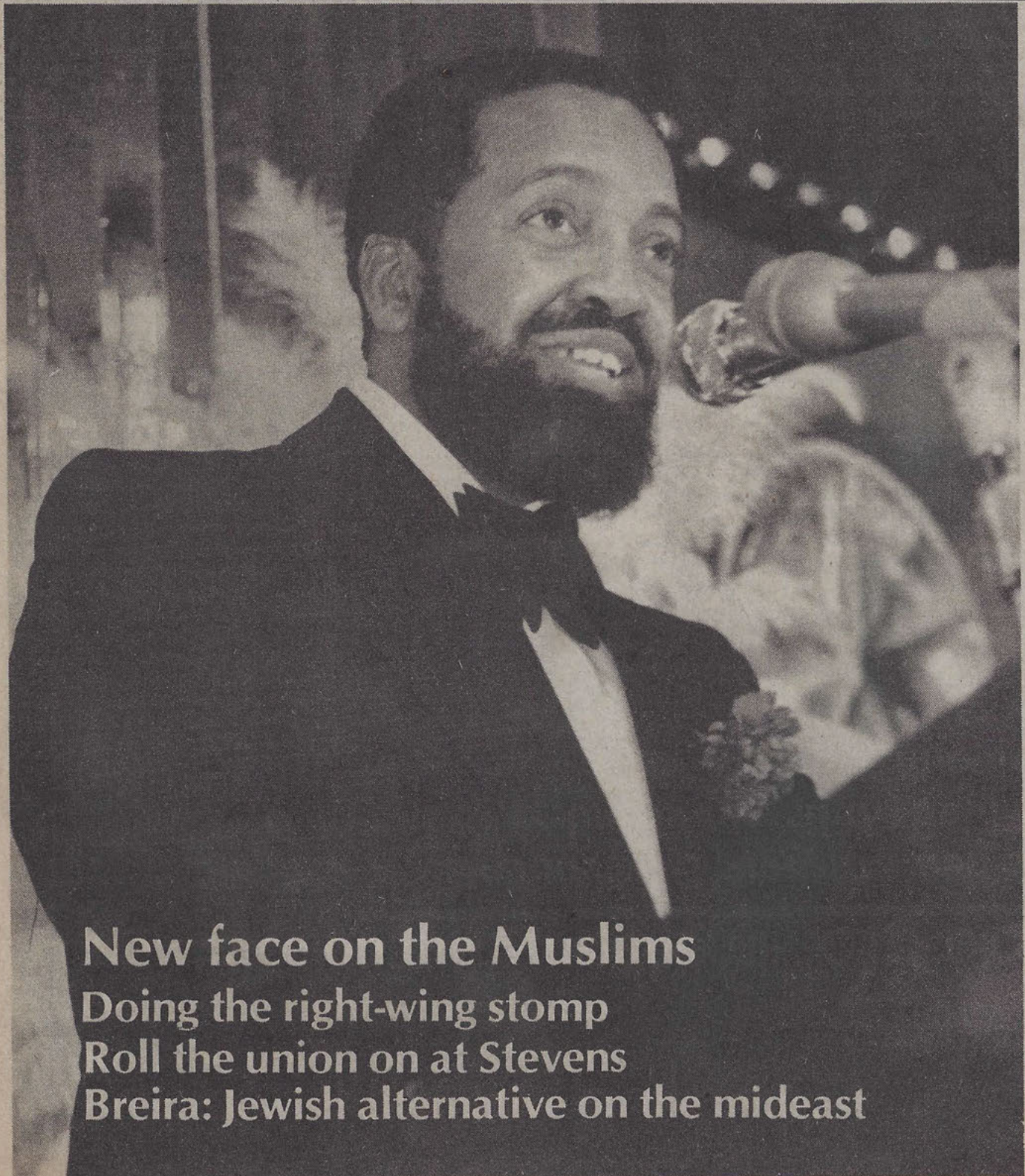


July, 1977

40 cents

Moving On

MONTHLY MAGAZINE OF THE NEW AMERICAN MOVEMENT



New face on the Muslims

Doing the right-wing stomp

Roll the union on at Stevens

Breira: Jewish alternative on the mideast

Photo by Wali Muhammed.

Moving On

MONTHLY MAGAZINE OF THE NEW AMERICAN MOVEMENT

EDITORIAL BOARD: Alan Charney, Holly Graff, Dorothy Healey, Bobby Lilly, Mark Mericle, Bob Niemann, Glen Scott, Sue Wells

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Letters

Dear MO,

The initial issues of the new, improved version of MOVING ON have been a welcome addition to the left press. They're attractive, interesting, topically balanced and the best forum yet for the presentation of NAM's politics and strategy.

Your June editorial indicates a principled but constructive attitude towards IN THESE TIMES; the best answer I've seen to the question of how NAM should relate to the paper.

However, as a staff writer for ITT, I must take exception to your unproven assertion that we take "an uncritical stance towards the upper reaches of the labor movement." If you survey the labor coverage in our first seven months of publication, you'll find that though we have been generally sympathetic to the labor movement, we have been pointedly critical of the leadership of the Steelworkers, Teamsters, Electrical Workers, Mineworkers, Communication Workers, Autoworkers, and the building trades, not to mention George Meany and his ideological cohorts at the top of the AFL-CIO.

We have also been critical of the positions of some union leaders on a variety of questions—environmental protection, foreign policy, defense spending, legislative strategy, protectionism (see No. 10), internal union democracy, anti-communism, and organizing the unorganized. In addition, ITT has provided thorough, tough realistic, coverage to rank and file movements and opinion in the Teamsters, Steelworkers, Electrical Workers and other unions. These movements are usually in explicit disagreement with the established union leadership.

An accurate perspective towards the labor movement must examine both the internal dynamics of unions (questions of democratic structures and freedom of political expression) along with the role of unions, as established institutions, in relation to other sectors of society. The political positions of union leaders, and

more letters p. 19



The struggle for inequality: Doing the right-wing stomp

by Roberta Lynch

"This is just the start of the struggle." That's militant talk and it's coming from some very militant people. Those are the words of Robert Daly, a leading member of Save Our Children, the group that spearheaded the repeal of the Florida ordinance prohibiting discrimination on the basis of sexual preference. Anita Bryant, the organization's most notorious spokesperson, says that she does not care if her crusade damages her career: "I would give my life if necessary to protect my children."

Phyllis Schlafly, the leading opponent of the Equal Rights⁴ Amendment, repeatedly insists that what is at stake in that fight is nothing less than the fate of Western civilization. And another anti-ERA campaigner says that she has been "killing myself doing five or six debates a day" because of "moral conviction."

The controversies over gay rights and the ERA have been going on—in muffled tones—for the past few years. But in the past few months they have again erupted into national prominence. While there are clear differences between the two issues and the forces supporting them, there is also one vital similarity: the forces opposing them.

In essence, these two issues have become a decisive battleground for the organized right in America. These opposition forces are not naive moralists or "apron-clad covens of housewives" as one feminist paper put it)—although they may have won such people to their ranks. Rather they represent a highly mobilized, militant, ideological, and well-financed core of right-wing organizers.

One small but dramatic example of

Gay rights and the ERA have become decisive battlegrounds for highly mobilized, militant, well-financed right wing organizers.

their approach is the planned disruption of the International Women's Year conferences being held in every state this year. The conferences do not have any official policy making

powers, but they are government-sponsored bodies and presumably their recommendations will receive some notice. In addition, each state conference will elect delegates to a national conference to be held in Houston in the fall.

In Georgia busloads of women were brought to the conference by the John Birch society. According to one conference participant: "These women were instructed by a handful of men on which sessions to attend, what kind of parliamentary procedure to use to disrupt. . . They nominated their own candidates for the Houston convention who are against abortion and the ERA, and eventually forced us to keep some issues from coming to a vote rather than be defeated." They particularly targeted workshops on reproductive freedom, sexual preference, international peace, and the ERA.

In Missouri such women actually did succeed in getting their slate elected as delegates to the Houston meeting. In Illinois Schlafly mobilized her Stop



Alice Paul, now 92, drafted the Equal Rights Amendment in 1923.



ERA forces to attend the conference with the same goals. But Illinois feminists, learning from the experiences in other states, were better prepared and prevented the attempted takeover.

ERA Setbacks

The defeats of the ERA in Florida and Illinois represented a real setback for the prospects of its ratification into law. Supporters of the amendment have been perplexed by the shift in its fortunes. They point to the fact that in Illinois, for instance, the polls indicate that a large majority of voters are in favor of its passage.

This shift seems to be caused by a combination of two factors. First, there is the misleading propaganda of the Right that has served to convince many women that the ERA will bring about what they see as negative changes.

These fears have helped to produce an active base of opposition to the amendment. In addition, right-wing forces have managed to build a skillful campaign of legislative pressure that play into the hands of the many conservative and male legislators who would just as soon vote against the ERA.

Secondly, though many people support the *idea* of the ERA (that is, making equality for women part of the most basic law of the land), proponents of the amendment have not been able to forcefully demonstrate concrete positive changes that it will bring about. Although the ERA could provide a legal basis for challenging a range of discriminatory practices, such vague and long-term results do not seem sufficiently compelling to bring new forces—beyond committed feminists—into the field to actively work for it.

Gay Rights

The opposition to gay rights has invoked a range of hysterical charges to advance its crusade. Bryant has even gone so far as to blame the California drought on the prevalence of homosexuals in that state. Because the gay rights issue does not have the same kind of widespread base of support as the ERA, it is even more susceptible to such propaganda assaults.

Probably the most insidious of these has been the attempt to link the recent exposes of child abuse, prostitution, and pornography with homosexuality. A recent case in Tennessee has received nation-wide attention with headlines

consistently linking "homosexual" and "child abuse." In Chicago, a major newspaper series on child pornography sensationalized and exaggerated the involvement of homosexuals.

The Congressional hearings on child pornography continued this theme. All of this despite the fact that it is widely known that more than 90% of all child abuse is heterosexual. It's hard not to view such distorted (and nationally coordinated) campaigns as more than coincidentally off-base.

It's clear that the right has recognized (sometimes more than some people on the left) the progressive impact of the women's movement. Now it is beginning to focus on the gay liberation movement. Despite the Dade County defeat, the movement remains strong. In the past month, there were pro-gay demonstrations of 4,000 in Chicago, 5,000 in New York, and 7,000 in Los Angeles. Although these two movements clearly have different potential, both challenge the dominant patterns of social organization and the cultural myths that shape our lives.

Vital Issues

These two issues then—legal equality for women and an end to all forms of discrimination against gay people—are vitally important. They are important because such efforts deserve support in themselves. Because they help to strengthen the possibilities for a revival of activism. Because they expose the emptiness of the rhetoric of tolerance, pluralism, and justice that underlies democracy in a capitalist society. And because the right has made them a testing ground today for extending its influence and for defeating the egalitarian impulses that are at their core.

This is not to say that the current campaigns for these issues are without weaknesses. The ERA is not the issue of most immediate relevance to the needs of the majority of women in this country. And it is frustrating to have to

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The Stevens boycott Rolling the union on

by Nick Rabkin

Twelve months ago the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union (ACTWU) called for a boycott of J.P. Stevens products. Stevens, a notoriously anti-labor southern textile firm with a record of union busting, poor working conditions and low wages that would qualify it for the Guinness Book, has been the target of a decades-long fight for unionization. In 1974 the union won a certification election at its Roanoke Rapids complex, but the company has refused to come to terms with the union ever since.

ACTWU feels that it must win at Roanoke Rapids to show that it can deliver a good contract and establish credibility with Stevens workers at its eighty other mills. The boycott was intended to be the blow that would finally end Stevens' stubborn fight to stonewall the union.

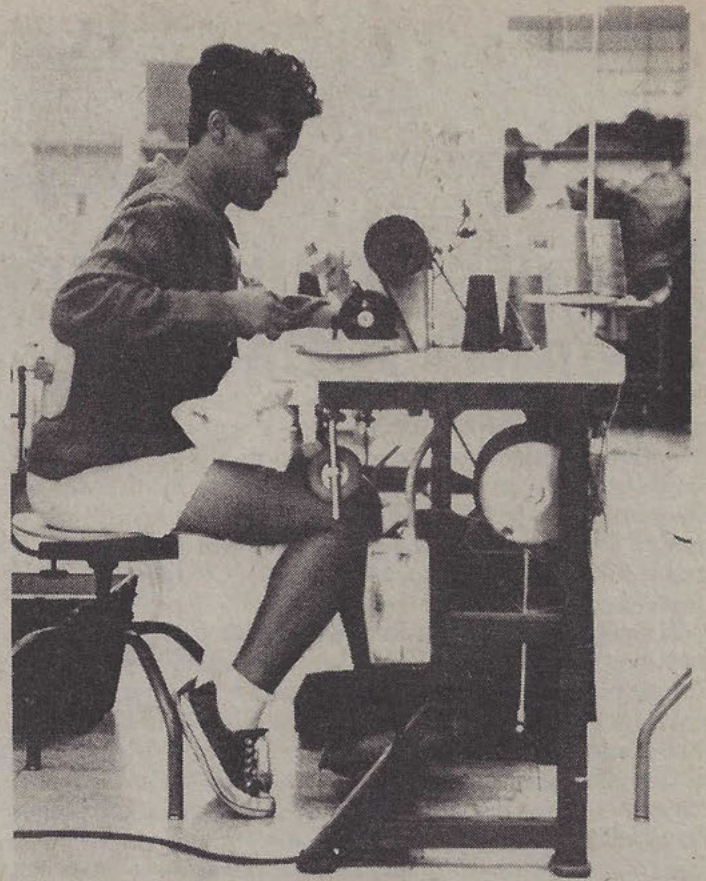
Today the Stevens boycott is between a rock and a hard place. The rock is the special difficulties involved in boycotting a company that promotes its product under 21 brand names; that sells only 34% of its merchandise on the retail market; and whose products (unlike the UFW's targets—grapes and lettuce) are non-perishable.

The hard place is a set of court and National Labor Relations rulings on consumer boycotts that limit the union's ability to target retailers who carry Stevens products. Under the threat of lawsuits and large fines the union cannot picket specific retailers and pressure them to remove Stevens products from their shelves.

The extreme difficulty of organizing a successful boycott under these constraints is clear. Yet, victory by the Stevens workers is absolutely crucial to the union, and the boycott is a valuable weapon in its arsenal.

The two unions that merged to form the ACTWU a year ago—the Amalgamated Clothing Workers and the Textile Workers—lost half their members in many northern cities in the last twenty years while the textile industry has moved to the unorganized south and Asian countries. The Textile Workers was hardest hit—it lost 250,000 members—and was operating at a deficit when they merged. Until the south is organized, companies will continue to be lured by lower wages there and the position of the unions will continue to be undermined.

There is no magic formula for the problems faced by the boycott. For a while ACTWU considered testing the secondary boycott rulings in Washington, D.C. Federal District



Court. But that idea has apparently been scrapped. Recent rulings from that "most liberal district court in the country" have been virulently anti-union; the latest made it legal for employers to finance employee lawsuits against their unions.

The union has decided on an "institutional" approach to the boycott because of these limitations. They are concentrating on building boycott committees that include important organizational forces and influential individuals, politicians and religious figures. In many cities the boycott is gaining the prestige and legitimacy it needs to be successful.

The union can now begin the difficult task of educating retailers on why it is in their interest to refuse to carry Stevens products. This is not as far-fetched as it may sound: northern retailers depend on a healthy economy in their cities, and the flow of capital and jobs to the unorganized south will ultimately damage their sales.

This sort of persuasion has been effective in some cities, notably Philadelphia, where some major retailers have stopped ordering Stevens products.

The Stevens boycott model is vastly different from the more familiar Farmworkers and Farah boycotts, which included pickets at stores and were more open to participation. While those models are not appropriate for the problems facing ACTWU, the greatest failing of the boycott campaign has been its hesitancy to organize other participatory events. The few that have been organized—a march to the Stevens stockholders meeting, for example—have been resounding successes, and helped to bring very favorable publicity to the union.

July 4th Coalition meets in D.C. to form People's Alliance

Perhaps as a symbolic comment on its historic origins the July 4th Coalition finally held its follow-up conference on Memorial Day weekend. Since last summer when it rallied nearly 50,000 people to Philadelphia under its banner for a counter-bicentennial demonstration, the Coalition has been searching for a new form or focus.

It has gained and lost adherents, gone through several conceptions (or misconceptions) of its role, and confronted all the problems that plague the left today. It has, moreover, set itself the difficult task of building an alliance that is multi-racial and that reflects the concerns of Third World people.

The Memorial Day meeting was called to form a new "People's Alliance" that would be based not on a higher level of political unity, but on a commitment to joint programmatic work. It included representatives from the Puerto Rican Socialist Party, the Mass Party Organizing

Committee, CASA, the American Indian Movement, the Black Panther Party, the New American Movement, the National Organization of Women and the Clamshell Alliance, as well as such left notables as Dave Dellinger. The PSP and the MPOC have been the driving forces behind the new alliance effort, although the PSP is taking a less active role than it did in the early days of the J4C.

The meeting was—within its own terms—remarkably successful. Nearly all those who attended agreed that there was a refreshing lack of sectarian in-fighting and an impressive desire to foster cooperation. Many of the groups present committed themselves to be part of the People's Alliance and to further dialogue among themselves.

Connections were made that surprised some of the participants. For instance, the workshops on nuclear power included not just Clamshell Alliance members, fresh from the Seabrook takeover, and NAM members involved in local utilities campaigns, but also representatives from AIM who are concerned about the potential rip-off of energy resources on Indian lands.

Stevens Boycott

from previous page

The union has failed to take other kinds of opportunities as well. When *60 Minutes* featured a very favorable report on the J.P. Stevens organizing, the union didn't follow the TV show with newspaper ads asking for support.

The odds against the Stevens workers and the boycott are high. And they recently got higher, as the AFL-CIO has all but abandoned NLRA reform goals in Congress that would have made southern organizing easier. Those goals—repeal of section 14b of the Taft-Hartley Act (so-called "right to work" laws), and a new certification procedure that would have eliminated the delays in union certification through elections if more than 50% of a jurisdiction's workers had signed union cards (known in Washington as the "Stevens Reform")—would have put Stevens on the defensive.

But there is reason to think that the odds are going to turn in the union's favor. ACTWU organizing is picking up steam at Stevens mills in Greenville, Tifton and Statesboro, Georgia, and in East Hampden, Mass., and West Boston, Alabama.

When the potential winners in a union victory over Stevens are tallied, a powerful coalition can be seen that includes southern rural workers, northern urban workers, blacks, whites and even northern retailers. Such a coalition is capable of bringing Stevens to its knees.

Nick Rabkin is NAM's Organizational Secretary.

Limited Terms

However, the terms of the Alliance are limited. Its origins and approach are firmly rooted within the terrain of radical terminology and ideology. Despite important attempts to develop a program based on issues that are of broader concern, the new formation has not been able to transcend these roots to involve new constituencies. In addition, it has little emphasis on sexual oppression and the particular concerns of women.

Moreover, the local July 4th coalitions that sprung up to build for the Philadelphia mobilization have largely dissolved, and there is a real question as to whether the new formation will have any life other than on a national level.

Finally, the Alliance has adopted a lengthy and varied set of programs that would burden even a highly-developed organization. Given the confusion that continues to exist about how this new formation will actually function, the array of demands can only serve to further complicate its workings.

It's too early to tell whether the new Alliance can overcome these weaknesses and grow into the kind of broad left coalition that could play a serious role in American politics. But as one observer put it: "There's little doubt that the People's Alliance is a positive sign within a left long given to emphasizing its differences rather than its commonalities."

—R.L.

Getting Together

Voices from the Motor City: Caucus building in the UAW

by Judy MacLean

The United National Caucus, a rank and file group within the United Auto Workers, has a fluctuating membership, with a high of 8,000 at last contract time. Their sporadic newspaper has a circulation of 35,000. The group has survived for over ten years. Pete Kelley, who comes from Belfast, Northern Ireland, and Jordan Sims who comes from "the bowels of Hantramk" are its co-chairs.

On how the United National Caucus was built:

Pete Kelley: The UNC began in 1966 out of the skilled trades movement. In 1967, outside of Ford's headquarters in Dearborn, Mich., while negotiations were going on, we put 11,000 people on the lawn.

That agreement gave the skilled tradesmen 50¢ per hour more, but there was a 16¢ cap on the cost of living increase. The result of that contract soon became very clear. Inflation was phenomenal. At the end of the contract, we were 33¢ behind on the cost of living, which in the long run was millions of dollars in savings for the Big Three.

The caucus put out a series of papers during that time showing exactly what an auto worker lost if he worked a 40 hour week, a 48 hour week, or a 54 hour week. Each auto worker on the average lost \$1,500 during that period. Those papers gained great credence among the rank and file, so much so that in 1970 the major issue was getting back the cost of living. We did such a job that Reuther said, "We made a mistake."

In 1970, we got elected to leadership in local 160, and we were out on a 10-week strike. GM tried a slick ploy. They asked for 750 people to come in during the strike so they could meet the emission control standards in 1975. We had

In a socially progressive union like the UAW, organizing the ranks is no simple matter. But it can be done.

1,000 workers laid off in those same classifications prior to the strike. We voted 17-1 at the executive board against. Irv Bluestone, international vice president of UAW, came down and told us to do it. He said, I'm not asking you,

I'm telling you. So we held a membership meeting and let them decide. We had 3,400 members show up. Bluestone spoke first but by then he was requesting, not telling us to do it. The vote was 3,400 to 0, we're not going to break our own picketline. Bluestone left really teed off.

We got the cost of living, though we got little else. But that was a victory. From 1970-73, it went up 46¢. From 1973-76, \$1.24.

At Christmas, 1973, the ink was not dry on the new contract when 35% of our members were laid off. Again, it's ironic. We had been pushing for a stronger SUB fund. (Supplementary Unemployment Benefit fund, which adds to unemployment compensation when auto workers are laid off.) The SUB funds at GM and Chrysler went broke.

In 1976, Ford pulled the same stunt with local 245, trying to get some of the workers to cross the lines. We had a strong caucus by then; 245 called us and asked us to shut them down. We had a meeting of 2,000 skilled workers; the next day it was shut down. The '76 con-



UAW pensioners at the recent union convention.

tract got narrowly through the skilled tradesmen, and there was also a heavy production vote against it.

We have straightened out a lot of the bylaws in our local. We think that, today, local 160, in spite of the tremendously reactionary, almost totally white skilled trades membership that we have, is one of the thorns in the international union's side. We are one of the most progressive locals in relationship to program. We have a program for locals and for the international. For instance, we think the international leadership should be elected by referendum.

On becoming a rank and file activist:

Jordan Sims: I'm not voluntarily a rank and file activist. I am a victim of circumstance. I had to get up and speak primarily for myself first.

I went to work at Chrysler in 1948. It took me 5 years to learn that I was making an important, integral part of the Chrysler automobile. To me, the most important thing was survival. I was perfectly content to carry a lunch pail, earn a reasonable living and provide for my family for the rest of my natural life. As a black American and looking at my

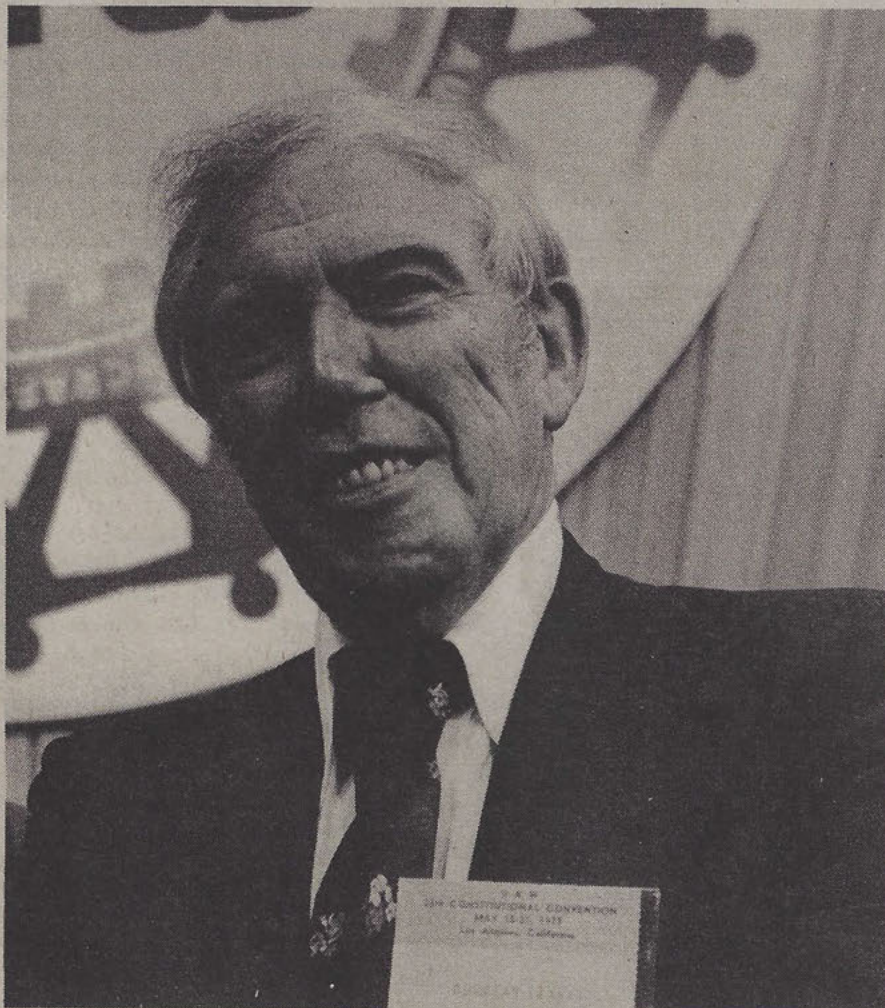
white brothers and sisters from Hamtramk as well, they were not better off than I was—this was a hell of a goddam move for me.

Hamtramk's not too far south of Flint, where the major struggle for UAW recognition took place. No one taught me in the '40's of the early struggles. It was just come in the plant, get your work done, and get your paycheck. Those who were in leadership in the union didn't think it necessary to involve young people coming in in what the real struggle was, who they were, what had gone on and what it was necessary to protect. And I see that continuing today. They allow our entire union, and everything it represents in terms of progress for working people, to degenerate. They teach just a little, only survival. Don't rock the boat.

I never aspired to be rich or president. I never aspired even to be a local union chief steward. But conditions and circumstances lead you to things just in order to survive. It took seventeen years for the system to put me in a bind and jeopardize all I held sacred. Let me tell you what I held sacred. Money.

After 17 years without penalty, poor work performance, belligerence or insubordination, because I had the temerity to talk back to a supervisor, I was spotlighted. For this to happen in a union supposed to be as progressive as the UAW under Walter P. Reuther shocked me. I thought he was my savior and all those elected under him were there to protect me. But they threw me in the streets anyway. Me. A god-fearing, dedicated worker with an impeccable record.

I took my plea to my chief steward, my committeeman. They said there was nothing they could do. If I held my mouth a different way, if I copped a plea, I would become accepted and I could make it. I asked, why must I do this when I have all these rights here in this contract. They said they had a private understanding with the company. So then I had an argument with the company and with the union.



New UAW chief, Doug Fraser.

So I thought, who am I to condemn my fellow man for something I haven't tried to do myself? I started campaigning to be a union rep. It took me six years to become chief steward. Within a year's time I was plant shop committeeman. Within three more years, I was fired.

I had made the great mistake of talking with political activists imported from foreign countries, to educators in colleges about labor law. I worked all day and went to school all night. But even when I knew the law, the company called in my own people from the UAW international who said, don't deal with the law, we have a private understanding.

Growing up in the UAW, I paid my dues to something I didn't really understand. I never sought knowledge until desperation, turmoil and problems hit me. And this is the typical worker's attitude. That's why, as UNC cochairman, for the last eight years, I haven't been that harsh on those I dealt with because I understand where I came from, what my own attitudes were. Within the last five years, I've learned I'm socialistically inclined.

On the UAW:

Jordan Sims: By comparison, the UAW is one of the most progressive, advanced and socially involved unions.

Pete Kelley: That tells us the state of the labor movement in America. What we've been doing for the past five agreements is negotiating the same contract over and over again. At the conventions, we pass brilliant resolutions, but they're always the same resolutions.

In our union, there's only one way for our members to vent their anger and that's on their committeemen, their chairmen and their presidents. They don't vote for the top people. The UAW has become a graveyard of secondary leadership in the locals. Each convention has a tremendous turnover of delegates.

The slogans on the wall are great. "A one world trade union," "Equality for women," "World class solidarity." But it's a facade. They keep a lid on the convention. In the last hour, they take the lid

"The corporations have let enough trickle down to keep people from militance. I don't believe that can go on."

off and the delegates scream out a little, to get on the record that they hit the international union with something. And that distinguishes the UAW from other unions, that much dissent is permitted to happen.

On a new strategy for the caucus:

Pete Kelley: We're seeing the end of the Woodcock era and the beginning of the Fraser era. Woodcock wanted a businesslike union and that's what we got. Right after the '76 agreement, when Woodcock said we had to cool it, that our demands for wages would cause inflation in this country, that we were just coming off heavy layoffs, a broken SUB fund, and exhausted strike fund, and didn't want to do anything to disrupt our jobs, GM declared a \$2.9 billion profit. GM has a slick brochure with an article, "A Tribute to a Super Chief Negotiator, Leonard Woodcock." I guess if I owned a corporation and had a labor leader who produced \$2.9 billion for me, I'd pat him on the back, too.

Jordan Sims: Back in 1973, when we depleted our strike fund, the leadership had enough persuasion and togetherness with corporations that they even subsidized our strike fund, to make sure they didn't lose face with the membership.

Pete Kelley: Fraser is supposed to have an ear for the rank and file. We will see some changes, but I don't have any illusions that Fraser is going to regroup the UAW into the kind of militant fighting union it was.

We're (the United National Caucus) not a mass movement within the UAW: we're small. What we have to do is survive between contracts and hope that when a crisis comes around, we'll be an alternative to whatever is going on at the time.

But I believe we're beginning a new era in collective bargaining. For the last 20 or 30 years, the corporations have been able to let enough trickle down to keep American working people from any degree of militance. I don't believe that can go on. We're going to see critical times ahead with the crunch in energy, inflation, higher utilities, increasing unemployment.

UNC is changing tactics. We're no longer willing to be the social conscience of the UAW, to raise all the social questions hitting us at home and abroad. We want to build a broader movement within the UAW, so a lot of people can stand along side us, meet us, talk to us and not feel the pressure of us being too far left. Fraser has six years to go as president of this union. In 1983, he will retire along with the majority of the executive board. While we have differences with the leadership of the union, they came out of the '30s, they do have socialist backgrounds. Our major concern is what lies underneath that group. Believe me, in the machine system they built a weak Solidarity House of yes-men and the worst opportunists. Our concern is we may be heading for a union going sharply to the right. In the crisis that may be coming, we certainly don't need a right wing union.

On the co-optation of rank and file leaders

Jordan Sims: We in the UNC have a difficult time competing with overtime, better paying jobs, that extra bonus of going into the UAW bureaucracy or a white shirt for the corporations, with our morality and program.

There's an apathetic attitude out there primarily caused by the amount

turn to p. 21

Breira: Alternative on the Mideast for American Jews

by Ira Katznelson

The past decade has been a time of lost chances for those of us concerned with a just settlement in the Middle East. After the 1967 War, Israeli governments might have been able to negotiate a partition of Palestine with the traditional and younger leadership in the West Bank (virtually none of whom wished the area returned to the Jordanian crown). Later, time after time, Israeli leaders refused to come to terms with Palestinian nationalism of any kind, even at moments denying that such a people existed.

By no means have such myopic failures been one-sided. For much of the post-1967 period Arab heads of state repeated the conventional litany of no negotiations, no recognition, no peace. The Palestinian Liberation Organization's covenant, asserting a Palestinian peoplehood, denied the legitimacy of any competing claims to the land.

Neither side has been prepared to acknowledge some simple truths: two people exist with "legitimate" claims to one land; the alternatives are permanent war, bi-nationalism, or partition. The first has been lived not just for three, but for over six decades. The second, while abstractly attractive, is at best a utopian slogan, at worst a prescription for another Lebanon. Partition into Israel *and* an Arab state has for many years been the most appropriate solution to a historically impossible situation. Yet, formally and substantively in the case of the PLO, and substantively and perhaps now formally as well in the case of Israel,

Neither side has been prepared to acknowledge that two people exist with "legitimate" claims to one land; the alternatives are permanent war, bi-nationalism or partition.

this option has been rejected.

Caught between the rigidity of the regimes of a State whose existence we were not prepared to compromise on the one hand, and the poverty of Left analysis on the other, many of us in the progressive movements in this country have found ourselves pressed into silence. We have not been prepared to endorse uncritically the policies of the regimes in Jerusalem or to simply join in the chorus of acclaim for the PLO.

(It is striking that after 1967 Fidel refused to break relations with Israel claiming, in a celebrated speech in Havana, that revolutionaries do not under any circumstances threaten genocide.)

We need be quiet no longer. For with the creation of Breira (the Hebrew

word for alternative) after the 1973 War, and its emergence this past winter as a national membership organization, we have found not so much a voice as an appropriate forum in which to give voice to our views. Unlike other groups critical of Israeli foreign policy, such as the American Friends Service Committee, Breira is an authentic part of the American Jewish community. The officers of the Board include Rabbi Arnold Jacob Wolf, Director of Yale University Hillel; Rabbi David Wolf Silverman, Associate Professor of Philosophy at the Jewish Theological Seminary; and David Tulin, Director of the Board of Jewish Education in Philadelphia. All of the members of the organization share support for an independent Israel; many share experiences of anti-Vietnam war, civil rights, trade union, and socialist struggles.

Breira's platform

In order to demonstrate the significance of this new alignment, it is useful to quote the two planks of Breira's national platform that relate specifically to the Middle East:

1. Achieving a just and lasting peace in the Middle East is the most pressing problem facing Israel and the Jewish people. As committed Jews concerned for the security of the State of Israel, we in Breira address ourselves to this question. . . We believe that Israel cannot achieve a secure and lasting peace without: 1. A willingness to negotiate on the basis of the June 4, 1967 borders with such rectifications of those borders without which Israel's security would be clearly and substantively affected. An indication of this willingness would be the immediate cessation of Jewish settlement of the occupied territories.

2. A recognition of the Palestinians' right to national self-determination, including, should the Palestinians so choose, a state alongside Israel in the territories from which Israel with-

draws. In this regard we call upon the Israeli government to enter into negotiations with a recognized and authoritative representative body of the Palestinian Arab people, not excluding, on the basis of mutual recognition, the Palestinian Liberation Organization. . .

We take note of indications that certain Arab countries and Palestinian leaders are willing to recognize Israel's right to exist. We call upon these as well as other Arab spokesmen to publicly acknowledge and confirm these indications and, further, to clarify that they recognize Israel's right to exist as a sovereign Jewish state within secure borders. . . In the case of the PLO this would mean an amendment to the Palestine National Covenant removing those clauses which call for the dismantling of Israel and the renunciation of the use of violence and terror against civilian populations.

Within Israel

Breira's platform also addresses itself to the character of Israeli society and to American Jewish life. With respect to Israel, the organization expresses its solidarity with groups working within Israel not only for peace, but for closing the society's economic and social gaps by redistribution of wealth, modification of the tax structure, new social welfare programs, and affirmative action for the Oriental Jewish majority, women, and Arab citizens. In addition, it calls for ending the Orthodox monopoly on religious organization and many civil affairs, expanding civil liberties, and preventing the expropriation of Arab lands in the Galilee and in the Negev.

Within the United States, Breira affirms the imperative of free discussion (Breira has been the target of a neo-McCarthyite campaign by many established community groups), the independence of the Jewish press, the democratization of fund raising and fund allocation, and the "pursuit of

social and economic justice."

Breira has undertaken to carry its views to a variety of constituencies, including: the American Jewish community; the Israeli leadership and people; the broadest possible base of the general American public; and the American government (viewed with distrust by most members). The platform statement concludes by proposing that the organization support those in Israel as well as those

among the Palestinians and in the Arab countries who share its approach to peace in the Middle East.

For more information, write: Breira, 200 Park Ave. S., Rm. 1603, New York, NY 10003.

Ira Katznelson is an Associate Professor of Political Science at the University of Chicago and a member of the Editorial Board of Politics and Society.



Looking For America

The new Muslims: Descendants of Elijah Muhammed and Malcolm X

by David Moberg

Over 1,700 black and white dignitaries from across the United States and some foreign countries gathered at Chicago's luxury Hyatt Regency Hotel in early June for a dinner tribute to Wallace Muhammed, Imam of the World Community of Islam in the West. It was the most lavish of many recent gestures made by the "Black Muslims" to erase their old image to much of the public of violence or fanaticism.

In the two years since the death of Muslim leader Elijah Muhammed, his son Wallace has done far more than polish the image of the Muslims. He has dramatically changed the teachings and practices of "the Nation," as it is still frequently called. Beliefs that were heretical enough to lead to banishment and, indirectly, even to death not many years ago are now official doctrines. Rapidly Wallace has stripped away the idiosyncratic beliefs of his father and actively embraced an orthodox Islam.

At the same time that the Muslims have decided to devote themselves more to religious work, they have also announced that their holdings in land and various businesses, which had contributed to accumulation of a debt of \$6.5 million, will be sold off to "pioneer" members of the World Community. Also, not only are whites now admitted to membership, but the controversial separatist program has also been abandoned.

"We don't live in isolation," said Dorothy Hassan, editor of the *Bilalian News*, formerly called *Muhammed Speaks*. "We live in America. We must fight from within to reform America and

not constantly look at America as if we were outside it."

Although Wallace Muhammed has urged greater involvement in community affairs and, reversing his father's position, recommended that Muslims register to vote, the political program of the Muslims remains a somewhat vague "betterment of the community." More attention is paid to moral development and religious study than to political action.

"We don't live in isolation. We live in America. We must fight to reform America and not constantly look at America as if we were outside it."

Ironically, the World Community of Islam in the West has adopted many of the positions of Malcolm X, the Muslim leader who criticized and left the Nation in 1964 and was assassinated in 1965. A Harlem mosque has even been named af-

ter him, although he was anathema to Elijah Muhammed. But Wallace himself had been suspended in 1964 from the Nation for supporting Malcolm and his ideas.

Theological Changes

There has even been a closing of the theological gap with the small breakaway group of Hanafi Muslims. Last March the Hanafis seized several buildings in Washington, D.C., in an effort to avenge the killings by Black Muslims of seven Hanafis, including five children and grandchildren of Hanafi leader Hamads Abdul Khaalis. Khaalis had been a strongly outspoken critic of Elijah Muhammed.

The theological changes in the Nation of Islam include a renunciation of the divinity of W.D. Fard, the founder of the group and mentor of Elijah. Wallace also denies that his father was the last messenger and prophet, a title reserved in orthodox Sunni Islam for Mohammed. The number and length of evening services have been cut. The austere clothing requirements have been greatly loosened, although modesty is encouraged.

As "reviver and restorer of tradition," Wallace has repudiated some of his father's teachings as distortions and falsehoods. No longer will Muslims be taught that straight hair is important or that a "mother ship" hovers over the earth to pick up all Muslims at Armageddon. Insiders claim that these abrupt reversals of belief have been readily accepted by the members, and that many people enjoy the more relaxed atmosphere.

The announced plans for construction of a \$16 million mosque in the Woodlawn neighborhood on the south side of Chicago is another indication of the devotion to strictly religious projects of the new World Community. The mosque, part of a neighborhood development project of The Woodlawn Organization and the city of Chicago, will be largely financed with gifts from other Muslim countries, such as the Per-

sian Gulf Emirates and Libya, who have also helped to reduce the Nation's debt. Only with the theological conversion to orthodox religious principles could that help be obtained.

The rigid discipline once exacted has also been relaxed. There are no more checks on attendance at religious services. Wallace also stopped the mandatory sales of the newspaper, a practice that had in the past led to greatly exaggerated circulation figures as members paid for their copies but did not sell them. The Fruit of Islam, a corps of devoted male members who could serve as security forces, has also been dropped.

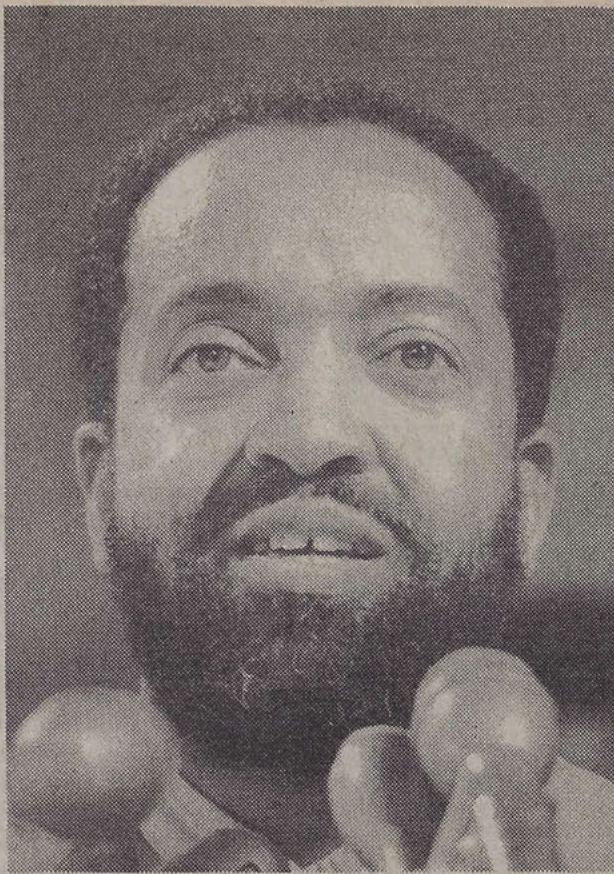
The Muslims have tried to maintain traditional doctrines of male dominance but with a twist that gives women a larger role, although hardly a standing that would satisfy any feminist. Dorothy Hassan, whose position as editor of *Bilalian News* is an indication that Muslim women can have some influence, talked about "mother's liberation" as the Muslim answer to women's liberation.

"That means looking out not only for her children but for all children and the society in which they exist, in education and in looking after the community," she said, describing the expanded women's role. "We still talk of the man as being the leader in the family relation—because it needs someone." Only men can be spiritual leaders or hold other high posts in the World Community.

Recruitment Shift

The Muslims still stress self-help and self-respect, themes which made the religion popular among former criminals, prisoners, drug addicts and prostitutes, who found a road to personal reform through their faith. Although the work among prisoners continues, there also appears to be a shift toward recruitment among more middle class and professional ranks of the community, according to some observers.

The decision of the Nation to stop



Wallace Muhammed

operating its own businesses does not mean that economic development has been abandoned. Instead, individual business ventures are encouraged, and Muslim enterprises will be transferred to members. Various reports blame bad management and even personal rip-offs, but the long-time friend and advisor of Elijah Muhammed, Eugene Dibble, said that "taxes were the primary cause of the problems." The Nation was only granted tax-exempt status as a religious organization this spring.

Name changes reflect some of the shifts in the organization. Nationalism was downplayed, to the apparent distress of at least some non-Muslim black nationalists, and ties with practicing Moslems elsewhere in the world were emphasized by changing from "Nation of Islam" to "World Community of Islam in the West." The term "Bilalian," in honor of Bilal, an Ethiopian who became an early follower of the prophet Mohammed, is now used in place of "black," but Muslims insist that "Bilalian" is not considered a racial description.

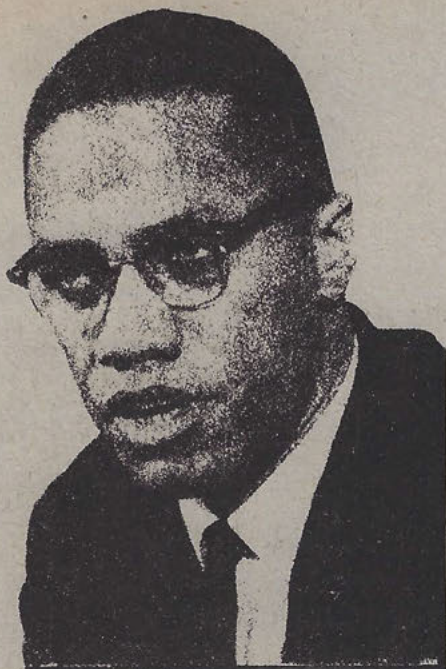
Despite these changes, and the surprising admission of whites to membership in accord with Koranic messages on race, the Muslims have not abandoned

all nationalist themes. Wallace Muhammed has urged all members to change their name, in whole or part, to one of the names in the Koran. Recently he urged black Christians to consider dropping the use of white images of Christ or rotating different racial images so that their followers would not think that God was white.

Dialogues with black Christian churches have picked up. There have also been talks with Jewish groups, especially in the wake of the Hanafi seizure of B'nai B'rith headquarters in Washington.

Newspaper Changes

Many of the changes are reflected in the newspaper. There are now more articles that profile blacks who have been successful in politics, arts, entertainment or other activities—such as Jesse Jackson, publisher John Johnson, Duke Ellington, Atlanta Mayor Maynard Jackson, authors John Williams and Claude Brown and Joan Little, who won her nationally celebrated case of self-defense in the stabbing of a prison guard who sexually assaulted her. Little recently joined the Muslims after what she described as a confusing and distressing



Malcolm X

series of attempts by various leftist groups to recruit her.

At times this policy has led to a fairly uncritical support of blacks in prominent positions. Although black and white public workers were militantly striking against Maynard Jackson's government in Atlanta, the *Bilalian News* reported Jackson's position most thoroughly and sympathetically. Cook County jail superintendent, Winston Moore, now on trial for abuse of black prisoners, was also given implicit support.

Basically, editor Dorothy Hassan said, the paper wants to play up blacks "who have worked for the cultural, internal revolution of our people." Also the paper now stresses "more of what the community is interested in, such as music, more of where people are at." The one-time emphasis on third world news has been sharply scaled down. Also, the paper now favors "balance" in its coverage of the third world instead of the earlier policy of favoring the views of socialist and liberation movement forces in those countries.

There will be fewer men in conservative business suits hawking the paper on streetcorners now and more reliance on newsstands. During the past year the circulation has reportedly run between 150,000 and 350,000, still strong despite a decline from previous inflated figures.

Much of the change among Muslims seems to have come about because of the

genuine convictions of Wallace Muhammed, who has long expressed interest in orthodox Islam, sympathy to many of the ideas of Malcolm, and criticism of his father and some of Elijah Muhammed's close associates.

It is possible as well that the moves were seen as necessary to strengthen the Nation by making membership more appealing and by making the Muslims more respectable in black and white middle class circles. Although membership figures are not announced, current estimates suggest that there may be 20,000 to 50,000 members in the 180 masjids, or mosques, in the United States. The *Bilalian News* typically reports around 8,000 people attending the Friday noon prayer service around the country. That may represent a drop

If Malcolm's theological views have been accepted, his political pronouncements have not.

from past totals, but sources close to the Muslims say that their numbers are now growing. Obviously the Nation's large debts required drastic action as well.

Political Questions

If Malcolm's theological views have been accepted, his political pronouncements on the whole have not. Although political action and voting are now encouraged, there is no clear sign of the direction the Muslims will take politically. Some observers think that the shifts in membership and image toward more middle class respectability may lead to a moderated political stance. Community action programs at this point include an organized, radio-equipped force to back up police in high crime areas of Chicago, where the

World Community has its headquarters, and plans for a community medical clinic.

In calm, measured tones, the newspaper does a good job of reporting black grievances and political action, but the Muslims don't take a stand on allegiance to capitalism or socialism. "There isn't really any economic system out there now that serves the needs of our people," editor Hassan said, "but capitalism is our system and given an opportunity we could make some gains within it. I don't think we're attached to either one, but what capitalism has provided in social services leaves a lot to be desired."

With its bid for respectability and ties with sympathetic black and white organizations, the Muslims are cautiously entering a new political arena with a commitment to improving life in the United States, especially for blacks, rather than to withdrawal into a separate nation. There are signs that the World Community of Islam is becoming more of an organization of the middle class, small businessmen and professionals within the black community. With his current emphasis on religious tasks, Wallace Muhammed may continue to keep an arm's length from politics and promote instead a more diffuse notion of self-improvement.

Wallace, however, has apparently accomplished a remarkable transformation of the Muslims, including abrupt about-faces on several issues, without debilitating divisions among followers. It was never clear that he could keep together the group that had always been devoted to Elijah Muhammed as a nearly divine leader. "Everyone was saying that once Elijah Muhammed died, everything would fall apart," Dibble said. "But they've had a very smooth transition." That accomplished, the question still remains: will the Muslims be only a church or a force for social change?

David Moberg is a reporter for *In These Times* and a member of NAM in Chicago.

The Long View

From Moranda Smith to Addie Jackson: "Before we started organizing it wasn't too different than slavery."

The following article is the text of a speech delivered by Roberta Lynch at Mayday celebrations in Oakland and Los Angeles, California.

by Roberta Lynch

In 1947 Moranda Smith, a young black woman, stood before a national convention of the CIO and said:

"I have looked over this delegation and I wonder if you cherish democracy. I say to you it means something to be free. It means a great deal. When the civil liberties of Negroes are interfered with and you do nothing about it, I say to you you are untrue to the traditions of America."

Many of you have probably never heard of Moranda Smith. She was one of a whole generation of blacks who left the sharecropper's existence and moved to the cities and industrial labor in the 1930's. She worked for the R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Co. in Winston-Salem, N.C. in what may have been described as "slave-like" conditions with earnings as low as 40¢ an hour. But Moranda Smith was also a fighter.

In 1943 an elderly black man fell dead in a Reynolds plant after having asked for—and been refused—permission to go home. Thousands of workers staged a spontaneous sit-in in protest. The anger spread and within

days 10,000 workers from other Reynolds plants in the area had walked off the job.

That was the beginning of Local 22 of the FTA—Food, Tobacco, Agricultural and Allied Workers of America—the union and the movement in which Moranda Smith was to play a leading role. She emerged from the ranks as an articulate spokesperson for the needs of her fellow workers and was placed on the union negotiating committee. She worked tirelessly to build the union, visiting workers at night and recruiting new union members on her lunch break. She eventually became the first woman to serve as regional director of an international union in the South.

She travelled all over the South, working constantly, often in dangerous conditions. Moranda Smith died in 1950 at the age of 34, worn out, they said, by the strain of the pace she had set for herself in order to meet the needs that she saw.

That was R.J. Reynolds in North Carolina in 1947. Today in 1977 there is J.P. Stevens in North Carolina. The conditions, the problems, the challenge—they are as alive now as they were then. Addie Jackson, a young black woman who works in a Stevens textile plant, says of conditions: "Before we started organizing, it wasn't too different than slavery."



There is a continuity between these two women, their two struggles that easily spans the intervening decades. The South (like the rest of the country, really) remains largely un-unionized, rent by racial and sexual prejudice, and defined by poor working conditions. But successive waves of working people continue to rise up to challenge the degrading conditions, and to face down the harassment that is the response of those in power to their efforts.

Limited Continuity

It is this continuity that we acknowledge here today. It is a continuity that is both historical and international—stretching back into our

own country's past and reaching out around the world. But even as we note this continuity, we cannot help but be painfully aware of its limitations.

It is not very likely that Addie Jackson of J.P. Stevens and the AC-TWU has ever heard of Moranda Smith of R.J. Reynolds and the FTA—her predecessor in spirit by a short 30 years. Like so many working class heroes and heroines—and I don't think we should be afraid to use those terms—she has been largely lost to history.

In fact, the working class in this country has suffered—or more accurately, had imposed on it—a loss of collective memory that is staggering in its proportions. We know so little of the men and women who formed the labor movement or the early left movements. This darkening of the past has contributed to a dimming of the present—the blurring of a working class identity in America. The horizons of working people have been narrowed in so many ways. The sense of solidarity with each other and with people around the world, and of ourselves as a potent agent for change that was unleashed in the early days, particularly of industrial organizing—has diminished.

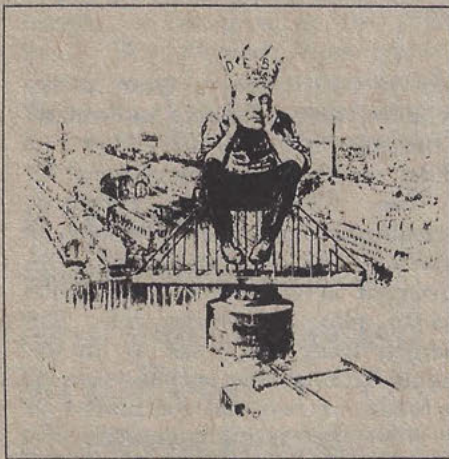
"Union," wrote one Daniel Weaver, a coal miner, in 1861, "is the great fundamental principle by which every object of importance is to be accomplished. . . Men [sic] can do jointly what they cannot do singly, and in the union of minds and hands, the concentration of their power becomes almost omnipotent."

Quite a contrast to the attitude today where "union" is taken to mean little more than higher wages and the dictates of George Meany, isn't it?

But it's hard not to wonder—particularly on a day like this—what it might be like if our educational system and our mass media were not so biased. If in growing up we heard as much about the Republic Steel Massacre as we did about the St.

Valentine's Day Massacre. If we learned as much about Eugene Debs as we did about Andrew Carnegie. If we knew not just that unions engage in collective bargaining, but of the tears and blood that went into their formation.

If the memory of the waves of strikes that swept California in 1933-34 in which Latino workers played such a vital role were honored, would the labor movement in Chicago be as likely to sit by quietly when a local fac-



Eugene Debs, as caricatured in Harper's during the Pullman strike

tory is invaded by immigration officials who—without the slightest pretence of due process—force over 100 Latino workers onto buses that don't stop until they cross the border into Mexico?

And if there were a strong recollection of the Seattle strike of 1919 in which dock workers refused to load boats that were being armed for a possible invasion of the young Soviet republic, would there be such a passive acceptance of the AFL-CIO's refusal to join with other labor bodies throughout the world to pressure for an end to the degrading apartheid practiced in Southern Africa?

Reclaiming Traditions

So much has been lost to us in this loss of continuity. Largely as a result of a concerted campaign of anti-socialism/communism in both World War I and post-World War II, we have lost the continuity of a socialist tradition within the working class. What is in other countries—and was once here—considered as a real alternative to the rule of profit—has become a "subversive ideology"—a "threat to the American way of life."

And then some socialists have contributed to this process of alienation by identifying themselves with other countries or by striking out against America per se—as though the country were not also made up of its people. Moranda Smith, addressing the CIO in 1947, could speak proudly of an "American tradition" with which she as a militant worker, a union organizer, and a black woman could identify. By the 1960's such an identification had largely disappeared from the radical movements. It was as though they existed on some unclaimed virgin territory—one which was solely their own.

It is time for us to reclaim this tradition—to realize that when we talk about a movement against corporate capitalism in this country we are talking about a movement that must include the majority of its people. People who, however much they recognize the failings of this nation, also see it as the source of their identities, their own history and progress. People who are as much, if not more, "America" than the multi-national corporations or the particular government that is in power.

There is a tradition of democracy that is at the core of many of the struggles that have been waged since this country's inception. It is the tradition that helped to spark the civil rights movement of the sixties, that helped to expose the unfulfilled promise of equality for women, and that is alive today in the efforts to

reform the labor movement. It is also a tradition that the rulers of this country seek to claim as their own in order to manipulate and manage in the name of democracy. It is time for us to reclaim this tradition.

But even as we seek to reclaim it, we need to go beyond it. Because democracy has always been as much a promise as a reality in this country. I know that there are those who would argue that we have "political democracy" and we now need to establish "economic democracy." But I would suggest that without economic democracy, political democracy itself is seriously undermined.

Unfulfilled Promise

It's hard to talk of "free elections" when we are confronted with a system that makes it so difficult for a third party that is not dominated by corporate power to even get on the ballot. It's hard to talk about "freedom of speech" when certain people have access to the mass media and can have their "speech" reach millions, while you and I can only reach as many people as can hear our voices in a large hall. It's hard to talk about "freedom of assembly/movement" when we have a social system that spawns crime at a rate that people no longer feel safe leaving their homes at night. And, perhaps most fundamentally, it's hard to talk about "free enterprises"—that is "work"—when most people have to work at boring, degrading and unsafe jobs. Democracy has to mean more control for people over every aspect of their lives if it is going to mean anything at all.

So what we need to talk about is making the promise of democracy into a reality. And in order to do that we need to reclaim another American tradition—socialism. I know that there are many people who are honestly committed to turning this country around who believe that because socialism has been so discredited as "anti-American" or "anti-democratic",

we should abandon it as a stated goal. To me this is only handing something else over to those in power. They want to define democracy in such a way as to legitimize themselves; and they want to define socialism in such a way as to delegitimize us. We are making a big mistake if we continue to let them do either.

If they can make socialism out as a scourge, an evil, it will always be capable of being used as a tool against us. Whenever we seek to affect change that undermines corporate power and seriously challenges the prerogatives of profit, we will be "accused" of being socialists. To the extent that we allow the term to remain an accusation that must be denied rather than a vision that can be affirmed, we undermine all the work that we try to do.

What is needed then is a new attempt to define what socialism could mean for our own country—in a way that is meaningful to Americans and that seeks to integrate a prospect of fuller democracy and equality. We are still in the very early stages of developing such a popular vision. No movement—socialist or non—has currently done so on a mass scale. I think, in fact, that we are still very much in the same boat that the great American novelist Richard Wright described when he talked about the

"It is too late for us that're sick.

*But for the people
still working in the
plants, and for our
children and our
grandchildren
that're coming on
after us,
we ask you
to help us.*

Boycott J.P. Stevens!"

LUCY TAYLOR



Communists of the thirties. He said: "They had a program, an ideal, but they had not yet found a language." Today our effort to establish a continuity with our past must be complemented by an effort to develop a language for our future.

This emphasis on our own country should in no way mean that we are not internationalists—or that we have the slightest hesitancy about challenging American foreign policy. In fact, it should mean that we stand for the same ideals that we put forth here in every situation around the world, and that we support those who are struggling against oppression and the loss of freedom in their own lands.

New Conditions

Contrary to popular mythology, history does not simply repeat itself. When we talk of rediscovering our past, we have to be careful to avoid thinking that we can just replay it. The conditions that we face today are radically different from those of the early 1900's or the 1930's (two periods to which some of today's leftists look for strategy and tactics). The working class has changed in composition and structure—new forces are being unionized today that were never thought of 25 years ago. The women's movement and the movements of

minorities have changed the shape of American politics irreversibly. But, perhaps most critically, we face today an unusual contradiction.

There have been few periods in American history when the ruling ideas have been so seriously undermined. The concept of profit, so sacred to free enterprise, no longer goes unquestioned. The honesty and integrity of the highest officers of government were exposed as a sham in Watergate and its aftermath. And ever-growing numbers of people are beginning to doubt the legitimacy of the current status quo.

Yet—and here is the contradiction—in spite of all this (and more) we are without the mass movements that could indicate and effect popular sentiment for change from the ground up. These movements—whether focussed on particular economic issues, such as unemployment, or on broader social goals, such as racial equality—are the lifeblood of any possibility for far-reaching change.

I think it is this contradictory situation—the weakening of ruling ideas, without corresponding mass protest—that contributes to the frustration and discouragement that many people feel today. It is the sentiment that leads people to give up on political activity—to opt for a religious politics (like the sectarian left groups) or political religions (like Rev. Moon).

Laying Foundations

It seems to me that this discouragement comes too much out of expectations of “instantness” that our society has propagated. We have instant cameras, instant breakfast, why not instant revolution. We tend to forget the great amounts of tedious, often invisible work that it takes to lay the foundations for mass movements to emerge. There is no preordained issue or constituency for such movements (and some people who thought there were missed the historic import of the movements of oppressed minorities

There have been few periods in American history when the ruling ideas have been so seriously undermined. Yet we are without the mass movements that could indicate and effect popular sentiment for change from the ground up.

and women). But there is some indication from past history that they are the results of the combination of certain external circumstances that no one can prophesy in advance, and the nitty-gritty building of resistance, organizing, pushing, etc., before those circumstances are fully evident.

The civil rights movement did not start the day that Rosa Parks refused to go to the back of the bus. Hundreds of organizers, including Parks herself, had been hard at work—day in and day out—doing the organizing that few knew of or responded to until that historic bus boycott. Or take the case of a labor organizer I know. He organized for two years among auto workers in Detroit in the 1930's and signed up about 10 workers into the union. Then things began to break loose with the CIO and he and the union were there. In two weeks, he signed up 2,000 workers.

I tell you these things not to promise you miracles, but to emphasize the importance of organizing even when it seems slow and difficult. You never really know what issue will strike the spark that will set things in motion.

And there is certainly no dearth of issues today. People can't find jobs and unemployment benefits are running out. Our cities continue to deteriorate while massive cutbacks are made in

human services. Many workers face conditions in which they have to breathe dangerous fumes that shorten their lives or cripple their later years. The average home in America costs over \$50,000—and black people are still segregated into housing that is rapidly deteriorating without government programs or sound open housing enforcement. Women cannot walk the streets without fear of rape, or sometimes even live in their homes without fear of brutality.

Organizers Needed

I could go on. The thing is: there is a dearth of organizers. People who are willing to lay the foundations for new movements to emerge. And people who are willing to work to develop a socialist presence that could help to give vision to such movements.

It was another tobacco worker of the '40's who said:

“Resolutions on paper won't solve people's problems. We got to send men and women out to organize. Speeches is all right, but you might as well be asleep if you just have speeches. I tell you, black and white, we can't survive without the other. We got to organize.”

Is it worth it? To be an organizer when there are so few visible results?

More letters

To try to develop a new socialist tradition in American when there's no guarantee of success? To commit ourselves to a goal that is not a finished utopia, but a continuous process of change? I think it is. Richard Wright expressed it very well. Some may think it's too romantic or simplistic, but I think such an understanding is essential. He said of his initial interest in communism:

"It was not the economics, nor the great power of trade unions, nor the excitement of politics that claimed me; my attention was caught by the similarity of experiences of workers, by the possibility of uniting scattered but kindred people into a whole. My cynicism slid from me and I began to wonder if a solution of unity was possible. My life as a Negro in America had led me to feel that the problem of unity was more important than bread, more important than physical living itself. For I felt that without a common bond uniting men, without a continuous current of thought and feeling circulating through the social system, like blood coursing through the body, there could be no living worthy of being called human."

Thank you, and may it never be said of any of us that we "might as well be asleep."

Roberta Lynch is National Secretary of the New American Movement.

the stated position of their organizations, intimately affect political legislation (which often touches the living/working conditions of the entire working class), the national economy, the size of unions themselves, the development of rank and file activity and the configuration of political parties. Their politics also often reflect the dominant consciousness of the union's membership.

It thus becomes essential to pinpoint those positions on issues, analyze how they may be changing, and evaluate how those changes will affect the fight for union democracy and maybe advance an anti-capitalist movement/consciousness.

Another premise of our labor reporting, at least that done by staff writers, is that our readers have the intelligence to draw their own conclusions from a presentation of the relevant facts mixed with quotes from knowledgeable sources. Instead of dropping in unabashed socialist rhetoric, we let rank and filers or union leaders do the talking. Anyone who carefully reads our labor articles can tell where we're coming from. This approach maintains at least an aura of objectivity and balance for those readers who are used to their daily papers. Our writing style—while always in need of improvement to hold reader interest—is intended to reach people who are not yet socialists and are unaccustomed to left jargon.

Dan Marshall
Chicago, Ill.

Dear MO:

The article in the May edition on the Ku Klux Klan and free speech points up an important issue facing the Left today. I concur with Mr. Wilkinson's position, at least to the extent that the Klan should be allowed free expression in civil society. In addition to the fact that repression of organizations like the Klan often serves as a double-edged sword against the Left, it is unfortunately true that such organizations are the result of deep antagonisms and contradictions in society that are quite independent of the First Amendment.

Furthermore, empowering the judiciary with the right to determine what speech is "racist" is dangerous in

any society, and doubly so in one where legal mechanisms exist mainly to protect private property. Therefore, the right of the Klan to preach its doctrine should be protected within civil society.

Protection of this right in civil society, however, should not be confused with allowing racists to become members of governmental institutions. While it is perhaps proper that any competent person should be allowed to fill non-sensitive jobs, such as in public libraries, sanitation, etc., it is the right of any government to require certain standards of behavior for positions of immense responsibility. Police officers and military personnel are armed and must occasionally make decisions that could affect people's lives. Naturally, "responsible," mature people would be demanded for these jobs; might we assume that racials would not fit the criteria? And further, can't we assume that members of the Ku Klux Klan are indeed racials, irrespective of how much they may deny it? Thus, since the powers of police and military are great, it must be concluded that any government has a legitimate right to prevent Klansmen from joining its ranks.

I think, then, that the position of the Left should be this: it should support the right of any organization to enjoy free speech—such as expressed through demonstrations, leafletting, and rallies—in civil society, but should adamantly oppose fascists and racials joining the military and the police, where they could immediately oppress black people.

William J. Volonte
Charlottesville, VA

Dear MO:

I was very disappointed by the dialogue between Ben Margolis and Frank Wilkinson on the ACLU's defense of the KKK at Camp Pendleton (MOVING ON, May 1977). Margolis and Wilkinson treated racism as a "clash of ideas", ignoring that racism is an institution which oppresses Blacks and diverts the working class into fighting itself over issues like welfare and busing. The Ku Klux Klan is involved in the maintenance of the structure of racism both by advocacy and by direct action designed to

Boycott J.P. STEVENS

DRAPERIES
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intimidate Blacks; racism is not simply a free speech issue.

Wilkinson further makes the mistake of representing the government as a neutral "tool", capable of being equally protective of right- and left-wing forces. Thus he is able to assert that "consistency in the defense of the First Amendment is the PRIME protection

ERA/Gay rights

from p. 4

fight a battle for a largely abstract goal when there are so many more concrete and pressing issues that need action.

The gay rights movement, as it has recently burst upon the national scene, has been strikingly male dominated, and has tended to focus on the concerns and lifestyles of gay men over those of lesbians. In addition, the gay movement is frequently under the leadership of the more wealthy elements in the gay community—those who own the clubs, bars and baths. This can lead to a limited perspective within the movement.

Perhaps, most basically there is the reality that laws will not bring about equality in a capitalist society. Inequality—in one form or another—is built into the system. The oppression of women, in particular, is central to the current economic order. Only continuing struggle to challenge all forms of discrimination and stereotyping can give meaning to legal changes.


But despite the limitations, the outcome of these current efforts—whether in the Illinois state legislature or the Dade County Commission—has meaning far beyond this particular time and place. If well-fought, they could help to bring about not just new social attitudes, but also a more progressive political configuration in America.

Roberta Lynch is the National Secretary of NAM.

against reaction; inconsistency invites repression". This leads him to imply that the repression of the left in the 1950's would not have occurred if the House Un-American Activities Committee had not already existed, when it is clear that this repression was the result of the situation facing U.S. imperialism after World War II. The Congressional Committee was merely a convenient means of carrying out an already operative policy, and its usefulness was contingent on the nature of the Communist Party at that time: limited in vision and without any strong mass support.

The key to avoiding repression is not dependence on the government, which has always withdrawn its protection whenever a revolutionary movement became too threatening, but to establish strong mass organizations capable of fighting back on their own. It should also be pointed out that allowing the growth of right-wing organizations itself invites repression of the left; militant right-wing groups have often functioned as extra-governmental means of stamping out progressive forces.

Michael Wold
 Austin, TX



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Auto workers

from p. 9

of money we workers have access to, that they didn't have back in the '30's. There are janitors in my plant who earn between \$12,000 and \$18,000 per year. Take one of the ghetto children and offer him an opportunity to make \$12,000 to \$18,000 a year and tell me what he wouldn't give up for that.

The UNC has a basic program for plants. All plants suffer from the same afflictions: speed-up, a negative working environment, health and safety, arbitrators, no individual membership rights. So we find an individual there with guts enough to stand up for it. That's how we get UNC members. Nine times out of ten, they get elected.

Immediately thereafter, the UAW moves in, and tells them about the grandeur, and the glory and the goodies that will come to you if you're mindful of who you are, and what you represent and how advantageous it is to join them. So we lose these people we just got through recruiting.

If you are a local president, and you start up on a revolutionary platform, representing membership rights and problems, and you continue on your militant dissident ways, you become spotlighted and pressured to mend your ways and join the administration. It depends on the integrity of the individual involved. How many people will turn down \$20,000 a year for morality questions?

On the UAW and the AFL-CIO:

Pete Kelley: We of the UNC have taken a position against affiliation with AFL-CIO. We have no illusions about why we left to begin with. It was supposed to be that the AFL-CIO was reactionary, and not engaging in social issues. So the international union got out. That's basically untrue. Really, Meany just didn't give up the presidency. Walter Reuther thought he was heir

apparent and he just pulled out under the guise of social issues.

Since then, the UAW has done nothing on social issues. Nothing. In 1968 after burnings in Detroit, when people marched arm in arm with Martin Luther King, those were fine things to do. But the skilled trades at GM were less than 1/2 of 1% black and nothing was done in the local unions. I say, they should have been taking care of where they had some clout.

If we're going back in the AFL-CIO, they'll have to negotiate if they want us in. First, we think the legislative campaign of the AFL-CIO should open up. It shouldn't be restricted to a small body of people who make up the political action program. We should also talk about changing their policy in relation to discriminatory practices that go on within those unions.

On the left in America:

I've had some bitter experiences. To join the working class to them meant to get a job in a plant. Then, they had to show they were revolutionary. The only way was to hit a foreman on the nose, and get fired and have a strike with a hundred members supporting you, and get them fired. But there's one difference. If you have a PhD in your pocket, and didn't really like the plant to begin with, the only way to get out is punch a foreman and get on this blacklist, making sure you can't get in any other plant.

There's a real need for understanding between working class people and intellectuals, students. But what we don't need in the plants is teachers. Nobody's going to save the working class. It's going to have to save itself.

Working class people are not in the plants because we want to be there. We're there because that's our only survival. We've learned upward mobility won't work for us, and that's where we're going to be. I don't believe the American working people are going to skip over the labor movement and go to any political party, even though I advocate the formation of a

labor party. I believe the American working people will go to the same source that provided relief for them in the '30's, the labor movement. We're trying to prepare the union for that time. That's the job of the progressive elements in the labor movement.

If there is nothing happening among the working class today, you are not going to make it happen. What's going to make anything happen is when a crisis comes. The question will then be, have we been working, have we been organizing, have we been giving an alternative, so we're ready, prepared, organized to lead.

Judy MacLean is a staff writer for In These Times and a NAM member in Chicago.

Thanks to Jim Berland of KPFFK in Los Angeles for taping the remarks on which this article is based.

NAM literature

***Working Papers on Socialism and Feminism**

The second edition of a popular pamphlet on the interface between socialism and feminism, the socialist movement and the women's movement. Includes articles by Barbara Ehrenreich, Eli Zaretsky, Roberta Lynch, and others on black women, autonomy and unity, the meaning of socialist-feminism, and the state of the women's movement. \$.75. Include \$.25 postage.

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***A People's Energy Program**

There is an alternative to the Carter energy program that places the needs of people before profits. NAM activists in the energy, environmental and utilities movements have written a program that is designed to attack private power over energy policy and at the same time really improve the situation we face. \$.35. Include \$.11 postage.

NAM News

COORS BOYCOTT The nation's largest Brewery Workers' local—#366— is out on strike against the fifth largest beer company in the land, Adolph Coors Co., of Golden, CO. The union was forced to strike or, as one member put it, "lose everything we had," after Coors made such "good faith" proposals as an open shop, forced physicals to weed out older workers, and involuntary lie detector tests. Now in an effort to put pressure on Coors at the bargaining table, the union has called for a boycott of Coors beer, concentrating in the Western and Southwestern states where it is distributed. Coors has long been notorious among feminists, Chicanos, and Blacks for dodging affirmative action plans. In addition, Board President Joe Coors is a notorious right-winger who heads up the National Right-To-Work Committee. These factors have enabled the boycott to generate a wide base of support. In Austin, Texas NAM members have joined with Chicano groups, trade unionists, and other leftists to form the Austin Coalition for Human Rights at Coors. According to a NAM member in Austin, the Coors boycott work has provided an important means of "linking up issues of racism, sexism, and class oppression." For more information, contact: Brewery Workers Local #366, 4510 Indiana St., Golden, CO 80401.

AGAINST RACISM Four hundred people were arrested for a sit-in protesting institutional racism at the University of California at Santa Cruz in late May. The sit-in followed two weeks of intensive educational and organizational work on the campus. It focused on increased support for affirmative action, Third World and Native American studies, and an end to U.C. investments in corporations operating in South Africa. The Coalition Against Institutional Racism (CAIR) which spearheaded these efforts was an unprecedented union of Third World, Native American, and White students. It represented an advance over the student movement of the sixties in two respects: First, by connecting apartheid to institutional racism on the local campus, CAIR created a concrete basis for multi-racial unity. Secondly, because of the role played by Third World groups, People for a Free South Africa, and NAM, the struggle put forward an openly socialist perspective. These advances have strengthened the possibility of an expanded anti-racist and socialist movement at UCSC in the coming year.

HOUSING Some 70 community and campus people attended a recent open forum on "Housing, the University, and the Community" initiated by members of Southside NAM. Sponsored by the University of Chicago Student Gover-

ment, the speakers included leaders of several community organizations, the 5th Ward alderman and representatives of city-wide coalitions on rent and urban development issues. Released at the forum was a "Report of Students Housing and the Community" published by the NAM-organized Students for Alternatives Housing Task Force. The report, which received good coverage in the community and city press, details the University of Chicago's past use of urban renewal to exclude neighboring black and lower-income residents, and its continued callousness towards the housing needs of students and campus workers. The report calls for new apartment construction by the University and democratic input into the community planning process. NAM members see the forum as the first step in building a community-wide movement around housing issues. They hope to combine the efforts of student groups, campus unions and community organizations around a common program to insure the availability of adequate, affordable housing.

COMMUNITY NEWS Middlesex NAM has initiated a new community newspaper based in Somerville, Massachusetts. The *Somerville Community News* will be published on a monthly basis and distributed free throughout the community. The first issue features an analysis of why the local school system does such a poor job of educating, a report on the union organizing drive among clericals at Boston University, and a review comparing the films *Rocky* and *Harlan County, U.S.A.* The paper also includes a special Portuguese-language section directed toward Somerville's large Portuguese population. Frank Ackerman, a NAM member who works on the paper, said the *Community News* has already gotten a very warm reception among working and progressive people in Somerville.

GAY RIGHTS NAM members in New Haven, Conn., participated actively in a broad coalition around a Gay Rights Week in early April. The coalition, based mainly among Yale Univ. undergraduates, collected several thousand signatures on petitions calling for basic civil rights for gay people. The group also held an outdoor rally which was attended by over 150 people, about half of whom were Third world people. The two gay student organizations at Yale initiated the coalition, which also included the Black Student Alliance at Yale, Despierta Boricua, Yale Undergraduate Women's Caucus, and others. In addition to helping with the general planning and petitioning, a NAM member spoke at the rally on the subject of "Socialism and Gay Liberation."

NAM Convention set for August 11-14, in Cedar Rapids, Iowa

BRIDGING THE GAP An unfortunate division exists in the non-sectarian left today. There are those committed to socialist organization, discussion, and agitation. And then, there are scores of leftists involved in mass organizing but without an organizational means to link this work to a larger perspective. The New American Movement has survived and grown into the 70's by attempting to bridge this gap between developing a socialist perspective and presence and working within the mass movements in their present forms.

CREATIVE TENSION This is not a project without tensions. But we believe that facing these tensions can give rise to a more unified socialist movement and practice in America in the coming years. The 1977 annual NAM Convention will focus both on questions of political direction and on the concrete problems that organizers find in their work. It will be of importance not just to NAM members, but to people on both sides of this dichotomy who are starting to look for ways to overcome it.

JOIN US We want to urge all those who share this approach to come to the convention. Work with us to bridge the gap.

JOIN US

- Please send me more information on the NAM Convention — agenda, costs for meals and lodging, etc.
- I'm planning to come to the NAM Convention. Please reserve a space for me and send me registration materials.

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(This form is only for the use of non-NAM members. NAM members will receive Convention materials through their chapters.)

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its meaning for the U.S. left
Puerto Rican independence
gay liberation
class analysis and
class consciousness
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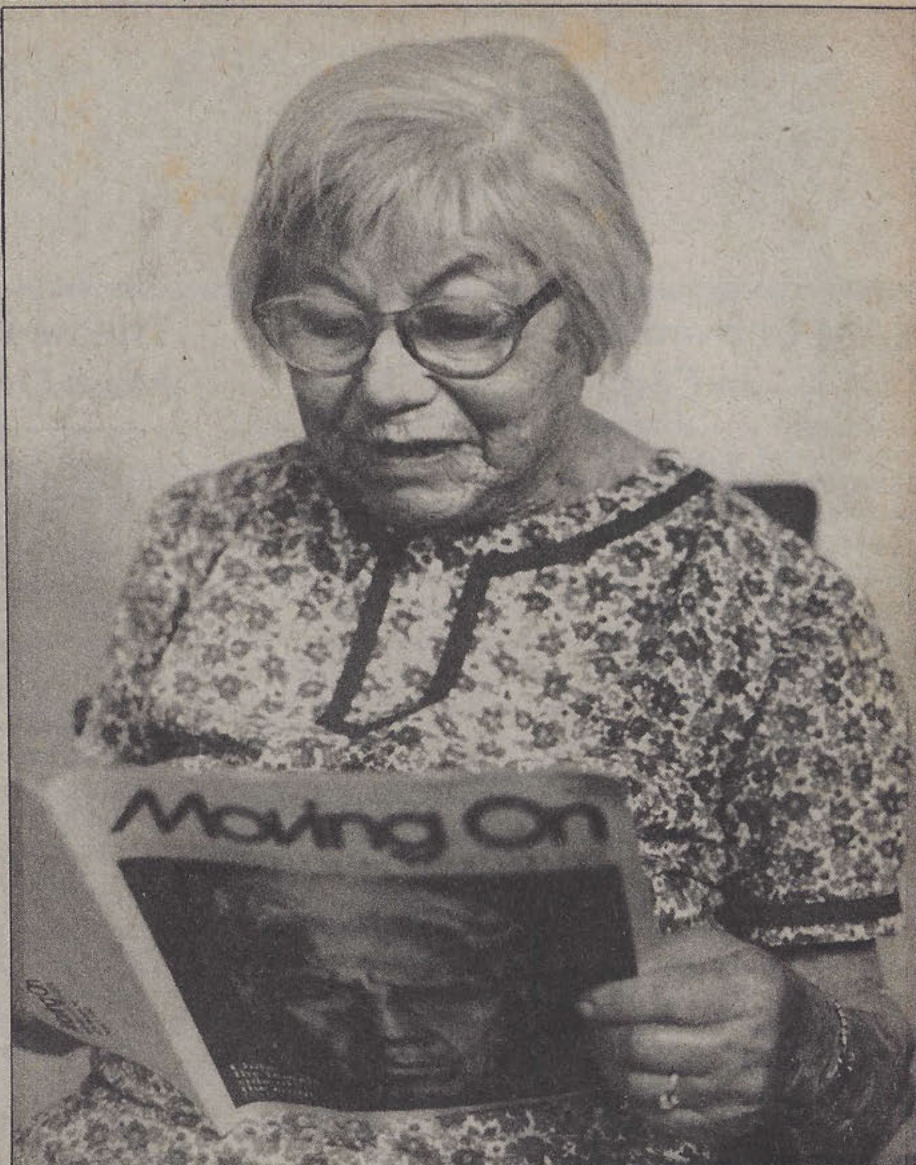
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