

# Moving On

MONTHLY MAGAZINE OF THE NEW AMERICAN MOVEMENT

May, 1977

40 cents

## Ban the Klan?

NAM's energy program

Supermarket soft-core

Jobs vs. development  
down under



*Robertson  
Lamp  
1977*

cover photo by Warren Smalling



# Moving On

MONTHLY MAGAZINE OF THE NEW AMERICAN MOVEMENT

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VOLUME I, NUMBER 3

APRIL, 1977

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MOVING ON is published monthly, except September and January by the New American Movement, 1643 N. Milwaukee Ave, Chicago, IL 60647. Subscription price: \$4.00 yearly. Application to mail at controlled circulation rates is pending at Chicago, IL.

## Letters

Dear MO,

Subscribe me to MOVING ON. It's great. I hope you continue dialog like the one on the "new populism." That's what distinguishes NAM from the sect groups. Rabkin's article, complete with an alternative urban program was also valuable. With articles like those the magazine will reach people beyond NAM and the left. I'm proud to show it around.

Kraig Peck  
Seattle

Dear MO,

Hugh Grady's response to my piece in the April issue of MOVING ON was certainly more cordial in tone than is customary for left assaults against the ogre of "social democracy." Yet among our various disagreements, I believe it is especially important to challenge his use of the term. The phrase "social democrat" derives from the old battles in the international socialist movement that followed World War 1. Yet even in original usage when it surely described an authentic phenomenon, the phrase had no corresponding analytic power. It shed virtually no light on the actual origins of increasing conservatism in socialist parties.

Indeed, its function was not to primarily enlighten. It was an hortatory term which was meant to police potential deviation from a revolutionary politics. In the real world of politics, however, where ideas are shaped far more by the setting in which they develop and the institutional bases which sustain them than by moral rectitude, the phrase was singularly unsuccessful in accomplishing its purpose. And today whatever justification for the phrase might once have existed is no long apparent. Instead of using moral categories to describe each other's politics, what seems to me crucial is to address the vital issues of our movement. How can we legitimize a formal socialist tradition which is now largely discredited in the American political culture? And more broadly, how can we help build a spirited, powerful and ultimately victorious popular resistance to the modern corporate attack?

Harry C. Boyte  
Minneapolis, MN

more letters p. 22



## The common touch: Making an un-president

by Roberta Lynch

Once upon a time there was a fairy tale about an emperor who had a fancy new suit of clothes—or so he said. Actually, at the story's end we discover - through the eyes of a little kid - that he's been quite naked the whole time.

In these early days of the Carter presidency, it's hard not to sit around waiting for some sharp-eyed six-year old. This modern ruler has got his own brand of new clothes: he wears blue jeans and sweaters. Of course, there's more to Carter than a new style of presidential attire. There's a new image to go with the clothes.

Mr. Carter describes himself as a "populist," a man of the people. His days in office thus far have been marked by ostentatious efforts to minimize the glitter and trappings of his job. He wears a simple business suit for his inauguration. His top aides no longer get limousined at taxpayers expense, but drive their own VW's and Chevys. He stays with ordinary families when he travels and his own family looks pretty ordinary compared to much of America's elite.

Probably the most powerful and popular variant on Carter's "go to the people" approach was his nation-wide call-in session. Forty-two "average" people from around the country got to take up their concerns directly with the

president of the United States. Millions of Americans listened and identified. And Carter's rating in the polls soared.

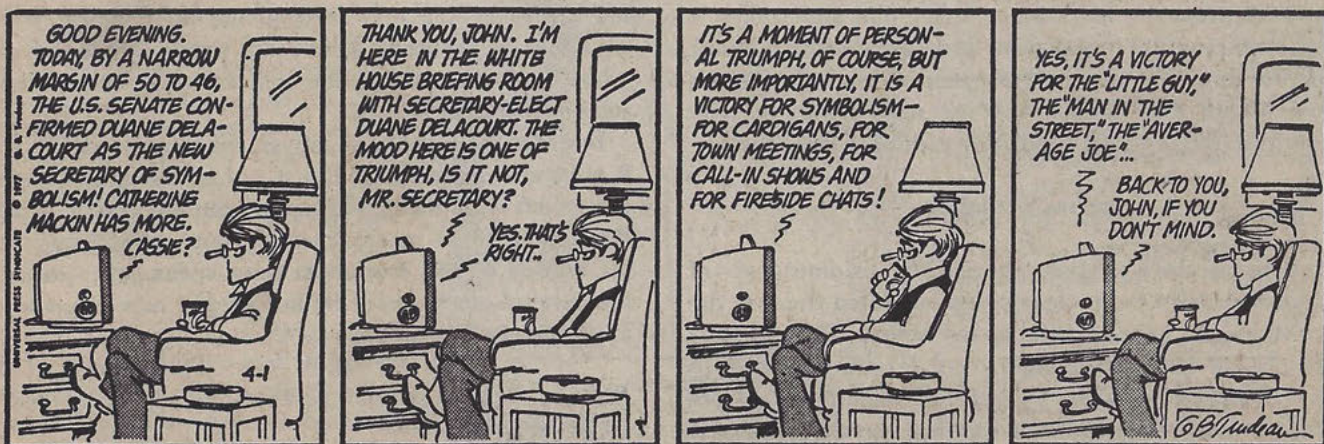
What's behind this new presidential posture? To some it is only the natural instincts of a farm boy turned politician. To others it is a conscious attempt by Carter to capitalize on his down-home image. But whether it's a genuine impulse or a Southern brand of Madison Avenue put-on, there's more to Carter's style than meets the eye.

### Imperial Decline

The Carter presidency is based in the decline of the imperial presidency - and the re-emergence of a more democratic demand from the people. The result of this new trend is not so much that all politicians will quickly adopt folksy speech patterns as that those politicians who best speak to this popular impulse will be most likely to emerge on top. Here, as much as anywhere else, lies the secret of Carter's dark horse victory.

The Nixon years witnessed both the pinnacle and the downfall of the imperial presidency. Nixon craved power and feared people. He sought to insulate himself through the pomp and circumstance of his office. The debacle of Watergate painted in stark colors the dangers of an office that promoted arrogance and presumed honor.

Jerry Ford was in every way a transitional figure. It was actually in the politically advanced state of California that the trend toward making politics out of style got its big boost—in the person of Governor Jerry Brown. Brown is a man of deep political contradictions. A fiscal conservative who has cut back health and welfare programs. A consumer advocate who appoints representatives of citizens groups instead of business to public commissions. Brown's appeal is not so much in his specific policies as in his ability to create







an image as someone who does not want public office for the power or the payoffs, but to genuinely serve people.

This is a key element that Carter has brought to full flower in his presidency. It may be *the* key element in the ability to govern in America today. It's clear that Carter is desperately seeking to reassure big business that he is on its side, and his resultant policies are clearly not in the interests of working people. Yet somehow he has to convince significant sectors of the population that they should go along with continued unemployment, higher defense spending, a lower minimum wage, and other indignities.

To do this requires a dual strategy: convincing people that the workings of government are very complex and beyond their ability to understand; and convincing people that there is a genuine interest in their input and decisions will be made based on their needs.

Ironically - or perhaps one should say obviously - the Carter approach is specifically designed to increase the real power of the presidency - camouflaging this in an elimination of the accoutrements of power. Carter has undertaken a carefully choreographed program designed to build popular support for himself - not based on specific stands, but on his image as a man of the people - that will make it very difficult for Congress, the press, or opposition groups to cross him.

### Open manipulation

Nowhere has the effectiveness—and the insidiousness—of this approach been more clearly demonstrated than on the issue of the arms race and the Soviet Union. The old style diplomacy of Henry Kissinger was largely cloaked in secrecy. Statements on the progress of negotiations were carefully worded and vague. Everything was done with the

greatest delicacy. And then along came Jimmy.

Carter has emphasized that the negotiations should not be secret from the American people, and he has released information on the content of the American and Soviet proposals. But in all the fanfare about openness, a fact of amazing importance is getting lost: Carter deliberately sabotaged the arms talks by dropping in without any warning a completely different set of proposals - ones that he knew the Soviet Union would not accept. In the words of one commentator, it was like "hitting Brezhnev with a two by four." Carter's openness was basically a ploy to win popular support for his stance, and to undermine the growing opposition to the nuclear arms race and defense spending.

None of this is to say that the new style of the Carter presidency hasn't opened some doors and let in some fresh air. You can't get away with being all talk and no action, and Carter has been forced to make some appointments that bring consumer activists, labor, women, and minorities into government. At this point he's doing a real juggling act though and it's unlikely that he'll be able to keep it all balanced for long. There may soon be increasing pressure on Carter to produce in terms of the substance of people's lives. Style only goes so far these days.

The Left should be part of these movements that arise to challenge the Carter big business policies, and we should point out the cynical and manipulative approach that underlies Carter's "new clothes." But we also need to be aware of the deeper processes at work in the society that Carter is responding to.

Increasingly people feel themselves divorced from the larger forces that shape their lives. Their input into government is restricted to periodically casting ballots for candidates about whom they know almost nothing. It is this feeling that Jimmy Carter is addressing when he opens up his life to people and talks about his feelings; when he says that he wants to hear from people what they think; when he chats on the phone with someone who can't find a job and promises to help.

In order for a socialist movement to grow in this society it must address these feelings of powerlessness and disenfranchisement - not through the empty gimmicks of a Carter but through an active commitment to thoroughly democratizing all aspects of life. Socialism must mean more direct and meaningful control over their own destinies if it is to mean anything at all to people.

*Roberta Lynch is the National Secretary of the New American Movement.*



# Civil liberties frontier: Free speech in a racist society

## There is a right to be free from racism

by Ben Margolis

The recent Pendleton Marine incident involving a physical confrontation between some black marines and white marines who were believed to be members of the Ku Klux Klan resulted in charges against the black marines for their conduct and the transfer from Pendleton of members of the Klan. The ACLU of San Diego has come to the defense of the Klan members who were transferred, on the grounds that their constitutional rights were violated by such transfer. Its action has created a storm of controversy among civil libertarians, liberals and leftists.

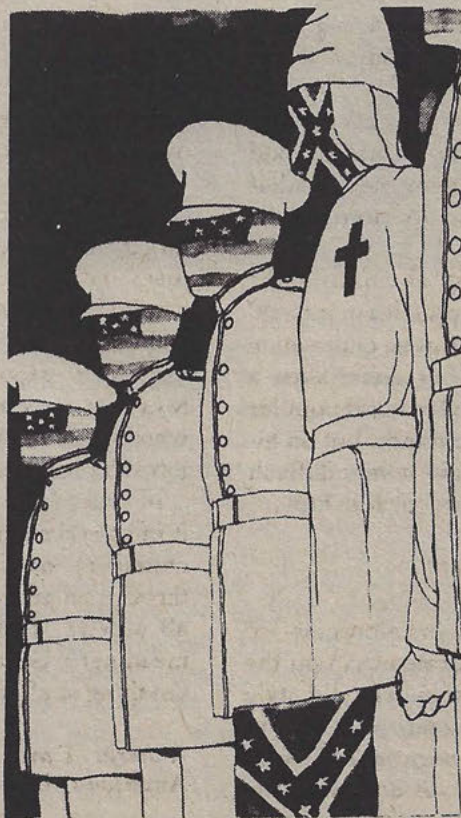
In evaluating the conflicting positions certain preliminary questions should be considered. Can there be any doubt that the Klan is one of the most openly racist organizations in this country? Is there any question that the ACLU defense of the Klan members is based upon the premises that such a racist organization, and therefore racism, is protected by the Constitution?

The ACLU, of course, justifies its position by its traditional stand that it will defend the right to advocate ideas which it hates. And some socialists take the same position. Anyone who truly believes in the First Amendment must support the general proposition that its very purpose is to protect unpopular ideas, not simply those that find broad acceptance. But no court and no government has ever adopted the principle that the right of free speech must always prevail when it comes into conflict with other rights.

One cannot parade without a permit and permits may be denied of limited depending on the circumstances. One may not make a speech in a public library. Electioneering near a polling place may be prohibited, etc. It is true that these limitations concern only time and place of speaking and have no

over

## The ACLU's defense of KKK activities at Camp Pendleton prompts two prominent fighters for civil liberties to slug it out: Does free speech mean the Klan can spread its ugly gospel?



## Free speech is key to fight for freedom

by Frank Wilkinson

The demand for racial equality is indivisible from the absolute assertion of the First Amendment in the political arena. Consistency in the defense of the First Amendment, and all the Bill of Rights, is the prime protection against reaction; inconsistency invites repression.

History is replete with examples of the peril of inconsistency in the defense of the First Amendment: the immediate predecessor of the Committee on Un-American Activities was established to investigate the German-American Bund, the Silver Shirts, and other groupings of the American ultra-right at the time. The Smith Act of 1940, later to be used so effectively against the Socialist Workers and then Communist Parties, was also initially enacted in part to be used against rightist hate groups. The "group libel" statutes of Illinois and other states were all enacted to punish racial and religious defamation in the '40s and '50s, only to become precedent for legal attacks upon the First Amendment rights of civil rights leaders in the '60s.

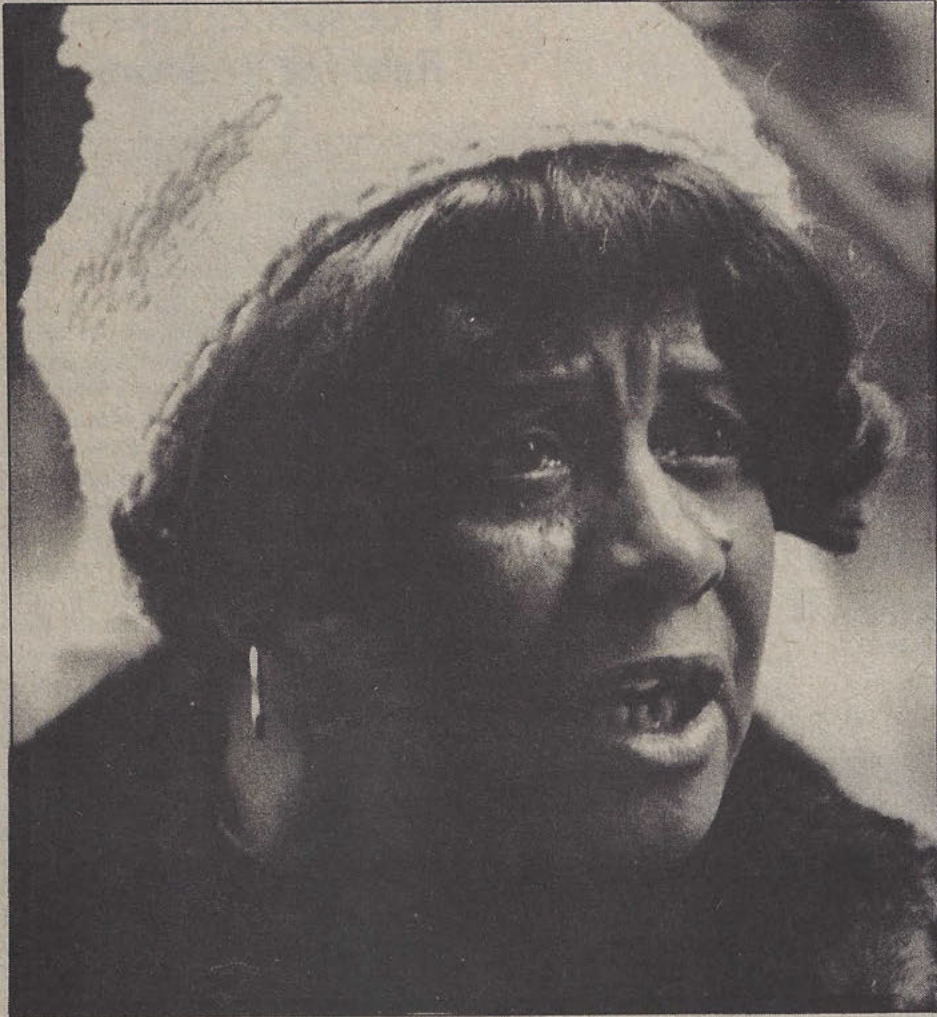
In his paper discussing the Pendleton Marines, Ben Margolis questions the ACLU's principled defense of both those white Marines who had been transferred without hearing due to their alleged membership in the KKK, and the black Marines charged with violent actions provoked by Klan activities on the Base. Then, following a recital of ACLU's traditional commitment to the commands of the First Amendment - that the unpopular as well as the orthodox view be equally protected - he asserts a basic premise of his own argument:

"But no court and no government has ever adopted the principle that the right of free speech must always prevail when it comes into conflict with other rights."

turn to p. 19



photo by Warren Friedman



press them no matter how much we hate them; and thus we act in order to protect the sacred right of free speech. This contention does not change the issue to be decided. Are our values such that we place the right of all persons to say whatever they please above the fight to end the denial of human rights to black people?

Don't charge us with such lack of humanity may be the response; we believe that the way to fight ideas is with ideas and that ideas cannot be wiped out by their suppression. As a general proposition, this argument is unassailable. Ordinarily, ideas should be answered by other ideas. However, we are not dealing here with an ordinary conflict of ideas. How much longer do we ask the black people to wait for the resolution of this clash of ideas?

Free speech is an essential aspect of a free society. So is freedom from racism. Free speech will attain its maximum effectiveness in a society in which all expressions of racism are removed from the protection of the law. All freedoms are inter-related and dependent on each other for their full growth. Free speech, like freedom generally, requires certain conditions to flourish and be meaningful to the masses of people. A racist soil ill supports the growth of equality or of free speech.

#### Creating Precedents

There are other contentions that must be considered. It is argued that to permit the suppression of free speech creates a precedent which will shortly be used to suppress other speech which should be protected. That possibility exists. Precedent is important, of course, but the real question is: "How important is the precedent of denial of protection to racist speech as compared with other effects of such denial?" An examination of the role of precedent in the area of free speech reveals that it occupies a secondary position. Primary are the political climate and the composition of the governmental bodies  
*turn to p. 19*

relation to content of speech. But there are also restrictions on the expression of particular ideas. The Supreme Court has held that during wartime speech, which is protected during peace, may be punished; speech labelled as obscene may always be punished; libel and slander are not constitutionally protected; an employer may not say he is considering closing down his plant if a union wins an election; restrictions may be placed on the First Amendment rights of public employees; etc.

#### Restrictions Exist

One may agree with some of the above restrictions and one may disagree with

others or with all. The fact is that we live in a world where restrictions on free speech exist. The problem is that the right to speak does sometimes come into conflict with other rights. In dealing with these conflicting rights, one cannot avoid making a judgmental evaluation of the value and importance of the rights involved. Here, that judgment must be made in the conflict between the right of the Klan to express its racist ideas and the right of the black marines to be free of the expression of racism, which undermines *every* fundamental right of black people. For me, the choice is clear.

But, we are told, Klan ideas are not being defended—only their right to ex-



# Getting Together

## Southern Africa: Confab plans new action

In the last few years organizing against American corporate and governmental involvement in Southern Africa has been increasing. But for the most part this growing movement has been dispersed and local, without a unified focus. Now a new national mobilization is being launched to provide a basis for joint work among different forces, and to coordinate activity going on around the country.

Over six hundred people gathered in Washington, D.C. in late March at a weekend conference to initiate this effort. The meeting was sponsored by the National Black Political Assembly and the United Church of Christ Commission for Racial Justice. It drew together community activists, concerned churchpeople, and political organizations in what conference coordinator Koko Farrow called "the most impressive display of unity I've seen in years."

The conference identified three occasions for national demonstrations of support for the liberation movements in Southern Africa:

- \* The commemoration of African Liberation Day in Washington, D.C. on May 28;
- \* Commemorations of the Soweto rebellion on June 16;
- \* A national rally at the United Nations in October to demand Human Rights for African People.

The conference resolutions point out that the United Nations rally is intended to dramatize the hypocrisy of President Carter's pronouncements on human rights when the United States continues to sanction minority rule in Southern Africa.

In addition to these national actions, a grass roots educational campaign is being initiated in churches, schools, community, professional, and fraternal organizations. The campaign will target American corporate involvement in Southern Africa.

There will be a boycott of the products of one of the major corporate offenders. Others will be hit through selective purchasing campaigns, in which pressure will be brought to bear on municipal and state legislative bodies not to do business with those corporations who have a record of

- 1) extensive holdings in Southern Africa;
- 2) cooperation



*The hope and future of Southern Africa.*

with the governments there; and 3) low level of African employment.

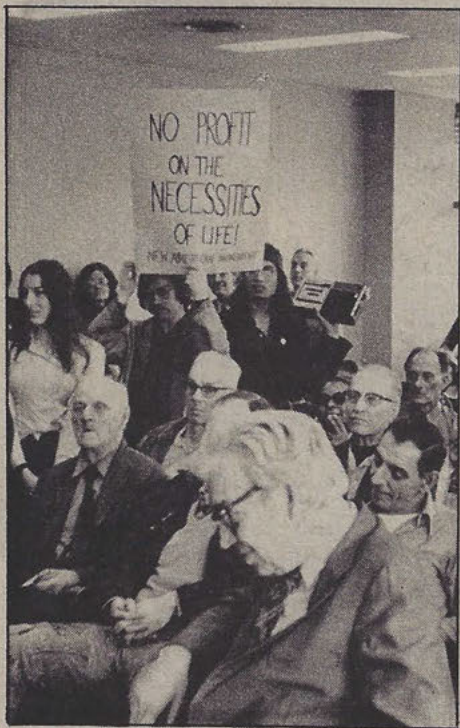
The Polaroid Corporation was discussed as a possible target for the boycott. Selective purchasing will more likely be used against such corporate giants as ITT and IBM, whose lack of easily identifiable consumer products makes it difficult to conduct a boycott against them.

In addition to waging the campaign against key American corporations, and carrying out educational work, the conference organizers also recognize the importance of influencing government policy. The new mobilization effort was endorsed by leading members of the Congressional Black Caucus, including Ron Dellums and Parren Mitchell. According to Ms. Farrow, the grass roots organizing activity that the conference planned is seen as a "complement to legislative efforts."

She went on to stress that with all the achievements of the conference, the most important result was that people recognized that "the real work had to go on back in their local communities."

For copies of conference presentations or resolution, or for more information on follow-up activity, contact: Koko Farrow, United Church of Christ Commission for Racial Justice, 1029 Vermont Ave. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20005, (202) 737-2600.





Public hearing on utility rates, Pittsburgh, PA.

**The movement against utility companies ranges from city council members to community organizations. It includes farmers and seniors. And it is growing.**

# NAM conference draws up alternative energy program

by Judy MacLean

The energy crisis struck again this winter. It had a new form, but the same basic content: increased profits for the energy monopolies and increased hardship for most Americans. In mid-March, as the country was beginning to thaw out from its harsh winter, NAM activists gathered in Yellow Springs, Ohio to assess the progress of the utilities struggles going on around the country and their own role in them. Over the last four years there has been an upsurge of protest activity directed against rising utility rates and NAM chapters in fifteen cities have been part of these fights.

The Yellow Springs conference was organized to draw on NAM's experience as activists in these campaigns and as socialists with a broader perspective on the energy crisis and its relation to the overall development of capitalism.

Paul Garver of Pittsburgh NAM's People's Power Project explained why the utilities will continue to be a focus of conflict for years to come. The basic problem is not energy, but capital. Thirty-four percent of all capital in the United States is now tied up in the energy industry, and electrical power is now the most capital-intensive sector of the economy.

Although as a percentage of sales, the profits of electrical utilities are soaring (as high as 30%), expressed as a percentage of total investment, profits are too low to finance new growth. The only way to convince investors to continue to put money into utilities is to be able to point to increased growth. And the only way to get new capital to finance such growth is through higher utility rates. Thus consumers are con-

stantly getting hit with higher bills to finance new construction not because more electricity is needed (on the day of highest demand in U.S. history, only 65% of generating capacity was used), but in order to insure continued investment.

"Wall Street is calling the shots," said Garver. "It's purely the demands of financiers that are picking our pockets."

Natural gas producers are in a similar crisis, Garver noted. In the past few years the demand for gas has been lower than the supply. In a free market economy this is supposed to force the price down. However, natural gas producers can act as a monopoly and hold back supplies, thus forcing the price up.

## Diverse Movement

These ploys of the energy companies have not gone without response, according to Mike Troutman of Environmental Action Foundation - clearinghouse and resource center for the movement against the electrical utilities.

"The movement against utility companies is truly diverse," he told the conference. "It ranges from city council members to community organizations. It includes farmers like those in upstate New York who have gotten arrested for protecting trees that were being chopped down for a power line."

Environmentalists have been a sometime-ally in the utilities movement, but they have proven unsteady at times. Although they have supported lifeline and anti-nuclear measures, most have come out in favor of deregulation of natural gas. (They reason that the higher prices that will come with deregulation will promote conservation.)



A necessary ally that the utilities movement everywhere has had little success in linking up with is the power companies' own workers. Most workers still see their interests tied to those of the company and fear that lower rates may be taken out of their wage. (This actually happened to utility workers in North Carolina where there was no union.)

Many utility groups probably have not even tried to deal with this central problem. "We have to start including some of their demands, such as monthly meter readings and restoration of services like appliance repair," says Paul Garver who recently met with some utility workers in Western Pennsylvania to discuss these issues.

In Dayton, the Miami Valley Power Project, initiated by NAM members, is supporting local utility workers who are on strike. Buffalo NAM's utilities project has done similar support in the past. But for all the groups it's still a long way to the strong alliance between workers and consumers that can really take on the utilities.

### Interim Steps

Mark Mericle, NAM's Energy Coordinator, emphasized that such an alliance will be key to real public control of the utilities—the only way to halt the constantly rising rates. Utility groups are working on a variety of interim steps, however, to stave off the onslaught of the utility companies.

Stopping a rate hike is often the first step for a new utilities project, says Halli Lehrer of Baltimore NAM. "You can set up a network for those people interested in utilities to begin to act together. It's good for publicity, demonstrations, and gaining roots." The first attempt in Baltimore, which NAM helped to organize, drew over 500 people to a public hearing and blocked 40% of the local power company's requested increase. This initial action resulted in a city-wide coalition that is now going on to tackle other utility issues.

Joni Rabinowitz of Pittsburgh NAM's

power project warns that the utilities are getting wise to community groups, and are asking for hikes more often and in larger amounts. "That way the regulatory board can grant only half the request and still give them what they want."

Lifeline struggles are going on in many states, and NAM chapters are active in several. Lifeline is a reversal of the present rate structure which allows large industrial users low rates and makes the small residential user pay the highest. Under lifeline, enough power for basic necessities is available at a low, fixed rate; large users pay slightly higher rates.

Although the benefits of lifeline may seem obvious, it has not been quickly adopted because of the well-financed propaganda campaigns against it in some states. Betty Kapetanakis of the Miami Valley Power Project described some of the arguments used by the utility companies to defeat a lifeline initiative on the ballot in Ohio last November. (Incidentally, the initiative passed in MVPPP's territory, although it lost statewide.) The companies argued that poor people's homes aren't well-insulated and so they wouldn't be able to stay within the lifeline amount. They also claimed that industry would move out of the state, and that hospitals, churches, and schools couldn't bear the rate increase.

Kapetanakis said that to deal with these kind of arguments, new lifeline proposals should be developed that establish a fund to help people insulate their homes (financed by a tax on the utility), support legislation to prevent industry from leaving, and exempt churches, hospitals, and schools from higher rates.

The biggest issue used to fight lifeline in Ohio and other states has been jobs. The electric industry has spent millions to tell people that higher rates for industry will mean plant closings, and that discouraging electric plant construction will mean fewer new industries, thus fewer jobs.

Jeff McCourt of Pittsburgh NAM



*In the fifties the power companies urged us to buy plenty of appliances - "Get your wife a toaster and she'll look like this in the morning."*

pointed out that it is actually the approach of the utility companies that will lead to fewer jobs. The large amounts of capital the energy industry needs to expand are flowing into the industry that employs the fewest workers per every \$1,000 of capital. This will mean less capital for industries that employ more workers, and so fewer jobs.

The lower rates for industry that lifeline would abolish have also led to unemployment, according to McCourt. These rates encourage the use of power rather than labor, and have helped to create the stagnant labor market in all high-energy industries such as steel.

Even those construction workers who wholeheartedly support building nuclear power plants should take a second look, McCourt said. Construction of power plants employs fewer workers than using the same amount of money to build almost anything else.

So far, the utilities movement has been unable to counter the jobs argument effectively enough to win union support, except in California where the



high ratio of public worker unions means that many of the arguments don't hold much water. It's clear that utilities reform, in the long run, can help the job situation; the problem is countering the blitz of TV, radio and newspaper ads, and bill-stuffer brochures the utilities churn out.

### Disturbing Rumbblings

Perhaps most disturbing to the power companies are the growing rumbblings about taking over the utilities - the call for public ownership. Although most utilities groups are not strong enough or too fearful of ideological fireworks to move quickly on the issue, there is growing interest. In Pittsburgh, after several years of fighting rate hikes and working for lifeline, some of the community groups with which NAM works began bringing up the question of public ownership. "We were taken by surprise, we didn't even have a proposal worked out," says Joni Rabinowitz of the People's Power Project.

Buffalo NAM is part of a statewide coalition fighting for public power in New York that includes several labor unions. One key to building this alliance has been the coalition's support for repeal of New York's Taylor Law, which makes it illegal for public workers to strike. Utility workers are unlikely to favor public ownership if it means they lose their right to strike, says Phil Nicolai who works in the coalition.

Struggles for public ownership are very complex, he noted. "You have to answer several questions. Who governs the utility? What are the boundaries? Do you acquire the utility all at once or piecemeal? Where do you get the money and how much compensation are stockholders entitled to? How will the takeover affect utility workers? How can bureaucratic control by the city government be avoided?"

Nicolai believes public ownership is worth fighting for, however. All publicly owned utilities are more efficient and have lower rates than their private counterparts. "And it pushes the concept that utilities are a right, not an expensive

luxury," he says.

Heat began to seem an expensive luxury indeed during the recent natural gas shortage. Like most utilities campaigns, NAM organizers have focused on electric utilities. The recent gas crisis caught most groups unprepared. Although there were a few local protests, no group was able to break into the national media with a voice to counter that of the gas industry when the fires were going out all over the U.S.

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**It is actually the approach of the utility companies that will lead to fewer jobs. The industry employs fewer workers per \$1000 of invested capital than any in the country.**

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The Yellow Springs conference participants agreed that NAM should join the fight against the gas companies and help to catalyze opposition to their current tactics. A proposal was adopted to mandate fundraising and research for a national project that could coordinate local organizing and launch a campaign aimed at curtailing the power of the industry. Mark Mericle explained that NAM in a unique position to

help spark such a campaign because it has technical expertise, a broader political perspective, and local organizing involvement around the country.

The conference also adopted a draft program that defines NAM's stand on many energy issues. The program describes a rational system of energy production and distribution that would require a transformation of the present economic relations, while also outlining important areas for immediate reform struggles. Some highlights:

- \* Public ownership - at a local and national level - is seen as a key aspect of any strategy for challenging the energy monopolies. Although it is not the solution to our energy problems, it shifts the terrain of struggle into the public arena where it is possible, to require greater accountability.

- \* Conservation measures that don't penalize workers or consumers are advocated; more labor intensive industries, more recycling.

- \* Reform of utility rates is stressed: no rate hikes, initiate lifeline rates, stop unnecessary plant construction.

- \* A demand for full investigation of natural gas reserves; no deregulation; a moratorium on the Alaskan pipeline.

- \* A proposal for an energy policy that preserves and creates jobs, with job guarantees for energy workers.

NAM recently received a letter (one of thousands sent to citizen groups) from James Schlesinger requesting input into the new national energy policy. In a particularly ironic comment, Schlesinger noted "Often some of the best solutions have come from the people themselves."

It's doubtful that Schlesinger will recognize NAM's suggestions as among the "best" since they run counter to the energy industry's profits. But every day, the energy crisis leads more Americans to see the sense of the kinds of proposals put forth in the program.

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



# Looking For America

## Disco dance — Boogie down the blues

by Sally Banes

"Artists from all over the world recorded 'Onda Nueva' music. It didn't catch on because it didn't have a dance," Tito Puente, the legendary Puerto Rican musician claims.

"Shame on you if you can't dance to it," Shirley, the disco singer, scolds.

The country has been infected with dansomania on a scale unparalleled in nearly twenty years. A song's popularity is determined by its disco usage even before it hits the radio charts; there is a strong social imperative, as Shirley suggested in the early days of disco, to get on that floor and dance. Discos are opening on every corner - in former square dance barns, former bars, formerly sedate restaurants, former any-kind-of-space that can house a sound system, flashy lights, and a few square feet of dance floor.

The current choreomania has been dismissed as a faddish nostalgia for the 30s, or even the 50s. But though the style of dancing may share certain traits with the dancing popular in either of those decades, the resemblance is more than superficial. Disco dancing of the 70s is a cultural response to very real and current conditions, some of which recall the past.

Like 30s dancing, disco dancing features close body contact, partnering, an emphasis on fancy technical feats performed with grace and style. The disco beat, like the Big Band jazz beat, is regularized and repetitive. The disco clubs are swank and often exclusive, providing the clientele with the setting for a variety of fantasies: here upwardly mobile aspirations can be played out, a temporary compensation for the drudgeries of everyday life created. In the 30s, people flocked to see Busby Berkeley's marathon dances, each a fantasy of instantaneous money and fame. In the 70s, we create our own, and live out the fantasy—even if only for an evening.

Like 50s dancing, disco dancing is highly choreographed - the couple or crowd dances are designed to the point of monotony, repression of individual expression. No one can get the steps exactly right, but at least there is a model of perfection to aim for. Despite occasional touches of Latin syncopation, the dancing is regimented and controlled.

Photo by Post Wolcott for the FSA.



*Disco roots: jitterbugging at the juke joint, Mississippi, 1939.*

Remember what dancing was like in the 60s? For black kids, the Mashed Potato, the Philly Dog, the Funky Chicken and Funky Broadway were just a few examples of structured, stylized dances that nevertheless provided room for self-exposition. White kids, with occasional forays into black forms, evolved an improvisatory style over the course of the decade which grew more and more individualized and anarchic as the drug culture, aspects of political liberation movements and other factors created an atmosphere which valued "doing your own thing" and "letting it all hang out." You didn't touch your partner. You shook and stepped, twisted and jumped, waved your hair and flailed your arms, and sometimes stood still, in a stream-of consciousness, ego-dissolving ecstasy.

It had to change, and dancing in post-Vietnam USA reflects a subdued concern with order and structure. The new style coopted elements of 60s black dancing (the stylized movements and strict design) and of the gay bar culture (suppressed but clear sexual expression and the need for anonymity and exclusivity). Disco dancing transmuted these phenomena, originating in repressive social conditions, into an ideal: the dancing - disciplined, suave, stylish yet anonymous and uniform - demanded a certain kind of music, a certain kind of technology, and a specific social setting.

No more the unpredictable rock concerts and festivals of  
over



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**Like thirties dancing, disco features close body contact. The current dances build a satisfying sense of group coordination, an excitement which is neither a prelude to nor a substitute for sex. Yet, the new dances reflect a subdued concern with order and structure.**

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the 60s, where you paid exorbitant prices and then the speakers broke down and the bands didn't show and the police used tear gas on the crowds of stoned kids to deter them from expressing any anger at the rip-off.

At latter-day discotheques, the sound equipment is peerlessly crafted to play records that have been flawlessly engineered. The only disco employee resembling a musician is the DJ, who is not a musician but another engineer. No risks. Even with steep disco admission prices, it's still cheaper to go out dancing than to a live concert. The music is polished, repetitive, with an insistent bass line. As one disco fan points out: "It removes any element of choice. You're forced, when the music comes on, to get up and pump your pelvis." The music is so loud that you can't talk or listen; dancing, touching and looking are the only options here.

#### **Recession Dancing**

The reliance on technology makes the disco an important capital-intensive trend in the music and entertainment industries. Hiring a DJ for a night costs only a small fraction of what a live band costs; the investment in sound equipment is a one-time expense. For customer and owner alike, the disco scene caters to a recession economy.

Ironically, as the blue- and white-collar workers in the US meet with more attacks on living and working standards,

we turn for release to disco dancing, which physically replicates the rote motions performed all day on the job, in a crowded atmosphere that simulates the subway rides to and from those jobs. But unlike on the job, we go to discotheques to experience the physicality of the movements with others. Here the purpose of the individual is identical with that of the group; at our jobs, usually our individual purpose is to earn a living, while the overall purpose of the group is something quite different. And while we're dancing, we don't have to go on for eight hours at a stretch.

Dancing has always fulfilled certain social needs, and disco dancing is appealing for single people and couples (whether straight or gay) who don't have children and can spend more time and money on entertainment. Dancing provides physical release and contact within the boundaries of social conventions. The current group of dances especially—like the Bus Stop or the L.A. Hustle—build a satisfying sensation of group cooperation and coordination, an excitement in fact which is neither a prelude to nor substitute for sex, but an event with its own sensuous, special nature. There are indications, too - in the use of everyday movements and rhythms - of a determination to recycle the forms present in degrading situations (i.e. work) into means for gratification (i.e., dancing as play).

Yet whatever real pleasures and met needs we find in disco dancing are refused in the long run by the basic social structure it proposes. In fact, integration is not achieved; the division between work and play is maintained, and patterns of alienation reinforced. The subliminal message of most of the songs—sometimes the overt message (for example, the Hues Corporation's "Rock the Boat")—is to accept authority and the status quo; songs that seem to militant or political (like the Isley Brothers' "Fight the Power") are squelched. The dancers may determine the success of records to a degree unprecedented in the record industry, but their response can come only after the DJ filters out what he—and usually it is a man—doesn't like or approve of.

The excitement generated in the huge, unison group dances doesn't imply free collective action any more than does a military review, which can generate a similar response in both participants and onlookers. The ban on invention, the imperative to be cool, the monotony and boredom, all seem emblematic of a willingness by the working and middle classes to relinquish control and accept external structures of regimentation.

*Sally Banes is a union organizer, writer, critic, dancer and NAM member in the Big Apple. She thanks Noel Carrol and Michael Krugman for their help.*

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# Tempestuous romances: Softcore in the supermarket



*Moonstruck Madness*  
Laurie McBain  
Avon, 1977

by Alice Allgaier

"He looked into her darkened eyes with pleasure and surprise. She was different. She had taken over the play and was on fire for him, guiding him now with her mounting passion. Her fiery responses and uncontrolled desire ignited a flame in him and he took her again and again until they clung together unable to tell where they were not one."

A little soft-core porn anyone? Some adventure? Far away places of long ago? A strong-willed, intelligent heroine and a handsome but cruel hero? These are the ingredients for the latest rash of best-selling novels for the American housewife. Women are grabbing them up in grocery stores and drug stores everywhere.

The above passage is from *Moonstruck Madness*, one of the most interesting of the genre for its portrayal of an independent eighteenth century woman who is "brought to her senses" only after much adventure, a moderate amount of passionate love-making and a little sadism. *Moonstruck Madness* ranked as the number two bestselling paperback in the nation. And it is only one of a growing number of national bestsellers in this genre. These Tempestuous Romances, as they have been called by bookdealers, are currently outselling more explicit titillations like *Playgirl* and *Viva* magazines by a long shot.

Part of the explanation for this new phenomenon is, of course, the big sell. Book companies have launched a campaign to push these books using new marketing techniques and new formats for the books themselves. Ads on daytime T.V. (particularly during the "soaps") and book displays in grocery stores are part of the campaign. But what is the  
over



We apologize to Alice Allgaier for an error in the ordering of her article, "Soft core in the supermarkets," on page 14. It should read as follows.

The section which begins in the second column with the sub-head, "New Fantasies" and continues through the first paragraph and indented quotation which ends with ". . . she saw the surprise in his eyes gradually turn to anger as his scar throbbed and his nostrils flared." should follow the quotation at the end of the third column which ends with the sentence, "Their warmth spread between them and he heard Sabrina give a contented sigh. . .". The second column should then read, "She eats big breakfasts after a hard night's work. She ignores the pressure from the other women to force her to act like a lady." Etc.



appeal of these romances for the American woman?

### Escapist Fear

Escape from the everyday reality is part of the appeal. Most of these novels are set in some far away place at least two centuries back. England, Ireland and Scotland in the eighteenth century are popular. Or, if you prefer, you can be transported to Napoleonic France or to a tobacco plantation in pre-revolutionary America.

But all these escapist settings do not obscure the real concerns in these romances - marriage, children, sexual relationships, and exciting (if sometimes sadistic) men. All the assigned concerns of women in stereotypic roles are there, but everything is charged with adventure and electrified with passion. The heroines in these novels have it both ways. They have children and they have high adventure in the world. And finally, they get their passionate lovers as husbands.

*Moonstruck Madness* is a good example of this combination. In this novel one of the most adventuresome of the TR heroines, Sabrina Verrick, watches her Scots grandfather die on the battlefield at the hands of the English. She and what is left of her family escape to England where Sabrina turns highway-person in order to support them all. She takes to the road dressed as a rakish man with velvet bloomers and a feather in her/his cap.

By night she is Bonnie Charlie, the notorious outlaw who robs from the rich English gentlemen of the neighborhood; by day she is Lady Sabrina Verrick who entertains the very gentlemen she has robbed. She's a tough, smart bandit, she's a successful breadwinner, and she is a loving sister and mother-figure to her family. Besides all this she is confident, emotionally strong and beautiful.

Because Sabrina has been thrust into this unconventional position, she exercises and enjoys some unusual

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## The pornography is clearly directed toward women. The emphasis is on foreplay and sex as an expression of love.

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privileges for a woman. She eats big breakfasts after a hard night's work.

### New Fantasies

Is this what the American housewife is fantasizing about? Good foreplay and real affection? Unfortunately, there's more in these books. Mixed in with the satisfaction of sex is a moderate amount of sadism and violence. In one scene Sabrina's father horsewhips her and the slight suggestion of incestuous pleasure is evident. And Lucien, her lover, gets out of hand in this scene:

*Then he wasn't the gentle lover any longer and Sabrina felt a sudden fear . . . she saw the surprise in his eyes gradually turn to anger as his scar throbbled and his nostrils flared.*

She ignores the pressure from the other women to force her to act like a lady. And she even gets to talk tough. About men she comments, "No man's worth losing your wits about. I'd sign his death warrant first, and then launch him into eternity riding my sword."

### Interesting Twist

Of course all of this is a set up for Sabrina's fall at the hands (or rather at the sword's end) of a man. Lucien, the scar faced gentleman, catches Sabrina as Bonnie Charlie and wounds her/him in a pathetic duel (Sabrina talked tough but she failed to learn to use her sword). He finds out she's a woman and they, of course, fall into bed together while he nurses her back to health. The rest

of the story centers around the Tumultuous relationship that ensues between these two proud and stubborn people.

An interesting twist here points up some of the story's problems. In order to get Sabrina, strong-willed as she is, to marry Lucien, the author finds it necessary to give her amnesia. She turns into a docile, charming creature who romps in the flowers and is madly in love with Lucien, despite his former cruelty. They marry, and Sabrina bears a daughter.

One day she suddenly regains her memory and is furious. Once again the lovers are estranged. It is only after Sabrina is saved from death by her husband that her pride disappears (as well as some of her earlier strong qualities) and the two are reconciled. In the final pages Sabrina is tamed and begs to return to her husband.

The real basis of Sabrina's love for this cruel but clever man is that he is her first lover. This is where the porn comes in.

The pornography in *Moonstruck Madness* is clearly directed towards women. The emphasis is on foreplay and sex as an expression of love. There is none of the disturbing distance of the lecher found in hard core pornography. There are no descriptions of bulging, purple organs or vicious thrusting action or tortuous positions. There is lots of kissing, pressing, caressing, stroking, nibbling and play. And mixed with more explicit descriptions of both gentle and passionate foreplay are expressions of comfort, warmth and tenderness:

*He comforted her, smoothing back her tangled hair with gentle fingers, liking the feel of it in his hands. Their warmth spread between them and he heard Sabrina give a contented sigh . . .*

It's hard to tell what the appeal is here. Does the connection between violence and sex mean that women inherently fantasize themselves as victims? Is this simply a reflection of the violence

turn to p. 21



## The Long View

# The Green Bans:

How a labor union moved beyond self-interest, sparked a movement and shook up the powers that be.



Jack Munday: The Australian labor leader who fought against construction that was environmentally destructive.

### Introduction

A public employee union that has its wages frozen or suffers big layoffs can't get any support from other unions that think in terms of increased taxes, not labor unity. Environmental issues on the ballot in the last election frequently lost because workers felt they were faced with a choice between jobs or clean air—and they chose jobs. A community group stops urban renewal in its own territory, but refuses to ally with other groups to prevent it from striking their neighborhoods. What do these situations have in common?

One similarity is that the people involved usually see their own interests and goals in a narrow, limited way. Reasonably enough, they are worried about what is going to happen to *them* today or tomorrow. They feel that they

can't afford to worry about strangers, or even what will happen to themselves in the distant future—that is a luxury left to the very religious, or more ironically, the very rich.

A Marxist analysis of the problems suggests that people can't afford not to have a larger notion of their self-interest and what they can fight for. Yet it is precisely the problem of how to move a struggle beyond immediate self-interest that so perplexes those organizers whose vision extends to broader social change. For Marxists it is a central dilemma.

You cannot lecture people into socialism. You have to begin at the position of current possibility for struggle. Yet there cannot be revolutionary change unless the working class becomes conscious of where its long-term interests lie and unites as a class. The divisions among working people, the ability of capital to offer attractive short-term trade-offs, the constant ideological muffling of class conflict - all of these and more combine to undermine the development of this broader awareness.

The following interview with Jack Munday, former leader of the New South Wales Builders' Labourers Federation (BLF) and leading member of the Communist Party of Australia (CPA), suggests some ways out of this dilemma. It focuses on the "Green Bans" initiated by the BLF when it began to refuse to

work on construction projects (either building or demolition) that were socially or environmentally harmful. Since the construction industry in Australia is over 70% unionized, it was possible to effectively halt the objectionable projects. The green bans were widely publicized and gained considerable support (as well as great antagonism from the powerful sectors of society). There have been over 40 bans involving up to \$4 billion worth of work. They have included: neighborhood preservation against business expansion; refusal to build a stadium in a popular public park; refusal to transport mining equipment to a unique and unspoiled island.

### Saving the Rocks

In an interview in *Friends of the Earth*, Munday describes the process involved in imposing a ban:

"The Rocks was a neighborhood of people who serviced the city, people who worked on the docks or the ferries. Well, of course, with the central business district getting smaller and higher, like everywhere else, this land became very valuable. And so the government of the day decided it would push down all these homes in the Rocks and build further concrete, glass, and aluminum monsters."

"Residents of the Rocks came to us  
over



and said 'We've lived here all our lives; if there is going to be any re-development, we should have a say in what sort of development.' Again our union took the position that it had the people who made the decision. Well, more than 1,000 people came to the first meeting where they requested the green ban be imposed."

"The growing diversity of people involved in requesting the green ban was surprising. And then the residents took the initiative of countering the claims that the green bans were just negative by coming forward with their own people's plan for the Rocks. Residents argued that their plan would create more work in the long run than if the high-rises had been built."

"The Rocks are still standing. If the ban hadn't been imposed, that neighborhood would be just a continuation of the insurance companies, banks, right down to Sydney harbor. So, I think that's very important."

The green bans were perhaps most remarkable in that the BLF workers looked beyond their own immediate concerns to wider social issues. For instance, in the short run the bans sometimes increased unemployment. But BLF workers had come to understand that if they could shift construction away from high rises to renovating and building houses and apartments, they could create more jobs in the long run. Moreover, the importance of gaining public support was seen as key in one meeting of the most pressing BLF goals—"permanency."\*

#### New Directions

The role of Jack Munday and other CPA members was crucial in the transformation of the BLF and points to the importance of sound analysis and good

leadership. The approach of the CPA in the trade union movement was shaped by a series of struggles within the party in the late 60's that led it to alter both its international and domestic policies. The CPA developed an independent stance toward both the Soviet Union and China, determined to chart its own course to socialism. It also re-examined its strategy in the light of contemporary Marxist theory and developed a new trade union policy that emphasized democracy, workers control, and an opposition to bureaucracy.

At the same time the CPA leadership distinguished itself in its ability to lead the fight for the basic economic needs of its membership in the BLF. BLF wages increased dramatically over the years that the green bans were in effect, and the gap between the laborers and more skilled workers was narrowed.

Obviously, the situation of the CPA (which has a long history and roots in the trade union movement) and the BLF (which is part of a more militant and class conscious working class) is different than what we face here. It does not offer any immediate path out of our current impasse. However, it does point us in certain directions. It emphasizes the importance of coalition politics, of linking the demands of workers and "consumers." It shows what can be accomplished with leadership that is both visionary and in touch with and serving its membership. It demonstrates the importance of finding demands that can point to larger social solutions (e.g. construction of more neighborhood housing). And, it suggests that the spirit that can be generated when people begin to feel themselves taking control over their work—and acting in solidarity with others—can in itself be a new form of "self-interest."

—The Editors

#### *What sparked the green bans movement?*

I think the biggest thing was that we responded to the frustration of people who felt they were powerless to act. The extent of the frustration was such that we were inundated with requests from residents and from other community groups to impose bans. I don't think there was any great foresight on the part of the Builders' Labourers Union, but the important thing was that we responded to other sections of the community.

#### *What's your answer to people who say that these are middle class issues and that it's really a diversion from the class struggle?*

If capitalism is to be overthrown it is essential that a great section of the middle class have to be involved. We've also had growing support among the workers too, and it's interesting to note the number of rank and file members of other unions who have come to us. Many of our bans have been in working class areas where the working class themselves have acted in great numbers to impose the ban. The majority of our members now strongly support the union's position. At the same time, we didn't neglect the economic issues and in particular the question of permanency, changing the nature of the industry. I believe that if we hadn't had the big strikes of '70 and '71 based on, first of all, civilising the building industry to some extent, lifting up the second class status of the builders' labourers, bringing forward a formula that the wage variation between skilled and unskilled workers should be no wider than 100-90, this support would be far less.

But the support arose most importantly of all over permanency in the building industry. Our concept here goes beyond just having permanent employment for the full year, because it takes more to effect permanency in an industry like ours, where, with each

\* Construction work in Australia, as in the U.S., is irregular. The demand for "permanency" is the demand for guaranteed full-time, year round employment.



fluctuation in the economy, the building industry is hit.

***How does the issue of permanency relate to workers control?***

We've put forward for a long time now, that there should be a Building Investigations Committee to determine which buildings should be built. The Master Builders nearly croaked when we put this demand forward—you remember their silly stuff, "this is workers' control, it's anarchy, they're taking over". On the monetary side of negotiations they coughed up six or ten dollars without any real struggle, whereas before they were always hard to fight on dough. Now the money was there, but no invading our sanctity, they said, by the setting up of any committees to determine which buildings should be built.

I think this opens up the other side of it, the social responsibility of workers, the examination of the end result of their labor. Once workers start to have a say in the end result of their work—if, for example, unemployment built up, and they demanded that money be diverted to hospitals, to the public sector, instead of to office buildings—I think that would be partly workers' control and also an expression of social responsibility by the workers themselves.

And take the motor vehicle—I think that motor vehicles have got to go in the way in which they're being produced now; they've got to be restricted and greater emphasis placed on public transport. For that to happen, I think there's got to be shock tactics by the workers themselves, the workers have got to take it up, and a section of the workers have to be involved.

***Do you think they have honestly taken it up in their own hearts?***

When we embarked on the green bans, leadership was a long way ahead of the membership - I think that's the real position. I see that a most essential in-

gredient is leadership. Then, the very fact that we're defending the right of people to live in the city, means that workers could identify.

I think, secondly, they then saw the success of the union and felt that the union was contributing something of a social nature and there was an uplifting of confidence of the union members.

***A lot of people say the builders' labourers are a special type of workforce. Do you accept this argument?***

No, I don't. I think it's in the question of leadership. The organised trade union movement, working the way it is now, will continue to exist, but I question very much whether it will have as much influence in ten years' time as it has now unless it changes. I also think if it doesn't change sufficiently, other militant forms of workers' organisations will arise which will take over these more crucial areas. I think that leadership—including people of the left—is still a problem because of its conservatism. Officialdom has held back on the workers' movement in a general sense. Take the amount of controversy arising out of such a thing as tenure of office. I think I've spoken in about every capital city in Australia and most of the main provincial cities to meetings of communists or worker control meetings, meetings of the left. And invariably, though I try to play it down as not being an important thing, saying that the Communist Party has far more important ongoing ideas, and to try and raise the social issues—it comes right back to that, particularly union officials themselves, posing such questions as "you're so valuable, how can we replace you" and most of them aren't thinking of me at all, they're thinking of themselves.

The line that the builders' labourers are in a unique position is tripe. I was once asked on a radio program - Can you see it going further? And I raised two points: if in the recent oil refining strike, instead of just putting forward the wages question, and they had a



good question here because of technological changes, etc., they also put forward that the petrol be such that it doesn't pollute the atmosphere; or if the car workers demanded that there be emission control units on all motor vehicles. These are the sort of social issues which will grip the public at large.

***It must be said that you have, personally, played an important role in the union.***

I don't denigrate the role of leadership, but I think that, actually, we have always gone the other way, and exaggerated the position of leadership. I think that's one of the lessons we must draw from history, internationally, and also from trade union history in this country.

In our union, workers identify with leaders and don't just look upon leaders as getting a cushy job or working towards a seat in parliament, because it's impossible to occupy a leadership position with us and move away from the workers, move in circles of arbitration courts and employers as far too many do. So I do think that limited tenure of office is essential, and I think it should be put forward by the Party in all positions. I think future society must limit tenure of office of all people in public positions where they've got decision-making powers. I think it should apply to bureaucrats in government, as well. They've got to be rotated and moved out of those positions so they don't build themselves in. I've seen the



most pedestrian trade union officials who are hopeless in their fights for the workers, become very skilled and cunning indeed at remaining in the position of office.

***How do you explain the hostile attitudes of the builders' labourers among other left-wing union officials?***

I think that, first of all, if we take the Maoists so-called, and the Soviet liners—I think that their really conservative position wouldn't allow them to do the sort of things that we're doing. There are also ingrained habits and the old ways of doing things. Also involved is the old economism—the idea that the economic struggle of the workers is what we've really got to be involved in. I think that it is the old-fashioned thinking of these people which has held them back. I think there are a lot of people who I think support the policy to a fair extent, but they do think it's a bit way out, and they can't really grapple with how to apply it creatively.

***Have the BLF actions affected other workers?***

I think the builders' labourers have acted as a bit of a catalyst. Everywhere I go, I find members of all unions, particularly active rank and filers, condemning their leadership, and then go on and talk more politics. And they say that workers are more politically conscious about the events of the day. I

think that television has done something here, especially the news.

***What do you think are the main strategic lessons of the BLF experiences?***

It seems to me the whole experience of the union shows that the old formula is not necessarily right; that the more advanced action is then necessarily, the less support it must have, and conversely, the more broad an issue, the lower level it is, the more support it must have. This seems to have been really shattered by the builders' labourers' experiences. They have shown that intelligent action around an issue does tap a real feeling among people, even though it might be dormant. A type of action which punches through mass apathy and captures people's imaginations, as it were, brings in mass support and attracts all sorts of people.

The communist part of it is always known, it's not as though I'm unknown, and I take advantage of also pointing out the fact that you haven't got a monolithic communist movement, and of bringing forward our own independent position.

On the general strategic position, I have thought a lot about that because we have been near the precipice on many occasions in the last few years. There have been all sorts of predictions that "you're over this time. . ." and there were many times when I also thought it. But it has been borne out

that if you've got a sound base to fight on, even though it might be advanced action, you'll get support. And this is where the political skill comes in, and I believe that our base was sound and the way in which we imposed the bans achieved strong public support, so that we're pretty near invincible now unless they bring in new laws, which of course they might well do.

### Conclusion

Well, they weren't exactly "invincible." Munday spoke those words late in 1973. By March, 1975 the CPA had been forced out of the leadership of the BLF in what one commentator called "a chapter of perfidy without parallel in Australian working class history." The details of the campaign against the NSW BLF are too complex to list here, but they involved collusion among the Federal government, the employers, and a Maoist organization, and included setting up a rival local and massive lockouts of BLF workers.

The rank and file stuck with the leadership until the end. And despite the new leadership's opposition to green bans, the experience of the bans has had a powerful effect on the BLF workers and on the Australian working class that can't be wiped out of its collective consciousness.





## Margolis

from p. 6

involved at the time a court decision is rendered or legislation or executive action is taken. Recent history demonstrates these facts as Supreme Court precedent after precedent protecting human rights falls by the wayside.

In any event precedents can be used to support the position here taken. Take the use of the libel concept. If the libelling of an individual is not constitutionally protected, should the libelling of a group—of an entire race—resulting in injury to the entire group (as well as in specific injury to the black marines here) be so protected?

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. 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 consistent with the continued fight against this interpretation.

First, it is precisely in the area of political ideas that the right of free speech should not be restricted. Without it the concept of sovereignty of the people is destroyed. Accordingly, the Supreme Court has restricted free speech in the area where it must have the most complete protection possible.

Second, we are not dealing here with a new concept that threatens injury in some remote future. Rather, we have a libel that has been spread continuously for over two hundred years and that has caused, and is now inflicting, untold injury and misery on twenty million Americans. We are dealing with more, not less, than a clear and present danger. The evil effect of the expression of

racist ideas has been so pervasive as to blend into the fabric of American life. Our every effort must be devoted to its eradication.

The defense of the rights of the Klan to exist and function is inconsistent with the defense of the black marines who were goaded into taking action on their own behalf because of the failure of the military to prevent the Klan from spreading racism through the ranks of the Marines. Thus the ACLU by its defense of the Klan members is undermining the defense of the black marines in which it is also participating. Abstract theory may support this Janus-like action. Reality renders the two positions irreconcilable.

For the Left a question that it must face squarely is where it stands on this conflict between racism and free speech. It is an issue that will arise again and again.

*Ben Margolis defended fourteen California Smith Act defendants, effectively ending Smith Act prosecutions in 1957. He belongs to L.A. NAM.*

## Wilkinson

from p. 5

Indeed, this is the issue; and, not only civil liberties counsel, but defense lawyers for all persuasions of dissent have struggled intensely for the past sixty years to secure rational and consistent rights in this area.

Margolis, however, obfuscates his point somewhat by citing a number of uncontested examples: permit requirements for parades; limitations on speech making in public libraries; restraints on electioneering adjacent to polling places; the generally recognized laws relating to libel and slander; and restrictions on employers' speech attendant to union elections;—where all agree speech is subject to reasonable regulation.

Thereafter, he enters intellectual quicksand when he intermixes and equates these generally agreed exceptions with the Supreme Court's disastrous holdings prohibiting protest speech in wartime, the punishment of speech judged to be obscene, and the discredited Hatch Act's infringements upon the rights of public employees.

Further, I believe that in his effort to circumscribe what he derides as "the sacred right of free speech," Margolis speaks to our frustration and anger. Instead of seeking measure of what our progress might be without such free speech as has been achieved and sustained, he asks:

*"Are our values such that we place the right of all persons to say whatever they please above the fight to end the discrimination and denial of human rights to the black people of this nation?"*

The very impatience of his questions obscures generations of rooted struggle to achieve not only the elimination of racist speech, but the overt substance of our racist society. The basic assertion to be made is that such progress as has been made has come in good part from our free speech heritage. Life has taught us that free speech is the people's critical tool of struggle. Although expressed as a put-down by Margolis, it is axiomatic and should be underscored here again: "the way to fight ideas is with ideas - ideas cannot be wiped out by their suppression."

All concerned will agree with his contention regarding the importance of the development and maintenance of a favorable political climate to achieve optimum affect on governmental bodies - legislative, executive, and judicial - involved in decision making related to racism. Contrary to his point, however, such a climate can best be achieved by mass actions for human rights - not by repression in any form.

### Precedents Matter

I disagree also with what can be  
over



from p. 19

considered his cavalier treatment of "precedents." All precedents that abridge any aspect of our Bill of Rights must be viewed as a continuing danger to other threatened areas of political rights, and especially free speech.

In search of support for his argument, Margolis suggests the libel concept as an alternative example of precedent, stating:

"If the libelling of an individual is not constitutionally protected, should the libelling of an entire race . . . be so protected?"

Margolis is best answered by two great dissenting justices of the Supreme Court in the *Beauharnais* case: acknowledging "Constitutionally recognized" punishment for "malicious, scurrilous attacks against individuals, not against huge groups," Justice Hugo Black condemns group libel, as:

*"Every expansion of the law of criminal libel so as to punish discussions of matters of public concern means a corresponding invasion of the area dedicated to free expression by the First Amendment . . . it sets up a system of state censorship which is at war with the kind of free government envisioned by those who forced adoption of our Bill of Rights. The motives . . . may have been to do good. But the same can be said about most laws making opinions punishable as crimes. History indicates that urges to do good have led to the burning of books and even to the burning of 'witches.'"*

Also dissenting in the same case involving, incidentally, an Illinois statute punishing racist speech and press, Justice William O. Douglas prophetically warned: "in the next case" punishment will be meted out for "protesting in heated terms, lynch law in the South"; and, within the decade thereafter, a precedent applied initially against an organizer for the White Circle League of Illinois, was used to bring the Reverend Fred Shuttlesworth and other leaders of S.C.L.C. to trial on charges of defamation against the allies of the

racist program of Bull Connor of Alabama.

In his final selection of legal precedent to argue repression of racist speech, Margolis points to the Supreme Court's draconian "clear and present danger" doctrine - utilized for 20 years or more to jail and otherwise harass socialist advocacy of revolutionary change, under the Smith Act et al. After properly disposing of the doctrine as it was used against political ideas, he applies it against racist speech, as follows:

" . . . we are dealing with more, not less, than a clear and present danger. . . . so pervasive and commonplace as to blend into the fabric of American life."

Therefore, ipso facto, repression under the doctrine can be rationalized. To equate the sophistic rationale for suppressing political speech to suppress racist speech, turns logic on its head, and denies the lessons of political struggle these recent years. Such precedent had best go unsuggested.

To argue, as Margolis concludes, that the defense of First Amendment and due process rights of the Klan by ACLU undermines their defenses of the Pendleton black Marines, is not born out by the facts in the cases. An absolute assertion of the Bill of Rights often times results in defense of adversaries in conflict situations.

The urgent need of the hour is the building of representative anti-Facist coalitions to stem the tide of reaction. Experience teaches that such coalitions can only be built on the common bond of absolute political adherence to the Bill of Rights. Only division can result by compromises on First Amendment principle.

*Frank Wilkinson is the Director of the National Committee Against Repressive Legislation.*

**SPECIAL ISSUE  
GRAPHIC  
ARTISTS  
ON THE  
LEFT**



This entire issue is devoted to Bonnie Acker, Peg Averill, David Bragin, Bulbul, Jacky English, Ollie Harrington, George Knowlton, Bill Plympton, Shake, Toni Truesdale, Johann Vogelsang and Fred Wright; people who've been among those expressing the sentiment of the left movement in the United States through graphics for over forty years.

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# Romance between the carrots and the cabbage

from p. 14

against women that is an everyday reality in American society? Or is it a holdover from traditional hard core pornography? Perhaps it is all of these and more.

Though the Tempestuous Romances may be the new opiate of the American housewife, there are some positive aspects of the fantasy heroines that have been created. They are often strong, self-possessed women with unabashed sexual identities. Through them a more female-defined sexuality—without shame or blame—is legitimized for masses of women.

But despite this new sexual stance, in the end there is no real questioning of society's prescribed role for women in these books. The trick seems to be that the authors play off the contradictions between the assigned role in any given historical period and the various heroines' individual desires. This builds excitement, allows for adventure, and finally leaves the heroine happy in her acceptance of the real, eternal position of woman - subservient wife and attentive mother.

For Sabrina Verrick and the other women of the Tempestuous Romances it is all worthwhile because they get quality affection and sexual satisfaction in exchange. To many feminists this may seem a sorry trade-off. But judging from the way these books are selling, it's a better bargain than a lot of women are getting now.

*Alice Allgaier is a poet and teaches writing in Chicago. She is a NAM member.*

## FAMILY PORTRAIT 1933

*In the center my grandfather sits  
a patriarch, a boy on his knee  
and progeny surrounding. His face says  
this is my contribution, but the lips wanting  
reassurance. My grandmother is a trunk  
of a woman three children wide,  
her face stern and unfathomable.*

*While they are stiff and attentive,  
I would like to speak.  
Father, I'd say, you are twenty  
now, but will lease your body out  
to machines like the man did  
on whose shoulder you rest your hand.  
And after forty years you'll say  
"I'm just an old man smoking cigarettes  
in the cellar, fixing radios."  
Uncles, aunts, I cannot keep track  
of you. Live.*

*Grandfather, grandmother, don't worry.  
I'll be born in twenty-two years  
and grow strong and bury you.  
Uncle Mike, old mole,  
you will bury yourself  
in the anthracite fields of Pennsylvania.  
Please resume now. Come unfrozen,  
quickly; do what you must do.*

*Peter Oresick*

*(Reprinted with permission of the author from **The Story of Glass**; available from West End Press, Box 697, Cambridge, MA 02139. \$2.)*



# NAM News

## More Letters

Dear MO,

I am more than delighted—I am positively bouyed—with your new publication, MOVING ON. I note with pleasure your emphasis on Unions, Women, Latin America and especially, your section on "Resources." These issues are starkly illuminated every day at our community college. Our faculty has recently unionized and is currently engaged in a difficult (but predictable) struggle to gain a fair contract, the women employees are generally given the shaft by the management, and the students are beginning to recognize that they must organize to better fight.

Again, keep up your work. It is helpful to know you are there. And your information and poetry are useful and refreshing.

Dan Fallon  
President, AFT Local 3592

Dear MO,

I have just received your first issue of MOVING ON and I would like to compliment you on a job well done. In terms of the quality of the articles, the layout, subject matter MOVING ON is a major improvement. Overall this magazine comes at a time when I think your organization can be proud of itself, for its maturity and small successes are an encouragement in trying times. Many a radical movement in this country have become vehicles for people to create a following and role for themselves rather than serving the social function they originally set out to fulfill. I have followed you now for many years and it seems that you have not fallen into this trap. It is a road pitted with difficulties and I wish you continued success. Please accept this enclosed check in order to continue your work.

James Morris  
Albuquerque, NM

## Coalition stops railroads in Springfield

When the Springfield, Illinois Railroad Relocation Authority, a collection of bankers and railroad executives, decided to merge several of the town's railroads into a single corridor, they chose a site that ran straight through the local black community. Over 60 trains pass through Springfield daily, and outrage at what this would mean for community development and stability quickly surfaced.

This anger was strengthened when it was revealed that a rail yard was to be located behind the neighborhood high school and adjacent to the elementary school. The Springfield chapter of NAM began working with the community residents to challenge these plans. The chapter's research unearthed the fact that the St. Louis-Chicago run through Springfield (most of the trains are on this run) has the highest ratio of hazardous materials in its loads of any run in the country. Two rail yard explosions the previous year in East St. Louis and Decatur, Illinois had killed several people and injured hundreds of others. The rail yard would be a clear hazard to the populated area for which it was proposed.

A coalition formed to push for shifting the corridor to a less-populated site. It included 17 organizations, "everything from the League of Women Voters to the NAACP to NAM," says Peter MacDowell of Mother Jones NAM. The coalition had equal representation of blacks and whites and there was a "high level of cooperation and unity," he adds.

The climax of the coalition's efforts came when a People's Public Hearing drew over 500 people to speak out against the corridor. The hearing was timed to coincide with a statewide meeting in Springfield of the Relocation

Authority. It was a spirited gathering that showed the determination of the coalition and the people in the community. "At the end a woman from the NAACP said we'd lie down in front of the bulldozers to stop it, if necessary," says MacDowell.

It wasn't long after that that the Relocation Authority announced it would change its plans and use the corridor

## The St. Louis-Chicago run through Springfield has the highest ration of hazardous materials in its loads of any run in the country.

that the coalition favored - despite the railroads' contention that it would be too expensive.

MacDowell says that he believes that NAM's participation in the coalition was very valuable. "We learned that we had a body of people with specific talents—organizing, research, publicity—and I think the rest of the coalition saw that as well."



# NAM members protest Czech human rights violations

One of the important challenges that faces socialists in this country is the necessity to develop a stance toward the existing socialist countries. Frequently this stance has tended toward extremes—uncritical support in some cases; outright hostility in others. NAM's position from the beginning has been that we support the positive features of the socialist nations, but we recognize their limitations and will not hide our disagreements with them where they exist.

The recent surge of protest activity among the intellectuals of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union has brought into dramatic relief the question of socialist democracy and our attitude toward it. NAM members in Los Angeles joined with other prominent socialists there to condemn a particularly striking violation of democratic rights—the suppression of the Charter '77 dissidents in Czechoslovakia.

Charter '77 is a statement signed by over 400 Czechs calling on their country to live up to the Helsinki accords, the U.N. human rights agreements it has signed, and its own constitution. The statement condemns various discriminatory practices against supporters of the pre-'68 government and those whose opinions differ from official policy. Since the Charter was issued, many of the signers have lost jobs, been detained by the police, and viciously attacked in the media as anti-socialist. Some have been placed under arrest. Most of the signers have publicly expressed their commitment to socialism. One of those arrested, Zdenek Mlynar refuted the charges saying, "I am a communist and I am convinced that socialism must give people

photo by Jane Melnick



Dorothy Healey

more political and civil rights than capitalism."

NAM members Dorothy Healey, Ben Margolis, John McTiernan, and Paul Jarrico were among the fifteen signers of an open letter to Czech president, Gustav Husak, published in the *Los Angeles Times* condemning the "jailing, blacklisting, and harassment of those who signed Charter '77." Other signers of the letter included Ring Lardner, Jr., Jessica Mitford, Al Richmond, Linus Pauling, and Will Geer.

Healey said that they had been uneasy about issuing the letter because of Carter's "demagogy on the human rights issue. But in the final analysis this can't be the determining factor." She emphasized that she and other signers issued the letter precisely because of their commitment to the socialist countries. "Revolutionaries have to try to make clear that the question of socialist democracy has its own essential quality decisive for the future growth of these societies," Healey stressed.

**Healey emphasized that the signers issued the letter precisely because of their commitment to the socialist countries.**

## 'Open Letter to Gustav Husak'

We who fight for socialism in our own land are shamed and crippled by the violations of socialist legality in your land.

We appeal to you to honor the commitment you made in signing the Helsinki Accord of 1975—a solemn commitment to respect the human rights of your citizens.

We condemn the jailing, blacklisting and harassment of those who signed Charter 77.

They perpetrated no crime in petitioning you to keep your word.

It is you who commits a crime in abrogating your treaty obligations. And an even greater crime in making a mockery of socialist democracy.

Do not tell us your internal affairs are none of our business. During the McCarthy period, when we ourselves were jailed, blacklisted and harassed, it was international outrage that helped us to regain our rights.

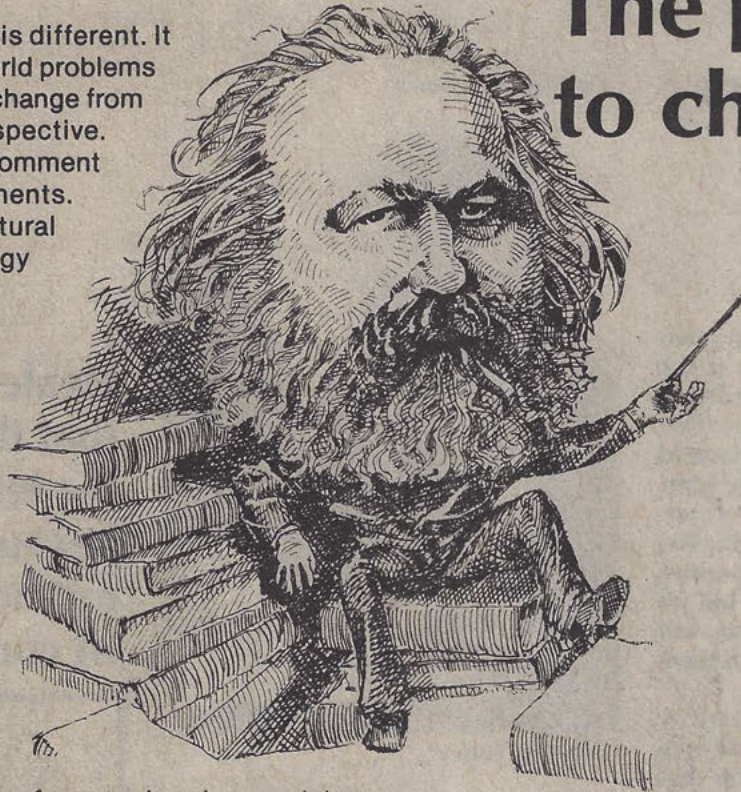


Most Americans think that socialists are hopelessly out of touch with American reality, committed to undemocratic means, and utterly forgetful of Marx's most important teaching: "The point is to change the world."

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, the new populism, interviewed steel activists, offered strategy to beat the urban crisis. Future issues will feature new trends in labor, Ken Cockrel's campaign for Detroit City Council, alternative energy programs, the JP Stevens boycott, and much more.

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



# The point is to change the world!

## Moving On

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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.