potential explosion

The author and almost sole public supporter of this unwelcome bit of legislation is John V. Briggs, conservative Republican State Senator from Fuller-



photo by SCRAP 9

Getting Together

According to Briggs' administrative assistant Don Sizemore, "Homosexuality does not rise to the dignity of a civil right." The right which is in danger, says Sizemore, is people's "right to make decisions about who is going to be displaying themselves in front of their children."

"You can tax people, and you can create air which is not fit for them to breathe," continues Sizemore. "You can make it inconvenient and almost impossible for them to enjoy their automobiles, but when you come to something touching upon their children, you've got a whole new dynamite there, and that's what a lot of these politicians just don't understand."

Whether this "new dynamite" explodes in the faces of Briggs and his sympathizers or whether it catapults him into political power and scores another victory for the New Right; depends in great part on how effective the counter-offensive proves to be.

There's no doubt that gays and progressives have taken the challenge seriously. The roughly 40 organizations that have emerged to fight the initiative form two clusters politically. One of the clusters centers around CABI (Californians Against the Briggs Initiative) which consists of 21 loosely affiliated grassroots organizations and coalitions. More a network than a statewide organization, these groups share a commitment to a democratic, non-sexist process, a single-issue coalition approach, a strategy that confronts anti-gay stereotypes, and—not incidentally—a lack of money.

The other cluster of organizations centers around Concerned Voters of California/No on 6. CVC has hired veteran campaign manager Don Bradley (who has managed campaigns from Helen Gahagan Douglas in 1950 to Pat Brown in 1974.) CVC, the New Alliance for Gay Equality (with a long list of Hollywood celebrities on its advisory board), and Reverend Troy Perry's California

Fund for Human Dignity are working together and hope to raise more than a million dollars for media spots.

There are some definite political differences, both in structure and strategy, between the two clusters and even among the grassroots organizations.

Preferring to speak of these differences in terms of focus rather than content, Bradley characterizes CABI as "a regionalized concept that utilizes primarily manpower, mostly a people-oriented activity. We at CVC are trying to mount the public relations and advertising efforts."

What is available to date of the PR, however, contains little mention of the issue of homosexuality. The initiative is presented as a violation of free speech, right to privacy, and equal protection, affecting all teachers. One of the leaflets begins with a headline, "Don't let Senator Briggs shut the door on American Freedoms," and the reader has to look past the sub-headings to the fine print to come across the word "gay."

As this approach suggests, debates about strategy among the different organizations tend to focus on the degree of visibility gays should have in the campaign and how much, if at all, it should confront homophobia by talking about homosexuality. Positions in the debate seem to hinge on how one reads and whether one believes the Schwartz poll, commissioned by CVC and taken last January and February. The results showed that the anti-Briggs campaign would be extremely difficult to win.

Moreover, it tested various strategies for the election on its sample and concluded, among other things, that demonstrations wouldn't be effective, that the campaign must show that the initiative deeply affects non-gays and would be costly because of the required hearings on dismissal, that publicity should feature non-gay civil libertarians as spokespeople and, most basically, that "there is not time to talk about or convince people about gay rights or the gay life-

ornia

ton in Orange County. A born-again Christian, he went to Dade County to help in the eventually successful effort to repeal a gay rights ordinance there.

To Briggs, gays live "an immoral lifestyle, committing an infamous crime against nature." He said recently, "Being a homosexual is like being a murderer, it renders you unfit to teach."

style."

Civil rights

Comparing this election to those in other cities, Bradley says, "This one provides the opportunity of having it affect straight as well as gay people, and if we miss the opportunity to take advantage of that, we'll probably lose like the rest of them. This is a clear civil rights issue too."

The alternative view in this debate, held by most of the grassroots organizations, doesn't deny that the civil rights issue is an important one. However, its proponents feel that Briggs will play upon people's fears of homosexuality and that this fear must be confronted head-on.

"Homosexuals have gotten bad publicity for thousands of years," says Linda Schneider of East Bay CABI. "Unless we deal with myths about homosexuality, we'll be ignoring the most significant element of this initiative's appeal."

Literature distributed by such organizations as SCRAP 6 (Sonoma County Residents Against Proposition 6) quotes Kinsey Institute and American Psychiatric Association reports that refute contentions that gays exhibit "abnormal" behavior or are otherwise "maladjusted."

Citing statistics that show that the vast majority of those opposing gay rights

are people who think they've never met a gay person, many organizers are arguing for increased visibility of gay people. Lesbian Schoolworkers, for instance, distributes cards that read, "The purpose of this card is to make you aware of the fact that you ride with, talk to, eat with, and see gay people every day. I hope that the time spent with me has helped you realize that we are people just like you."

Despite the obvious differences between CVC and the CABI-affiliated coalitions, these organizations are working well together in some cities. Initially, the spectre of a campaign run by a straight man and personified by straight celebrities who argue that the proposition puts *their* rights in danger, was truly offensive to many gay activists in the CABI network.

"But it just doesn't seem to be the case that that's what they have in mind," says Paula Lichtenberg of CABI. "We're having a lot less difficulty than we thought we would, and now there's a lot of communication back and forth between our offices," she adds. CABI has challenged Briggs to a TV debate and CVC is in agreement with their choice for a spokesperson—lesbian activist and literature professor Sally Gearhart.

Labor outreach is an important activity for most of the grassroots organi-

zations, and they've gotten good labor endorsement and support. "This is very much a labor issue," says Lichtenberg, "because it says that someone can be fired for something totally irrelevant to their job. It's a good way to bust unions, to get rid of people who are rocking the boat."

Endorsements have been coming in from AFL-CIO central labor councils, American Postal Workers locals, Civil Service Association locals, Department Store Employees locals, Retail Clerks locals, Building Trades, and others. Many unions have established their own committees to work against Briggs.

Opposition builds

Outreach to minority communities emphasizes that the initiative legitimizes discrimination against a minority and that it is part of a broader right-wing assault on the rights of all movements for social and economic justice.

"So far," says Claude Wynne of CABI, "we've concentrated on getting endorsements from prominent Third World leaders." Wynne says that polls show the Latino community favoring the initiative, and that it will be important to get Cesar Chavez to speak out against it. The United Farmworkers Executive Board is expected to endorse the "No on 6" position soon.

Anti-Briggs organizations met in Los Angeles in late August to share experience and practice. It was decided that the week of October 15-22 would be a target week for the campaign, with demonstrations, rallies, and speak-outs planned.

"The energy level is super high," says Tabi Iverson of SCRAP 6. "We're becoming more and more visible every day." SCRAP 6 has about 100 members organizing the largely rural northern part of the state. Its activities include workshops, radio interviews, media work, and cultural projects like programs on women's history and music. They plan to run a billboard campaign from Marin County to the Oregon border. "We think we'll win," says Iverson. "We wouldn't be fighting this hard if

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World Youth Festival National Committee bars lesbian

In the face of the right wing's attack on gay rights, it is particularly important for all leftists to speak out in defense of gays. Thus, we were especially disturbed by the recent action of the National Committee for the World Youth Festival. Holly Near is a writer and singer of songs on themes of solidarity with third world struggles, Vietnam, feminism, and, lately, love between women. She applied to the National Preparatory Committee for the Eleventh World Youth Festival held in Cuba in

August this year. The committee, where the ideas of the Communist Party, USA predominate, turned her down because she is a lesbian.

"It is incredible that people who identify themselves as progressive forces would engage in the kind of discrimination we regularly battle against in the larger society. It represents a failure on the left to see the connection between different fights against oppression," said Blazing Star NAM in a letter of protest to the Committee.



Self Portrait, June 27, 1977

Both my grandmothers are gone
my mother is dead, too
as was my godmother before her
there are no aunts
no blood-sisters
not a cousin
in the line
I am lonely

I am lonely for women kin
and the swap of lost cradle battles that can
wring comforts out of those who have at heart
themes of the family memory: my mother used
to say

my mother used to say
no one will rock me
I must be the rock
no matter what washes over
I must stay anchored on my own
fortunately
it is hard-wearing stock

-Sara Heslep

Sara Heslep is employed by the Chicago Board of Education in an experimental reading project. She quilts and writes on the side.



Looking For America



From Harriet to Hamer— Black women and feminism

Article and drawings by Michelle Russell

The following article is excerpted from remarks made by Michelle during a work-shop on "Black Women and Feminism" at the National Convention of NAM, July 19-23, 1978.

I want to discuss the question of black women's relationship both to the ideology and the practice of feminism in the US. In thinking about this situation, it's important to remember that from the beginning there has been a qualitative difference in the relations of both production and reproduction in which we black women exist in comparison to the white majority culture.

Today, roughly four centuries of productive relations coexist simultaneously in our communities. In Florida, for example, not only black women, but our children, are migrant workers, even though child labor has been outlawed for years.

Or we can look at the differences in pay rates and rates of production—expected in plantation economies—that still exist in large parts of the South: black women who have been structurally displaced or marginalized by the rise of agribusiness and mechanization feel themselves lucky to get three or four dollars a day for picking the cotton that the machines miss.

In the reproductive sphere, we are all too familiar with the conditions of life that produce pre-natal aberrations and the social policies that keep us numerical minorities.

One of the interesting aspects of the enforced material underdevelopment of the black woman's situation however, is that it has produced a relatively higher degree of class and racial consciousness than is the case even among working class white women in this country. In fact, if we trace the articulate spokeswomen who have arisen out of the struggles of black people for full citizenship, equal rights, and a variety of other things, I would contend that politically-conscious black women have been

from 10 to 15 years in advance of white women on political questions.

I want to be very clear that I'm not proposing in any sense that black women are the "vanguard" of the women's movement. However, it is true that from Harriet Tubman and Sojourner Truth forward, it has been black women who have come forward in the struggle for thoroughgoing transformation of American society. They have found it impossible to divorce issues of feminism from racial equality or class struggle.

In part this has to do with the continuing and still unfulfilled struggle for democratic rights — even in a bourgeois context — that we have been waging. It's also true that in a material sense black women simply have not had the relative luxury of fighting on only one front. It's always been a multi-dimensional struggle for us.

Beyond this, however, there is a problem. While we have in some senses been more advanced formulators of the connections between race, class, and sexual oppression, we have had relatively little success in achieving any consistent perspective or ideological hegemony out of these insights.

What do I mean? Simply this: it's possible to interpret history in many ways, from many viewpoints. Black women's history, by and large, has been interpreted for us by those outside our group. In order to correct this imbalance, I think it is essential that we begin by insisting on our own heroines and standard-bearers. For instance, people like Margaret Mead are far less important in my version of history than people like Ida Wells.

Wells not only had a history of fifty years of feminist struggle within organizations like the NAACP, but a history of class struggle as well. In 1953 she was organizing pickets in Washington, DC as a result of her observation that the segregated policies of the nation's government worked mutually to the exclusion of black people and women.

So, my version of the modern

women's movement starts with Ida Wells and goes through Rosa Parks and continues in a fairly consistent line through Fannie Lou Hamer, Ella Baker, Gloria Richardson, and a variety of other people who are usually ignored — both by the black male left and the white women's movement.

As a political period, I would date the modern women's movement in the US from its starting point in the early 1950's, not the late sixties. Its development is shaped as much by black mothers encouraging their sons to resist the draft in Viet Nam as by struggles in organizations over who's going to do the typing.

Industrial ghettoization

There are reasons for these disparities in perspective. In part they have to do with what I said about the necessity of struggling on many fronts. Our language has a lot to do with it. The communities in which we work have a lot to do with it. And the relative difference in the forms of social oppression that black and white women face in this society also has a lot to do with it.

For instance, at the precise time that the most militant sections of the autonomous women's movement were seeking to redress family-centered oppression and exploitation by coming up with slogans like "trash the nuclear family," black women — in direct conflict with the State over child custody, housing patterns, and the deaths of black youths at the hands of police — were basically fighting in defense of the black family.

But even in situations where there are certain commonalities there have been serious problems in developing unity between black and white women. Take, for example, the workplace.

Some of the documents in Gerda Lerner's book, *Black Women in White America*, give clues as to the historical antagonisms that have existed in workplace settings and the material basis for them. Emma Shields, a black

woman in the Truman Administration, wrote an account of the structure of the tobacco industry, one of the earliest transitional forms between the agricultural and industrial processes in which both black and white women worked. This is how she describes the organization and social relations of labor in the 1940's:

"Negro women are employed exclusively in the rehandling of tobacco preparatory to its actual manufacture. Operations in the manufacture of cigars and cigarettes are performed exclusively by white women workers. Negro women workers are absolutely barred from any opportunity for employment on manufacturing operations. The strident differences in working conditions which these occupational divisions provoke are further facilitated by the absolute isolation of all Negro workers from white workers in separate buildings. It's not unusual to find the white women workers occupying the new modern sanitary parts of the factory and the Negro women workers in the old sections, which management has decided to be beyond the hope of any improvement."

This is a form of industrial structural ghettoization that has worked to the detriment of black and white female unity at the point of production. It means that exclusion, isolation, increased physical danger, and marginalization are consciously built into that part of the production process that black women are allowed to do. The result is the persistence of a colonial division in the heart of a capitalist setting.

White women's economic role vis-a-vis black women historically has been to break into production at the point when its organization is in transition from a semi-feudal and patriarchal mode to an industrial one. They then pave the way for black women's entry into those jobs at the point when necessary skill levels decline, speed-up

becomes routine, and the easy replacement of workers — the interchangeability of task and function — becomes rationalized.

Conversely, when specifically arduous jobs, or culturally onerous forms of labor that have traditionally been considered off-limits for white women come under improved regulation either from federal or other sources, the black women who have been employed there are displaced.

These historical dynamics, although constantly being refined, are still at work and are pertinent to any discussion of multiracial unity in the workforce.

There are, however, simultaneous developments taking place today that make it possible for there to be symbiotic organizations of black and white women who think of themselves as feminists and operate primarily in the reform political arena (eg, National Organization of Black Feminists, and NOW, or the black women who are active in the Coalition of Labor Union Women.)

One reason for this is that class stratification in the black community is proceeding apace, particularly where black women are concerned. With the rise and expansion of the social service sector and the transition to a multi-racial workforce in urban areas in such monopolies as the telephone, gas, electric and insurance companies — the whole range of intermediary, buffer institutions — there has been a significant shift of black women into career civil servant and lower level clerical tracks formerly reserved for white women.

As a result, we find an increasing social identification with petty-bourgeois feminine styles and values. A lot of people get upset, for example, when they see the cultural phenomenon of young black women dressed up in their blond wigs and their platform shoes teetering off to their key punch machines. This has to be understood not just as a mirroring of the cosmetic aspect of stylistic

freedom of choice to look like Miss Anne if you want to, but also as evidence of the growing bourgeois class-identification in terms of cultural values among a whole generation of black women. It's a trend whose implications are yet to be seen.

Strategic implications

Strategically, there are a number of conclusions that emerge from looking at this historical picture. First of all, a consistent stream in black agitation, organization, and ideology has been the necessity (regardless of whether one wants a job in a corporation, whether one wants to work for democratic reforms, whether one is a socialist, nationalist, or whatever), particularly for women, of building autonomous institutions. This is one emphasis that is not likely to go away. In fact, it's likely to intensify as it becomes less and less economically feasible for the ruling class in this country to hold out ever-expanding economic, social, and political opportunities that make assimilation possible.

Secondly, the defense of the family is key to our survival and growth. This is important not just in terms of struggling around the maintenance of the family unit, but also in seeking to reshape the family structure. This is the essential context in which the black community and black women have any control over the perpetuation of black people as a group. Until both the black women's movement and the white women's movement deal with a coherent strategy in relationship to this reality, the distance between them is going to continue.

Third, in order to struggle for ideological hegemony, there must be an infusion of black women's perspectives to correct the omissions and distortions which characterize the dominant approaches to women's studies. There needs to be a thorough re-examination of events, as well as the reconstruction of the history of personalities and organizations, and the socio-cultural contexts from which they grew. This is a very

serious intellectual and political process that is only at its beginning stages.

People with an understanding of the politics of culture, such as Bernice Reagon, are central to this process for several reasons. One, because they don't make the false distinction between politics and culture; two, because they root their understanding of the development of black culture in the historical evolution of the people; and three, because their political perspective recognizes that the forces that individuals in society have to adjust to, react to, respond to, and, ultimately transform are basically the forces that are developed in the Man's contexts (ie, under capitalism, internationally).

Community reconstruction

Programmatically, this means that we must develop organizations that can deal with all the problems of community reconstruction. When I say community reconstruction, I'm talking about the cultural, material, and biological reconstruction of the community.

I teach a lot of black women and one of the things that is absolutely clear to me is that between the early teens and around 35 years old, black women are currently operating in a historical fog, or vacuum, if you will. Even the neighborhoods that their parents grew up in don't exist anymore. That kind of structural displacement in a territorial sense, which is rapidly accelerating in both rural and urban areas, is something that must be reversed.

Biologically we are faced with the conjunction of reactionary social policy that spans everything from population control strategies to forced sterilization to the selective incarceration, assassination and otherwise incapacitation of young black people—primarily male—in this generation.

We need health programs—on the job and off. I'm not just talking about national strategies for socialized medicine and national health insurance, but simple educational programs—nutrition, budgeting, self-examination for toxic substances, courses on our bodies.



It is frightening that young black women - 13, 14, 15 years old - are experiencing such incredibly high birth rates. They've already had three children by the time they're seventeen. At least two-thirds of these pregnancies are unintentional. Their ignorance about their bodies is phenomenal.

We really have to be very basic about these things. For instance, we need literacy campaigns. There is a real question as to the ability of this generation of black people as a whole and women in particular to even read the labels on the food that the consumer movement has spent so much energy getting properly translated for lay buyers. Even government statistics estimate illiteracy in non-white teenagers at 40%, nationally.

Materially, jobs are central. In the absence of any stable employment prospects, wholesale demoralization and the undirected rage associated with economic marginality fill the space productive labor would have occupied in our lives.

We also need to look at the whole area of education and child development. Over the last ten years or so, the most consistent contact—and also conflict—among black and white women has been around questions of community control in education, the rise of paraprofessionalism, and the implementation of desegregation.

This is no news. We know that there are basic problems of racism and the kind of socialization that children get in school, but at this point there are

even more drastic problems. In public schools, even if we leave aside the problems of bussing or teachers strikes, in the normal school setting of urban areas of America today, class scheduling may be as far as a month behind the official opening of school, and absentee rates over the full year can be as high as 25—30%. These young people aren't in school. Or if they are there they aren't being taught much except how to stay quiet and memorize. This indicates the need not only for struggle within those institutions but for the erection of autonomous forms of education for the needs of the black community as defined by the citizens of that community.

Such parallel institution-building is predicated upon the absolute necessity of resocializing a whole generation of children to new value structures, new ways of working together, as well as, simply put, to the facts of life that can equip them to survive and to struggle for a transformation of society in their best interests.

Such a program of community reconstruction is—in its various aspects—high on the agenda of black women. The development of a unified movement of black and white women will depend on the ability of white women to grasp the centrality of this process and to re-evaluate their own goals and approaches in the light of the issues that it raises.

Michelle Russell is an author, teacher, and political activist living in Detroit, Michigan.

Classroom or closet

from page 14

we thought we'd lose."

In fact, in a recent *Los Angeles Times* poll, 55% favored allowing gays to teach in the public schools.

But it's not hard to find pessimists. Marilyn Goda of Lesbian Schoolworkers notes, "If we look at the times realistically, it's very likely we're going to lose."

Says Lichtenberg about the chances for a "No on 6" victory, "It's a possibility, not a great possibility. However, if we lose in California," she concludes, "nowhere is safe."

Santa Cruz NAM member, Julie Martchenko, who is active in CUDBI (Community United to Defeat the Briggs' Initiative) reports that most of the nine California NAM chapters are working in grassroots coalitions against Proposition 6. "Our hope," she says, "is that these organizations will reach millions and will make people understand that they know gay people, will destroy myths, and will help people realize that they are engaged in a common struggle."

On the other side, Briggs' aide, Sizemore notes that his effort "is just the first

step in reversing the trend against the family. He's concerned about such things as contraception and abortion, too..."

With such a right-wing program threatening California and elsewhere, it's clear that putting a stop to Briggs' "first step" should be our priority.

Ellen Reier is a member of East Bay NAM and an activist in East Bay CABI.

Taxes and left strategy

from page 11

There are no short cuts or gimmicks to eliminate the hard and patient work that it will take to do this. Taken in isolation Weinstein's proposal to run socialist candidates is an empty one because it fails to come to terms with this reality.

Socialists do have to participate in the electoral arena today, presenting programs that make sense to people. But this has to be done in the context of participation in the labor movement, community groups, and other arenas of struggle.

It is in this process that the best hope for meeting our basic challenge lies—to encourage people to fight not just for authentic tax reform, not just against

inflation, but to fight for socialism as a real alternative.

Richard Healey is the National Secretary of the New American Movement.

Taxes and personal costs

from page 8

ed library workers, she has been able to orchestrate pressure on the supervisors from an entirely unexpected front. She has lined up people to support the libraries who had been Prop 13 supporters in conservative South County.

Elizabeth Talbot is in the fight all the way. But, if the Coalition can't win substantial restoration of services, her future is uncertain. While confident of finding another job somewhere, she faces some changes in her life. She loves the Bay Area, but staying may mean no longer working in public libraries. And for a born librarian like Elizabeth Talbot, that's a difficult poison to take.

Tim Reagan is a member of East Bay NAM and a writer for the East Bay Voice.

We get letters...

More stress

Your article on how stress diseases are caused by capitalism (*Capitalism Is Making You Sick*, MOVING ON, Sept. 1978) was quite good. But you left out some crucial points. Author Kunnes lists "family breakup, death of relatives, job loss and job changes, and migration" as the leading causes of stress.

New research indicates that family breakup (if that means divorce) actually results in a decrease of stress for the majority of women. Although the breakup itself may be stressful, studies show that divorced women experience less stress than married women, while divorced men experience more stress than married men.

So, you have to list "marriage" as one of the chief causes of stress—for 50% of the population.

*Janet Hewitt
Salt Lake City, UT*

Our mistake

There's a very unfortunate mistake in the last MOVING ON. Michelle Russell's article about black Appalachians ("Letter from the Mountains", MOVING ON, September 1978) has been illustrated with photos of white Appalachians. I can understand how it happened; the layout crew probably only knew the title. I too had the stereotype that all Appalachians were white; as individuals and as an organization we need to overcome the limitations of our schooling, where few whites learn about black culture.

*Hannah Frisch
Chicago, IL*

—You are correct. The error was ours. Actually, though, the story was about both white and black Appalachians. That still doesn't change the mistake, however. We promise to take more care in the future.

Kudos for Mary Clark

I read your magazine from time to time and generally like what I see. As an artist, I often pay close attention to the art work I find in publications. The consistently excellent drawings by M. Clark prompted me to write this letter. Let's see more of them.

*Allen Deane
New Orleans, LA*



NAM News&Views

by Judy MacLean

The insight that "the personal is political" has many dimensions. It means personal issues—who we love and how we live—are as important a basis for political organizing as economic issues.

It means we understand that the political system we live under affects our personal lives.

It also means building an organization that begins to break down the fragmentation most of us experience between the "personal" and "political" aspects of our lives. In NAM this gets reflected in many ways.

Observers to our national convention often comment that we are "nice" to each other in our political discussions. Behind this observation of "niceness" is the respect we have for each other as political beings and as people—respect that means we can disagree without chopping at each other's egos or becoming contemptuous.

A different kind of example: In Detroit, the chapter organized a Christmas party last year complete with a modern play based on "A Christmas Carol." "The Last Remake of Ebenezer Scrooge, or Sally Cratchit Throws Off Her Chains" was performed by ten children (ages 2-13) and one adult. The evening involved children and spouses of NAM members and friends of NAM, and gave the children a chance to take part in something their parents believed in.

In Santa Cruz NAM, there is a short space on the agenda of each meeting for "personal time" for people to talk in small groups.

Many chapters across the country have a "buddy system." When someone new joins, they get a "buddy," who calls them after meetings, meets them for lunch or a beer, explaining what's going on in the chapter and helping them to figure out where they fit in.

Keeping up with the personal and emotional side of a political group's life has always been necessary. In the past, in mixed groups, it has mostly been done by women, largely in the background and largely unsung. In NAM, we've been able to make this a topic of political discussion, yet we need to go further.

Integrating the personal and political is leadership work. It's a kind of leadership women have been more likely to take in the past, and also a kind that hasn't been acknowledged as leadership.

When NAM was founded, we adopted a policy that all leadership bodies—national and local—must be at least 50% women. We did this because in political organizations, as in other arenas of life, the people who have been raised with the expectation that they will be leaders, the people most likely to put themselves forward, are more often men.

But we did more than set a quota. We've had training at national NAM summer and winter schools. We have skills-



Judy MacLean is Organizational Secretary of the New American Movement

Left turn

On women, men
and keeping politics human

sharing workshops on a local and regional level. Whenever possible, we have old leaders work with new ones for a while.

We've done all this with the kind of leadership roles men have traditionally taken—making policy, making speeches, making decisions, chairing meetings. What we need at this point is more attention to moving men into women's traditional leadership roles—roles that are harder to define because they've been talked about less. They include finding out how people in the group are feeling about its progress, organizing informal get-togethers, making sure people who should know each other connect up, dealing with member's family, friends or lovers in the context of the group's political life.

We've already made some progress in this respect. In some chapters, men have begun to take on many of these tasks. And a man coordinated childcare at our last convention. Yet women still do much more than half of the work of personal/emotional leadership in our organization.

One way to change this is to articulate the tasks of this personal leadership better and then have training sessions. It needs to be a built-in, and discussed, aspect of leadership.

Otherwise, we might end up reproducing in miniature what has happened in socialist countries—women have moved into traditionally male roles yet still do almost all the work remaining in the home.

Doing this on an organizational level is a small step toward the kind of society we want to create—where men and women share both the world-building and nurturing tasks, equally.

All the news...

MOVING AND SHAKING

• "The proliferation of nuclear power plants and arms is a dramatic distillation of capitalism's disregard for life," **Southside Chicago** NAM member Judy Johnson said in a speech at a local Hiroshima Day Rally August 6. The chapter has joined the opposition to the nearby Baily nuclear power plant. . . . **Seattle** NAM members are part of Seattle Committee Against Thirteen. Initiative Thirteen would repeal protection for gay people under the city's Open Housing and Fair Employment laws. . . . "It's bad vibrations to sell mutilations" says a leaflet from **Philadelphia** NAM, demanding that a local record store stop selling discs with covers depicting violence against women. . . . NAM members from around the country joined with 50,000 other supporters of equality for women to march for the ERA in Washington, July 9. Members in several cities walked to raise funds for the ERA in "ERA Walkathons" August 26. NAM's National Committee has gone on record as supporting the extension of the deadline for ERA ratification. . . . At-large members in Mobile, Alabama have helped pull together anti-Ku Klux Klan rallies. . . . The Lansing Energy Action Project, founded by members of **Lansing** NAM, got the

Public Service Commission to propose a new rule that welfare recipients can't have their utilities shut off during the winter. . . . **Dayton** Women Working, founded by members of **Dayton** NAM in Ohio, had a "Pettiest Office Procedure" contest during National Secretaries Week. The winner, a local doctor, required his secretary to move the lawn sprinkler once an hour. . . . **St. Louis** NAM members took part in organizing a demonstration at the U.S. Penitentiary in Marion, Illinois September 15. They demanded the closing of the Control Unit, a Behavior Modification program that has cost the lives of ten prisoners in five years.

SPEAKING

• National Secretary Richard Healey addressed the Socialist Party national convention in Iowa City, Iowa, September 3. . . . NAM Health Commission Chair Rick Kunnes will speak at the Los Angeles Socialist School October 13 on "The Politics of Health Care". . . . Chris Riddiough, member of **Blazing Star** NAM and co-chair of Gay and Lesbian Coalition of Metropolitan Chicago will speak on "Gay Liberation and Socialism" October 12 in San Francisco, October 13 in Oakland and October 20 in Los Angeles. Riddiough's tour is part of statewide NAM work against the Briggs initiative. . . .

AND WRITING

• Barbara Ehrenreich, member of **Long Island** NAM, is co-author of a new book, *For Her Own Good, 150 Years of Experts' Advice to Women*. Ask for the book at your local bookstore and watch for a review in a future issue of this magazine. . . . Roberta Lynch, member of NAM's National Committee and managing editor of *Moving On*, writes a nationally syndicated monthly column now appearing in 27 newspapers and broadcast over two radio stations. . . . At-large member Harry Boyte and Or-

ganizational Secretary Judy MacLean are part of a debate on left unity in the current *Socialist Review* (No. 40-41).

RESOURCES

• NAM has a number of commissions open to activists in various arenas of struggle. **Energy Commission**, c/o Kendall, 3640 Shaw Blvd., St. Louis, Missouri, 63110. **Labor Commission**, c/o Aronowitz, 12941 Springwood Drive, Santa Ana, CA 92705. **Culture Commission**, c/o Lakes, 926 West Ainslie, Chicago, IL 60640. . . . Connie Flanagan, an at-large member, has put together a weekend curriculum for socialist-feminist childcare. Order from 4415 Ranch Circle, Colorado Springs, Colorado 80907.

NEW CHAPTERS

• A group of labor activists (See "Labor Stirs on the Prairie," *Moving On*, July-August 1978) has formed a new chapter in Danville, Illinois. . . . In San Francisco, a new chapter is beginning work around reproductive rights, housing and starting a socialist school. . . . Welcome!

BACK TO SCHOOL

• Socialist schools begin new terms this month around the country. . . . The **Los Angeles** NAM Socialist School features courses in Spanish for Activists, Introduction to Marx, and Gramsci. . . . In the Bay area, **Eastbay** NAM's Socialist School is offering a course in "Contradictions in Women's Lives Under Capitalism and Patriarchy" (among many others). . . . Across the bay the new **San Francisco** NAM chapter's socialist school is also setting up classes, among them Al Richmond on U.S. labor history. . . . "A Good Party is Hard to Find—Analysis of the Revolutionary Party" is one of seven courses offered by **Chicago Northside** NAM's Second City Socialist School. **Pittsburgh** NAM Socialist School and Bread and Roses School (founded by **Austin** NAM) start new terms this month too.

In Memoriam

Helen King
1907-1978

Lifelong revolutionary
member, Leo Gallagher NAM

NAM in Brief

The New American Movement combines a Marxist analysis with careful attention to the current realities of American politics. It combines a deep commitment to its socialist principles with a tactical flexibility in its political approach. It combines a focus on the development of theory appropriate to our times with an activist orientation that stresses involvement in the crucial issues of the day. And it combines a vision of a socialist future based on democracy and human freedom with efforts to project

in our work elements of that future.

NAM has over 35 chapters involved in organizing for labor union democracy, against nuclear power, for abortion rights, against violence against women, for affirmative action, against apartheid in South Africa, and much more. Chapters also organize cultural and educational events that attempt to present a new and challenging socialist perspective on our world.

All of this work is informed and united by certain basic political ideas:

- NAM is committed to working toward a socialist society in which material resources and the decision-making process are democratically controlled by all people.

- We are committed to a socialism that has equality and respect for all people at its core—one that carefully balances the need for collective planning, ownership, and decision-making with a high regard for individual rights and freedom.

- The development of a movement for socialism in America will require the growth of socialist consciousness within the working class—all those who have to sell their labor power (even if they are not directly paid) in order to survive. For it is only a broad-based movement representative of the diversity of the American people that can fundamentally challenge the power of capital.

- American capitalism is a powerful and entrenched system. Yet it is also rife with contradictions. Organization is key to changing power relationships and exposing these contradictions. We are committed to the development of a socialist party that can carry out these tasks, as well as to the growth of the most strong and progressive possible popular organizations.

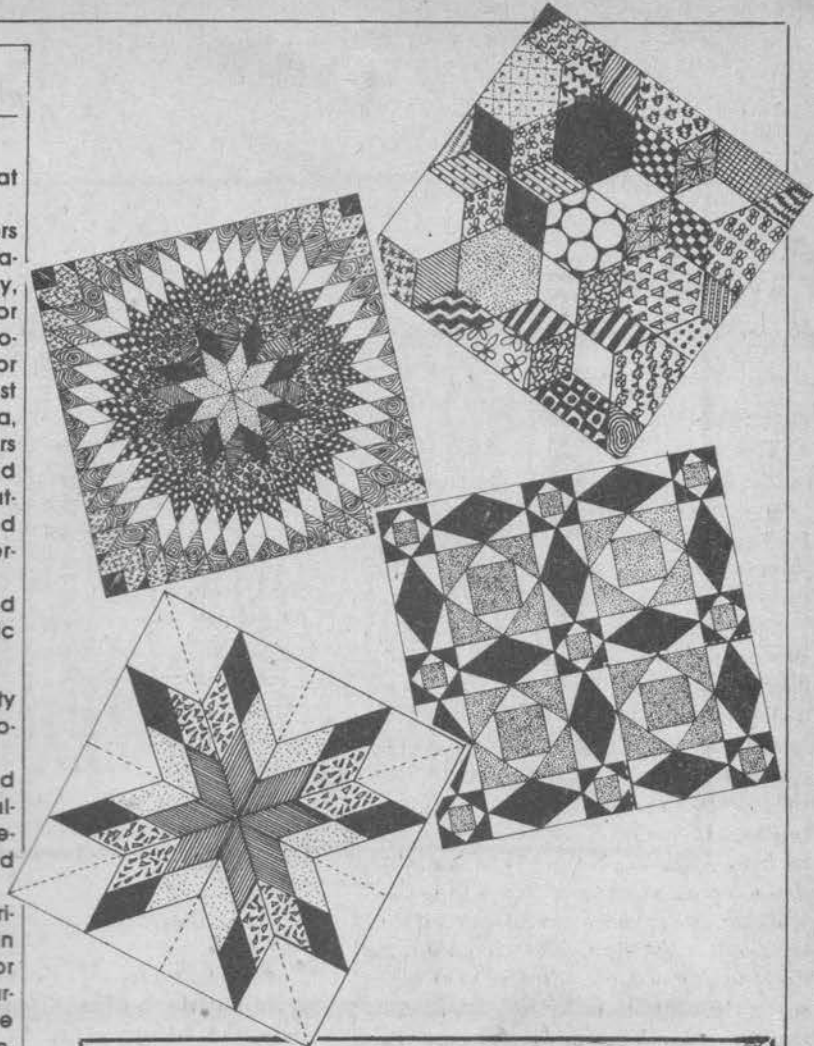
- Democracy is central to the process of building a movement for socialism. Only as working people become active, organized and begin to take control over their lives can a new society take shape.

- NAM sees the struggle for the liberation of women as integral to a socialist movement. We value the contributions of the women's movement in showing how revolutionary change must deal with all aspects of people's lives. And we defend now, and in the socialism we project, the liberation of gay women and men.

- Racism cripples national life—it denies the humanity of minorities and thwarts the potential of the working class as a whole. NAM is committed to fighting against racism and national oppression in all forms.

- The fate of socialism in the United States is tied to the rest of the world. We support struggles for national liberation and human freedom wherever they occur.

- NAM supports the positive achievements of the existing socialist countries. However, we are also critical of various aspects of their policies, and see no one of them as a model for our own efforts.



Other Voices

Most working people never make it into magazine articles or onto TV shows. They are seldom interviewed and rarely quoted. Yet throughout history it has often been the buried voices of such people that provide the most dramatic and moving picture of how capitalism damages our lives—and that suggest alternative ways to live. Each month we hope to feature on this page the words of those whose voices are rarely heard. We will include both historical and current quotes. We welcome contributions from our readers—things you've read, heard, or said.

"It took me more than twenty, nearly twenty-five, I reckon, in the evening after supper when the children were all put to bed. My whole life is in that quilt. It

scares me sometimes to look at it. All my joys and all my sorrows are stitched into these little pieces. When I was proud of the boys and when I was downright provoked and angry with them.

When the girls annoyed me or when they gave me a warm feeling around my heart. And John, too. He was stitched into that quilt and all the thirty years we were married. Sometimes I loved him and sometimes I sat there hating him as I pieced the patches together. So they are all in that quilt—my hopes and fears, my joys and sorrows, my loves and hates. I tremble sometimes when I remember what that quilt knows about me.

—A 19th century Ohio woman
submitted by Kristin Lems

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The holidays are a perfect time for a gift subscription to **Moving On**...

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- One of the very few publications committed to democratic socialism and to activism. Because it can take an articulate stand on an issue while leaving open space for differing views. And because it is part of an organization, the **New American Movement**, that is working to translate its words into political action.

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