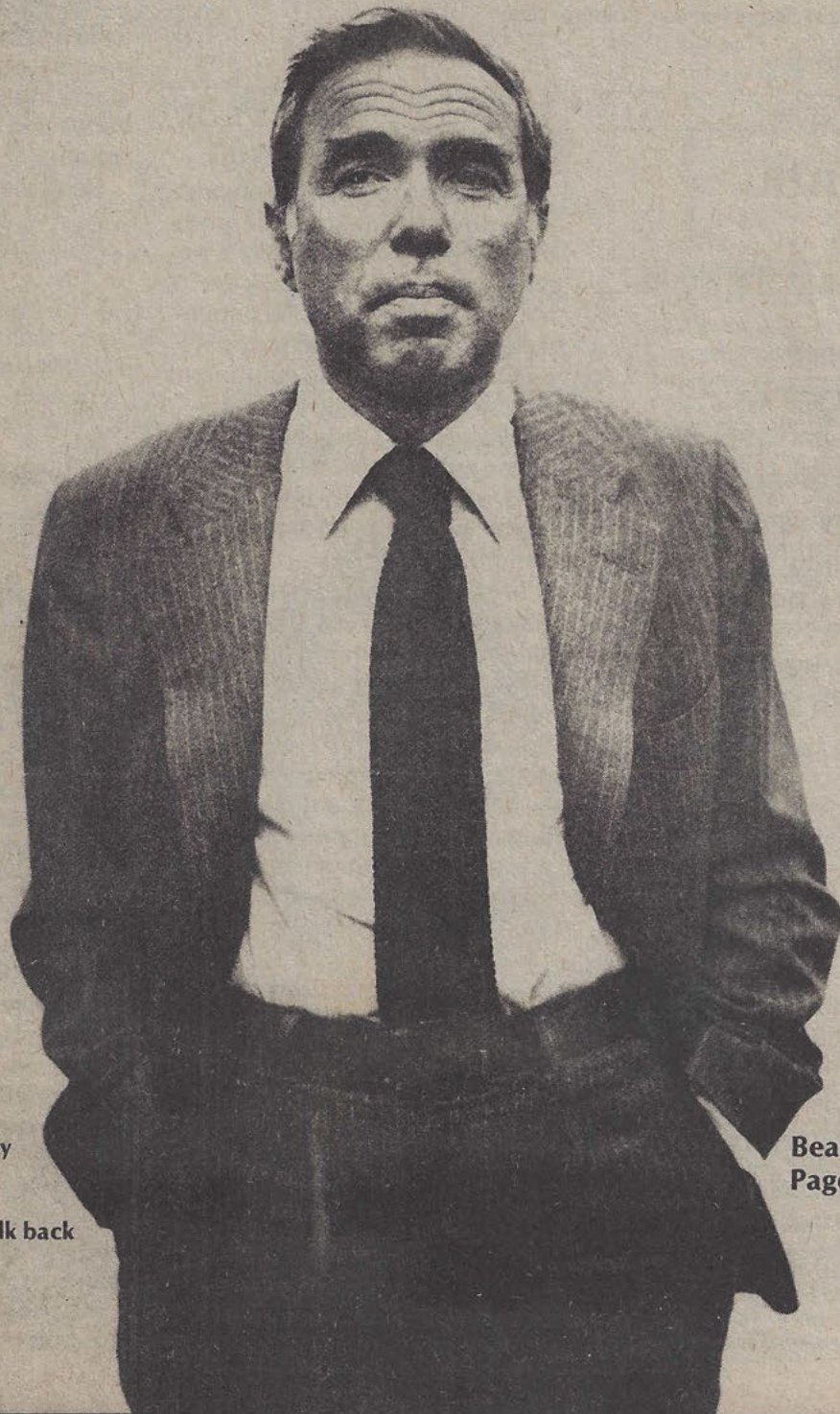


Moving On

MONTHLY MAGAZINE OF THE NEW AMERICAN MOVEMENT



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Big Cheese at New York's Big MAC: Felix Rohatyn

Moving On

MONTHLY MAGAZINE OF THE NEW AMERICAN MOVEMENT

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

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Letters

Dear MO,

A good first issue. I especially liked the article on transferring money from the defense budget to domestic uses. I saw that most of the domestic items involve the "human services". This is a terribly important area—the needs are even greater than the proposed

transfer will pay for.

I do want to point out one problem with this. Most people working in the human services are not organized in unions. Many are not covered by the NLRB or public employee laws. Often their employers are private institutions which fight viciously against unionization and its benefits. These jobs are typically underpaid, and are largely filled by youth, women, blacks and other minorities.

In light of their situation, a provision should be put into the amendment requiring that employers receiving government funds do not obstruct unionization efforts or refuse to engage in collective bargaining. Additionally, it is very important that the amendment guarantee retraining and placement for anyone who would lose a defense industry job.

Janet Clark
New York

Dear Editors,

I am writing to commend you on the first issue of MOVING ON—which I read from cover to cover

and then clipped to send articles to friends in other cities. The first issue represented a job well done—from lay-out to the range of topics covered in the articles.

The articles on organizing clericals and on the transfer amendment also provided valuable insights into two very important trends and movements that are in action.

Keep Moving On.

Lauren Poole
Chicago

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 racial and sexual equality prevails, in which the wealth and resources of the nation are publicly owned and democratically controlled by all Americans, in which the decisions that 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 and to subscribe to Moving On use the coupon on the back page.

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How to fight the urban crisis: Beat the Banks!

by Nick Rabkin

"We do not want to run the city. We don't want to be in control," said one top New York banker recently. "There is no interest on our part in trying to rule the world."

As he spoke, lawyers for New York's largest banks were feverishly putting the final touches on a plan that would give a banker-dominated board control of the city's finances for the next twenty years or more. That plan has brought New York unions and the banks into direct confrontation for the first time since the city came to the brink of bankruptcy in 1975. The unions have vowed "resistance against dictatorship by commission," and if they stick to their guns, they possess the clout to stop the plan.

Why is it that it took New York unions so long to take a stand against the banks' plans for the city, plans they now call "to the right of Attila the Hun"? After all, New York has seen two solid years of cutbacks in social services and welfare spending, a wage freeze that wiped out a six percent gain by city workers, layoffs of nearly three in ten city workers (51 percent of the Hispanics, 35 percent of the blacks, 33 percent of the women working for the city have lost their jobs), and the appointment of two boards (the Municipal Assistance Corporation—MAC—and the Emergency Financial Control Board) that have relieved city officials of the responsibility of managing the city's affairs, placing public power in the private hands of the banking interests.

Why is it that working people in New York have failed to mount visible and effective resistance to the corporate/financial program for the cities? Clearly the

When cities have to pay 30 percent of their budgets to the banks for debt service, there is little wonder why social services are cut and workers laid off.



Victor Gotbaum

constituencies most hurt by the cuts, layoffs, tax breaks for corporations, infringement on democratic rights—labor, blacks, women, other minorities—consti-

tute a political majority in the big cities. The answer to that question holds lessons for understanding the same pattern in virtually every big city in the country.

Militant Interest Groups

The cauldron in which the urban crisis bubbled in the sixties was the militant insurgencies of public workers, blacks, other minorities and women that won new social service program funding and large wage and benefit gains. In part, the answer to why opposition to the corporate plan for the cities has been so slow in coming lies in the nature of those insurgencies.

Each of them viewed the others with alarm and some suspicion—as if they were hostile competitors. Blacks competed with women for affirmative action appointments. The labor movement defined itself as an interest group primarily interested in the welfare of its own members, and often opposed both black and women's demands.

The Democratic administration, seeking to deepen its electoral base in the cities, met these groups' demands in such a way as to channel and limit the insurgencies and keep them separate. As a result, the natural coalition of forces fighting for increases in social service spending and public sector expansion never came to be.

The Nixon administration increased the tendency of the urban insurgents to compete with each other, leaving them to quarrel over what remained of urban programs as public spending was cut in response to the recession, and diverted, largely to the sunbelt states.

By the time of New York's bond crisis in the Spring of 1975 most of the urban turmoil of the sixties had disappeared. But its political legacies lingered. The unions were viewed as irresponsible disrupters that had gotten more than their fair share, precipitating the crisis. Welfare and social service recipients were also viewed as culpable.

Union leaders, who had worked closely with bankers through the sixties (especially in the context of investing union pension funds), accepted the bank-

ers' explanation of the crisis. As United Federation of Teachers President Albert Shanker explained, "In the days when the economy was growing you didn't bother to worry about what resources the city had. You always assumed they had some money hidden and if you pushed hard enough you'd find it."

The black and other minority movements of the sixties had largely failed to maintain organizational vehicles for their bases. The result was that they were even less prepared than the unions for the cuts when they came.

New York union leaders felt that in 1975 they had no choice but to bail the city out of its fiscal crisis. First, they feared that a bankruptcy would result in even sharper attacks on their workers. Second, they lacked confidence that the Republicans in Washington would come to the rescue. Third, they were convinced that a direct fight against the cut-

backs through a strike would confirm their public image as the villains in the plot and be unpopular, losing efforts.

As AFSCME's Victor Gotbaum explained, "We are in the same position as a union dealing with a company in danger of going out of business. The necessity for keeping the city from bankruptcy imposes a whole new set of responsibilities that exert a conservative bias on our tactics and objectives." The unions have already bought more than \$2.5 billion in city and MAC bonds, and will buy another \$1 billion by mid-1978 to keep the city afloat financially. During the same time, the banks have bought no new bonds. This huge investment has in turn created new pressures on the unions to protect their investment.

National Trend

Similar pressures and trends are at work, though not nearly so intensely, in other cities around the country. Dick

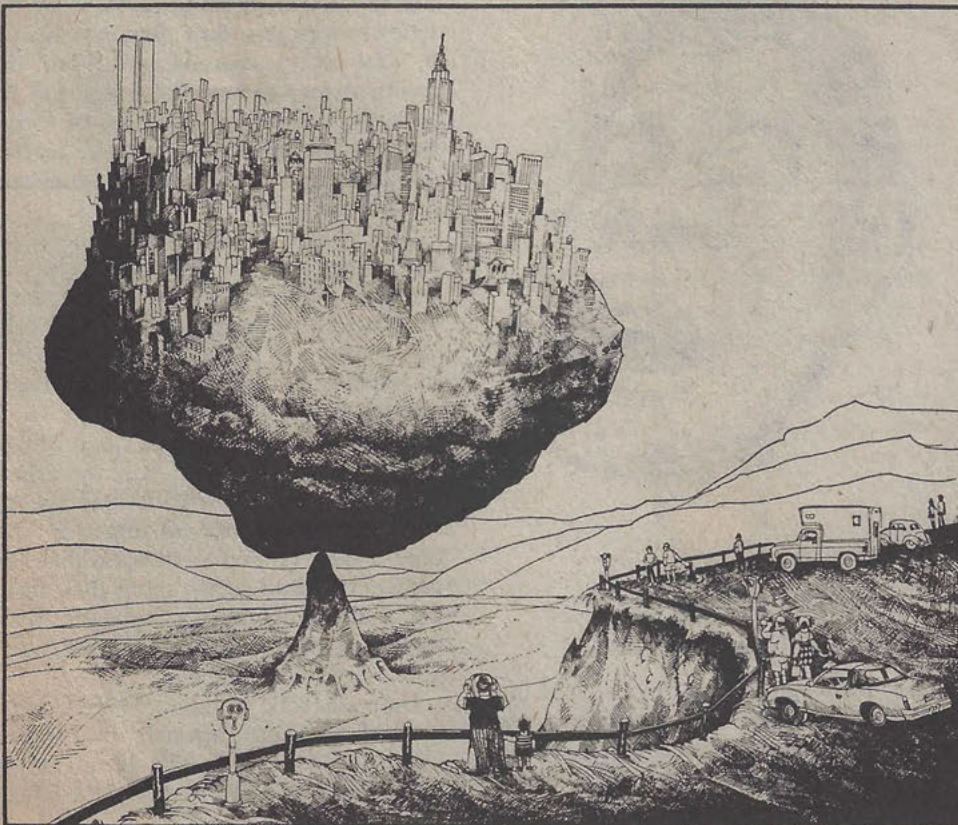
Groulx, Secretary of the Alameda County Central Labor Council in Oakland, California, strikes a typical note in reference to coalitions with other urban forces: "Public workers have now lost the general public support, but what the hell difference does it make? They never gained anything by having public support, so what do they lose when they've lost it? We're a very strong political movement and we know how to do political work. I'm not saying we will not make a coalition with other people, I'm just saying that so far we haven't found anybody strong enough to move with. Nobody but the labor movement is going to take care of the labor movement."

That attitude characterized labor leaders across the Bay in San Francisco as well, where craft workers struck the city after Jack Crowley, head of the S.F. Labor Council declared, "This will be an unpopular strike." Striking workers disrupted essential city services, at one point breaking a water main that served a large neighborhood. They lost the strike.

Within this context, N.Y. union leaders' stand against the new bank proposal is a very positive development. Perhaps they were given heart by the preliminary findings of a Security Exchange Commission investigation that indicates that the major banks colluded to create the bond panic of 1975. Perhaps they were sincerely offended by the authoritarian aspect of the bank proposal. Perhaps they were given new hope for serious federal aid by the Carter victory. In any case, their stand is a first step against the corporate program for the cities in New York.

A Small Step

But it is a very small step. While the unions oppose the new board, they have not indicated that they have come to grips with the roots of the fiscal crisis itself—financial and corporate disinvestment in the cities. They have not made a serious effort to politicize city workers and bring them directly into the fight against the banks. They have shown no



inclination toward building a coalition of urban forces against the banks. And they have developed no alternative to the corporate program on which such a coalition could be based.

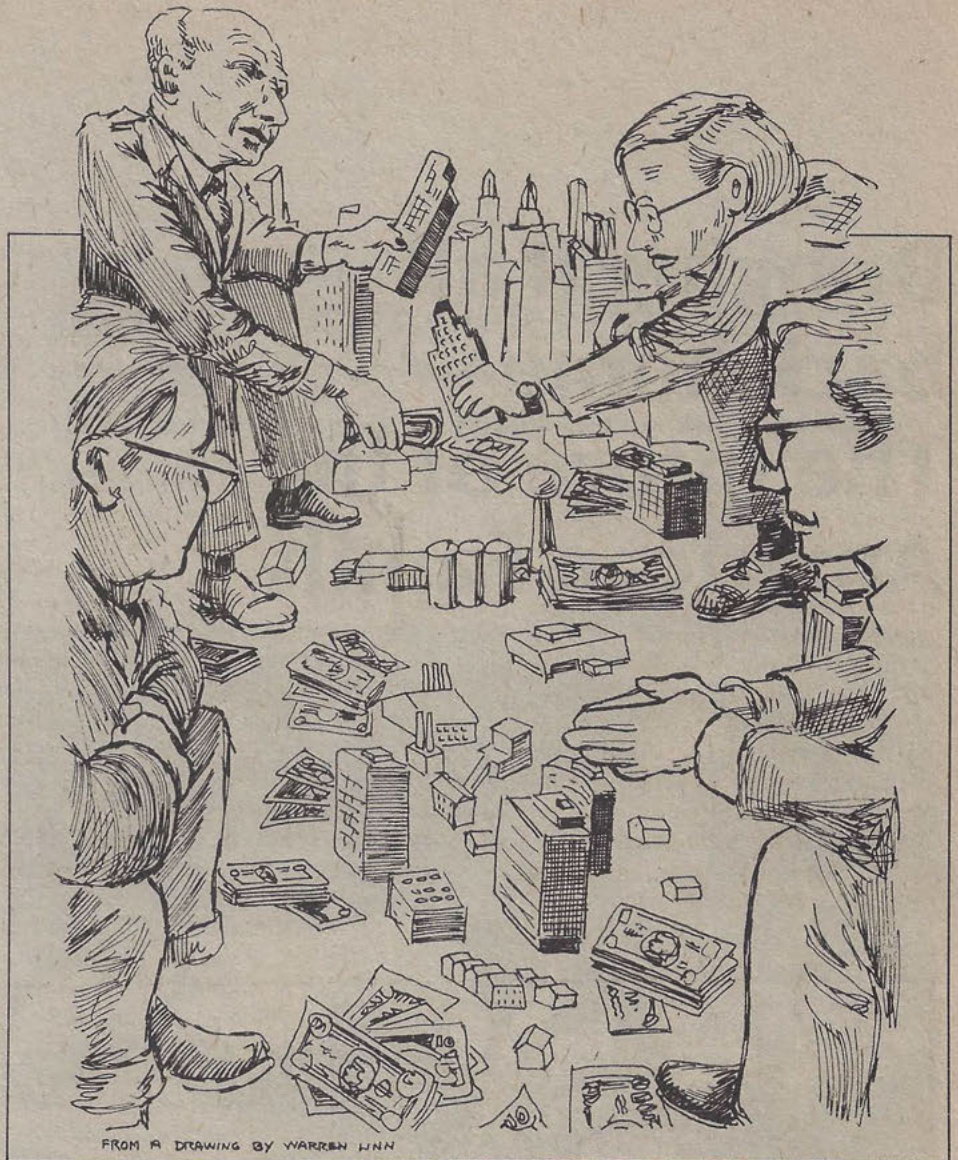
Such a coalition is the only viable hope in the fight against the corporate program for the cities. And the labor movement, the public worker unions particularly, will be absolutely crucial to building it. But before they can play a creative role they must change their orientation on two matters. First, they must commit themselves to the *principle* of coalition and give up the "tough guy" attitude that has won so much for American workers, but now isolates the labor movement from the rest of the working class.

Second, they must see the fight against the corporate program in just those terms, and not view the fight with the banks as peripheral. It is central. The corporations and financial institutions *do* make the fundamental decisions on investment and production that create the shape of our cities. When cities have to pay 30 percent or more of their budgets to the banks for debt service, there is little wonder why social services must be cut and workers laid off. The unions' fight is with the banks. As is the redlined neighborhoods'. As is the overtaxed working homeowners'. As is the black communities'. This is the foundation of a new urban coalition.

An Alternative Program

There are several elements to an alternative program for the cities around which a new urban coalition can be built. Each must be fought for at local, state, and federal levels.

First, the inequities and corporate bias of the city budgets must be attacked. Social service and welfare cuts must be reversed. In part this can be done by shifting the priorities of local budgets away from police hardware and other useless expenditures toward education, health, childcare, etc. In part this can be done by fighting to commit more federal dollars to the cities through budget



reform at that level. (See "Defense Spending on the Defensive", *Moving On*, March, 1977). In part, this can be done by breaking the cities of their dependence on private finance capital and finding new sources of revenue and investment. One of the ironies of the N.Y. crisis is that billions in union pension funds are being used to bail the city out of its debt to the banks. If those funds had been invested years ago in, say, housing construction and rehabilitation, the city's housing crisis would not be nearly so acute, there would be fewer unemployed and the city wouldn't be in the position where the banks can "hold a gun to its head".

Second, the new urban coalition must make a serious commitment to full employment. The personal and social suffering cities where 10-45 percent of the la-

bor force is unemployed is incalculable. The corporate program for the cities calls for new tax credits for private investors in urban areas. Eventually, it is argued, this private investment will generate new employment opportunities.

Expanded Public Sector

An alternative full-employment program would take the opposite approach. It must offer an enforceable guarantee to all who want to work. It must rely on the expansion of the public sector (as the suggested budget reforms imply) rather than the private to create new jobs. It must finance the expansion of the public sector through taxes calculated to limit private, unplanned investment.

Tax reform is at the heart of an alter-
turn to p. 20

Bringing it all back home — The future of the American Family

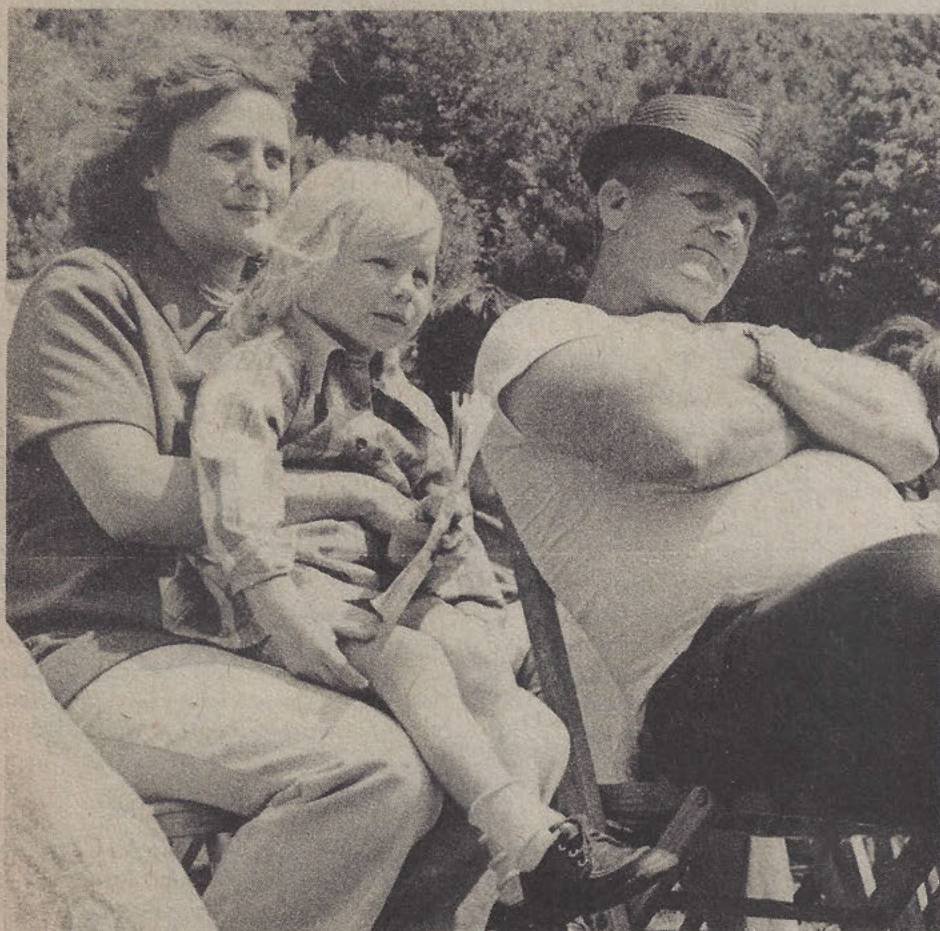


photo by Jane Melnick

**“Those of you who are living in
sin I hope you will get mar-
ried.” Jimmy Carter**

by Roberta Lynch

In recent years concern about the future of the American family has reached a feverish pitch in some quarters. We are being treated to a rash of statistics on rising divorce rates, single parent households, unmarried couples, and widespread homosexuality. All of this accompanied by anguished articles by religious leaders and social commentators asking whether the family *can* survive.

With the coming of the Carter administration, the issue of family life is likely to move increasingly beyond the realm of the moralists and sociologists and into the arena of government. Carter, Mondale, and HEW Secretary Califano have all voiced their fears about the breakdown of the family, and their intention to do something about it—although their specific plans remain murky. The only concrete proposal so far is Mondale's suggestion that all federal legislation be accompanied by a “family impact statement,” indicating how the new provision would affect family life.

Despite the fact that some of the most visible chinks in the armor of family stability have appeared in the American upper classes, it's pretty clear that it is the more subtle changes occurring on a mass scale among the majority of people that are of concern to Carter and company. It is this working class family that capitalism has shaped and re-shaped to meet its needs, and that is a central element in social and economic stability.

A Grand Design

The particular form of the contemporary nuclear family has evolved through a complex process to perform certain basic functions for capitalism. Perhaps its singular feature is the designation of the home as women's primary sphere. In this “grand design” women remain peripheral to the world of work, a surplus labor pool that can easily be forced out of the work force or exploited for lower wages at will. And women also work without pay in the home—rais-

ing children, doing the housework, and "keeping the homefires burning."

But capitalism is nothing if not contradictory. At the same time that it has consistently sought to define the family to serve its own ends, its larger workings have progressively undermined the functioning of the family. As modern capitalism has developed, it has plowed under nearly all other forms of social interaction. Neighborhoods are going by the board; unions are no longer real centers of workers' lives; recreation has become largely depersonalized and passive.

Simultaneously, the emphasis on individual fulfillment has greatly increased. The lack of other social institutions means that the locus of this search for personal happiness has largely shifted to the family. As more and more people come to have great expectations about the pleasures of sexuality, the necessity for love, and the joys of child-raising, the demands on the family have come to weigh heavily on its frail shoulders. Increasingly, it is cracking under the burden.

In addition, the specific economic policies of capitalism have often acted against its long-term need for family stability. The welfare program of the U.S. government is notorious for its bias against household that include men, and its encouragement of weak family ties. Nor can there be much doubt that the maintenance of a high rate of unemployment takes its toll in alcoholism, wife-beating, and child-abuse—all threats to the traditional image of family life. Current statistics indicate that only seven out of every 100 families now fit the standard notion of the American family—a household with both parents, two children and a single (male) breadwinner.

The American family *is* in trouble. But it's important to realize that all the talk about "saving" the family in government circles is a little like pushing someone off a cliff and then loudly calling for the rescue squad to hold some nets at the bottom.

All the talk about saving the family in government circles is a little like pushing someone off a cliff and loudly calling for the rescue squad to hold some nets at the bottom.

Thorny Issue

While we may scoff at this predicament of corporate power, we should remember that the family has always been a thorny issue for the women's movement and the left. And as the question of family life becomes more of a public issue, we may be faced with the necessity to take our own position beyond current instinct or distant goals. What do we think about the present trends?

There are probably few other questions that can produce such varied and emotion-laden responses as this one. The family is such a complex of psychic history, social image, and economic necessity. And our understanding of all its functions and factors is still so limited. For now we can only point to the dual nature of the family as it exists today. On the one hand, the family structure rises like a wall around the aspirations of women, limiting their horizons. On the other hand, there really is no place else to go—it is the only immediate alternative for the majority of working class people, including women. For the most part, the family provides all there is of a sense of community, warmth, and human intimacy under capitalism.

This sense of community is vital. It is not the myth of eternal romance nor the empty sacrifice of staying together for the children. It is rather the genuine caring and nurturing of human beings for each other—something that a socialist society would attempt to foster on a wide scale. For now, it should be preserved to whatever extent possible within the fami-

ly, and extended beyond.

This does not mean an unqualified defense of the family in its present form or functions. It means that the family should be treated as a necessary social institution whose withering away—if it comes—is in a future beyond our ability to forecast.

We should defend it against further encroachment by corporate power while working to overcome its most oppressive aspects, particularly those that shape and confine women's potential. This would require such changes as adequate and unrestricted welfare programs, an end to unemployment, full employment opportunities for women, easily available childcare, an end to wife-beating and child abuse, shared housework responsibilities, free birth control and abortion, and more. Some of these reforms are already in process. Others pose a fundamental challenge to capitalism and will require a more long term effort. Some focus primarily on governmental power. Others will be fought for on the ground of the family itself.

New Territory

Defending community also means moving beyond the confines of the family and recognizing the importance of alternative social arrangements—communal living, single parents, unmarried couples, gay relationships—in charting new territory for personal interaction. At the same time, it's important to remember that these new forms, like the family itself, exist within and are influenced by the existing social structure.
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Getting Together

Ben Shahn poster, 1937

Ed Sadlowski's campaign for president of the United Steel Workers had widespread repercussions at the union's base. Although the campaign was not able to completely overcome the resignation and cynicism that have hampered rank and file activity, it made some giant strides in this direction. A year ago Sadlowski was the only District Director willing to challenge the "Official family." Today there are two dissidents in this key post—Balanoff in District 31 and Wampler in District 33. A year ago there was little rank and file organization outside of Chicago. Today there is a network of people and groups throughout the country (and in Canada) who know that strong and ongoing grass roots organizing is necessary if union democracy is to be established.

None of this is to say that mistakes were not made in the course of the campaign. There were, at times, confusion about where Sadlowski stood on key issues. In addition, the campaign had difficulty in building up an infrastructure that could rival McBride's use of the existing union structure. Sadlowski's defeat was rooted in these weaknesses. But the positive results of the campaign are so powerful that this defeat must be seen as more a beginning than an end. We are printing the following interviews—conducted with steelworkers active in the campaign in the Pittsburgh area—as an indication both of the problems of the campaign and of the potential it has helped to unleash within the USW membership.



Steelworkers talk back: The Sadlowski campaign revisited

by Anne Hill

Michelle McMills is a member of the Executive Board of Local 1397. She's worked at US Steel's Homestead Works for three years and is currently an apprentice in the motor division.

You belong to one of the strongest rank and file organizations in the Pittsburgh area. How did you get together and what did you do during the campaign?

M.M.: About a year ago, at the time of the local union elections, some people at Homestead first started thinking of ourselves as a group committed to making our union more responsive to the dues-payers. Last August our slate of four got elected to represent Local 1397 at the Convention in Las Vegas. When we returned we passed out leaflets explaining what happened at the convention. Everyone in the mill said it was the first time they ever got any report back after paying for the delegates' trips. Several weeks later we started getting ready for the Sadlowski campaign by helping set up the Steelworkers Fight Back headquarters on the main drag in Homestead. Sadlowski had broad appeal because he talked about the same issues we thought were most important--the ENA, ratification of the contract and more democratic procedures instead of the old top-down decision making.

Did the Sadlowski campaign help to build rank and file activity in the mills?

M.M.: We got to talk and meet with a lot of people we wouldn't have otherwise met. The headquarters and beer gardens were great meeting places. People in every department and mill in the Monongahela Valley came together to form a network for dispersing information.

What do you think the future holds?

M.M.: The sentiment had been much more "let Ed do it" than self-help. Now the full-time organizers have left town and the Fight Back office is just one more vacant storefront. We have only ourselves now, but we're much more

confident of our ability to organize, and having been through the campaign, our group is closer and more trusting. We know how to fight back and we will.

Eva Davis is in Local 2634, Rod and Wire Works of Bethlehem Steel in Johnstown, Pennsylvania. John Barbera is a third helper in the open hearth at the Lykes-Youngstown Co. in Youngstown, Ohio. He's Vice-President and Grievance Chairman for the open hearth in Local 1426. He's been in the mill for 27 years.

What's your job? And how long have you been at the mill?

E.D.: I was hired as a laborer. Now I'm a mill hand. I shear the mill, feed the mill, reel. I've been here three years.

Why did you support Sadlowski over McBride?

E.D.: I'll tell you what. I feel we would have got a lot more with Sadlowski being president than McBride. Because it seems like Sadlowski was a lot for the girls and minorities. I'll tell you what. Working in the mills I've come up with a lot of problems. I've been discriminated against. I've had my share of labor gangs and grinding plates in the winter, bad jobs. I hurt my shoulder once and the doctor told me that all the girls are trying to pick their jobs and get the easy ones. He's not getting paid for that. He's getting paid for his medical opinion. I took it to the union discrimination committee down here and one of the lawyers said he could have seen them giving me a hassle if I'd been there only three months, but three years, he couldn't see it.

Why do you think that so many steelworkers voted for McBride?

E.D.: I argued on the bus with one guy who was for McBride. He says, "Well, Sadlowski wants to do away with the steel mills." They read this article about how he wanted to cut down the jobs on the blast furnace.

J.B.: I thought it all started with the *Penthouse* interview. Up until that time

photo by Steffi Domike



Ronnie and Johnnie Demarski, McKeesport, PA.

"We have to learn to tie change to job security. That's the issue we could turn America around with."

there was no campaign in our plants by the McBride people at all. Once *Penthouse* came out—it wasn't what Sadlowski said in the article, but what McBride said that he said. After that we never recovered. That article was posted on every bulletin board. It was the first time I noticed some of our stickers coming off people's hats, off the lunch buckets. And we never regained the momentum until *Meet the Press* when we made somewhat of a comeback.

Were a lot of workers scared of losing their jobs if Sadlowski won?

E.D.: Here in Johnstown, yes. Just before I was hired in '72, they said they were going to phase out the plant completely. Then in '73, they changed their tune. And then when the steelworkers read the article they said, "Oh no. Here we go again."

J.B.: We had USS shut down here about four years ago for seven months and that issue about plant closing is alive in Youngstown. Sadlowski got caught in the classic trap. It's always environment vs. jobs, plants vs. jobs, wages vs. jobs. Yet I think that's the issue we could probably turn America around with. Nobody feels their job is secure. So we have to learn to tie change to job security. And until we do that, we forever get into this kind of trap. And I think it is probably the one issue every American is sensitive on, whether he's working in a plant or in management. Nobody feels safe.

Do you think there is a future for Sadlowski forces in the union?

E.D.: Oh, yes. I feel that McBride is going to continue the same policies. And I'll tell you that a lot of steelworkers want this strike clause taken out. They want the right to strike. That's a really big issue here because you got a lot of discrimination and stuff. And safety's a big issue too. You got a high rate of people getting hurt. And fatalities too. I had two uncles who were killed here in the plant.

When someone gets hurt does the union do anything?

E.D.: It always gets covered up. I'll tell

"When people said Sadlowski wanted to go on strike, I'd say, 'That's a bunch of bullshit. He wants to let the people decide."

you, whenever you get hurt, no matter who's fault it was, it's always your fault. If it was some safety feature overlooked, it should be stressed, but it never is. It's always the workers fault.

John Pressley, a black steelworker, has worked in the Homestead Works more than four years. He's been a fourth steel pourer, third helper on the furnace on the open hearth, and is currently an apprentice machinist in forge division.

How are racial minorities treated at Homestead?

J.P.: In relation to white workers it's basically the same in terms of pay scale for the same jobs. Where it comes down is wherever management has the right to assign certain jobs, like in the labor gang, they can discriminate there. They send the black workers in the summertime to the flues where the temperature's always going to be 100 plus. In the wintertime the blacks are stuck on jobs where there's an open door and they're standing there freezing. Another way is in dispersal of discipline. They might let a white workers go by with a violation and just get a warning, where a brother will get three days suspension. And then he has to deal with the union who play their little discriminatory games too. So the black worker is caught in the middle trying to make a living.

Did white workers resent it when the court's consent decree ordered the companies to pay black workers for past discrimination?

J.P.: Yeah, 'cause of the lack of understanding of what the document meant. Blacks got a little bit of money, yeah, but it was really a slap in the face when you consider that \$30 million was dispersed among all the blacks in the nine basic steel companies. I think the most a black worker got at Homestead was \$900. For 30 years of discrimination! Damn, that's not even \$100 a year! But a lot of white workers thought this was another way the government was trying to strip them of their rights. They supported McBride because Sadlowski wouldn't commit himself against the decree.

Were there a lot of blacks involved in the Sadlowski campaign?

J.P.: There were a few who were out front. But there were more who weren't active. And there were lots of blacks who were uncommitted for a long time. They wanted to know if Sadlowski was just another white, "vote for me and I'll set you free." They took their time and checked it out. But I think percentage wise more voted for Sadlowski than McBride. I think Sadlowski's stand on the right to vote on the contract influenced a lot of younger brothers.

What do you think is the future for Sadlowski forces here?

J.P.: We got to continue. I think the future is a hell of a horizon to look to. Because a lot more people have been motivated and we have gained more of an understanding of the union and the power we possess. We've started an organization McBride is going to have to deal with. The rank and file has been recognized and now we can't be ignored by McBride or anyone else. Where before we were diversified, now we're uniting around basic principles of union democracy.

Dave Dunn, Rob Davis and Donald Saffranski all belong to Local 1196 at Allegheny Ludlum Steel in Brackenridge, Pennsylvania. Allegheny Ludlum is the largest plant in the country that produces specialty steel. It employs three thousand workers. Rob has worked there over a

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Sinking Roots in the suburbs

Editors Note

Even months after the event, it is still difficult to gauge the full significance of the TV presentation of Alex Haley's *Roots*. But there can be little doubt that whatever its merits or demerits, the show was a major political and cultural happening.

Over a decade ago black people across the country were picketing, sitting in, marching, and taking to the streets to demand equality and freedom. At the start of 1977 you could look at almost any of the mass media and see black people—writing articles, selling products, starring in movies. What you wouldn't see in the dominant media was any serious discussions of the concrete situation of black people or of race relations today. In a remarkably short space of time, the word "racism"—and all its implications—had been largely excised from the public debate.

This strange silence on the topic of racism can hardly be attributed to an improved quality of life for blacks. Nor can it be the result of any substantial improvement in race relations. If anything, conditions today are worse, and racist social movements among whites that oppose bussing and affirmative action are more widespread.

The importance of *Roots* lies primarily in the fact that it has shattered this taboo on the topic of racism. Like almost nothing else in our lifetimes, it has succeeded in bring home to white Americans some part of the reality and horror of slavery.

None of this means that *Roots* was without its artistic or political flaws. It does mean that the problem of racism in American life is once again out in the open where it belongs. *Roots* will not end ghettos or unemployment. It will not inevitably spark the revitalization of black activism or galvanize black-white unity. But *Roots* through whatever accident of history or coincidence of profit, has made a real contribution to these necessary aspects of any real challenge to capitalist power and control.

by Diane Horwitz

On a summer afternoon young men are loading bats and chains into their cars for a Sunday trek into the city to help the brothers in Marquette Park keep the blacks out of the southwest side. After all, if that neighborhood goes, the suburbs could be the next target.

Right before the public schools opened this past fall, there was a large, well-organized demonstration by white parents in one of these suburbs. Why? It had been rumored that the Board of Education was thinking of appointing a committee to study the possibility of busing to the Chicago suburbs.

A woman is found dead in her car at a local shopping center. A wave of panic runs through the suburb. It was reported that a few blacks had been shopping there the week before.

The suburbs are relatively new. Most of the residents moved away from the tight-knit ethnic communities of the south and southwest sides of Chicago as blacks moved in over the last 20 years.

Many of these families' lives have been defined by moving, escaping. "They're pushing us out." And the boundary lines keep changing. A few years ago it was the largest shopping center on Western Avenue. Now few whites venture into what has become black turf. The southwest suburbs population boom is a direct result of the expansion of the Southside ghetto.

Fear and anger run deep. The latter surfaces easily. "I was driving past the old neighborhood last week and you should see it. We knew how to keep our property up."

These are solid middle Americans. Skilled workers, foremen, post office clerks, assistant managers of McDonalds, truck drivers and an occasional

small businessman. The women mostly stay at home, though this is changing rapidly. They are Catholic, Irish, Italian, Lithuanian, Polish. . .

Some of them, their daughters and sons, attend the local community college where I teach, hoping for careers as professionals and businessmen and women. After the first night of *Roots*, one, obviously affected, said, "I didn't know that was how they got the slaves here." A group—those willing to explore their reactions, not too threatened about voluntarily talking about black people, more liberal than the average student—collects to talk.

One woman begins proudly, "My son is in the third grade and he watched it all week, and they talked about it in school. One day I used the word 'colored' and he corrected me on that, told me to use the word Negro. But I told him maybe they went to extremes in the movie."

Most people love the series.

Joan B. (A woman in her early forties, mother of three. She's moved four or five times.): "You know, we're always talking about the land of the free and the brave and the word freedom. I guess I never knew what it meant. It was something I took for granted. That scene in the movie where they separated the families tore my gut out."

These are strong family people. The kind who loved Mayor Daley for his family loyalty. 'So and so's a Good Family Man' is the highest compliment.



Danny Lyon

An older woman asks rhetorically, "Now if these slaves were so family oriented so many generations ago, why aren't they like that today?"

How do you know they are not?

"Well, you know, they're living with how many people? There are quite a few colored living in the ghetto with aunts and uncles and cousins."

"But that's family," someone points out, confused.

Another counters, "Well, half the time they don't know what family they belong to!"

And another, "Welfare goes back to how they came here. The slave masters took care of them, and they still expect to be taken care of."

Do you really think the family in Roots wanted to be "taken care of?"

Silence.

Finally, "Well, no, but Kunta had a sense of independence and strength because he came from Africa. Those born

For the first time, most found themselves rooting for the blacks.

into slavery didn't seem to know what they were missing."

What about Tom?

More silence.

"Well it was passed down to him."

"Don't you think this was an *unusual* family?"

"Yes!," many voices chime in. "This

family was an exception!"

Do people agree?

Heads nod. But some don't seem so

sure. The contradictions are settling in.

They are shocked by the deep cruelty and inhumanity. "I couldn't believe it. I read about slavery, but I never knew it was like that." It made them feel deeply uneasy, provoked guilt. "I wonder if I could have acted just like that slaveowner?" For the first time, most found themselves rooting for the blacks.

A Vietnam vet, silent through much of the discussion looks up. "I felt a bit connected with this *Roots*. I joined the Marines, went through boot camp. You've probably heard how they are. They strip you of your name, give you a number. They treat you like dirt, keep on you, keep on you, until if somebody tells you to do something you do it without a minute's hesitation. They just strip you of your pride, everything. You're just part of them, instead of yourself. I felt bad about myself. It was just so easy to say yes sir, yes sir. I guess I was the opposite of Kunta. I could have been a good slave."

For most there was a gap between the history of *Roots* and the fears and prejudices of their lives today. *Roots* didn't explain the chain of events—sharecropping, black migration to the Northern cities, economic policies and official racism—that ties *Roots* to Chicago.

"I have to think about what if my kid came home and said he wanted to marry a black."

"You know, my grandfather came over here third class steerage without a penny to his name, and he worked hard, and look where we are now."

Nonetheless, for people who are so racially isolated, who live with such a high level of racial tension, weeping when Kizzie is taken from her parents, feeling anger when Kunta is forced to take the name Toby, is a step ahead. "Most of us have not been exposed to black people. They have always been mysterious to us. *Roots* opened the door for me a little."★

Diane Horwitz is a Chicago political activist who teaches at a suburban community college.

Roots

The book was better

by Earl Ofari

When Alex Haley began work on the reconstruction of his family history twelve years ago, he was hardly aware that his efforts would have the impact on the American public that it did. The ABC production of *Roots* topped the Nielson ratings the week it was aired, and eventually went on to become the most watched TV program of all time.

This did not entirely take the corporate executives at ABC and the other two major networks by surprise. With a million dollar promotional budget and saturation advertising in the electronic and print media, a big slice of the regular viewing audience was guaranteed before the first scene.

Following the avalanche of praise and response, the corporate bigwigs of TV are now falling over themselves to claim that the public will get much more "relevancy" in its programming. Implied here is that the public will get less of the propaganda and mindless pap of the myriad "good" cop, game, and comedy shows.

Whether or not this is the case remains to be seen. However, one thing is clear: *Roots* did shatter the myth that the viewing public only wants "non-involved" fantasy and entertainment. More importantly, the fact that a series explicitly about blacks (in a non-comic or sports role) was able to garner such a high rating from presumably a predominantly white audience was itself some measure of distinction.

Nighttime Soap Opera

However, in comparison to the book the TV production was little more than nighttime soap opera fare prettied up for a white audience. The two main ideas that Haley was trying to get across in the book were the utter horror and degradation of slavery to its victims (from their point of view), and the high level of dignity and sophistication at work in the make-up and organization of African society. Although the cultural continuity of his family was a prime focus, the fact that Haley chose to spend the better part of half his book detailing life in an African village indicated that this was a major concern.

And it had to be in order to refute the racist notions that Africa before the coming of the whites was nothing but a land of savages with no civilization. The same reasoning came into play in his emphasis on the total bestiality of the slave system. Here he counters the writings and "research" of the historians



who continue to try to prove that there was something good about slavery. (The book, *Time on the Cross*, is the most recent example of this type.)

In the TV production neither theme was forcefully put forth in the systematic way of the book. Slavery, to be sure, was treated and some aspects of the physical brutality and dehumanization of blacks conveyed. But David Wolper, the show's white producer, made clear that his eye was squarely on the white audience, not historical accuracy, when he said that if "the brutality of a slave ship were shown in its raw form and reality, we'd lose the audience before the end of the first show."

Realism Missing

Maybe. But the point is that if they hedged on the main elements, what about other things? It's apparent that the emphasis was on the positive whether it came to prettifying up the slave quarters (straight off a Hollywood back lot), the use of insipid and contrived love scenes between whites, slave merryment, christian forgiveness (Tom failing to whip the Klansman), or high camp comedy.

The use of whites was another example. In the book, Haley's white characters were never strongly defined. They served rather as backdrops for the telling of the main story. This was completely reversed on the screen.

A more realistic depiction of slavery can be found in works such as: W.E.B. DuBois' *Black Reconstruction*, Basil Davidson's *Black Cargos*, Robert Starobins's *Industrial Slavery in the old South*, and August Meier's *From Plantation to Ghetto*. Here the true roots of the oppression of blacks—which is very much a feature of American life today—can be found. Quite a difference from the sanitized history courtesy of ABC.

Earl Ofari is an author and radio commentator. He has written The Myth of Black Capitalism.

Grassroots Organizing — how will it grow? An exchange on the new populism

by Harry C. Boyte

“The elements of the new populism include a wide range of views, from anti-trust to socialist. Together they make up the working class response to the corporate attack.”

The changing circumstances of the 1970s have begun to alter significantly the terms of “politics as usual” in the United States. Here, I want to summarize the corporate attack on welfare state policies and social movements and the ensuing populist ferment which have increasingly defined the battles in mainstream political institutions (discussed at greater length in “The Populist Challenge”, *Socialist Revolution* No. 32). And I want to take the opportunity of this forum to address a crucial question that I was not able to explore adequately in the earlier piece: the relationship between explicitly socialist organization and the new populist politics.

From a Marxist perspective, three main elements form the matrix in which we must develop strategy: the business offensive against reform; the populist movement which still remains economist and fragmented; and the enormous prob-

lems which the political and cultural environment pose to attempts at gaining legitimacy for traditional socialist language.

In the environment of seemingly easy and indefinite economic expansion all through the 1960s, many elements within big business adopted a “progressive stance”. But the changing economic conditions of the 1970s led to a prompt reversal. Corporate ideologues and their political allies began reviving nineteen thirty vintage rantings against social services, regulation and “egalitarianism” with a vengeance. And the business community concluded—in the words of a *Business Week* editorial—that “private investment cannot increase as a share of the gross national product unless government spending declines”. In an environment of anticipated prolonged foreign competition, shortages, inflation and other difficulties—where the paramount need within the framework of the historic “givens” of American economics

by Hugh Grady

“Harry is seriously mistaken in his view of the ‘democratic’ consciousness of these groups and in his strategy for work in the Democratic Party. His proposal is a new form of social democracy.”

As we enter the late '70s the American left is trying to make sense of the changes in the world and in this country since the upsurge of radical activism in the '60s.

Harry Boyte's article is a part of that re-evaluation, and it contains valuable insights and presents an important challenge to some of the assumptions that NAM and others have been operating under. But Harry's conclusions, I believe are not the ones we need to guide us now; instead, they represent a theoretical and practical retrogression to earlier and disastrous tactics of the socialist movement.

Harry correctly points to a significant ideological shift on the part of the “corporate elite” in recent years that puts a great strain on a number of the mainstays of mainstream liberalism and has produced some interesting situations: Ralph Nader's questioning of capitalism and an embryonic “new populism,” for example. In addition, there has been a

slow but steady growth in community organizing efforts indicating discontent at the grass-roots.

I agree with Harry's basic point that as socialists we need to be involved with people at the grass-roots level in these everyday kinds of struggles.

Agreement ends

But my agreement ends here. I think he is seriously mistaken in his view of the “democratic” consciousness of these groups and in his strategy of working in the Democratic Party as a “major priority” for socialists.

Now, we both agree that social movement from below is absolutely essential to any kind of real social change in this country. But Harry's model of politicization seems to involve two separate steps: first you work to build democratic, populist, but non-socialist ideology within these movements; second you construct a socialist movement in what appears to be a kind of media-electoral sphere (“socialist schools. . . media. . . po-

The Long View

was to get the economy moving again—such viewpoints won the support of supposedly liberal corporate figures and politicians alike. “My job is to make sure the people get less than they want,” declared Jerry Brown on Christmas Eve, 1976.

Explosion of Expectations

The dilemma corporate strategists and their friends have faced in the 1970s has been far more worrisome, however, than the simple need to change ideological garments. For from their point of view the root problem is that the people are too insurgent. The movements of the sixties created an “explosion of expectations.” The black movement, the women’s movement, the anti-war movement, new labor organizing among Chicanos, new environmental and consumer organizations have been adding millions of disgruntled Americans to those traditionally clamoring for reform.

over



*Kansas populist Mary Ellen Lease:
“Raise less corn and more hell!”*

litical work with left Democrats. . . and . . . in the Democratic Party”) and presumably hope that this will attract the populist democrats in the long run.

Harry isn’t very clear here on how he sees these two levels of consciousness (populist and socialist) interacting. But I think it is crucial to get some clarity about this, and I think we can learn from a comparison of two grass-roots organizing projects in Texas—ACORN, one of the new populist groups that Harry mentions, and the Bois d’ Arc Patriots of Dallas, (see No. 5 of *Green Mountain Quarterly*).

ACORN’s approach is consciously non-ideological. They restrict themselves to issues of immediate concern with no attempt to place local conditions in a larger context. They have had some success in this way, but from reports they remain a very staff-dominated organization. There are “people in motion” in ACORN, but rather passive

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Photo Rick Summers. Copyright NTIC



Gale Cincotta, Chairperson, National People's Action, a populist-oriented network of neighborhood organizations.

New populism

— yes

“What before would have been considered one of fortune’s gifts,” as a special commentary in *Business Week* put it, was now “converted into a right, not to be grateful for but to be insisted upon.” In such an environment of popular self-assertion, democracy itself was thought to be excessive.

The rightward shift in corporate politics polarized the mainstream liberal tradition. Yet if the corporate elite clearly predominates in American politics, it does not have a complete dictatorship over policy. The corporate attack on reform has been partially resisted by those liberal groups with the closest ties to grass roots movement. And a new breed of populist politics, focused on corporate power, has appeared that has manifestations in labor, the black movement, the women’s movement, and other social change constituencies.

Moreover, new organizations have emerged out of consumer, community and environmental battles in the 1970s that have an explicitly anti-corporate orientation and that involve thousands of working class Americans in activist campaigns: utility groups, neighborhood associations, citizen action organizations like CAP, Fair Share, ACORN, CAL and others. They remain by and large determinedly issue-oriented and non-ideological—as do, indeed, their counterparts in public interest fields like the Nader groups. In many ways such groups are the analogue of the trade union—defensive organizations that fight against corporate ravaging of the “social realm” where businesses have found increasing profits in late capitalism. But their implicit language of “popular power” holds fascinating parallels to the language used to describe the mass organizations at the popular substratum of every successful revolutionary process. And in fact, although it is a process not yet fully apprehended by the Marxist tradition in advanced industrial society,

the experience of self-organization and internal strengthening which every group undergoes as it strives for liberation gives rise to the subjective sense of expanding democracy, described objectively as popular power.

There is a pressure for “the problem of reformism” to become an excuse for a politics which is a source of identity, not a means for changing the world.

Class Polarization

The balance of class forces was reflected in the 1976 election. With Ford, business would have won a clear and decisive victory (a felt reality which caused the election to be the most class-polarized since the 1930s). And while Carter acquiesces to the fundamental features of the corporate agenda, his administration still is forced to adopt a populist style, and has proved far more responsive to social change demands than did those of Nixon and Ford on issues like affirmative action and control over natural resources. However, in the aftermath of the election there are growing indications of new populist self-consciousness and programmatic unity. And in the near future, activist organizing center for the new populism—like that now being constructed out of the Hayden campaign in California—seem likely to further the process of movement building, and give the movement an increasingly explicit language of grass roots democracy.

In aggregate the populist responses of social change forces make up the working class resistance to the corporate attack. But the elements of the new populism include a wide range of viewpoints, from anti-trust to socialist. Moreover, questions of class, international relations, cultural insurgency are norm-

ally submerged by the specific issue character of the movement. And thus for both the short and long range success of the anti-corporate resistance, more is needed than simply the issue-oriented populism and even the activist “visionary” new populist organizing centers now emerging. As Roberta Lynch put it in her superb *In These Times* column of January 26, socialists must see their work as building a socialist tendency within the working class movement, which they also seek to build as a whole. Indeed without such a respected and strong socialist tendency, the populist movement would ultimately be certain to fall prey to anti-socialist rhetoric, fear, and internal divisions.

Socialist Language

For socialists to build such a tendency requires an unromantic and hard-headed look at the reality it is difficult for socialists to face: the failure of socialist groups to grow significantly in an environment characterized by considerable anti-capitalist sentiment. As Lynch correctly points out, the two main analyses of the failure of the left to build a mass socialist movement in the United States blame variously a “corrupted” working class or a strategically clumsy left itself. Both explanations contain insight. But there is a crucial, and more basic explanation for the current failure of socialist groups that is normally not addressed. The fact is that in the American environment, “socialist language” is not very believable. The Marxist tradition in industrial society, still not entirely having comprehended the substructural process of movement building and democratic self-organization at the base of working class power, has yet to win state power and create any living example of “socialist democracy”. In a political culture contaminated by years of anti-communism, colored by popular anger at government bureaucracy, and guided by a ruling class adept at pointing to “socialist failures”, our descriptions of democratic socialism remain largely academic

sounding and abstract to masses of people, no matter how eloquently presented. The result is specific. Insurgent, radical socialism finds adherents almost exclusively from among intellectually inclined strata of the working and middle classes. Our politics, cut off from a mass base, are therefore highly vulnerable to fantasy. And indeed, there is great pressure for the "problem of reformism" (itself historically misunderstood by Western Marxism) to become an excuse for a politics which itself is simply a source of identity—not a means for changing the world.

A socialist strategy for the present must begin with full recognition of the difficulties we encounter. In particular, socialist strategy must be geared simultaneously to the work of building the working class movement and to the task of legitimizing "socialism" itself as a respected and credible politics within mainstream working class life. In several instances NAM chapters have been able to combine such a dual necessity. Such work is crucial: local base building through which the socialist movement will win sympathy—if not a large number of members in the near future—for itself from a variety of progressives.

Winning Credibility

But a strategy for socialist legitimation must also place as a major priority work in the formal political process, on local, state and national levels. At times in the next several years, carefully chosen, explicitly socialist candidacies may prove important elements in such a strategy. But on the whole, the progressive American constituencies and organizations are not going to see themselves as socialist for many years. That fact alone dramatically limits the options for an insurgent socialist movement and makes extraordinarily acute the need for socialist attention to the task of winning political credibility. In particular, it raises in a new way the question of the Democratic Party. At this point, when all significant social change forces express their political objectives through

the Democrats and will for the foreseeable future, socialists will only begin seeming an authentic political current in American life by working in such a context. And thus the formal political approach adopted by the Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee, of obtaining members and articulating a leading socialist presence within the Democrats, is a necessary and crucial component to any successful socialist strategy for victory.

Socialists will only begin seeming an authentic political current in American life by working in the Democratic Party.

In conclusion, then, a socialist strategy for the populist movement contains several key elements: 1) We need to continue the activist, issue oriented organizing work now underway in utilities, labor and other arenas. 2) We need to aid in the process of building activist, broadly based *political* organizations that can give the new movement increasing self-consciousness and politicize it with the language of grass roots democracy. And 3) We need to seek imaginative and creative methods for legitimizing our tradition in "mainstream political life"—through building on past practice like socialist schools, use of media like *In These Times*, local political work with left Democrats like Ron Dellums, and through new projects with left wing social change forces in the Democratic Party.★

Harry Boyte is an activist currently writing a book on the new populism. He is a member of NAM.

New populism — maybe

from p. 15

ones, it seems—the opposite of what is needed for a truly democratic transformation of this country.

The Patriots, too, concentrate on felt needs. They work in a poor white inner-city section of Dallas. But they attempt to put these needs in a broader political context that concludes that what we need is a Second American Revolution against the monopoly capitalists. They build on the traditions of Southern poor whites—music, community, and pride—while opposing racism and right-wing thinking. They point out the practical necessity of unity with blacks and put this into practice by joint actions with the Dallas Black Panthers and Brown Berets. Their success can be measured in part by the thousands of Dallas residents in Patriot-organized tenants rights groups, food co-ops, and protest marches.

Groups like the Patriots teach us that you don't have to give up anti-capitalist ideology in order to reach the people. And you can use words like "class" and "revolution" if you make them real to people in down-to-earth language and militant, successful practice. In the Patriot's organizing, anti-capitalist consciousness is not developed in some separate sphere, but through a series of collective struggles.

Linguistic Problem?

This discussion has already led us into the question of "socialist language" that Harry raises and his argument that we need a major priority of working within the Democratic Party to "legitimize" socialism in a hostile American environment.

First of all, I don't think the problem is basically a linguistic one. As a matter of fact, the Patriots don't use the word "socialism" in their agitation, but talk instead about taking power from the monopoly capitalists and setting up *collective*

tively owned and managed enterprises. The problem that Harry is pointing to when he speaks of the difficulties of "socialist language" are basically problems of working-class consciousness. He's getting at the major challenge to Marxism in the West since the First World War: the historical fact that the intense self-activity of the working class in Western Europe and North America in that time has led to a series of important reforms, but not to the revolution posited by classical Marxist theory.

Historically, Marxists split into two camps over this problem. One wing, the Social Democrats, gave up Marx's vision of revolution and substituted a strategy of a series of gradual reforms achieved through electoral activity as a way to socialism. The other wing, the Communists, kept Marxism's revolutionary traditions but under Stalin's influence became rigidly dogmatic and were often manipulative and undemocratic in their practice. Thus for decades anti-capitalists had to choose between a movement that practiced democracy but had abandoned revolution and a second movement that preached revolution but had, in the worst cases, given up democracy. (There were, of course, occasional rare exceptions to this generality in both camps.)

The movements of the '60s produced the great antidote to this ideological hardening of the arteries in a many-sided, often partial or contradictory series of developments that stretched from the Cultural Revolution in China, to democratic socialist rebellions in Eastern Europe, and the rise of the New Left in Western Europe and the United States. NAM emerged out of this process in the U.S., in an attempt to combine revolutionary goals and an unshakeable commitment to democracy in a way that cut through the old dilemma.

But as the ferment of the '60s subsided, there has been a notable increase in the influence of the old ideological patterns. A new form of Stalinism has emerged in the U.S. in the "new communist movement." And it seems to me that Harry's

"Labor" plays an often decisive role in the Democratic Party. "Labor" refers to the rigorous bureaucracies of the AFL-CIO, not to the millions of workers who make up it ranks.

proposal completes a pattern of retrogression by being essentially a new form of social democracy. That is, Harry's strategy is one that seems to me to tie us to the strategy of gradual reformism by its emphasis on participation in the Democratic Party as well as the lack of clarity about grass-roots reform struggles.

"Mediated" rule

Since Roosevelt's election in 1932, the Democratic Party has been the political mainstay of the continued rule of capital in the United States. Basically the DP has served this function by seeming to give the working class a role in public policy while always defining working class needs within a capitalist framework. It has "mediated" the rule of capital with the demands of the working class *within* the capitalist system.

Now I suspect Harry would agree with this description but point to the potentially explosive contradiction (between capital and labor) within this role. But here it is crucial to understand the concrete way that workers "participate" in the DP. It is, of course, a commonplace that "labor" plays an often decisive role within the Democratic Party coalition. But this is an extremely misleading formulation. "Labor" here refers to the rigid bureaucracies of the AFL-CIO, not to

the millions of workers who make up its ranks.

The DP serves as a clearing-house for the most class-collaborationist wings of the labor, women's, national minorities'—and socialist—movements. It is the chief institution in American society for the containment of incipiently anti-capitalist movements. It does this by offering symbolic "acceptance" of the bureaucracies formed by insurgent movements—at the price of accepting the "mainstream" agenda.

This process has, of course, achieved important reforms. But we cannot lose sight of the other side of this process: the transformation of potentially system-transcending movements into the "interest groups" of pluralist capitalism.

Harry's proposal for working in the DP seems to me to promise a similar dynamic of containment and cooptation. I simply don't believe the Democratic Party offers the possibility of nurturing a real alternative to the capitalist system. But it will remain the only option for working people until we build another party—and this must be the major political priority of the socialist movement. ★

Hugh Grady is a member of the Austin, Texas, chapter of NAM.

Boycott J.P. Stevens!

Sheets and Pillowcases

Beauti-Blend
 Beauticale
 Fine Arts
 Peanuts (comic strip figures)

Carpets

Contender
 Gulistan
 Merryweather
 Tastemaker

Tastemaker
 Utica & Mohawk
 Designer Labels:
 Yves St. Laurent
 Angelo Donghia

Table Linen

Simtex

Towels

Tastemaker
 Utica

Hosiery

Big Mama
 Finesse
 Hip-Lets
 Spirit

Blankets

Forstmann
 Utica

Steel Talk

from p. 10

year in the plate mill shears, as a laborer in the strip mill and now as a janitor. He and Dave are members of NAM. Dave has worked at the mill for four years as a laborer in the strip mill, and is currently on the weld and side trim line. Donald has worked in the mill over five of the last eleven years. He is currently on the weld line.

Sadlowski won by a big two to one margin at your local unlike other basic steel locals in Western Pennsylvania. Why?

R.D.: There were problems in signing away a lot of benefits in our local contract, and that caused a pretty big stir. That issue cut across the age boundary and they impeached the Executive Board and a group of people got a protest slate together. So I guess there was a little bit of radical tradition before the election.

What did you hear during the campaigning about the ENA?

D.S.: Fear, first of all. Until people started talking about it and understanding what Sadlowski wanted. Because everybody thought Sadlowski was strike crazy. "This man wants to go on strike because he was against the ENA." We understood what the ENA was. We understood what striking is in a bargaining situation. It's the only real power you have in negotiation. Anything else is lip service. We have a large younger force in the mill and its higher educated than in the past. And they understood and they got a lot of the older guys to understand.

R.D.: When people said that Sadlowski wanted to go on strike, I'd say, "That's a bunch of bullshit. You don't understand his position. He wants a referendum vote to let the people decide." And I talked about what we've lost under Abel and how ENA has paved the way for speed-ups and job combinations.

Do you think the Penthouse article was damaging to Sadlowski?

D.S.: No. Magazines of that type are

very prevalent in the mills. They're read a lot. McBride came out with his leaflet where he quoted Sadlowski and then had his three dots at the end. Now in our mill *Penthouse* goes around. *Hustler* goes around. *Playboy* goes around. The interviews are read. They saw what McBride did and said, "Wait a minute, this is all wrong." And we said we have in black and white what Sadlowski is saying and we pull it out and show that McBride is basically lying to steelworkers to try to get their votes. He's trying to scare them. Sadlowski doesn't want jobs elim-

"We understood what striking is in a bargaining situation. It's the only real power you have in negotiation. Anything else is lip service."

inated, but realizes it's a reality of the future due to technology, and that something's got to be done for steelworkers who will be put out of their jobs. It is the responsibility of the company to re-educate them, relocate them, something.

How are women and minorities treated at the mill?

R.D.: If you are talking about from the rank and file, there's a lot of racism and sexism in the mill. To describe the situation on the shop floor, I'd say there's a passive tolerance of minorities and women.

D.S.: There was resentment on the part of whites when the consent decree came down.

R.D.: For them I think the decree was another thing that was going to be shoved down their throats. Like so many bad contracts and bad working conditions. They had absolutely no input and no control over it. They had to swallow

it. I think most of the resentment came from that and not necessarily that this person who the consent decree applied to was a woman or a black person.

What were the specifics of the Sadlowski campaign in this mill?

R.D.: First of all we plastered the plant with Sadlowski slate stickers. They were everywhere—in the canteen, the lock-errooms, doorways, anyplace more than one steelworker would be at a time. We wanted to make the campaign as visible as possible. Every time the Fight Back office came out with a new leaflet that we thought spoke to issues of concern to us here we would distribute them. We had a core group of people we could call on to leaflet at the gates, and we also took leaflets inside the plant.

D.D.: We also did a lot of talking to people. Anytime we'd hear a remark about the election, we'd jump in and try to talk up Sadlowski. With ten of us doing that consistently and consciously it caused a chain reaction.

R.D.: There were other factors in the campaign in our area. Sadlowski came up for a rally which was really successful. About 2000 guys showed up and there was a lot of enthusiasm that night. The local paper gave good coverage to that rally both before and after. Another factor was that there was never a strong McBride campaign here. I think the staff people were afraid to show their faces because of the visibility of the Sadlowski campaign. Plus, Sadlowski had the endorsement of four out of the six new Executive Board members. ★

Anne Hill is a member of NAM and supported the Steelworkers Fight Back Campaign in Pittsburgh.

Urban crisis

from p. 5

native program for the urban crisis. The share of federal taxes paid by the corporations had declined from 34 percent to 14 percent since 1944. In 1974 the ten largest bank holding companies paid an average of 2 percent federal tax on \$2 billion. Tax reforms must be aimed at closing loopholes, raising rates, and ending incentives for corporations. Locally, property tax rates must be restructured to tax income producing property at a higher rate than homes, and graduated income taxes should replace regressive sales taxes.

The new revenues generated by such tax reforms could then be used to create jobs. But not just jobs within the arenas typically understood as "public service". To the contrary, the cities should look toward entering fields that have traditionally been left to private enterprise. For example, the housing crisis could be reversed if construction and rehabilitation were organized on the basis of the cities' needs rather than profit opportunities for the real estate, banking and construction industries.

Democratic Control

Third, the program must deal with by the process by which budget and investment decisions are made in the cities. Private capital can no longer be allowed to make decisions that have such intensely *public* meaning as building a hospital or laying off its workers. As conservative a political figure as Stanley Steingut, the Democratic Speaker of the New York State Assembly, has suggested that every bank board include public representatives. Steingut's suggestion does not amount to public democratic control of investment, but it moves in the right direction.

Another approach that has been widely discussed at the several Conferences on Alternative Local and Public Policy is the public bank—a depository for tax-

"Public workers have lost public support, but what the hell difference does it make anyway." Dick Groulx

ex, pension funds and other public monies that could compete with private banks and whose investment policy could be determined by elections of its board or legislated guidelines.

Another is legislation that would discourage or prevent corporations from leaving cities to relocate where labor and other costs are lower.

This alternative to the corporate urban program is a far cry from socialism. It is an alternative, nothing more, around which a broad urban alliance can unite—labor, women, blacks, other minorities and the left. In some cities this coalition is beginning to grope toward existence. Some elements of the program are becoming the platform of progressive candidates for local office.

But these formations are very tentative, often lasting only as long as a single election campaign and narrowing the fight for reform to the election alone. It may be that this is necessary to begin with. But as an element of the coalition building process, we should flesh out and enrich the program and broaden the struggle. Saving the cities and perhaps our own future depends on it. ★

Nick Rabkin is Organizational Secretary of the New American Movement.



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American family

from p. 7

enced by the larger social context. They are not solutions in themselves. Left to their own devices, many of them replicate the patterns and problems of tradition. To flourish, they need to be situated within a larger movement toward women's liberation and human freedom. Thus, the search for community, if it is to succeed, has to transcend the narrow terrain of personal relationships to which it has been relegated. It has to look most immediately to the re-creation of those forms of meaning that capitalism is steadily sapping; to the efforts to

preserve neighborhoods from deterioration; to the efforts to bring unions back to their members, and to include more workers in their ranks; to the efforts to break down the racial and sexual antagonisms that divide people at a profound level; to the efforts to create new cultural forms that draw on people's own experiences and energy.

Such political and social movement is vital not just because of its goals, but because it is the very process of collective activity that provides a larger sense of meaning and community. It is in part the absence of such movements on a wide scale that contributes to the current emphasis on personal relationships as the source of all meaning and the frantic focus on the family.

President Carter may be sincere in his desire to have all sinners repent and get married. But it is just as likely that he would like to have the spotlight shifted to the individual and personal level, and away from the political and economic issues that actually shape family life. As much as capitalism requires a stable family structure, it can't bear the cost of maintaining it. The problem of the family is in essence a problem of capitalism. It is a problem that neither Carter nor the other guardians of family life will solve for us. It is one that we must collectively solve ourselves in the course of changing this society.

Roberta Lynch is National Secretary of the New American Movement.

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NAM News

Pulling the plug on Duquesne Light

Duquesne Light is running scared from the organized challenge to their continuing efforts to wring more profits from electrical utilities consumers in western Pennsylvania. They're scrambling to halt the support and favorable publicity that the increasingly powerful movement of broad-based community groups fighting for fair rates has earned. In late February, Duquesne Light made a rather pathetic attempt to reverse this trend. They invoked the tried-and-true "red scare."

Sending "Dear Friends" letters to the media, they charged the People's Power Project (PPP) of Pittsburgh NAM as "a self-avowed group existing to help organize a movement for democratic socialism in the United States." As "evi-

dence," they re-produced portions of a Pittsburgh NAM newsletter which described NAM's politics and covered the progress of its organizing projects, including the PPP. This "revelation" could hardly come as a surprise to those working with the PPP, since they have consistently identified their affiliations with NAM, as well as their socialist perspective.

The PPP was working with community groups (South Oakland Citizens Council and People's Oakland) to organize protesters and charter buses to Harrisburg for hearings of the Public Utility Commission on a proposed \$128 million rate hike when Duquesne Light launched its attack. Undaunted, 100 supporters, including seniors and community or-

Letter to an Imaginary Friend

Blessed be the fighters:

The unknown angry man at the end of the idiot-stick with his dream of freedom;

Jawsmiths and soap boxes, gandy-dancers setting the high iron—

Toward the ultimate Medicine Hat: blessed, blessed, blessed.

Blessed the agitator; whose touch makes the dead walk;

Blessed the organizer; who discovers the strength of wounds;

Blessed all fighters.

Thomas McGrath

ganizers, half of whom were black, rode the buses to Harrisburg to say "No!" to more profits for Duquesne Light.

Joni Rabinowitz of the PPP addressed the hearings, denouncing the utility company's "unethical and red-baiting tactics" as "an underhanded trick... to discredit and divide this movement." She explained why the New American Movement is committed to a democratic socialist society in America and why it is fighting in utilities struggles. Her testimony was met with cheers and applause.

wards passage of a Lifeline bill by the state legislature.

When an older woman who had attended, described the hearing to her community group, she said, "There was a girl who testified who was a socialist, and everything she said was true." Duquesne Light has reason to be scared.

... and notes

Convention

At NAM's 1975 Convention, a strategy resolution was passed to guide our work. The strategy stressed three key elements—work in mass organizations for a reform agenda, developing a socialist presence in the political life of our communities and the country, and building our organization. The 1977 Convention will concern itself with a thorough evaluation of our progress in implementing that strategy as well as the viability of the strategy itself, from the perspective of the last two years of chapter work.

Additionally, the Convention will be concerned with developing national program for the organization in one or two key areas, e.g., utilities organizing—building on the local experience of the chapters. The development of socialist-feminist theory and practice will also be discussed.

The Convention is open to all friends of NAM and will be held August 11-14 at Coe College, Cedar Rapids, Iowa. Further information and registration materials will be made available in future issues of *Moving On*.

Philly NAM

A NAM chapter is being organized in the Philadelphia area. Contact: Philadelphia NAM, 422 W. Airy, Philadelphia, PA, 19119, for more information.

**"They might as well try to stop Niagara with a feather as to crush the spirit of organization in this country."
Eugene V. Debs**

New York NAM members, Barbara and John Ehrenreich are publishing an article on the emergence of a professional/managerial class over the last 40 years in the U.S., in an upcoming issue of *Radical America*.

Speakers Bureau

In an effort to reach broader groups and greater numbers of people, NAM has established a Speakers Bureau that offers speakers—NAM members and not—who offer a socialist perspective on the world. The list includes activists with first-hand experience in some of the most significant struggles of our time and creative approaches to building a left in contemporary America. Listed below are some of the speakers available:

- *Dorothy Healey - *The Struggle for Socialism Today*
- *James Weinstein - *American Socialist History*
- *Barbara Ehrenreich - *Socialist-Feminism*
- *Stanley Aronowitz - *Politics and Culture*
- *Roberta Lynch, Richard Healey, or Nick Rabkin - *NAM and the State of the Left in the U.S.*
- *Eli Zaretsky - *Capitalism and Personal Life*
- *Rev. George McClain - *Socialism and Religion*

If you are interested in reviewing the other thirty speakers described in the brochure or are interested in more information on any of these speakers, please direct inquiries to: NAM Speakers Bureau, NAM National Office, 1643 N. Milwaukee Ave., Chicago IL 60647.



In addition to presenting testimony and mobilizing for demonstrations aimed at defeating rate hikes, the PPP has organized community meetings and discussed with groups across the city how to fight rising utilities costs. They developed a slide-show which they present, and they often appear on talk shows and interview programs on the radio. The PPP has linked-up with activist senior citizen groups, several labor unions (Service Employees International Union, the Pennsylvania Social Services Union, and an American Federation of State, City, and Municipal Employees local), Welfare Rights groups, and students around utilities issues. They are engaged in a lobbying campaign directed to-

World-view (Wurld-vu), n., an attitude toward, or interpretation of history, reality and civilization.

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