

Moving On

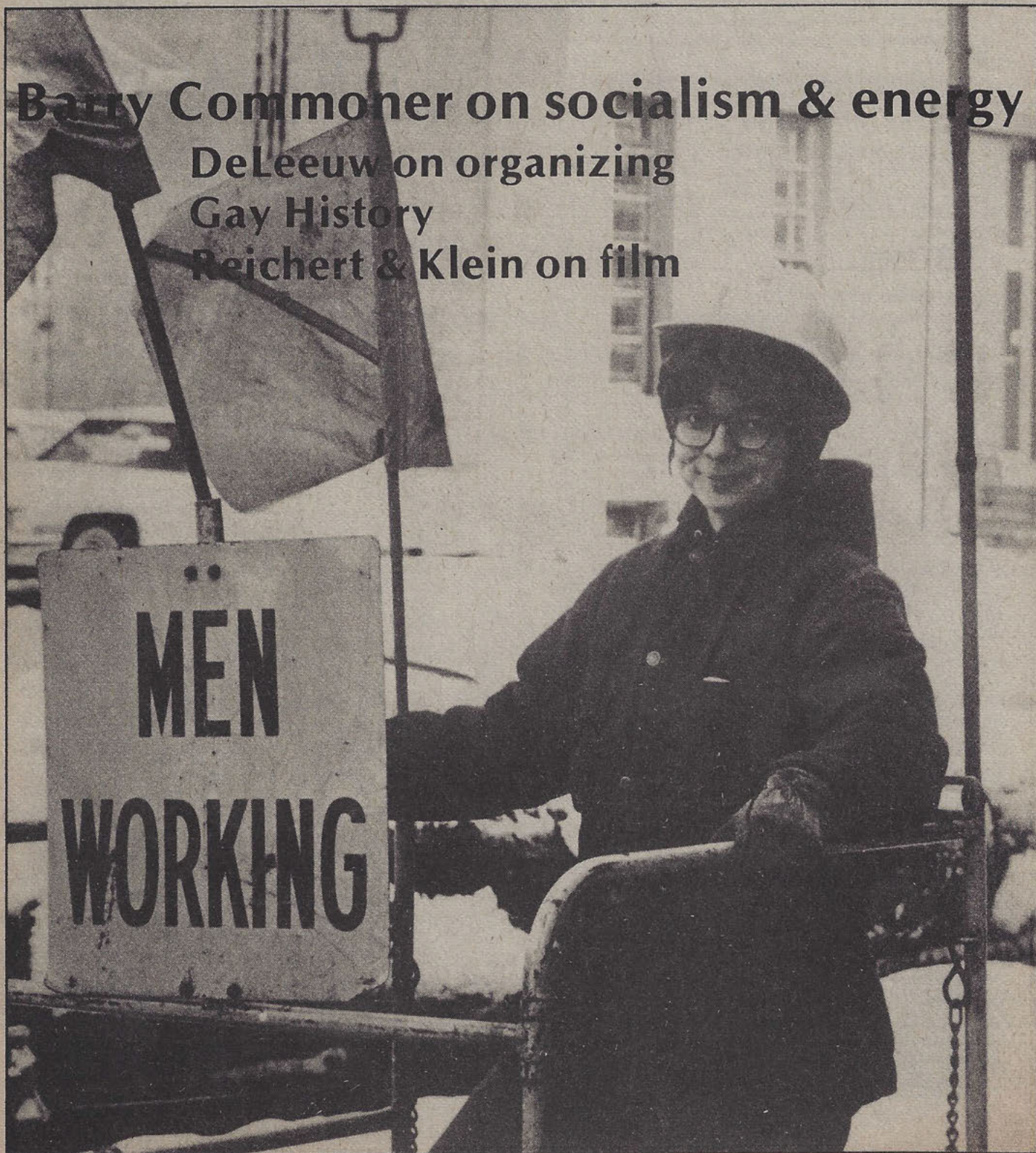
MONTHLY MAGAZINE OF THE NEW AMERICAN MOVEMENT

Barry Commoner on socialism & energy

DeLeeuw on organizing

Gay History

Reichert & Klein on film



Moving On

MONTHLY MAGAZINE OF THE NEW AMERICAN MOVEMENT

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Comment

- Carter's energy remedy..... 3
Just what the corporate doctor ordered.
- There is an alternative..... 5
NAM vs. Carter on energy. Guess who comes out ahead.
- A good socialist paper is hard to find..... 6
But IN THESE TIMES is making a strong run for the money.

Getting Together

- An organizer speaks..... 7
Bert DeLeeuw, of the Movement for Economic Justice offers lessons.
- Common Sense hits Detroit..... 9
Ken Cockrel runs for Common Council

Looking For America

- Culture, capitalism and the left..... 11
Socialist filmmakers look at the state of the art.
- Gay American history..... 14
Taking the past from the closet.

The Long View

- A new social imperative..... 15
Scientist and ecology leader, Barry Commoner, stands up for socialism.
- NAM News..... 22

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Letters

Dear MO:

I want to congratulate you for initiating the important dialogue on civil liberties and the KKK. However, I am concerned about some of the deletions that were made from my article because of space considerations. I believe that the following points are germane to my argument and would like your readers to be aware of them:

1. Setting the Pendleton KKK development in a historical context of the residue of statutory and case law, and Executive Orders, violations of our Bill of Rights sustained by political radicals during the domestic Cold War;

2. Unlike the Cold War era, when the Supreme Court on occasion checked the repressive attacks by the Congress and President, today the struggle for equal rights and revolutionary social and economic change exists in a climate of coordinate repression from ALL branches of government, including a Supreme Court now, for the seventh year on a collision course with the Bill of Rights;

3. Criticism of Margolis' use of obscenity in listing Court sanctioned limits on speech, juxtaposed against historical citations that thought-controllers and their racist allies have made major inroads on free speech in this area; and, Hitler's initial attacks on Jews were done in the name of fighting obscenity.

Frank Wilkinson
Los Angeles, CA

CORRECTION

We would like to apologize to Ben Margolis for an error in his article that was part of the exchange "Civil Liberties Frontier: Free Speech in a Racist Society" in the May, 1977 issue of MOVING ON. The third paragraph on p. 19 of his article should read as follows: To take another example. The Supreme Court has held that advocacy of the overthrow of the government may be a crime meeting the requirements of a clear and present danger even though the danger of such advocacy being effective exists only in a remote and possible future.

more letters on p. 18



Carter's energy remedy: use less and pay more

by Paul Garver

The emphasis on conservation in Carter's new energy program is grounded in harsh economic reality. The energy crisis is integrally linked with other structural contradictions of American capitalism—inflation, unemployment, the fiscal crisis of the state, and negative balance-of-payment. Any real solution to the energy crisis would require major transformations in American society itself. What we are offered instead is governmental tinkering with taxation, while retaining the basic system of private monopoly dominion over energy resources that is responsible for creating the crisis.

President Carter and his energy advisors are grappling with an explosive situation that totally eluded Ford's "Project Independence". The steeply rising prices of all energy resources are undermining what has been the basis for capitalist development since World War II. The tremendous expansion of productive capacity, G.N.P. growth, and (to a lesser extent) real per capita income were dependent upon low energy prices. Capital investment programs took advantage of low or declining prices of electricity and fuels to substitute energy-intensive and capital-intensive processes for labor-intensive ones. In major manufacturing sectors (steel, aluminum, chemical, etc.) energy consumption per unit soared while employment remained static or declined. Energy extraction and processing itself was the most dramatic example of this process, requiring the largest capital and energy inputs and the smallest labor input of any industry. In addition, industries with high energy requirements

What the energy monopolies needed was a "wartime sense of urgency," a climate in which the people would voluntarily accept austerity and lowered standards of living.



Harry Pincus

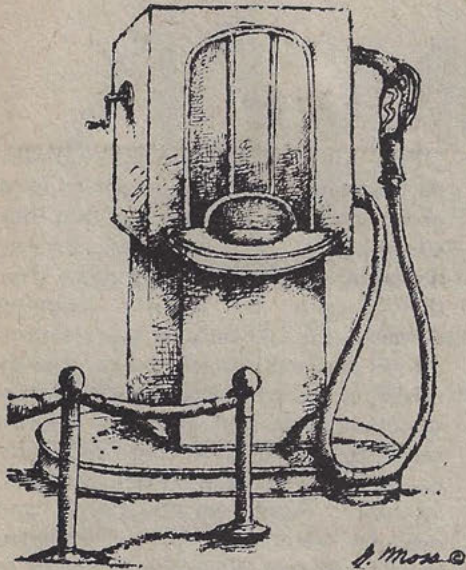
(synthetic fibers, plastics) crowded out labor-intensive competitors (textiles, leather). Despite a persistent tendency toward increasing unemployment, this post-war industrial transformation seemed to make economic sense because the price of energy (and capital) remained relatively low.

Signs of trouble appeared in all the energy industries even before the

OPEC oil boycott. The international oil companies found it easier to earn profits on cheap imported oil that they control. In the hope of forcing deregulation of natural gas in the U.S., they began to report declining domestic oil and natural gas reserves. (Mobil ads first proclaimed an "energy crisis" in 1971.) Because of rising construction costs and climbing interest rates that made new coal-fired plants—and particularly nuclear plants—more expensive to build and operate, electricity prices reversed their long-term decline and began to steadily rise.

As a result of these changes the energy/utility industry began to absorb an ever-growing share of available capital investment, from 23% of all new plant and equipment expenditures in the U.S. in 1965 to 34% in 1974. The limit of government-subsidized financing via tax breaks (depletion allowances, investment tax credit, deferred income taxes) was reached, as the effective tax rate of energy companies and utility companies declined toward zero!

The OPEC oil boycott signalled the end of the cheap energy prices that had fueled economic growth. The boycott provided an excellent cover and pretext for a massive jump in energy prices that was already in the cards. The international oil companies shifted their profits from production to refining and marketing, squeezing out independent service stations in the process. They earned windfall profits on all their energy holdings—not merely on domestic oil and gas, but on the coal and uranium reserves they had bought up in the late 1960's. Coal and uranium prices were quickly jacked up toward the artificially high price of oil, causing massive price increases to utility consumers through automatic fuel adjustment clauses. When the price of natural gas lagged (merely tripling instead of quintupling!), the producers prayed for a cold winter and prepared for it by withholding gas from the interstate market. The success



of this strategy was seen in this winter's gas "crisis."

A wartime urgency

The stage was set for the shaping of a comprehensive national energy policy, a development ardently desired by the energy monopolies. They wanted complete price decontrol, deregulation of natural gas, abandonment of environmental restrictions, and massive public subsidies for nuclear and synthetic fuels development. Despite the advocacy of the Ford administration (orchestrated through the ERDA, the FPC, the FEA, and Vice-President Rockefeller), the full realization of these goals was frustrated by a Congress somewhat responsive to the mounting wave of public indignation toward the energy industry. What the energy monopolies needed was what the Mobil ads called a "wartime sense of urgency," a climate in which the people would voluntarily accept austerity and lowered standards of living.

Carter's carefully orchestrated unveiling of his energy policy is designed to create a popular mood of urgency about the need to overcome the "energy crisis". His call to "sacrifice," to "use less and pay more" evokes a wartime psychology, in which all patriotic citizens are exhorted to put aside their personal convenience, their selfish interests, and to join in a noble crusade of saving energy. Posing as a

lonely leader battling against entrenched "special interest groups," President Carter claims his program transcends politics as usual. (Common Cause promises to defend the President's program.) And indeed polls taken the week after Carter's three presidential messages suggest that Energy is replacing Inflation and Unemployment as the No. 1 national "problem." They also show that energy shortages are more likely to be viewed as "real" than as manipulated by the energy monopolies and that voters blame government, rather than the oil companies for the shortages.

The polls indicate why the energy industry will not attempt to defeat Carter's program as a whole, but rather to amend it to include more governmental "incentives" for themselves. Realistic industry leaders realize that Carter's energy policy must avoid the *appearance* of subservience to the energy industry. In addition by cushioning some of the impact of higher energy prices with tax rebates, the government will prevent an immediate and catastrophic decline in mass purchasing power, which would pose both a political and an economic threat to corporate interests.

Rising prices

Sharply rising energy prices will still provide sufficient incentives for energy production and development across the entire spectrum of energy sources monopolized by the major oil companies. This is particularly true since Carter has specifically refused to endorse any measures that would weaken their total dominion over energy supplies—no vertical separation of oil production, distribution, and marketing; no horizontal divestiture of oil and gas from coal and uranium; no Federal Oil and Gas Corporation to develop energy resources on public lands.

Carter's proposed government policy encourages conservation rather

than expanded production because conservation will reduce the incredible capital demands that would otherwise plunge the economy into a major depression. Research efforts by the Ford Foundation, the Federal Energy Administration, and the Conference Board (none of these noted for their antipathy to capitalism!) convinced the more "liberal" sectors of American capitalism that the combined capital requirements projected by the energy monopolies, the nuclear industry, and the electric utility companies would bankrupt and destabilize the entire economy.

Several estimates of the cost of merely maintaining the historical rate of energy growth run to \$1 trillion in the next ten years, which would absorb 75% of all new capital formation in the U.S. This would put interest rates through the roof and leave little for other private or public capital needs. Inflation and unemployment would return to double digit levels; cities would be forced into bankruptcy; and energy-intensive industries would suffer severe dislocations. Conservation is cheaper than accelerated production in terms of the long-run interest of capital as a whole. But we're talking about a corporate brand of conservation—a program for altering energy consumption patterns *without* fundamentally restructuring the economy, for government intervention to rationalize the energy industry without endangering private monopoly control.

Opposition coalition

In order to organize a movement for an alternative energy policy, we must consider what Carter's program does not do. First and foremost, it leaves crucial life-and-death decisions about energy policy to an industry that has demonstrated to most Americans its total disregard for their interests, tempered only by decisions of equally inaccessible government bureaucrats.

There is an alternative

An issue by issue comparison of Carter's energy program and the NAM energy program. There is a way through the crisis that puts the people's need ahead of corporate profits. (The full text of NAM's program is available for 35 cents. Write us.)

	Carter	NAM
Prices	Price increases to promote conservation of non-renewable resources.	Price stabilization through development of renewable energy sources—solar, sea, geothermal, wind, etc.
Conservation	Tax credits for insulation and other conservation measures.	Discourage industrial waste by reconversion to less energy-intensive technologies. Encourage insulation through direct financial aid, especially to homeowners. Develop mass transit.
Utility rates	Reform electric rates to prohibit promotional pricing and institute "peak period" pricing for industrial users.	Shift the rate burden to large industrial and commercial users. "Lifeline" rates to guarantee stable low prices to consumers for essential gas and electric service.
Taxes	Tax rebates for efficient cars will shift the market away from "gas guzzlers," but will also encourage price increases on small cars. New gas taxes will mostly discourage low-income consumers.	No new taxes on sales or rebates without price controls.
Nuclear Power	Faster licensing for nuclear power plants; proposes "breeder" reactors.	Stop nuclear power. It's unsafe, inefficient, expensive, creates fewer jobs than other forms of energy. No "breeder" reactors, phase out existing nukes.
Jobs and labor	No jobs or income guarantees for workers who lose their jobs due to energy-related economic changes.	Job safety guarantees in energy and utility industries. Industrial reconversion to more labor-intensive technologies to create jobs and conserve resources. Bargaining rights for utilities workers in public sector. Job guarantees and training for workers who lose their jobs through reconversion.
Corporate control	Status quo: leave energy production in the hands of the monopolies—the oil and utility companies.	Weaken private control of energy; acquire and strengthen democratic public control. Support divestiture, federal corporate chartering, and public ownership on local, regional and national levels with elected directors from the local level on up.

Second, it would sharply increase energy costs that already fall most heavily on lower-income working class people (utilities, heat, gasoline, food), who lack the personal financial resources required to take advantage of tax credits. They can't afford newly built housing with solar and insulation

incentives, nor can they afford new cars, even with rebates. Third, the program seems deliberately designed to focus on "individual" consumer decisions, and ignores all cooperative and collective alternatives (decentralized energy production and distribution by neighborhoods,

cooperatives, etc.). Finally, two areas of omission that show that the urban poor are left out of consideration are mass transit and insulation of rented premises—both essential to prevent economic disaster in the cities.

Strategically, socialists should try to
turn to p. 20



A good left paper is hard to find

In November of 1976 a venture of some significance for the American left was launched. *In These Times*, a national independent weekly socialist newspaper, began publication.

Since *ITT* first appeared on the scene it has been at the center of controversy within the left. The *Guardian*, a self-defined "Marxist-Leninist" weekly has roundly condemned *ITT* as "social democratic." And within our own organization there are some who share this view.

From the paper's inception NAM has been organizationally and politically independent of *ITT*, although several NAM members are employees or sponsors. *ITT* does not want to be closely identified with one particular organization and NAM does not want to be tied to an editorial policy over which we have no real influence.

On the whole, however, NAM views the emergence of *In These Times* as a very positive development. The left has for so long been invisible—without a presence in the larger political reality. Whatever the merits of our particular programs or the power of our social vision, we have been without a means of articulation. Local socialist papers have been mostly weak and transient. The *Guardian* remains mired in left language and politically isolated by an undemocratic and unrealistic approach. *Seven Days* has been commendable in many respects, but it lacks a socialist perspective.

Into this vacuum, *ITT* brings a lack of rhetoric, a firm commitment to democracy, an openness to new currents in the society, and a strong socialist advocacy. We view *ITT*'s role as a vital one in creating a climate more favorable to socialist ideas and in stimulating political discussion within the broadest reaches of the current left.

It is precisely because of our high hopes for the potential of *ITT* and our common perspective on certain key issues,

that we have been so seriously disappointed in the overall drift of its editorial policy. At the core of *ITT*'s perspective is an emphasis on participation in elections as the decisive element in building a socialist movement in America. We disagree with this approach.

NAM shares *ITT*'s commitment to democracy, but as we see it democracy cannot simply be defined as periodically casting a ballot. It must be re-defined to include popular control over all the institutions of people's lives and direct popular involvement in gaining that control.

The fundamental problem today is not the absence of socialist *ideas*—though that is certainly a terrible problem—but the absence of the mass movements and militant action that are the necessary ground for the growth of such ideas. *ITT*'s lopsided emphasis on socialist electoral activity misses this critical point.

Vital coverage

Fortunately, the perspective of the editorial page does not permeate the entire paper, and *ITT* has provided vital coverage of some popular movements and a forum for political discussion. It is fast becoming the most reliable source of news on the left. Despite these advances, there are a number of problems with the paper that may be as much the result of the limitations on a still young and underfinanced paper than of a conscious political choice.

These include: an undue emphasis on covering left electoral activity relative to other forms of political activity. An uncritical stance toward the upper reaches of the labor movement. Weak coverage of black or other minority movements. A conservative and wordy style.

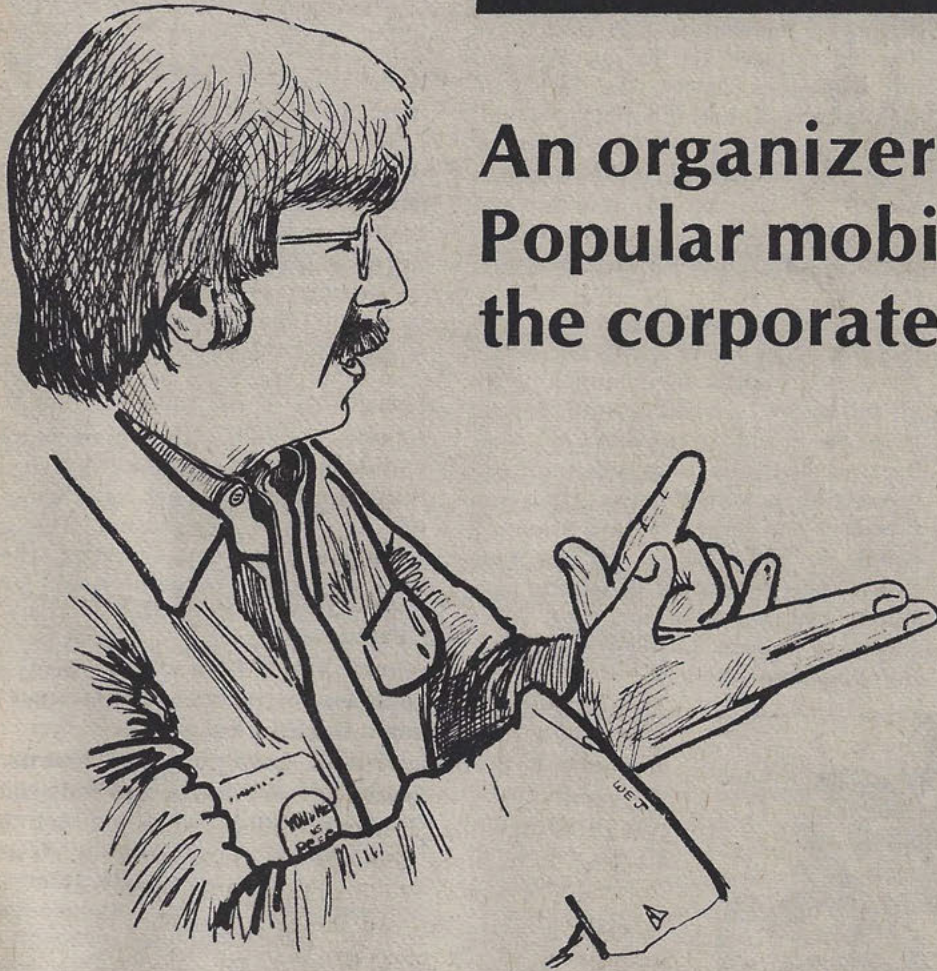
NAM—and those who share our approach—cannot afford to stand on the sidelines, pure in the strength of our criticisms and patiently waiting to see how all these problems work out. Whatever our disagreements, *ITT* is at present the only real hope for a voice that can speak to significant sectors beyond the existing left.

We should, therefore, join the fray. We should energetically help to build *ITT*'s circulation. We should write articles on the kind of political activity and social trends we think are important. And we should continue to express our political differences with the paper through all available forums.

At periodic intervals we should evaluate whether the paper is really reaching out to new constituencies and positively influencing the political climate. *ITT* may not change or grow if we do all this; but there's certainly a far better chance that it will than if we don't.

—R.L.

Getting Together



sketch of Bert DeLeeuw by William Johnson

by Bert DeLeeuw

The single most persistent problem facing the Left in America today is its failure at mass organizing.

I believe that the "new populist" or citizens action organizations—the Fair Share, ACORNs, CALs, etc.—when viewed in the context of recent organizing history and in terms of their as yet unrealized potential, offer the brightest hope for a mass movement for fundamental change in this country.

What this organizing is about is empowerment; challenging and changing

the relationships of power. It is important to understand that this is the basis of these organizations' ideology, though they may not speak of it in those terms. What is distinctive about these organizations is that they have rejected all of the easy labels for themselves and are in the process of developing a new set of politics and ways of talking about fundamental issues.

Most of these organizations are still in their early adolescence but there are encouraging signs that they will soon come of age. More people are full time organizers than at any point in the past

An organizer speaks: Popular mobilization and the corporate counter-attack

ten years. More money is being raised for organizing; most of it, significantly, by door to door canvassing campaigns in the vast suburbs. More mass-based, direct action citizen organizations are being built. More people are being reached with the anti-big business, anti-bank, anti-utility monopoly message.

The preceding should not be construed as a wholesale endorsement of these organizations. For the past four years, under the banner of the Movement for Economic Justice, we have grappled with the problem of building a mass movement for economic change. MEJ worked with these grassroots citizen action organizations across the country, fostering their growth at the local level and inching toward a national federation around a common economic justice agenda.

Our decision to close MEJ last spring was based in part on some frustration with these citizen action organizations. We were frustrated with the slowness with which local groups began to explore the possibilities of national coalition. We grew restless with the preoccupation of many successful grassroots organizers with polishing their local pearls rather than developing a national strategy. We've been uncomfortable with some organizers who try so hard to keep

their politics out of the organizations they work with that they miss the signals of their members' readiness for more militant action.

On the other hand, we've agonized over the organizing efforts of activists on the Left: their common lack of basic organizing skills and their unwillingness to submit to the discipline that serious organizing requires. We've seen an obsession with ideological purity prevent alliances and a desire to proselytize stand in the way of action. We've seen the resultant organizing failures make people feel that change is not possible.

We've been disappointed with the failure of both forces to develop new strategies and tactics by which large numbers of people can engage in confrontation with the corporate class.

In the end, these internal problems are dwarfed by the external constraints on mass organizing; analyzing these

external influences is a critical component of developing new directions. Currently, three key factors demand our attention: Carter, the corporate counter-attack, and the moral revival. Each is interconnected, and Carter is, in fact, key to each. He is the unofficial leader of the moral revival and represents the new "enlightened" breed of capitalists for the corporate sector.

How does Carter affect the base building work we're concerned with? First, as President, he is launching an all out effort to build a similar base. Using the unlimited resources of his office and the media, he is systematically organizing a constituency. His open presidency is geared toward allowing people to feel part of the decisions rather than remaining dissenting outsiders. For every major issue from energy to welfare, Carter is consulting the opposition's leaders.

For the architects of the fundamentalist religious revival that is sweeping America, Carter's election was tremendously important. *Time* magazine has cover stories on Carter's religion and the country was treated to weekly Sunday school lessons during the transition. Basic fundamentalist religion is back—equating support of the status quo with belief in God.

The religious revival is compounded by the fact that the conservative forces in most denominations have wrestled control of resources and positions of power that in the 60's were used to support the civil rights, poor peoples and anti-war movements. Church activists, for the most part, have lost out, left, or are in hibernation. The implications are great. Consider where the civil rights movement would have gotten without the churches. There is no question that religion plays an important part in most people's lives; the churches could be important allies in any struggle for change.

Finally, organizing is facing a massive, sophisticated corporate counter-attack, unlike anything activists have been up against before. Here's what Reginald Jones, chairman of General Electric says about their strategy, "Business must develop its own constituency, the middle class that not only invests in, but works for and buys from the corporation. All these people have a direct economic and political stake in the corporation's success. We'll have to win our constituency issue by issue like any successful politician, demonstrating how specific proposals will affect the lives and pocketbooks of the people whose support we need."

Corporations are increasingly comfortable and adept at operating in public arenas. No longer is it outside their experience to be forced into referendum campaigns and other public battles. The initiatives last fall taught us that whether the issue was tax reform, utility rate reform, or the right to organize, corporations were

turn to p. 19



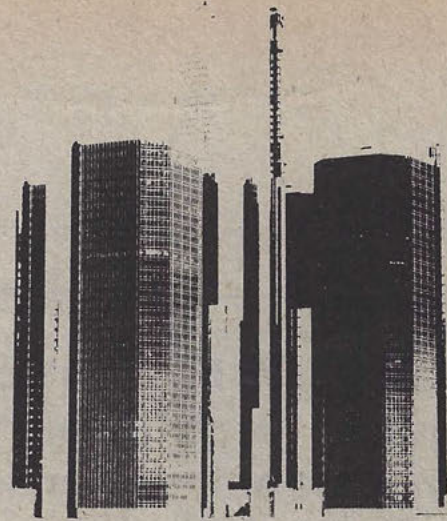
The corporate counter-attack offers us . . .

"Common sense of the 70's" comes to Detroit— Ken Cockrel for Common Council

by Nick Rabkin

Ken Cockrel has been a prominent figure in Detroit for ten years now. Perhaps prominent is not the right word. Maybe infamous. He's been described as "controversial," but that surely doesn't sum him up. He is known as Detroit's black Clarence Darrow for his flamboyant and political courtroom defenses of people like James Johnson—an auto worker who killed his foreman and two co-workers in an emotional breakdown in the plant.

Cockrel was a prominent figure in the fight to abolish STRESS, the Detroit police program that Mayor Coleman Young described as a "Blackjack justice." He was on the central committee of the League of Revolutionary Black



Workers, active in the Black Workers Congress and the labor Defense Coalition.

For ten years Ken Cockrel has been the most unusual of all public figures: an open socialist in capitalist America.

Today Cockrel wears a three piece suit in his law office and sits beneath a photo of his smiling son. He is a candidate for Detroit's Common Council, the city's nine member city council. He is running on a program of reform for a city that has sunk deeper into crisis than any other in the country, save, perhaps, New York; that is politically dominated by the United Auto Workers and the Democratic Party; in which a well organized and viable left in the sixties has all but disappeared; and in which racial tension is as high as anywhere in the country. Detroit NAM is actively supporting Cockrel's election.

MO: Why are you running? Don't you think that the political climate and the limitations of what can be done in city council add up to a prescription for failure and disappointment?

Cockrel: A city councilperson's prerogatives are limited, sure. But I'm interested in getting into a position to learn as much as I can about how the city actually operates. My perspective on the relevance of an electoral strategy for socialists goes beyond the '77 race. A part of '77 speaks to '81—establishing an independent political base to make a beachhead in the executive branch.

MO: "Independent" can mean a lot of things. What do you mean by it?

Cockrel: Everyone who knows who we are knows what we stand for. That's been a matter of public record for a decade. We're not closet socialists. Now just from the standpoint of mathematics I know that the people who will elect me are black people. I look at the results of the Carter election

and draw some conclusions about where they might be when it comes to third parties. They've got a lot more work to do before they are comprehended as an alternative to the Democrats or Republicans. But this election is non-partisan. I don't have to face the partisan politics question directly. That was part of my strategy. I don't have to fight the Democratic Party or explain a lot of shit about third parties.

MO: Nominally the race is non-partisan. But isn't there a hidden reality?

Cockrel: Oh, yeah. We have to deal with the reality of the black political community which is dominated by John Conyers and Charles Diggs (both Democratic Congressmen, ed.); the fact of the UAW and its political wing, which has real influence and meaning. Conyers has offered his support already.

You can't forget that there is a huge black middle class here— more

homeowners per capita than in any other city in the country. There is an incredibly conservative tradition in some respects. This is the invisible black community. And they vote. And they cried when Kennedy was shot. They're Democrats.

MO: How will you relate to that? They sound rather conservative. Won't they balk at a radical program?

Cockrel: We can invoke Tom Hayden's cliché: "The radicalism of the sixties is the common sense of the seventies." This city's been devastated by urban renewal, freeway construction, the exodus of white folks, incredible unemployment aggravated by the total reliance on the auto industry. All this has been exacerbated by racism. I may have more trouble with these people because of my lifestyle than my programs.

Even though "Ken is a commie," I'm also a black attorney with a reputation for competence. I'm not foreign to them. There was broad sup-

“We invoke Tom Hayden’s cliché: ‘The radicalism of the sixties has become the common sense of the seventies.’ This city’s been devastated. The importance of getting involved in this municipal election is to have a political base from which to talk about an organizational thrust.”

port for some of my legal work. And the STRESS mobilization reached a significant portion of the middle class. This work has been recognized, and I’ve been invited to speak at churches. I talk to the people in the same sense, I suppose, that Berlinguer (Secretary of the Italian Communist Party, ed.) doesn’t run around Italy trying to persuade people to abandon Catholicism.

MO: What does the black church mean as a political institution?

Cockrel: It’s not monolithic, but it’s very influential inside this community. Most of the leadership of service organizations around town has come from the clergy. And look at the national scene. It’s Rev. Andrew Young and Rev. Jesse Jackson.

MO: What’s your estimate of the state of the black movement around the country?

Cockrel: The black left today has a pretty clear track, except for the fact that there’s not much of the black left left. The National Black Political Assembly, which was a most important effort at a black united front, really ran a cropper at its first convention at Gary. Last year they tried to run a presidential candidate, but nothing doing.

MO: All this boils down to a sense of nobody having a real base in the black community.

Cockrel: That’s a stark characterization. But as we go through it, I suppose the facts point to such a conclusion. Of course, that’s consistent with the fact that nobody has a base with anybody. That’s the importance of getting involved in the municipal electoral arena—to have a political base from which to talk about an organizational thrust.

MO: What sort of organization are you talking about?

Cockrel: There are lots of tracks to try, and we’ll try them all. There’s the National Caucus of Black Elected Officials. There’s the Joint Center for Political Studies—a kind of black think tank operation. Then there’s the national Democratic track. That will be a hard and fascinating one. Maybe we’ll take a national popular front track.

MO: What’s that?

Cockrel: I know that Hayden is pushing something called the Campaign for Economic Democracy. We’ll see if that’s a viable model. First thing, though, is here in the city. What kind of organization can we build and sustain through the campaign and beyond? I don’t know yet.

MO: Let’s talk some more about Detroit. How do you see Coleman Young, the black mayor?

Cockrel: Young is expected by the

rulers here—the Henry Ford’s—to keep the peace, to “keep the niggers cool.” The miracle really is that when you look at the crime, not that things are so bad, but that they are not worse. So the police question becomes key. And now a grand jury has indicted four high ranking police officers and charges that they are involved in narcotics traffic. Coleman’s under attack from the right for this. They say he can’t run the city effectively.

MO: What is the general opinion these days about the cops?

Cockrel: It’s not one of love and admiration, but there is a predisposition to be open to them and cooperate with them. That did not exist at all before 1973. Used to be across the board, “fuck ’em.” But people are terrified and feel very insecure about the crime problem—black and white.

MO: People are scared, even desperate. How does that contribute to the political climate?

Cockrel: Well, there’s a general shift to the right. People are trying to protect what they’ve got—their home, their job. As bad as things are, people have adjusted.

MO: You’ve just painted a bleak and pessimistic picture. Where do you get your optimism from?

Cockrel: There’s a militant tradition here and a black tradition that continues. The Muslims got started in Detroit. There’s a tradition of comparative political sophistication here, political activism. The Flint tradition, the UAW. Michigan has got the second largest number of black elected officials in the country. A lot of people think of racial tension when they think of Detroit. But even during the periods of most intense nationalism, there has always been a strong trend for racial collaboration. Detroit is out ahead on this stuff. And I think we’ve got the track on how to move it further.

Nick Rabkin is the Organizational Secretary of the New American Movement.

Looking For America

Culture, capitalism and the Left: An interview with Julia Reichert and Jim Klein

by Judy MacLean

*Julia Reichert and Jim Klein are members of NAM in Dayton, Ohio. Their first film, **Growing Up Female**, showed how sexism shaped the lives of six women. It has become a classic of the women's movement. **Methodone: An American Way of Dealing** explored the politics and history of addictive drugs in the U.S. Their latest film, **Union Maids**, tells the story of three women who organized in the CIO during the 1930's through interviews, film clips, photos and music of the period.*

MO: Several films lately seem to be examining America's past and looking at the struggles of working people—or at repression of them—in a new light. I'm thinking of *The Front*, *Bound for Glory*, or the TV series *Roots*. What do you make of this trend?

Klein: There seems to be emphasis on the system cleansing itself. It says, look at America, it goes through crazy periods, but then it straightens itself out and that's the brilliance of democracy and the American system. There's a use of the fifties to sort of parallel Watergate, to show how people overcame that. For instance, *Tailgunner Joe*, the TV special about McCarthy, said it was just one crazy guy, like Nixon, rather than a political system that's oppressing people.

Reichert: Those films are romantic. In *Network*, which shows the network manipulating people for profit, it's just one guy against the system. The Woody Guthrie film is also this one noble guy

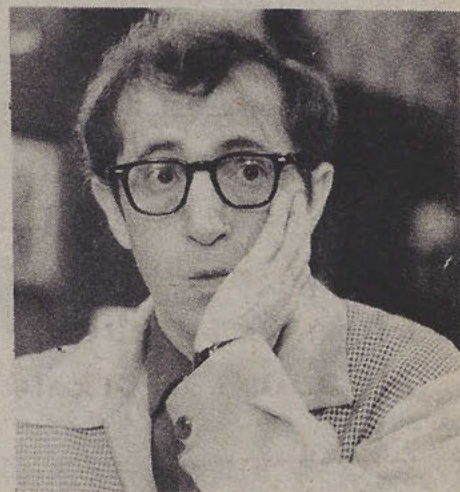
against all this shit. It's very individualistic. It's like there's this huge system which is totally out of whack and nobody can figure it out and then there's a few people, desperately trying in their noble way. But it's all very despairing. And, in *Network*, the masses are just mindless people who will rally to anything. Also, the way they handle the stuff around McCarthy, you get the feeling that all of us just went crazy. It's cynical about people, with a romantic view of these heroes who go against society.

Klein: It's interesting, that trend in film. The big film last year was *One Flew*

"It's like there's this huge system which is totally out of whack, and then there's a few people desperately trying in their noble way..."

Over the Cuckoo's Nest, with one guy in this closed system of the mental institution who just knocks his head up against it and refuses to go by the rules and in the end is lobotomized.

MO: To what extent is that a necessary part of a film, having a hero or heroine that stands above the rest, even when you are telling a story that's a collective story?



*Woody Allen starred in **The Front**, a film on the blacklist in Hollywood.*

Reichert: That's a real trick in making films. People need to identify with a protagonist, yet in radical films you try to get people to see that they themselves could be the heroes, as a group. It's hard to develop an emotional identification with a couple of hundred people. *Harlan County* is the best attempt at that, the people really do come alive. It's brilliant how Barbara Kopple shows them even having real disagreements and arguments among themselves and coming out stronger for it.

MO: What do you think people are looking for in films? Why aren't films like *The Front* and *Bound for Glory* commercially successful?

Klein: I don't think it's an innate quality in the people who watch the media. For a long time the media that's been available to people has been very low quality. At this point, I think most people who go to a movie or watch TV are looking for escape, after all the experiences they've had to deal with in the rest of their day. I know I feel that a lot. The average amount of TV watched in a

night in a family is about 5 hours each person. If you work 8 hours and sleep 8 hours, that's at least half of the rest of the time in your life. The effect is that what life means is to go to work and then be entertained. It's making it harder to organize people.

MO: Do you think there is any form of culture that can have the effect of stimulating people to act collectively to change their lives?

Klein: We've always seen that as the major role of our filmmaking, to help activate people. *Growing Up Female*, our early film, was used that way by the women's movement. *Union Maids* is an attempt to get people feeling good about

that whole process of struggling, of making some changes, and of seeing a long term. Not always moving straight forward; sometimes not succeeding. But you can't expect to play a movie in a theatre, or even in six hundred theatres around the country, and have a

movement come out of it. You're just looking for slight consciousness changes, in a film. It can inspire people.

Reichert: This gets into the question of building an alternative culture rather than working into the mass culture as it is. Given the real stranglehold that capitalism has on Hollywood, TV and even radio, we long ago decided that we had to be strengthening an alternative movement that wasn't answerable to capital. It's hard to get anything significant done through the regular channels. We have friends who tried to make it working through NET and PBS, to get their ideas in there somehow. They all left and got very discouraged. So we decided to do our own distribution. We try not to rely on outside funding with strings attached. We hope to strengthen that to the point that, for a minor example, *Union Maids* can now play in theatres and get regular reviews. Three years after *Growing Up Female* was made, it was on PBS. It felt very good to

us, to have made the film on our own, even if it was three years later that PBS wanted it, rather than working for PBS and trying to slog along for years trying to get out a few ideas. In the long run, we hope to build up the kind of clout that we will be able to get alternative films into theatres in a big way.

Klein: In a small big way . . .

Reichert: Our goal wasn't to keep our films in living rooms and union halls. But actually, that's a very important thing. People see very different interpretations of society, of how people could interact or how society could be set up through radicals or the women's movement bringing it into the community, and not on TV sandwiched between two Prell commercials. It strengthens the left network. But even-

tually we hope to be strong enough to get our films into theatres on our own terms. I feel that's happening, but slowly.

MO: Who has *Union Maids* reached?

Klein: We've tried to have a benefit opening of the film in most of the major cities and we've tried to have it sponsored by women's groups, usually in association with socialist groups, or groups organizing around union issues. Those have gone really well and gotten the very broad left seeing and using the film. It's amazing how many people like that there are. There are forty groups a month that use the film. That's enough to make it a success in terms of educational films.

Reichert: The distribution has really given me a renewed faith in the movement. I can tell from the letters we get that a great number of people are conscious left organizers. They may not be out front about it, but they're just hungry for something like *Union Maids*. There are a lot in unions, but also in community organizations, tenants organizations, certainly women's groups. There are a lot of them teaching high school.

Klein: *Union Maids* is getting into high schools faster. When *Growing Up Female* came out, most high schools



David Carradine and Melinda Dillon in *Bound for Glory*, the Woody Guthrie story.

wouldn't touch it. It was very threatening, until it had been out for several years.

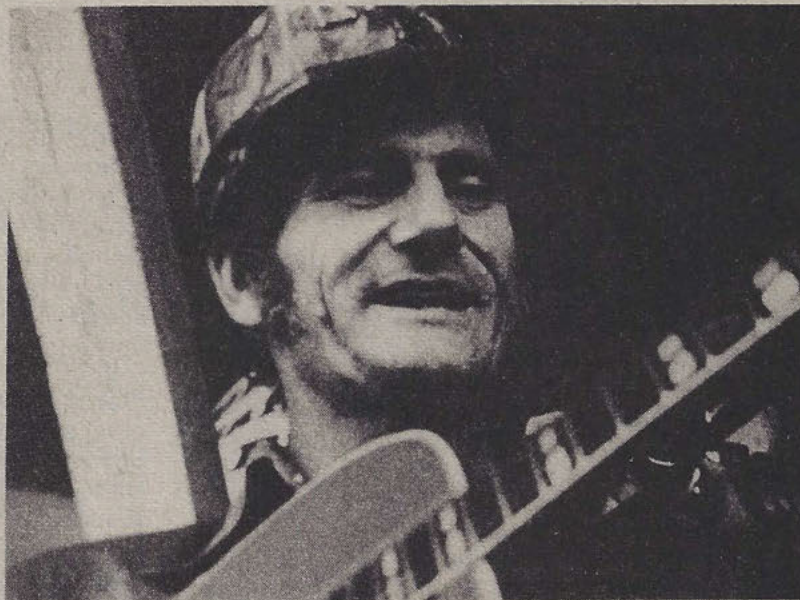
MO: What has been the response of unions?

Reichert: That has been a different question. Some, like UE, 1199, District 65, left unions that weren't at all ashamed of their traditions, immediately picked up on it. They had great showings, with the audience all in tears. Then, all over the country, gradually, there were these little pockets. An AF-SCME local here, or a clothing worker's local in the South, or some ILGWU locals, or independent unions, outside the regular structure. You get a sense that there are left and progressive people in locals, anyway. But with the nationals, the internationals, the biggies. They had a very cool response. Some were willing to tell us, right out front why they didn't want it. They would say, why don't you just cut this film and then we'd love to use it. Either they wanted us to cut the critical reference to George Meany, which is very brief, or the reference to the McCarthy period. That's the biggest one for a lot of these unions, that little reference where Katie talks about radicals being kicked out of the CIO, and there are headlines about left unions being kicked out. It's very laid back, it's almost in code.

MO: But they read the code.

Reichert: Right. And they don't want their people to know that that happened, that they had any part in the McCarthy period. Then they also say, we resent the fact that you imply that the CIO was a socialist organization, that it was led by socialists. But that's the facts. The CIO organizers were, many of them, Communists and Socialists. But the union leaders don't want those facts to come out.

Klein: In the beginning, people in some of the more progressive unions said that if we didn't make the cuts no AFLCIO union would use it, no union education department would use it, no college labor relations department would use it.



Harlan County, U.S.A.

Reichert: They gave us these passionate arguments, that people should see the film, and that the cuts weren't that significant to the general thrust of the film. Even radicals said that. So we've been pressured pretty heavily, told if we didn't cut it, working people wouldn't see it. So we had to make a decision. We decided that at least for a couple of years we would trust the left, not make the cuts and see how far the distribution would go in terms of reaching out into union locals and to working people without going through the national bureaucracies and making the kind of concessions they wanted. It's the philosophy we mentioned earlier, of building an alternative movement. We'd like to see the pressure come from the bottom up in unions. Working people will see it, and go to their unions and say, this is a great film, why don't you buy it? And that's what's starting to happen. It's very small yet.

Klein: Getting the film out in any kind of way will put that pressure on unions. The fact that it's been in movie theatres in East Coast cities means those union bureaucrats won't be putting themselves on the line so much, there's less risk.

Reichert: That was part of our strategy. We put money into trying to play it in regular theatres that we won't get back.

But that national visibility and positive reviews, like Vincent Carby's in the *New York Times*, will make people wonder why they can't get it through their international office and pressuring for that to happen.

Klein: Once the unions get it, they may cut it. They've done that with other films. But the least we can do is not do it for them. It would be undercutting the work of a lot of people over a long period of time.

Reichert: We've found out that all these threats about none of the locals using it were not true. Every week there are more and more union locals using the film. They don't necessarily follow what the national or international says. That's our idea about how to get it out. And so far, in limited ways, it's working.

Julia's and Jim's films may be ordered through New Day Films, P.O. 315, Franklin Lakes, NJ 07417.

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



Taking the past out of the closet

Gay American History—Lesbians and Gay Men in the U.S.A
A Documentary by Jonathan Katz
Thomas Y. Crowell, 690 pp., \$9.95 paper

by Jeff Weinstein

When I heard the news last year that a large 'gay history' had been published that was neither hostile nor silly I was excited. Most 'gay histories' were demeaning; brave psychoanalytic studies of repressed writers à la Dickinson or Whitman, or 'famous queers of history' anthologies written by homophobic or apologetic experts. Katz's book would be different. He had written *Coming Out! A Documentary Play About Gay Life and Liberation in the U.S.A.*, *Resistance At Christiana*, about a fugitive slave rebellion, and he had edited a series of books about homosexuality. For an expensive paperback, *Gay American History* was selling like hotcakes. It could not have been published without the existence of an ongoing gay movement and the market such a movement made possible. Nearly everybody I knew involved in gay politics and quite a few others were talking about the book, more about the fact that such a book was published than the information it contained. As more than one reviewer said, *Gay American History* helps create the subject it sets out to document. In any case my excitement was justified: it is a fine group of documents, the result, as Katz notes, of "a certain dogged, one track, single-minded, obsessive persistence."

Katz arranges his material into six parts, each of these in chronological order: Trouble: 1566-1966; dealing mostly with judgments of the outside world; Treatment: 1884-1974, which documents some lesser known horror stories of

psychoanalytic 'therapy'; Passing Women: 1782-1920, with examples of women who took male roles; Native Americans/Gay Americans: 1528-1976; Resistance: 1859-1972; and Love: 1779-1932. Easily available items are not included, although even the most obvious sources are not so obvious to the non-gay scholar. There is a long introduction and each chapter as well as each selection is prefaced by notes.

In his introduction Katz points out the difficulty of finding material. The author found much of his stuff by word-of-mouth, and some of the selections are indeed 'finds': previously unpublished love letters from Almeda Sperry to Emma Goldman; a page of Walt Whitman's diary listing the men he 'slept with' (which should finally give lie to the constant academic denial of Whitman's homosexuality); as well as many telling legal and personal documents of less famous people. Katz's book has flashes of real life. 'Particular attention was paid to documenting the experience of ordinary gay people' he says in the introduction. The oral history of a young man who experienced electroshock treatment and the interviews with Barbara Gittings (of the Daughters of Bilitis) and Alma Routsong (author of *Patience and Sarah*) are good examples of this necessary reportage.

Primary Research

Gay American History has been accused of being 'bathroom reading' and in some ways it is (although to me this is no perjorative term). Sometimes the selections seem scattered and their arrangement arbitrary. The *History* does not have, and does not pretend to have, an historical 'analysis'—of why there has been gay oppression, of whether such oppression changes over time or results from a recognizable set of causes. This is no present problem with the book; primary research like Katz's has to be done before any questions like these can be answered. Most analysis of gay oppression coming from the American and European Left has appeared de novo, without much data to support the theorizing. But Katz does make a few unexamined analytical assumptions in his book just by calling it a Gay History: that a history can be written of people who are unselfconscious of their connections to each other, that women and men can be included together under the word 'gay', and that sexual or gender proclivities can themselves tie together otherwise disparate people or ethnic groups. I'm not saying that Katz is wrong in his assumptions, but only that they should have been discussed.

The author early identifies himself as homosexual, which, although it may seem unnecessary, is a reminder that his perception as a gay American male informs *Gay American History*. This book does not wear the mask of neutral or objective history. The documentation of homosexual life must

turn to p. 21

The Long View

A new imperative — Social governance of production system

by Barry Commoner

The United States is on the verge of a new historic passage. Once seen as a place almost infinitely rich in land and resources, now the nation confronts resource limitations and environmental degradation. Once capable of producing enough wealth to sustain a rising standard of living and rapid growth, now the nation is entering an era of constraints.

The U.S. has become the richest, most affluent country in human history, but the means used to reach this exalted state—particularly our reliance on production technologies based on unlimited use of resources and unrestrained impact on the environment—have created serious economic difficulties as well. The means of our past success now threatens our future.

This contradiction is widely recognized. But there is also widespread frustration, a sense of impotence, before the huge task of resolving it. And even if we understand what to do, the means of doing it—political action—is itself regarded with suspicion.

Once before the country faced a contradiction of this magnitude. And much as they did in 1976, the politicians of the day did their best to avoid the roots of the problem. In an account of the 1856 presidential campaign a prominent journalist declared, "We do not believe that the people much care whether Buchanan or Fremont, or Nobody, is elected. Their election will render the great and solemn trial of the highest question in our politics as a farce as ridiculous as the drama of the Prince of

Denmark, with the part of Hamlet omitted."

The highest question was, of course, slavery.

What trivialized the election cam-

Although the avowed purpose of the US economic system is social, social purpose is excluded from its governance. The US economy is almost entirely governed by private decisions.

paigns that preceded Lincoln's in 1860 was the candidates' elaborate efforts to divert the voter's attention, to avoid a national decision on the issue of slavery. With Lincoln, the nation at last took the first essential step toward resolving the issue of slavery—by confronting it.

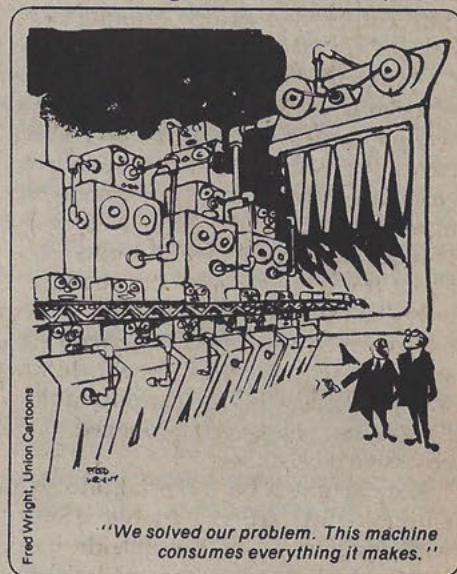
What is the "highest issue" that we are running away from today? What is the unspoken issue that reduced the recent presidential campaign to trivialities, irrelevancies and palliatives? If we are to weather the historic passage that has already begun, we must make an effort to understand it, to put an end to the politics of despair.

A valuable clue can be found by looking at the way that energy is produced and used in the overall production system. A recent survey by

the American Physical Society indicates that the overall efficiency with which energy is used in the U.S. is on the order of 10-15%. Thirty percent of the electric energy generated here is used to heat homes and water, with an efficiency rating of less than one percent!

In agriculture, transportation and manufacturing we have encouraged production processes that are particularly wasteful of energy and capital, and hazardous to the environment, displacing processes that were more thrifty and benign. These changes have worsened an array of serious economic difficulties, including unemployment, inflation and the capital shortage.

In sum, because the post-war growth of the U.S. production system has depended heavily on the introduction of increasingly energy and capital intensive technologies, it has itself generated countervailing economic forces. These have now begun to limit the system's



rate of growth and its ability to meet human needs.

This failure is rooted in the nature of what the system produces, in its pattern of growth. Wealth has been invested in new production which is inefficient in its use of energy and capital, and of the environment—and inadequate in its ability to generate employment. The locus of the fault must lie, then, in the system's *governance*—the pattern of decisions that determines how its wealth is invested and for what purpose.

Economists have told us a great deal about the process that is supposed to govern the productive uses of wealth in the U.S. The basic mechanism is exchange: two parties undertake to exchange goods or services in the expectation of mutual benefit. If, however, we examine the list of the nation's current problems—unemployment, inflation, urban decay—we find that they are not taken into account in the traditional market mechanism. They are regarded as "externalities," factors which play no part in the private process of exchange. These problems affect people through society as a whole, not through an exchange relationship. Thus, the basic mechanism that is supposed to govern the operation of the U.S. economic system excludes from consideration precisely those social effects that constitute the nation's greatest problems.

All this is to make the relatively simple point that, although the avowed purpose of the U.S. economic system—to meet people's needs—is *social*, social purpose is excluded from its governance. The U.S. economy is almost entirely governed by private decisions, made by those who own and control the capital needed to establish a production enterprise. It is, after all, a private enterprise, capitalist system.

Bureaucratic efforts to deal with unemployment, inflation, the energy and environmental problems seem so often to fail because they intervene at a point far removed from the site at which the damage is done.

Social intervention should govern rather than regulate; participating in the decisions which determine the design of the means of production.

Consider the unemployment problem: Nearly half of the unemployment in the U.S. is due to the continued reduction in the number of workers needed to produce a unit of output. Thus, the problem originates at that point where a decision is made to introduce new production machinery or processes that reduce labor input.

But the remedial action only takes place long after the problem has been created and people are unemployed. Then society intervenes, and the social goal—that even if unemployed, no one should starve—is achieved.

How much simpler it would be if there were a job available! For this to happen would require that the social signal represented by rising unemployment be fed back into the system so as to stimulate the creation of jobs at the point where that decision is made—the design of the means of production.

If social governance were exerted at the point where the problem is first created—at the decision making point in the production system—unemployment would become a self-correcting problem that would lessen over time. As long as the governance of the production system remains largely impervious to a

meaningful, operational social response, unemployment will continue unabated and the resultant bureaucracy will proliferate.

The same situation exists in connection with environmental degradation. It is now clear that the cause of pollution is in the design of the means of production: smog is the inevitable outcome of the post-war shift to high compression auto engines; radiation hazards derive from the introduction of nuclear technology into the production of electricity and weapons; chemical disaster—such as Kepone in Virginia, PBB in Michigan, dioxin in Italy—are the result of the huge growth of the petrochemical industry, which displaces natural products.

But we have ignored these origins of pollution and have only attempted to correct the symptoms: exhaust devices for autos; expensive controls and regulations for nuclear power plants; elaborate new tests for chemical products. As a result huge new bureaucracies are now involved in the process of patching up environmental damage—after it has occurred, when much of the damage may be irreversible and all of it costly.

These examples illustrate the advantage of social intervention that *governs* rather than regulates—that participates in the decisions which determine the design of the means of production. If we fail to meet this new imperative, problems of unemployment, inflation, resource depletion, environmental degradation and urban decay will persist. Efforts to ameliorate, rather than solve these problems will only add to our burdens the final insult of a growing bureaucracy.

Avoiding the issue of social governance in the production process trivializes American politics. But like the slavery issue in its time, many people prefer to avoid this new and equally disturbing issue.

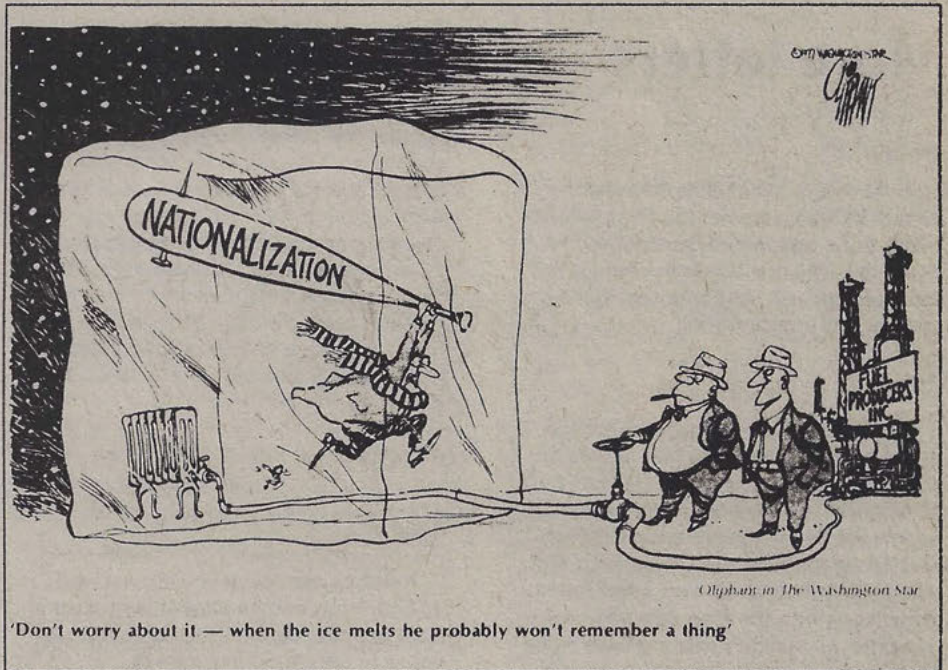
The history of the slavery question teaches us an important lesson, though.

When that question was at last confronted, and the people of the U.S. intervened in the system of production to put an end to its access to slave labor, enormous new gains in production became possible. As long as slavery persisted the nation could not take full advantage of the industrial revolution, and the south remained tied to a purely agricultural, stagnant economy. As long as such a major section of the economy lagged behind, the modernization of the U.S. system of production technology as a whole could not advance. Difficult as it was, and tragically bloodied by the Civil War, the decision to end slavery was necessary before the country could embark on the huge industrial and agricultural expansion that followed.

Although the right of society to intervene on the specific issue of slavery was accepted, this did not establish the more general principle that production itself is a social process which must be governed by social interest. The results of this failure are now upon us.

It takes little insight to see the strange paradox facing the U.S. economy: On the one hand growing unemployment and under-used productive capacity, and on the other the pressing need to create new enterprises that are mandated by the imperative to spare energy and other resources and to care for the quality of the environment: electrified railroads, especially for mass transit; urban trolley systems; solar energy systems, immediately for heating, soon after for power; new decentralized production facilities that alleviate the wasteful use of energy in transportation, and the plague of throwaway containers; industrial production based more on natural materials (cotton, wool, fat, wood) than on synthetics that waste non-renewable fuels and spread toxins in the environment; the restoration of organic matter into agriculture.

There are a variety of known techniques which offer alternative ways of introducing social governance into production: national planning; local or



regional planning; tax and other incentives that favor proper resource and environmental decisions; and public ownership on a national or local level. But these are viable alternatives only when set within a framework of social rather than private governance of the production system.

Obviously such a goal would clash with the present form of governance, which in almost every case seeks the maximization of profit. It has been argued that private profit is the best motive for efficient production. But this claim is weakened by the tendency toward the inefficient use of capital and resources as things now stand. It will also be argued that social governance when put into practice inevitably creates political constraints that are inimical to our own commitment to civil liberties and democratic government. This is a legitimate concern, but is based on the fear that the U.S. will be unable to bring to bear on this issue the political resources which have protected our liberties from assault and erosion in the past. We have, after all, only in the last two decades thrown back the McCarthyite

attack on civil liberties and forced Nixon to beat an ignominious retreat from his powerful attempt to subvert the democratic governance of the nation.

Recognition that the further intrusion of social interests in the system of production does run the risk of political oppression is essential. And skepticism that we can discover how to combine the economic democracy of socialism with a humanistic concern for personal freedom and a firm commitment to democratic government may be justified. But there is nothing to be gained by allowing the fear of failing in this goal to foreclose an effort to achieve it.

If we confront these issues in the confidence that we can resolve them, we can master the new historic passage and at last fully devote the nation's resources to the welfare of its people.

Barry Commoner is the Director of the Center for the Biology of Natural Systems and author of The Poverty of Power.

More letters

from p. 2

Most of us would consider this suppression of an idea a rape of the First Amendment. But it represents the existing state of the law. The position taken here is not inconsistent with the continued fight against this interpretation.

Dear MO:

After reading the Margolis/Wilkinson debate on the Klan in the May MOVING ON, I felt that the point had been missed, by both sides. Their main disagreement seemed to be over the relation between restricting the Klan and free speech. But when I thought over my own, very limited, experience with the Klan, free speech (or any other kind) didn't seem to have much to do with it. In fact, most encounters with the Klan that I know of have been remarkably silent.

Phones rang at three or four in the morning while we were doing welfare organizing in Houston: we answered to a silence repeated, jarring, far more annoying than terrifying. Months later, we found that we'd been put on the Klan's "Rat Sheet" for harassment. And then there was the silence of the local Pacifica station, KPFT, twice bombed by the Klan. And dozens of people whose mailboxes held ugly scrawled threats because of very simple acts of interracial solidarity: "You talk with niggers at school. You don't deserve to be white."

The point of these examples is simple: the Klan is not simply a group for the propagation of reprehensible ideas: its activities are not limited to putting out of offensive newspapers, or distributing racist leaflets. The Klan is an organization that tries, as much as it can, to carry out racist terror. It, quite simply, tries to run people's lives. Most folks don't like that. And so hostility to the Klan—to the point of being prepared to forcibly stop their activities—is not limited to leftists, but is a very common sentiment in the Southern and Southwestern working class.

In fact, in Houston, it was only through such acts of resistance that the Klan's activities were limited. When I came to

Houston in 1970, the Klan no longer dared to attack anyone living in a Black or Chicano neighborhood after years of direct action against the Klan by minority people. The action of the black Marines at Pendleton seems to me to be a part of this tradition of self-defense, and thus worthy of total support from leftists. This support should not be compromised by an "even-handed" defense of the Klan. The law which in its majesty forbids both rich and poor to sleep under bridges may have something to say on both sides of this question, but we, I think, have other fish to fry.

Sue Wells
Austin, TX

Dear MO:

I wish to commend you all. MOVING ON is both lively and intelligent, and is the first left publication I am truly happy to show to my unpolitical friends.

As an alternative (to the slogan "a worldview, not a line") I would suggest a slightly more cumbersome phrase: "The views presented in this magazine are those of the editorial board and not NAM positions unless labelled as such." This phrase would reflect the truth. It would, also, I hope, encourage you to put some more NAM positions and explanations of those positions in MOVING ON. This would give a sense of NAM as more than a debating society, a sense of NAM as at least potentially an instrumentality of struggle.

Jon Lepie
Los Angeles, CA



another perspective alternatives in radio journalism

a seminar in
news and public affairs
July 1-4, 1977
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What is news? Who decides? Who is the audience? What do we tell them? And why? WYSO's first annual radio seminar will be a meeting ground for radical journalists, broadcasting students, and radio professionals, to examine the foundations of news and public affairs, develop skills, and explore the role of community radio in social change.

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COST OF SEMINAR: \$100; ROOM AND BOARD: \$15/DAY UP TO 3 CREDITS AVAILABLE FROM ANTIOCH COLLEGE FOR AN ADDITIONAL CREDITING FEE
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HOUSING? YES? NO?
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Organize, organize, organize

from p. 7

willing to publicly raise and spend huge sums of money to defeat us.

Secondly, the corporations are into selling ideas and the capitalist philosophy rather than their products. Their advertising which is supported by federal tax laws, defends capitalism, equates growth with democracy, and most significantly, promotes a set of values and beliefs that are essential to corporate survival.

Unfortunately, the issues we have worked on lately have the tendency to unite the corporate class rather than divide it. In addition, the corporations have found a ready partner in organized labor with a strategy of screaming "jobs" whenever change is suggested. From nuclear power, to generic drugs, to environmental protection, the kinds of progressive changes upon which we could begin to build a mass base are shouted down to defeat by the fear of job loss and economic disruption. The Left has failed in pointing out that the pattern of job loss and economic disruption is a key strategy of the industrialists, not the result of progressive initiatives.

What options?

What then are our options? How do we build a mass base? For now, in the coming months, I would suggest the following elements as part of an emerging strategy:

1. MORE ORGANIZING—focused, almost exclusively, on organizing the unorganized. We should, in my opinion, refrain from the temptation of trying to reform existing organizations, such as labor unions, except to support rank and file struggles when they emerge. Rather, the focus on workplace organizing

should be on the majority of workers who are unorganized. I argue this on simple pragmatic terms—it is easier and there is more to gain.

Furthermore, I believe it is essential not to confuse coalition building with organizing. We could coalesce the whole Left and still not have enough power to win any significant gains. Instead, we should focus on expanding membership bases at the grassroots level so that our coalitions will be coalitions of strength.

Perhaps the most significant failing that is shared by leftists and populist organizations is an inability to project a set of values which are simple, and American, yet revolutionary.

2. DEVELOPING A SET OF PRINCIPLES AND VALUES—Perhaps the most significant failing that is shared by both Leftists and populist organizations is an inability to project a set of values and beliefs which are simple, understandable, and American, yet revolutionary. So long as we try to hide our beliefs or project

them by talking about non-American experience, we will fail at the most basic level of building support.

What we stand for must be moral, it must be visionary, and it must be believable, that is, people must perceive it as possible. One of our mistakes is an overwillingness to accept dominant American values unchallenged, to build campaigns around them, and then see our opposition use these same values to undermine us. We need to resurrect lost values from previous generations, define a new set of values, but most importantly, distinguish ourselves from the present values of greed, individualism, private profit and waste that are so dominant. If we cannot say what we stand for then we will continue to fail at building a constituency for change and continue to have our values defined for us by elites in ways that red bait, distort and mock us.

Back in the 1930's, Upton Sinclair led the EPIC (End Poverty in California) movement to become a major force in state politics. It was decidedly socialist but its strength was in its ability to appeal to people on terms they could understand. The EPIC movement was based on twelve principles, each one sentence long. "God created the natural wealth of the earth for the use of all men, not a few; Private ownership of tools, a basis of freedom when tools are simple, becomes a basis of enslavement when tools are complex," and so on. The simplicity and straightforwardness of the EPIC principles could serve as an excellent model for the type of principles we need to develop now.

3. REVIVING MASS ACTION—We need to seek out opportunities to enter into a phase of direct action and civil disobedience against the corporate class. The mass arrests at the Seabrook

nuclear power plant site in New Hampshire are encouraging. But we need to be even more creative. We need to develop some simple, easily replicable actions which defy existing corporate power—which are disruptive to that power, which appeal to mass constituencies, which people can do where they live.

Why not a counter billboard campaign where our truth squads cover corporate advertising on billboards with anti-corporate messages? Why not sit-ins and pickets at Cadillac dealers to protest over-consumption by the rich? Why not a campaign to boycott and protest corporate farming policies that are taking the taste out of food and putting cancer producing chemicals in? Why not explore the self-reduction campaigns such as those employed in Italy? We need to consider options for mass action that can build support and educate at the same time. And we need to look for ways to strengthen cooperation among people in different situations and locales to “national-ize” certain important local concerns. The J.P. Stevens boycott activity is a positive step: in this direction. So were the demonstrations held in some cities in solidarity with the Seabrook occupation.

One word of caution, however, in exploring mass action we should realize that it would be a tactical mistake to launch these kinds of campaigns without a thorough assessment of their appropriateness and our ability to carry them out.

Finally, we need to expand and create a real dialogue among organizers, community leaders, Leftists, trade unionists—all those who genuinely want to develop a mass movement to make our economy democratic, to attack corporate power, and to redistribute income, wealth and power. This dialogue is long over-due. Its initial agenda could be a simple one—to develop some common short term alliances and strategies and to begin developing some simple principles upon which a

Energy

from p. 5

organize the most broad-based opposition possible to this national energy policy that neglects the needs of working people. Some of the forces we have allied with locally will be pulling in different directions. For instance, some environmentalists are uncritically adopting Carter's proposals. And organized labor continues to be internally divided. Some unions are still vulnerable to jobs blackmail and pseudo-patriotic appeals to “energy independence.” But other trade unionists are coming to agree with George Hardy, President of the Service Employees' International Union, who attacked the failure to “break up the monopolistic control the large oil companies have over coal, oil, and other energy sources.”

Local neighborhood groups and consumer activists seem to be groping for handles on energy issues, and many will be responsive to a serious alternative program. Most working people are understandably mistrustful of every energy proposal. (“We're going to be screwed one way or another”, “Nobody tells us anything”, “Nobody

mass based anti-corporate, anti-capitalist movement could be built.

Bert DeLeeuw is a freelance agitator. He was the Field Coordinator of the Harris for President campaign and Director of the Movement for Economic Justice. He is an occasional contributor to JUST ECONOMICS.

This article is part of a continuing dialogue on the nature and role of the “new populism” or citizens' action organizations. (See “Grass Roots Organizing—How Will It Grow?” Moving On, April, 1977.) We hope to continue this discussion in upcoming issues.

cares what we think” are sample responses to *my* informal poll). It is no easy task to mobilize the latent power of popular outrage over the manipulations of the energy monopolies, but it can be done. There is a wealth of experience in local utility organizing projects throughout the country. There have been small victories and chastening defeats, struggles in which bonds of trust have been forged among some very diverse constituencies. In other words, there is a local base to build upon, and a local practice that can sustain an ambitious effort to intervene on the level of the national debate on energy.

Paul Garver is a member of Pittsburgh NAM and a business agent for the Service Employees International Union. By avocation he is a utilities encyclopedia.

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.

***Basic Political Education**

Fills a real void in Marxist education. A clear, comprehensive study guide; topics range from fundamentals of Marxist dialectics and alienation through analysis of contemporary racism and women's oppression. . . 13 topics in all. Each topic includes a short overview, core reading and bibliography. \$1 or \$.85 for ten or more. Include \$.25 postage.

***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.

Gay history

from p. 13

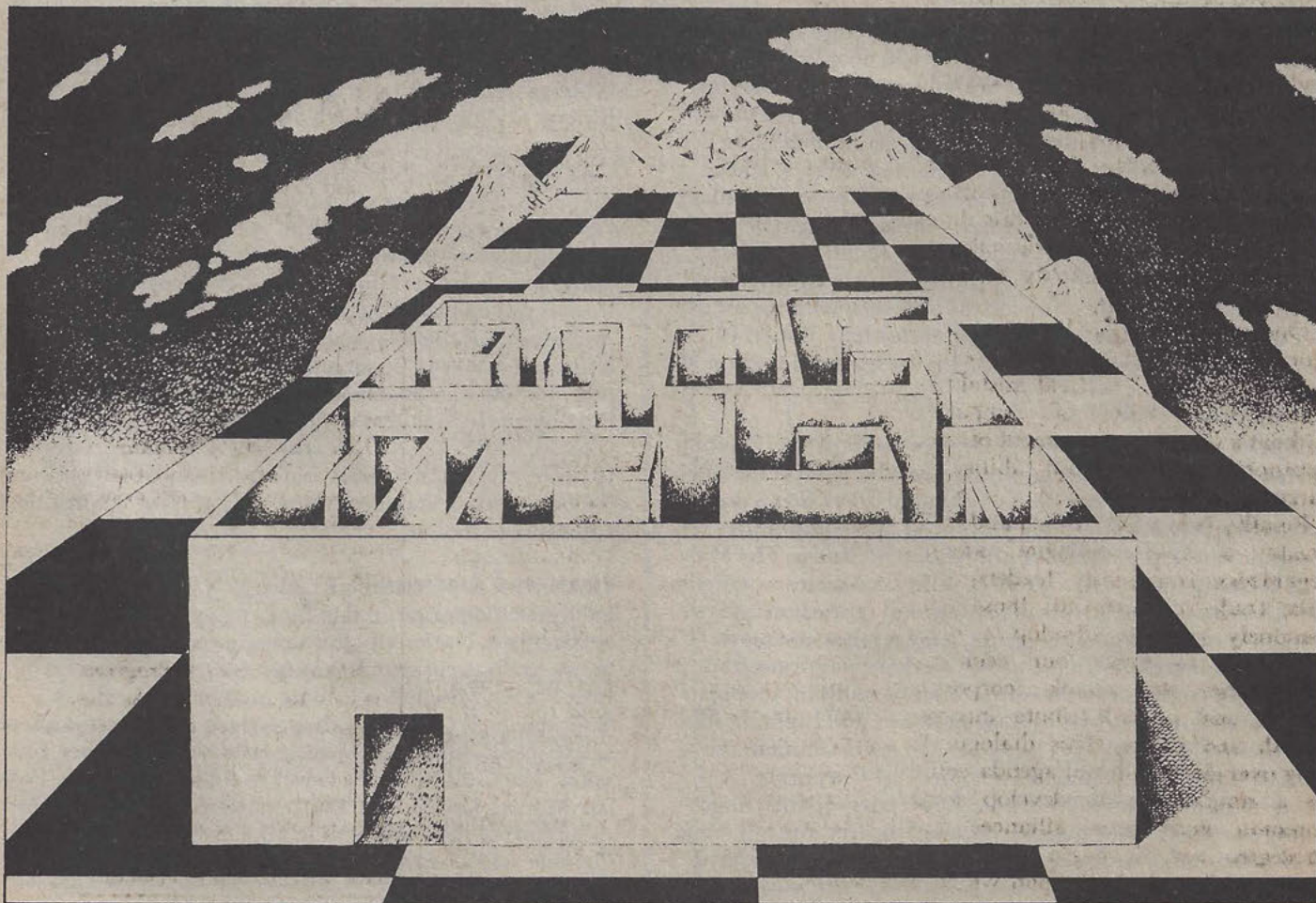
be integrated in any retelling of American (and any other) history. Like Black, Native American, women's histories (of which gay history is a part) this documentation must be—for accuracy's sake—one which acknowledges the human, political and economic rights of the homosexual person. One of the best things about

Katz's book is that if anyone is inclined to relax their vigilance about gay rights, *Gay American History* will remind you how easy it has been to imprison, shock and kill perfectly normal people.

An additional effect of this book is to suggest whole worlds of continuity. In the way Women's and Third World liberation movements helped individuals recognize that their situations were shared and not separate, this book extends that con-

cept of 'shared oppression' to different generations and groups. If there is a continuity to gay oppression, that continuity describes Gay History. Now this history not only has to be found and charted, but carefully described. One uniform symptom of gay oppression in American history is its invisibility, and uncovering scattered facts is what this book does best. It is an exemplary job.

Jeff Weinstein is a NAM member and free-lance writer living in New York.



J.P. STEVENS BOYCOTT Members of NAM have been working with other activists in Pittsburgh to set up a special women's task force to build support for the J.P. Stevens boycott and the attempt to organize textile workers in North Carolina. The task force hopes to involve women's groups—ranging from feminists through the YWCA and women's church clubs—in the boycott. It has been doing research on the history of women textile workers and on the current discrimination against women by J.P. Stevens. The Pittsburgh women's task force is also hoping to spark the formation of a similar focus on discrimination against women on the job within the national boycott committee of the ACTWU.

MAYDAY Los Angeles NAM sponsored a May Day gathering that was attended by over 400 people. The program emphasized the cultural diversity of the working class in this country and around the world—and the potential bonds that cultural sharing can forge. Among those performing were Cinco de Mayo, Vietnamese singers, and a group that explored the people's music of Greece. Two black musicians—Bevel and Streetman—almost brought down the house with their updated version of the American classic "Good Night Irene." And Roy Brown, Puerto Rican singer, poet, and PSP member, moved the audience with his songs of the struggle for independence and freedom. Roberta Lynch, National Secretary of NAM, was the featured speaker at the event.

LABOR UNITY The Miami Valley Power Project in Dayton, Ohio, a utility reform organization in which NAM members play an active role, has been working to break down the divisions between the labor movement and community organizations that limit the efforts of both forces. The MV-PP recently supported a strike of utility company workers. With several other strikes in process and repression and union-busting tactics increasing, a mass labor-consumer rally in solidarity with the utility workers was organized. The rally emphasized the importance of building support for the striking workers at Dayton Power and Light. It was sponsored by the MVPP, the local AFL-CIO Council, the UAW Cap Council, and Shareholders for Corporate Responsibility, and it drew over 1,200 participants. According to a local NAM member, it was "the first time in many years that labor and a recognized community group have worked together."

UTILITIES CONFERENCE Buffalo NAM was among the key organizers of a local conference on organizing for utilities reform, "Shopping for Lower Utility Rates." The conference was sponsored by the People's Power Coalition and the Labor Action Coalition with input from NAM, WNYPIRG, UAW, NAACP, The GCP Minority Political Caucus, Citizens Energy Council, and the North Buffalo Food Co-op. The purposes of the conference included "defining the positions of the mayoral candidates on energy issues" and "exploring the possibility of developing an energy program for Buffalo centered on conservation, renewable sources of energy and community/workers control." Buffalo NAM has published an informative booklet based on their utilities organizing, "The National Fuel Gas Story." It includes sections on: how banks influence and profit from utilities; how to get a better deal from the utilities without job or wage cutting; the fight against rate increases; and an informative bibliography. Cost is 40¢ from Buffalo NAM, P.O. Box 517, Ellicott Station, Buffalo, NY 14205.

GAY RIGHTS The Pennsylvania state legislature has been the scene of recurrent attempts to further limit the civil rights of gay people. Conservative forces are working to pass legislation that would prohibit the hiring of homosexuals for certain state jobs. The most recent form of this assault on gay rights is PA Senate Bill 83, introduced in mid-March. If the bill is passed, state personnel who hire a homosexual would be subject to dismissal from their jobs, a fine of \$300, and 90 days in jail. In a local press conference, Pittsburgh NAM joined with the Pittsburgh Gay Political Caucus, NOW, the ACLU, and the PA Social Services Union to protest this "outrageous and unwarranted intrusion into the bedrooms of state residents." Organizing against the bill continues to mount.

TRANSFER AMENDMENT Chicago NAM was part of a local coalition organized to build support for the transfer amendment. Nationally the amendment fared better than many had anticipated. It was introduced in Congress by Rep. Parren Mitchell, a leading member of the Black Congressional Caucus. Although the transfer amendment—as expected—failed on the House floor, it did garner 102 votes. The Coalition for a New Foreign and Military Policy (see *Moving On*, March, 1977) plans to continue its efforts in support of the transfer amendment with an eye toward October when further budget issues will be back on the floor of Congress.

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.

NAME _____

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

Return to NAM, 1643 N. Milwaukee Ave., Chicago, IL. 60647.

Theme is "Socialist Strategy and Mass Organizing"

Panels will include:

The Crisis of our Cities

Its roots and the issues
building a new urban coalition

Energy and the Environment: A Socialist Approach

local utilities and nuclear organizing
the energy crisis and the economy

Women's Liberation, 1977

the state of the organized women's movement
the growth of feminist consciousness

Sessions on:

organizing against racism
media and culture
the labor movement and
on-the-job organizing
Euro-communism—
its meaning for the U.S. left
Puerto Rican independence
gay liberation
class analysis and
class consciousness
undocumented workers and
immigration policy
organizing for full employment

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A magazine for activists

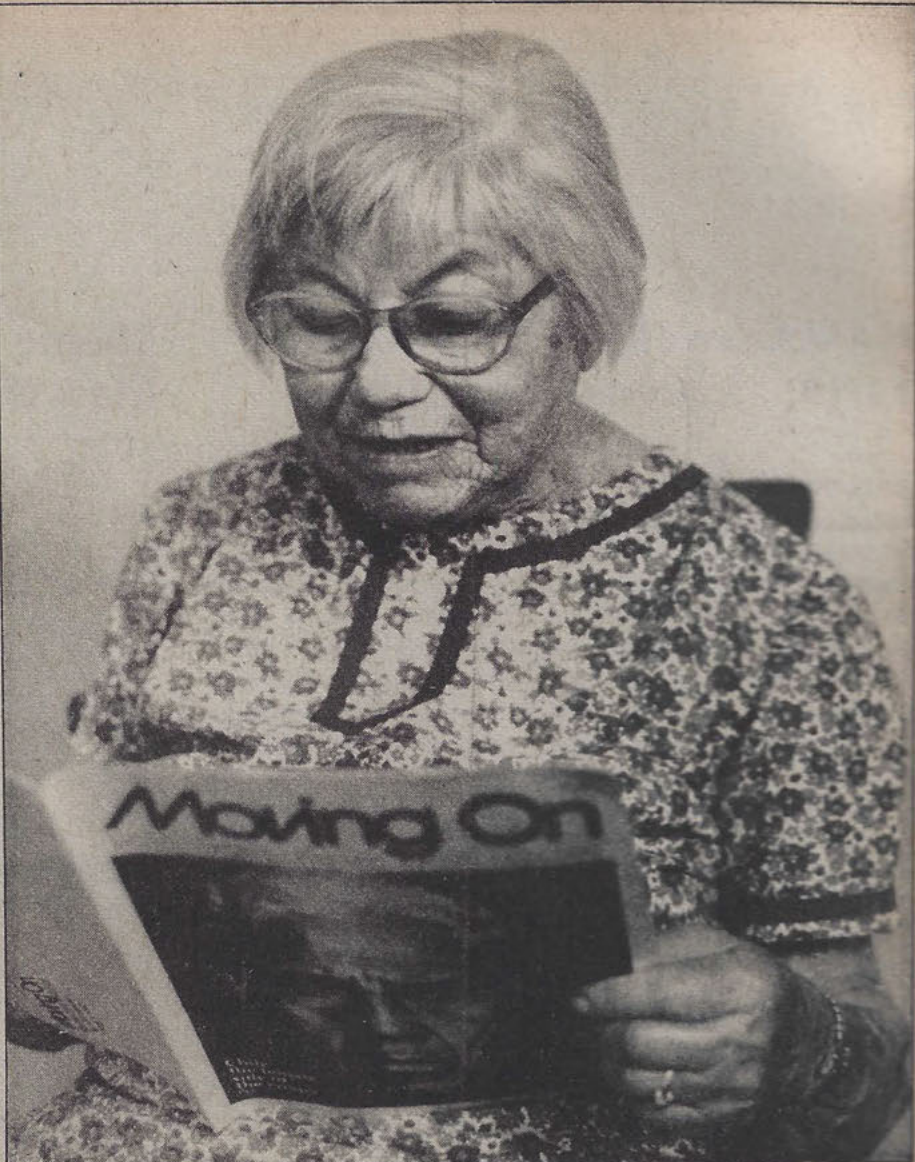
Most Americans think that socialists are hopelessly out of touch with American reality, committed to undemocratic means, and utterly forgetful of Marx's most important teaching: "The point is to change the world."

We think that MOVING ON is different. It concentrates on the real-world problems of building movements for change from a democratic socialist perspective.

Every month we feature comment on contemporary developments. Articles on organizing. Cultural issues. Thoughts on strategy and tactics, problems and prospects. We've covered the state of the art in clerical organizing, the fight over the military budget, interviewed steel activists, offered strategy to beat the urban crisis. Future issues will examine the state of the J.P. Stevens boycott, the changing face of the Muslim movement, the developments in the United Auto Workers.

MOVING ON is a magazine for people who want to change the world. A socialist magazine for activists. An activists magazine for socialists.

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What is NAM?

The New American Movement is a nationwide organization of socialists in nearly forty chapters. It is committed to organizing a majority movement for a social and economic system that is thoroughly democratic, in which wealth and resources of the nation are publicly owned and democratically controlled by all Americans, in which the decisions which shape our lives are decentralized and coordinated in a way that permits us all to have control over them. Membership in NAM is open to anyone who agrees with its basic principles. For more information please use the handy form on this page.

Get Involved

NAM chapters are working in the here and now to build toward this future. Chapters help to organize on issues like fighting the energy companies, gaining better and fair housing, winning new rights for office workers. They sponsor schools, forums, and cultural events to present NAM's democratic socialist perspective. They work with a variety of progressive forces to help forge a united opposition in their cities. They act as a meeting ground for people involved in organizing on the job, in communities, or schools.

If this work is to thrive we need more chapters. We need you to help. Please let us know if you'd like to help in forming a chapter in your city.