

Moving On

MONTHLY MAGAZINE OF THE NEW AMERICAN MOVEMENT



Reform, Italian style

Women's music

Socialism and democracy

Progressive push in labor

Moving On

MONTHLY MAGAZINE OF THE NEW AMERICAN MOVEMENT

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Letters

Dear MO,

Such a promising magazine as you should watch yourself a little more closely. For two examples in the June issue: In your desire to show the contrast between NAM's and Carter's energy programs (p.5), you say Carter "proposes breeder reactors"! Watch your facts, friends if you are going to develop credibility! Next example: You devote an entire page to an article commending IN THESE TIMES, but nowhere (repeat, nowhere) do you tell your readers where or how to send in a subscription. So keep MOVING ON up!

Duncan McBride
Mooreville, N.C.

Ed. note: We did make a mistake on Carter's position on the breeder reactor. But it was an innocent typo, not a calculated deception. Our chart was supposed to say, "Carter opposes breeder reactors." Ironically, since the publication of the June issue we have learned that Carter opposes only the plutonium breeder, but has left the door open for developing a "new generation of breeders," specifically the thorium breeder, only slightly less dangerous than the plutonium variety. So long as Carter remains committed to nuclear power as the renewable alternative to fossil fuels, he will be forced to support some form of breeder.

IN THESE TIMES' address is 1509 N. Milwaukee Ave., Chicago, IL 60647. A year's sub costs \$15.

Dear MO,

MOVING ON continues to be excellent. The June and July issues were really good. I was especially interested in Roberta Lynch's Mayday speech, with its account of Moranda Smith's work among tobacco workers. Today Moranda Smith is a forgotten heroine especially in her own home town of Winston-Salem, N.C. The union she helped build at R.J.

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Progressive push in labor hierarchy

by Dan Marschall

As the rank and file movements for greater union democracy gain steam in the Teamsters, Steelworkers, Mineworkers and other unions, significant political changes are also taking place in the top leadership of organized labor.

Younger union members, whose attitudes towards work and union affairs were conditioned by the social movements of the 1960s, are putting more pressure on labor's upper echelons. These pressures will shake unions on all levels in the next decade and possibly push them in a leftward direction.

Changes will begin to take shape as several leaders gain power in key unions. An important one to watch is the million-member International Association of Machinists, the third largest in the AFL-CIO. In July, William Winpisinger, a former diesel mechanic from Cleveland, became its top officer.

Winpisinger is a member of the Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee (DSOC) who advocates a redistribution of wealth in the United States. As Machinist president, he will join the 35-member AFL-CIO Executive Council and attempt to forge a "new left" coalition to counter the power of the conservative building trades.

"We need people on the council who will raise their voices in opposition to the status quo, and to help crystallize the opinions of the dissenters from what has been the majority view," he told the *L.A. Times*.

Winpisinger hopes to push the AFL-CIO towards a commitment to organize non-union workers, especially

New leaders at the international level will pursue liberal policies, but their positions may bring them into conflict with membership aspirations for greater union democracy.

blacks and other minorities, and to place legislative priority on social reforms like national health insurance.

He has also castigated George Meany on several occasions about labor legislation, defense spending and

foreign policy. His public statements that Meany should retire are unusual for an incoming union president.

Winpisinger is quite conscious of the increasingly youthful composition of his union. In one meeting of young Machinist organizers, his mention of George Meany brought catcalls. The incoming leader of the United Auto Workers, Douglas Fraser, is also aware of this trend and says that a big part of his job will be to train a new generation of leaders to command the 1.5 million-member union. About 55 percent of the UAW's members in major companies are under 30 years of age.

Fraser, who was elected president at the May UAW convention, is expected to pursue a more "activist" approach towards legislative lobbying. Instead of just testifying at Congressional hearings, UAW insiders say that he



Drawing by Mary Clark

will attempt to mobilize labor constituency to bring direct pressure on politicians.

Fraser comes from a Socialist Party background and believes that today's economic problems are similar to the 1930s. While a staunch liberal Democrat, Fraser has steadily distanced himself from the Carter administration. Instead of "becoming part of the machine," as did his predecessors, Fraser intends to pressure from the outside, in behalf of liberal causes.

Reaffiliation

If the UAW rejoins the AFL-CIO, Fraser is expected to align himself with Winpisinger's progressive policies. Reaffiliation is being discussed throughout the union and will probably be decided at a special convention this fall. The May convention indicated massive opposition to reaffiliation from rank and filers and local union officers. Observers speculate that the UAW will reenter if the AFL-CIO grants some reforms in

the structure of the Executive Council that would grant more power to the larger industrial unions.

Despite Fraser's progressive politics and outgoing personal style, his ability to relate to young autoworkers may be hampered by his past handling of wildcat strikes. In 1973, for example, he led a "flying squad" of UAW officers—backed by a force of 2000 union loyalists—to convince wildcatting Chrysler workers to return to work.

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

While Fraser and Winpisinger will pursue liberal policies in terms of political legislation and the internal power struggles of the AFL-CIO, their positions at the apex of their unions' power structures may bring them into conflict with membership aspirations for more union democracy. Neither are the representatives of a rank and file movement.

Several other recently-elected union leaders may become part of a "new left" formation in the AFL-CIO. Peter Bommarito, president of the United Rubber Workers, directs a relatively democratic union that won some hard-fought demands from the rubber companies last year after a four month strike. He has also rejected a no-strike deal proposed by the industry because it would not, he said, conform with the "democratic makeup of our union."

A.F. Gropiron of the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers (OCAW) is also known as a progressive on the Executive Council. His union publicly opposed federal funding of the B-1 bomber. The OCAW has also taken a leading role in the fight for greater attention to health and safety problems in plants, the central issue in their 1973 strike against Shell Oil.

Even in the tradition-bound building trades, some leaders are reportedly



Bill Winpisinger is the new President of the International Association of Machinists. His brand of Leftism will make a difference at the top of the union. Will it make a difference at the bottom?

critical of Meany's policies. Both William Sidell, president of the Carpenters, and Edward Carlough, president of the Sheet Metal Workers, are considered relatively independent of the AFL-CIO hierarchy. (Carlough's union has also taken a strong position in support of developing solar energy by redirecting government research funds.)

Historical Developments

A leftward trend in American labor would, of course, be the product of historical developments broader than individual leadership changes. Any "new left" coalition would likely coalesce on an ad hoc basis around particular issues. Two factors may contribute: the gradual decline of the construction unions and the growing importance of social service unions.

The power of the construction unions, which have dominated the policies of organized labor since the founding of the AFL in 1881, has declined in recent years because of economic, political and technological developments. High construction union wage gains in the late 1960s encouraged the growth of open shop contractors and provided an excuse for industry and government attacks. Prefabrication and other modern building methods have cut the need for skilled union labor. The recession, with its drop in construction, has also brought massive rates of unemployment in building trades unions.

While construction union interests usually prevail on the AFL-CIO Executive Council—as evidenced by their priority on common site picketing—their influence is waning. If George Meany retires as AFL-CIO president this year, their punch in organized labor may be further weakened. (See the May 10 issue of *In These Times* for a detailed history of this decline.)

In addition, the desperate efforts of building trades leaders to preserve their members' jobs have led them to

take reactionary positions on many social questions, especially environmental issues, thus widening their political isolation from other sectors of organized labor.

In contrast to the dwindling building trades, public employee unions have grown at a rate comparable to the industrial unions of the 1930s. With a high proportion of women and minority members, these unions have been more influenced by the movements of the 1950s and 1960s. Since they bargain with governmental



bodies on all levels, they have been impelled to confront the issue of how resources and public funds are allocated.

While Jerry Wurf, the head of AF-SCME, has been politically isolated in the high councils of the AFL-CIO, his union has begun to bring a new sense of social priorities to the labor movement. The growing strength of these unions is particularly remarkable because they lack the nationwide right to organize and bargain collectively, which was granted to workers in the private sector 40 years ago.

Business Offensive

The potential move to the left may be restrained by the growing anti-union offensive of the "business community," especially serious for public

employee unions. Through groups like the Business Roundtable, the Chamber of Commerce and a multitude of one-shot issue organizations, they are aggressively making their political positions known to Congress.

The defeat of common site picketing last March was just the beginning. Since then corporate interests have watered down the Labor Law Reform Bill, countered with their own "Employee Bill of Rights Act," waged an effective battle against the Agency for Consumer Protection, and are campaigning to stop repeal of the Hatch Act.

On the home front, labor is still losing important elections in its fight to unionize the south, as management adopts more sophisticated techniques for beating unions.

The fiscal crisis of the cities has led to massive layoffs of public employees. The political attacks on these unions seem to be reaching union-busting proportions. Of 238 major cities, 61 percent cut back their public workforces in 1976. In New York City alone, 56,000 workers have lost their jobs in the last two years. Across the country, state legislatures are trying to cut back the working conditions of teachers, usually accompanied by cuts in educational services.

Only if these unions foster coalitions with minority, women's and community organizations will they be able to hold the line against social service cutbacks. (See Nick Rabkin's discussion of this strategy in *Moving On*, April, 1977.)

These developments are in no way a predetermined direction for organized labor. An important future battle will concern the question of national economic planning. Faced with a host of crises, some "enlightened" corporate leaders are pushing for more coherent planning of the economy to cut down the uncertainties in investment decisions and stabilize their workforces.

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Democracy under socialism: reality and promise

by Richard Healey

Innumerable articles have appeared in the American press over the last year on the changes in personnel and policy in the Chinese and Russian governments. Much of this writing has the air of a good gossip column: What did the Gang of Four really do? Why did Brezhnev replace Podgorney as President of the USSR? Is the army getting more power in China? The speculative responses are usually followed by some pious moralizing on the superiority of the American system, for example the "orderly and democratic" succession of Ford and then Carter to the Presidency after the crisis of Watergate.

Both the gossipy questions and the moralizing miss the vital issue: to what extent do the people actually control the overall direction and policies of the government. In America, the order that characterizes the national political scene has little to do with democracy. We only have to look at the difference between candidate Carter's promises and President Carter's actions to grasp this fact. Carter's constant subservience to corporate priorities demonstrates all too clearly who has power in capitalist society.

Who controls

In a socialist society there is no conflict between the needs of production and those of the producers—the people of the country—because production is not for private profit but for social goals. This fundamental fact has enabled the socialist countries to make major advances in such vital areas as

Gossipy questions and moralism miss the vital issue: to what extent do the people actually control the government.

health care, job safety, education and employment for all citizens. It has laid the basis for a social climate that fosters little crime, mental illness, or the extremes of aggressiveness we are



familiar with in this country. And it has encouraged a continuing focus on equality. Of course, each of these aspects has developed to a different extent in different socialist countries. But overall they represent a fundamental contrast to the capitalist organization of society.

Despite the enormous importance of these factors, however, they do not tell us whether the people actually control the governments today in China or the Soviet Union. This question is vital for us, as socialists concerned not just with meeting material needs, but with creating a social order based on democracy and equality in all spheres of life.

The answer is not simple or straightforward. There are mechanisms of popular participation that exist in some cases that can barely be imagined under capitalism. For instance, in China the workers themselves can collectively determine the pace at which they will work in a particular plant. There are also guarantees of some rights and liberties that are in sharp contrast to the limitations that exist in this country. In the Soviet Union women's right to control their own bodies is supported by free and easy access to birth control and abortion.

Nonetheless, the answer is clear: genuine popular control over national policy and personnel is very weak in these countries. Power resides in the Communist Parties—or more precisely, in small leadership groupings within the parties. There are important differences between the Soviet Union and China in many areas of politics and economics, but in terms of the exercise of power at the national level, there are also important similarities. Three issues are central: availability of information, the role of organizations, and civil liberties.

The importance of information was vividly brought home to me in listening to a Czechoslovakian several years ago. He had left his country after

the Russian invasion in 1968, when he lost his job as a Minister in the Dubcek government. In replying to a question about the loss of his position, he said: "The worst thing about being purged from a high position in the Communist Party and the government is not the loss of power. It is the loss of information. Friends of mine, also purged, agreed it was as if we had been suddenly blinded. We no longer knew what was really going on, how much that we read in the papers or heard on the radio was true."

People in the socialist countries are aware that information is controlled and used for political purposes. In many cases they tend to be cynical and mistrustful of what the government tells them. A bitter example of this was the reaction of many Eastern Europeans to the war in Vietnam in the 1960's: some people, including many youth, opposed giving much aid to the Vietnamese. Nor were they terribly critical of the United States. For initially they assumed that the truth about Vietnam was the opposite of what their government and the Party said.

Certainly this is not equally true in all of the socialist countries. Yet as long as the government can control information, the underlying problem is the same. How can the people think through the issues involved in a debate between two approaches to national development when one side of the debate is termed the "capitalist road," its proponents are removed from office, and their writings removed from public view?

And the people have no way to decide who should be in the government if they don't know what the contenders have done or what they stand for. How can the Chinese choose between Chairman Hua and the Gang of Four when the latter are unable to state their case directly to the people?

For socialists, full information and open debate, including the widest publication of the various positions and arguments about political dif-



ferences is not a luxury. If socialism means the control by the people of their country's political and economic institutions, then the free flow of information and ideas is a basic necessity.

Organized power

But the problem in the socialist countries is more than the lack of information. Even if this were guaranteed, there remains the issue of insuring that the people have the power to use that information. Thus we need to examine how power is organized in the socialist countries.

People don't have power as isolated individuals. They form trade unions, women's groups, parties, and so on to develop collective strength. There are a large number of such organizations in the USSR and China, but their reality is at odds with their appearance.

Although such groups often play a vital role in stimulating popular participation and developing people's political awareness—particularly at the local level—in the final analysis they are largely controlled by the Communist Party. As a result the organizations are less responsive to their own members than they are to the Party.

In the long run, the recognition of this reality can foster cynicism and passivity in the participants, undermining the very purpose of the groups. We have seen much the same thing

happen with trade unions in this country when the leadership stopped being accountable to the rank and file.

Some people will disagree with this interpretation. They will point, for instance, to the mass upsurges and mobilizations in China during the Cultural Revolution, and more recently. They argue that the Chinese people are neither passive nor apolitical, but are exercising power through such actions.

Of course, there is some truth to this view. Mass upsurges can initiate great changes in a country. They can serve to give people a real sense of collective power. But to what extent are such upsurges dependent on the initiative of some portion of the Party leadership? And more importantly what are their long term results? If power is not embedded in organizations that the people themselves control, it can—and usually will—be eroded. One criterion for a successful revolution is that the new relations of power have been institutionalized; in a rebellion they are temporary and fade after the people leave the streets. A pertinent example of this is the rebellions in the ghettos of this country some ten years ago, and the lack of progress in their wake.

Independence

People in China and the Soviet Union need their own independent organizations. Organizations that
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Getting Together

Marion Prison — "Life is an essay in psychological warfare."

by Mike Turner

The control unit at the U.S. Penitentiary at Marion, Ill., is the end of the line for the 27,000 inmates of the federal prison system.

The Bureau of Prisons believes its 72 cells house the most dangerous and aggressive convicts in the entire prison system. So the unit was designed to reform prisoners' behavior and attitudes.

Prisoners insist that the "Controlled Unit Treatment Program" is a type of political prison used to isolate the most effective religious, political and legal activists. They say its purpose is complete control of a prisoner's life, not treatment.

Marion prison was built in the heart of southern Illinois in 1963 as a replacement for Alcatraz. Its 525 inmates are serving average sentences of 20 years, longest in the U.S. prison system. Leavenworth, where prisoners are serving an average of 10 years, is a distant second.

Like many other prisons Marion is in a rural area known for its racism and political conservatism. The prison is far from the urban homes of its many black and brown prisoners. People in the area are taught to regard the prisoners as brutish, sociopathic beasts.

Unlike other prisons Marion was designed for behavior modi-

fication. "What life at Marion boils down to is an essay in psychological warfare," wrote Eddie Griffin, one of the men in the control unit. Prison authorities constantly reinforce the fact that a prisoner has no control over his life.

The control unit is at the heart of the behavior modification program. Each prisoner is locked in an 11 x 9 cell 23½ hours a day. Prisoners are let out of their cells 30 minutes a day for recreation and 10 minutes a day for showers. Since only two prisoners are let out at a time, baseball or football games are impossible. Prisoners in the general population are often outside eight to ten hours a day and have access to bowling alleys, weight-lifting machines, and pool tables. There's only one television set in the control unit, which can be seen from about 12 of the 72 cells. Meals are served to the prisoners in their cells, not in the regular dining hall.

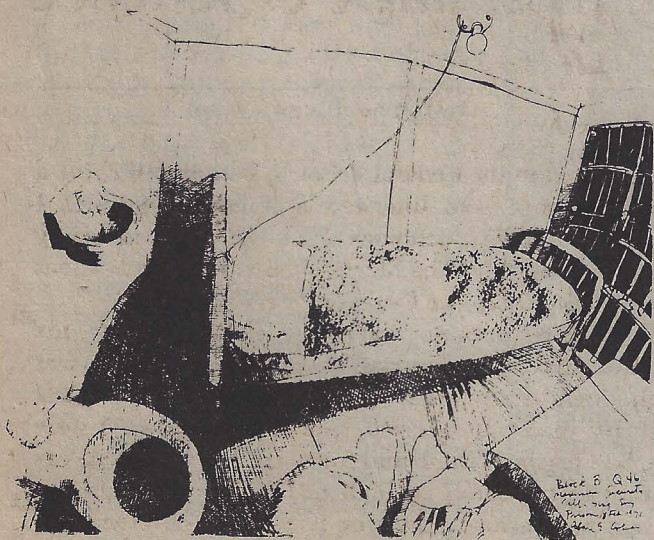
Boxcar Cells

"Living in the control unit is impossible for a free person to understand," wrote Earl Gaither, another of the men in the unit. "The only way you could understand is to go into your bathroom, lock the door, lie down in the bathtub and stay there for three years."

"Prisoners suffer from having their incoming and outgoing mail held up; confiscation and withholding of personal property; extreme cold conditions in the winter and lack of ventilation in the summer (and) hot and cold water manipulation in the showers," Griffin writes.

Work is a "privilege" allowed only 18 of the 72 prisoners. Wages start at 28 cents an hour and a prisoner who proves himself a good worker may advance to 42 cents an hour. Rehabilitation is not the goal of the prison enterprises. Above all, they must be profit-making, officials say. Education is limited to correspondence courses, for which inmates must pay the entire cost. Since few are employed, few can afford them. Visitors to a prisoner in the control unit are separated from the men by a plexiglass shield and communication is via telephone.

For prisoners who continue to resist, protest or "show a bad attitude," even in the control unit, there are 18 sensory-deprivation, "boxcar" cells. Each is sealed by a thick steel door, which makes the interior almost soundproof. Prisoners in the boxcar cells are fed cold bag lunches. The cell itself contains only a



flat steel slab jutting from the wall, overlaid with a one-inch piece of foam wrapped in plastic.

Harsh as physical conditions are in the control unit, the most brutal punishment is the indefinite nature of confinement in the unit. A review committee meets with each inmate every 30 days to decide the inmate's status, but prisoners maintain that the review committee's decisions are completely arbitrary.

Court Challenges

Since the control unit was set up in July 1972 to punish 102 prisoners involved in a work stoppage, prisoners have twice gone to court. In *Adams v. Carlson* a federal judge decided in December 1973 that 36 prisoners involved in the work stoppage were being excessively punished, not treated.

In April 1974 prisoners initiated a class action suit, *Bono v. Saxbe*, challenging the conditions and purposes of the control unit and seeking to shut it down. The suit alleges that prisoners are put in the control unit because of their religious and political beliefs and activities. During testimony at the trial in July 1975 former warden Ralph Aron said the control unit was "necessary because of the revolutionary attitudes acting throughout our country." A decision in the case is still pending.

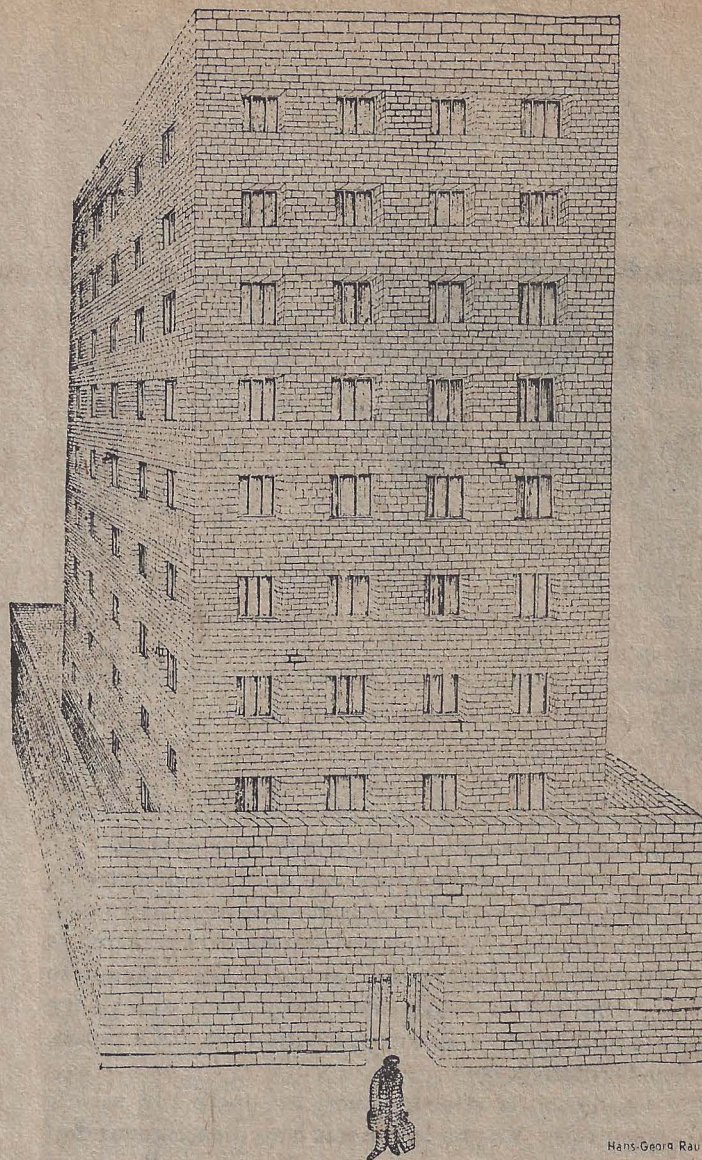
Support for efforts to close the control unit is growing within the general population at Marion, according to Audrey Myers, co-director of the St. Louis-based National Committee to Support the Marion Brothers, which is seeking to close down the control unit. Myers says such support gives lie to the administration's contention that the control unit exists because the prisoners want it to exist.

Prison officials staunchly deny the control unit is aimed at political dissidents. Instead they point to the inmates' "dangerous" behavior. Certainly there is some basis for the statement that the prisoners in the control unit are "aggressive." But aggressiveness must be seen in the institutional context of the prison.

The Marion Prison, its critics point out, may be more of a stimulus for aggressive and criminal behavior than it is a behavior modification program for criminals. The efforts to change conditions at Marion are part of a larger movement to re-examine questions of crime and punishment in America.

For more information or to make a donation, contact: National Committee to Support the Marion Brothers, 4556A Oakland St., St. Louis, MO 63110.

Mike Turner is a NAM member who lives and works in the Midwest.



Voice from Marion The most tragic experience

by Emmitt Brager

I first arrived in the Federal Prison system in 1972, for a violation of Theft from Interstate Shipment, for which I received an eight year sentence. I had just arrived to my twenty-third birthday. The Marion Federal Prison is about the most tragic experience I've ever experienced.

When I first became somewhat familiar with the procedures that the prison staff institute on prisoners was through incident reports. I noticed with the many disciplinary reports I received, over half the reports were untrue. So I began to think and found for a fact that the administration prison staff is all about lies. I searched among the prison population, discussing issues with different con-



victs and reflected back on some of my previous experiences in prison and my evaluation proved to be concrete facts.

The impression that the prison administration wishes to deliver to the convicts in Marion is that you are a bad guy, a hardened criminal, an animal, and you should be treated as such. The prison administration fabricates lies, not only to the prisoners, but to society also. They want to give the prisoners and society the impression that we are animals, hardened criminals, etc.

The impression is effecting most prisoners and society very successfully. You have inmates here incarcerated that actually accept the impression in full. Inmates walk around each other, with the impression, am badder than you, or am a bigger animal than the administration think you are. And each one of them that walk with this type of attitude are willing to prove it at any given time, even if it result to death.

Administration satisfied

The administration here at Marion is satisfied with this type of attitude that's among those inmates. If you fabricate lies and stamp a print on an inmate, he will conduct himself in the manner of the fabricated lies and the stamp you printed on him. Seemingly, the inmates that the prison staff mostly affects are the ones with a few years. It affects him so greatly, that he will eventually receive a life sentence for killing someone or he will be killed in the process. Then the prison administration will say to society, see I told you he was an animal.

The prison administration is active in these fabrications. Every place an inmate is forwarded to while in segregation, no matter what the reasons are, he's handcuffed. If he uses

the phone, he's handcuffed. If he's forwarded to the hospital, he's handcuffed with several officers surrounding him. I once worked in the hospital here at this prison. I witnessed inmates being forwarded to the hospital to have an interview with a supposed doctor employed by the prison staff. During the interview, the doctor has the handcuffs removed.

After the examination, the inmate prepares to return back to the segregation unit. The handcuffs hadn't been placed on the inmate's hands. The officer indicates to him, "let's return back to segregation". The inmate refused to return to segregation without the handcuffs, afraid his friends would see him without the handcuffs and see he's not such an animal after all (the inmate has been greatly effected by the administration fabrications). The officer places the handcuffs back on the inmate and he returns to segregation peacefully.

Handcuffed illusion

The handcuffs gives the inmate the feeling that he's a bad guy, an animal, etc. The inmate has turned out to be just what the prison staff fabricates to the public and to the prisoners that he is.

The prison officers will do anything to provoke a convict, harass him, destroy his family relationship or any oncoming relationship of a convict, assault him, and will even kill an inmate. There have been four inmates here at Marion that were supposed to have committed suicide. For my personal belief, I don't believe those inmates committed suicide, and if they did, they were drove to the point. I have witnessed inmates being beaten, one just recently on 5/16/77, by prison officers. I have been beaten by the prison staff, my life has been threatened and is in jeopardy writing this article.

The cells we live in are coffins; we are just not legally dead. I have never in my life witnessed so many men together at one time until I arrived in Federal custody, that feel they must be any thing other than a man to survive this hell hole.

If there's anyone that's concerned and wishes to render support, financially, or a letter from time to time to the prison authority inquiring about convicts welfare, or write to a prisoner, please contact me here at this prison: Emmit Brager, 87378-132, P.O. Box 1000, Marion, IL 62959.

*For a vivid testament about prison life, read **Through the Wall: Prison Correspondence** by Ethel Shapiro Bertolini. Order from: NAM, 1643 N. Milwaukee Ave., Chicago, IL 60647, or Peace Press, 3828 Willat Ave., Culver City, CA 90230. Cost is \$5.95.*

Looking For America

Baseball and the politics of race

by Manning Marable

We are now well into the baseball season. You don't have to glance at your calendar—you can just feel it by going outside. The sun shines down on your back; neighborhood children are out in the pasture or nearby back lot playing stickball.

When I was a child I used to imitate the local hero, Frank Robinson, who was then playing for the Cincinnati Reds. He wore his bright red stockings high as he stood menacingly close to the plate, awaiting the pitcher's delivery. All the black children in the neighborhood identified with Frank, who was the first black to star with the ball club. Later, Robinson became the first black manager in baseball, taking a position with the Cleveland Indians. There was much public controversy around his entry into both positions (and his recent removal from the managing job) and even then, we black children understood: politics was not separate from sports.

People usually think of Jackie Robinson as the first black player in professional baseball. It is true that Jackie broke the color bar thirty years ago this season with the courageous decision of Branch Rickey and the Brooklyn Dodgers. Jackie Robinson became the greatest all-around baseball player of the post war era.

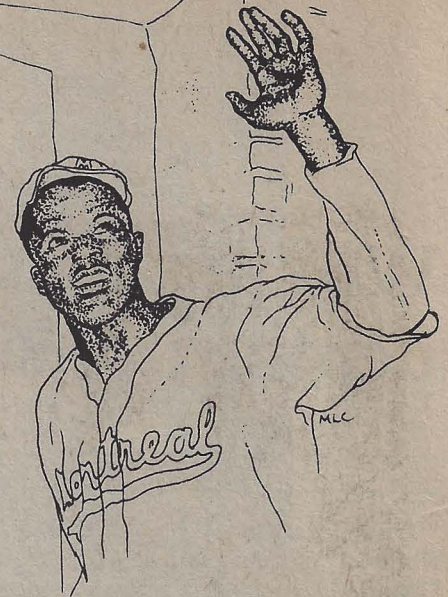
But it was a political decision that kept blacks out of the game for generations, and it is a distortion of American history to assume that blacks first learned the game of baseball in 1947. In the 1880s and 1890s there were numerous blacks who participated in organized baseball. Integrated teams were rather common in baseball's early history. But as the political rights of the black community were attacked by Jim Crow restrictions after Reconstruction, segregated baseball came into existence.

By 1910 it was literally impossible for blacks to play baseball with whites in the United States. By the Roaring Twenties most white Americans assumed that blacks had never participated in "America's favorite sport," or worse, that they were somehow not interested in the game or lacked the physical capabilities for playing it. Today, white sports officials, sports writers and businessmen assume the same racist attitudes for tennis, golf, ice hockey, swimming

drawing by Mary Clark

DODGERS
CLUB HOUSE

KEEP OUT



Jackie Robinson was the first black ball player to break the color line in baseball in 1947.

and lacrosse. They pointedly ignore the fact that whenever blacks have had the opportunity to participate within a "white" sport, that they have excelled at it—the examples of Jim Brown in collegiate lacrosse and Arthur Ashe in tennis immediately come to mind. They forget that "opportunity" is related directly to the political climate of the public—and that necessarily, sports must always express a political bias.

Occasionally, baseball has initiated changes within the wider, political world. Writing in *The Massachusetts Review*, George Grella recalled that the 1969 mayoral election was largely decided on the baseball field. The New York Mets, hitherto the lowliest and most disorderly of all professional teams, won the National League pennant over the more imposing Cincinnati Reds. John V. Lindsay, a "silk stocking" liberal from Manhattan, was the incumbent but also a severe underdog in the election. With the spectacular success of the Mets, Lindsay "took pains to be seen at the games, not only for the public exposure but undoubtedly to be inspired by the team, to drink at the fountain of charisma."

After the team went on to win the World Series, Lindsay's campaign gained new life. "Although his race was difficult," Grella observed, "any scholar of the game could have confidentially predicted Lindsay's win, ignoring the nonsense of the polls and ballots. Although he honored the team, the mayor never fully credited their efforts for his triumph; but he owed it all to spilt-over charisma."

Final Chapter

Lindsay's electoral triumph and the Cinderella victory of the Mets symbolized the final chapter of baseball's central role within modern politics. In the more cynical Nixonian seventies, football, and not baseball, has gained the right to be called the "Great American Game." With endemic
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Women's music fest: depth, diversity and dreams

by Jane Melnick

On the last day of the fourth annual National Women's Music Festival in Champaign-Urbana, Illinois, singer and comic Maxine Feldman moved onto the stage and took it over with her presence. She displaces almost as much air as Jackie Gleason and moves even more gracefully. She told stories about growing-up-Catholic and having one's emotional psyche formed by the American Bandstand.

She talked about being a lesbian before the women's movement existed, and suddenly launched into a very lively version of Helen Reddy's AM hit, "I Am Woman." The difference between the Reddy version and the Feldman version is that when Feldman sang "I Am Woman, Hear Me Roar!" she roared, and by the second verse had the whole audience roaring. Her voice is almost as low as TV's Maude, and at least as big and rich as Nina Simone's, so it was one unforgettable roar.

Maxine Feldman probably never had a chance of making it in the conventional American marketplace. If her size hadn't done her in, her aggressive exuberance would have. To the culture that created "the Pepsi Generation," that combination simply won't do.

Watching her, I was reminded why many of us find the autonomous women's music movement a matter of sheer necessity. Other groups in other sets or moments suggested, as did Maxine, the beginning of a whole new way of being, performing, seeing.

"Then he left, and I'm so al-o-o-one." The sound could have been Aretha Franklin for its rich, piercing sadness, pouring forth through the excellently

tended sound system. But it was coming from one of a group of four black women from Washington, D.C., Sweet Honey and the Rock.

"But it's all right," she sang, smiling and going into a shift of gears, for which no archetypes, musical or other, prepared us. The other three singers buoyed her up on soft but strong waves of gospel-like rhythm with no in-

Watching her, I was reminded why many of us find the autonomous women's music movement a matter of sheer necessity.

strumental backing. "It's all-right...s'all right...s'all right." Not hostile, not inhumanly defiant, just saying, matter of factly, "actually it's all right; he sure isn't all there is to your life, and you *know* it!" The pain of lost love had not been denied; nor had the necessity to survive and outgrow that pain.

New Synthesis

That moment, the slow shift to self-confidence was a new kind of artistic synthesis, a pulling together of different, usually separate strains—the strength and endurance of gospel and soul music shot through with feminist courage. All their songs contained something of this synthesis. One kept repeating the word "Soweto"; others talked of black struggles, women's

realities, love—but always the style was rooted in black tradition.

"Sweet Honey and the Rock" was just one of the many pleasantly unpredictable elements that were part of the festival. There were over 1000 people there. And, while some of the more celebrated performers of the autonomous women's music scene insist it is all only for women, the tone of this festival showed a willingness to let men take it in. Although only about 20 men attended the festival, most of the women there did not seem to be living their lives out in expectations that one day all the world's men would be transported far beyond the Northern Sea. A few men helped put it together, though in minor roles; the sound systems, better than those at most rock concerts I've attended, were all run by women.

Just as various women performers are developing uniquely new styles, so was this festival a unique event. It included an amazing variety of styles, as well as cultural and economic backgrounds. And considering it was run by a volunteer staff not for profit (though performers were paid), it was run very smoothly. The style of the festival was not vehemently attention-grabbing or spectacular; it was instead uniquely agreeable, happy, favoring the beauty of women's voices and instrumental skills, and non-star oriented without being indifferent to quality.

Kristin Lems, singer, songwriter, and musician—and one of the festival's coordinators—drafted a political statement that was passed by the festival participants. Framed with a maximum of political sophistication and a minimum of hassle, it opposed recent Supreme Court actions on abortion and cited specific local legislators for favorable or unfavorable voting on

the ERA. It also condemned forced sterilization and urged the implementation of day care.

High Point

A high point of the weekend was the performance of Hazel Dickens, who was there without Alice Gerrard, with whom she has recorded two LP's. When Hazel and her group—pulled together at the last minute—came on the stage, and burst into a high-energy country jig, led by fiddler Joan Balter, we all almost got up and danced.

Hazel sang "Working Girl Blues," (remembering "all the bad jobs I've held since I was sixteen"), "Ramblin' Woman" (I'm just a ramblin' woman, and you're a home-lovin' man"—how many songs are there on AM about THAT?), and, "Don't Put Her Down, You Helped Put Her There." She wrote that one, she said, when she was a waitress fresh from West Virginia come to try to make a decent living in Baltimore; she couldn't believe the hypocrisy of the way men at the bar talked about prostitutes.

There were many other fine performances; I heard twelve and I missed half the week. Some were people who have been around the women's music circuit for quite a while: Margie Adam, who makes the audiences love her by sheer energy, charm and warmth, rather than huge talent or vital tradition. Ginni Clemmens: what an amazing, big, soft voice. Kay Gardner: classically trained flutist, could play in a symphony, would rather search for new forms of women's music. Andrea Weltman: tough but warm, plays wonderfully tricky, rhythmic guitar. Periwinkle: an Indian activist from Mashpee, Massachusetts—she said Indians have to keep telling corny jokes to keep from crying, conveyed Indian reality very vividly.

Earlier in the week were Willie Tyson (backed up by Susan Abod) who writes songs out of visions—half nightmares, half wish fulfillment—and sings them with a voice that could hold together a Baptist choir. Others were



Maxine Feldman

photo by Jane Melnick

there: Jane Sapp, another black singer who combined gospel style with political concerns; BeBe K'Roche; Lucha, a D.C. group that sings about Latin American struggles; Anne Romaine, a southern country singer; No Sense of Humor; Kitty Barber; two women from Nashville, Patty Eron and Judy Hall; Night Angel; and Malvina Reynolds, as peppy as ever, with a song about dealing with that "Wisconsin judge who wouldn't budge."

And there was Jazz Alive. Jazz can be such a means to the end of male showing-off, obscurity, and isolation (two parts racing around at once, not together, but it sounds so impressive people don't know). Jazz Alive sounds beautiful and coherent, held together by Carolyn, the conga drummer, who studied percussion from all over the world for seven years. Suzanne is the bass player; you can usually hear her, and you *want* to hear her, unlike the usual role of bass players. And Rhianon sings scat-singing some, some words, all made up, all wild but melodic, rich, a first-rate voice that even sounds delightfully operatic at times.

New Energy

As I was driving home from the festival, it struck me that when you reconfront the basic, bald facts of women's situation in this society (our work is worth half what theirs is by the measures they've created; simply to deplore this and other facts is not to realize what it is to live them) this new music comes as one particularly appropriate and refreshing part of the overall remedy.

Music controlled by men has been one of the key ways men have conveyed to us that love and marriage go together like a horse and carriage. Or that men, even after they grow their hair long, still see us as mainly functioning to "Come on, baby light my fire." Men's definitions of sex, what is sexy, love, what is good love, bad love, correct-line love for women pervade the air waves as well as impair countless women's lives.

You hear enough carping negativity about the separatist features of the women's movement, from the left as well as the rest of the world, that it becomes necessary to insist over and over again on the absolute necessity of
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The Long View

Socialism — Confronting its second century

by Barbara Ehrenreich

There should be no question about it: Capitalism is in trouble. It lurches from crisis to crisis, cancelling out millions of people's savings and hopes with every downturn of the employment graphs or upturn in inflation. Basic material needs, such as for safe transportation, child-care, quality health care, go unmet; nonmaterial needs—for recognition, love, self-expression—are channeled toward the consumption of ever more commodities.

Worse still, capitalism seems to be hurtling us all towards ultimate destruction: environmental catastrophe, as the corporations pillage the earth for energy and resources; or world war, as the economy comes more and more to depend on the international sale of weapons. The harshest thing you can say about capitalism today is that it is a menace to human life; the kindest thing you could say is that, as a way of organizing human society, it is obsolete.

There is only one historical alternative to capitalism, and that is socialism. You can organize society so that a handful of people control the basic resources, technology and means of producing things, and let them run things so as to perpetually expand their own power and profits (capitalism). Or, you can organize society so that the basic resources, technology, etc. are controlled democratically by everyone and are used to meet real human needs (socialism). It's that simple. Yet we live in a country where very few people consider themselves socialists, where many people view socialism either with hostility—as a threat to freedom—or with tolerance—as a quaint old utopian scheme from the past. All of which leads to the unsettling question: Is socialism, as an idea for how

to go about organizing modern, industrial society, obsolete too?

My answer is *no*. The idea of socialism is not a historical relic to be preserved by a few Marxist professors in the universities and occasionally dusted off for public display at a rally on the economic crisis. Socialism is one of the most powerful ideas to ever occur to large

Socialist policies will be built on the experiences of the past, but also on our experience as the people who are here now.

numbers of people; it is still capable of gripping the imagination of millions, and transforming the course of human history. But my answer will have to be a kind of long-winded “no.” Because if the idea of socialism is not a relic, not some quaint old-fashioned scheme, then it is an idea that must grow and change and evolve. A socialist politics for the United States in the late 20th century will have to build on the experiences of many people who lived in the past and in very distant places, but it will also have to build on *our* experiences and understanding as the people who are here now.

Timeless Features

Perhaps the best place to start is with those features of socialist thought that

are truly timeless, that are as much a part of being a socialist in 1978 as they were in 1848. There are two sides to socialist thinking, and they are integral and inseparable. One side is visionary. It derives, ultimately, from people's dreams, hopes, desires. The other is scientific. It comes from hard-headed rational analysis. The visionary side contains our idea of a good society; the scientific side contains our understanding of the obstacles to achieving it—the forces that have to be overcome. You may run into many people who call themselves “socialists” and who downplay one side or another, but socialist thought consists only in their *unity*. Without the science, the analysis, we would be simply utopian dreamers. Without the vision—the dream—we would be mere technicians of social change.

The socialist vision is of a world free from want, in which all people are politically and socially equal, in which the use of vital resources (for production, education or whatever) is subject to democratic control—just to sketch the broadest outlines. In some ways, these are like the ideals we grew up with in a capitalist democracy. But there is a key difference. In a capitalist society, everyone may at best have a right to the “pursuit of happiness,” but things are set up so that only a few can succeed. One person's success requires the failure, and often the impoverishment, of others. (A businessman, for example, succeeds by fooling his customers, underpaying his employees, etc.) In contrast, the socialist vision is of a *cooperative* society, with the emphasis on mutual concern, sharing, working together.

We'll leave the vision vague for now, as most socialist thinkers have done in the past, knowing that there is no point in designing a static utopia. People's needs and goals change over time and the changes are most dramatic in those times that people get together to actually struggle for socialism. The important point for now is that socialists believe that it is possible to take human need (and its conscious expression in human



wants and desires) as the organizing principle of society. This is very different from the assumption of capitalist or feudal societies that the social order depends on the *denial* of most people's needs and wants, often by force.

The scientific side of socialist thought begins with the work of Karl Marx a hundred or so years ago. Marx's analysis traced inequality, poverty, crises and even psychological alienation—not to Divine Will, or human nature, or tradition, as others had done in the past—but to the workings of capitalism as an economic system. This is a system, in which a few men, by virtue of their legal ownership of factories, mines and other productive resources, are able to appropriate the wealth produced by large numbers of other people (the working class). These few men, the capitalists, invest their wealth in ways that will generate—not socially useful things or services—but more wealth, which will be used to generate still more, and so on. (Incidentally, this is not because capitalists are personally greedy men, though some are, but because if they do not behave this way they will be crushed by their competitors.)

The scientific socialist analysis concludes that the overthrow of capitalism is an absolute requirement for the achievement of the socialist vision, or more modestly, to end the material deprivation suffered by so many working people. A new, socialist society must be based on *public* ownership of vital resources, and public planning of their uses so that social wealth can be

applied to meeting the needs of the majority of the people.

Mass Idea

In the mid-19th century, the utopian yearnings of large numbers of working class people suddenly came together with the scientific analysis produced by Marx and other thinkers with the force of a revelation. The vision of a "cooperative commonwealth" or "blessed community" in which the power of modern industry could be used to free people from want, had been around since roughly the turn of the 19th century. Now Marx's scientific analysis showed that the vision of a just society did not have to remain in the realm of mysticism and religion. The greatest obstacles to human happiness had been identified and named—it was capitalism. The way to remove that obstacle was clear—to overthrow capitalism, i.e., *to end the rule of the capitalist class*.

Socialism caught on as a mass idea in the late 19th and early 20th century because it *made sense*. It connected people's vision and ideals and moral sense with their practical understanding of how the world worked and what it would take to change it. So what happened?

There are dozens, maybe hundreds, of analyses explaining how the capitalists managed to stamp out socialist ideas among the great majority of American people—by dividing people along ethnic lines, by repressing socialist organizations, by co-opting the labor

movement, and so on. All these explanations are true. But it is also true that most people in America—"poor" or "middle class"—are still either impoverished and/or materially threatened by the crisis-ridden, militaristic and ecologically dangerous capitalist system. And I will simply assert this—it is also true that most people still harbor the idea that there must be a better way to live, a better way to organize society.

The problem, I think, is that the dream has somehow become unhinged from any practical, or "scientific" sense of how to realize it. And this is the fault not only of capitalists, but of those of us who are socialists too.

Contemporary Problems

First and this is something that socialists within capitalist countries admittedly have no control over) there is the fact of the manifestly non-utopian character of existing socialist nations. All socialist countries have made incredible achievements in meeting people's basic needs for food, shelter, health care, education, etc. But, even correcting for the capitalist bias of the newspapers, etc., which have a bent for describing any noncapitalist country as a "dictatorship," the existing socialist countries leave a vast amount of room for criticism. The U.S.S.R. and the eastern European countries are not capitalist (their economies are planned, rather than left to the vagaries of private capital), but they fall dismally short of the traditional ideal of socialism as a democratic and egalitarian society. Even

Chinese society, which is much more democratic at the workplace and community level than either the U.S.S.R. or the U.S.A., is dictatorial and manipulative when it comes to foreign policy or the choice of top leadership.

Now there are good explanations why the existing socialist countries have the shortcomings they do—the longstanding hostility of the capitalist nations, the wreckage left by invading armies and imperialism, etc. But the point is they are not models for what socialist society should look like, and to take any of them as models, requires that you either deliberately conceal the truth about that country or that you abandon the socialist vision of what human society could be.

The other problem, and for us, more pressing one, is that: Scientific socialism, as it has come down to us from the 19th century, no longer speaks to all the problems people can see as obstacles to

human happiness and social well-being. When for example a worker says “I don’t care who owns the factories as long as I’m going to have to be here on the line all day,” or when a woman says “Socialism sounds great except that it’s not going to make my husband any less of a male chauvinist pig,” or when an environmentalist says “The problem isn’t politics, it’s whether we’re going to have any air to breathe or water to drink in 20 years”—they are not showing the signs of capitalist brain-washing. They are raising serious issues which ought to have a central place within socialist politics.

Nothing Automatic

Of course it is possible for a socialist to respond by simply asserting that women’s liberation, environmental balance, or whatever, will follow more or less automatically from the overthrow of the capitalists. But this is to fall prey

to “utopianism” in the bad sense, as a dream disconnected from any hard-headed practical thinking about how to achieve it. As the shortcomings of the existing socialist countries amply demonstrate, almost nothing can be expected to happen “automatically.”

When scientific socialism no longer has anything to say about some of the real problems people perceive in the world, or the hopes they are nourishing for a better life, then people take those hopes somewhere else. They join an evangelical or mystical movement which promises that the blessed community, or just individual bliss, can be achieved simply by wanting it badly enough. Or they subject themselves to a kind of psychotherapy that insists that all the obstacles to happiness lie within themselves, and not in the world. Or (more clear-headedly) they form a rural commune and attempt to set up a mini-socialist society within the larger capitalist society. More commonly, people simply abandon their hopes and become cynical.

Socialist politics, if it is to be “socialist” in the original sense, has to reconnect the vision and the analysis, the dream and the practical program for change. This means that a socialist politics for the late 20th century must address problems which could not be foreseen in the 19th century and must be prepared to pose solutions which might have been unimagineable to earlier generations. The socialist *project* in the fullest sense, is to connect human *need* with human *understanding* so that we can take action for change.

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Women’s music

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such “tendencies” as the independent creation of music by women for women—and anybody else who’ll listen.

New energy and new ideas are bursting forth from the women’s music movement. It is not as if they are all the same ideas, either. There is not space to analyze the many interesting differences here except to say that they range from the slightly cheerleaderish, semi-spiritual self-reliance of Margie Adam to the separatist focus on loving women of Alix Dobkin to the more real-world struggle-oriented emphasis of Hazel Dickens.

Anger is surely a common element to the music, because music becomes one place to get anger out in a presentable form. But if you listen long and hard, anger is not the major feature; it’s amazing how much genuine joy,

humor, vision, and sense of new values transcends the anger. And this serves to insist that the listener, whether woman or man (and some of them do seem clearly to be written with a hope of getting men to understand) learn of our present reality and potential.

It also begins to show the way to weed out truth-twisting macho from all that we do; the absence of macho, of showing-off or ignoring known truths for the sake of winning points, of using or objectifying anybody, is perhaps what all this music has most in common. The rest of the world is going to take notice sooner or later of some of the quality that is blossoming in this music. I just hope it’s sooner.

Jane Melnick is a member of NAM in Chicago and the Art Director for In These Times.

Italy — The limits of reform

by Joanne Barkan

Today the Italian Communist Party (PCI) already governs a good part of Italy on the local level. About half the regions, many provinces, and all major cities have left coalition administrations. Many political commentators and government officials, both in Italy and abroad, argue that, on the national level, only the PCI can provide stability. Only the PCI is cohesive, trustworthy, and strong enough to ensure that Italy will have an efficient government, economic growth, honest fiscal management, and decent social services. At the same time, the Communist Party's commitment to the Italian constitution and to the preservation of civil liberties makes the PCI a more sure protector of constitutional democracy than the Christian Democratic Party.

What many people in Italy and abroad hope that the PCI will do for the country—defend constitutional rights and provide efficient government, economic growth, honest administration and good social services—*as important as all of this is*—does not add up to socialism. How is true democratic socialism different from or more than this?

The best place to look for an answer to these questions is in the region of Emilia-Romagna and the city of Bologna where the PCI has governed for the last thirty years. Bologna has become famous for its efficient administration, enlightened urban planning, free buses, municipally funded day care centers, after school programs, housing rehabilitation, and services for the elderly. These are certainly to be valued and even used as a

source of inspiration, since such programs often go beyond what it being done here in the United States.

Yet it is also true that relatively honest government and good social services exist in certain wealthy capitalist countries such as Holland and Sweden. What then has the PCI done in Bologna that is characteristic of socialism? Has it created elements of socialism or given an indication of what a socialist society can be?

Several key aspects of socialism are true economic and political democracy—popular participation in the political process and popular control over workplaces and communities—and the absence of private profit making. Certain organizations and structures and several programs developed in Emilia-Romagna and Bologna during the years of the PCI's

administration incorporate some of these key aspects of socialism. Let's take a closer look at a few of them: the cooperatives, the urban planning program, and the decentralization of political administration.

Cooperative Development

The system of cooperatives is particularly well developed in Emilia-Romagna and includes farming, manufacturing, transportation, retail distribution, and restaurant cooperatives. The essence of a cooperative is that workers organize the labor process themselves, do the work and share the fruits of their labor. Such non-profit organizations in Emilia-Romagna exist at every stage of the economic process, from the start of production to the final distribution of goods and services.



The socialist elements are obvious: First of all, there is no factory or farm owner who makes a profit from the labor done by workers. Second, if run in a truly democratic way, cooperatives give control over what is done and how it is done to the workers themselves. They, of course, must operate collectively, involving the people in an ongoing political process.

Now let's consider the Communist Party's comprehensive urban planning program for the city of Bologna. The city administration gave top priority both to improving the quality of life for all the city's inhabitants, including the lower income classes, and to preserving the social fabric and historical features of the city. The PCI government decided to freeze the city's population at 600,000 and begin urban renewal within the historical center.

Whenever possible, old buildings were rehabilitated rather than torn down. Small property owners who could not afford rehabilitation costs received subsidies. Rent subsidies to low income tenants (both in apartments and in shops) made it possible for these social groups to remain in the city.

All new construction had to conform in scale and design with the general architectural style of the city. The Communist administration ensured that rents in new buildings were not speculative and inflationary. The program also included measures to prevent distortions in population density where new buildings were constructed. The program is a complex one, and, of course, there are complaints about specifics that have or have not been done. Yet, urban planners all over the world have praised the Bologna project and use it as a model.

But what, if anything, is "socialist" about this program? Two important aspects must be pointed out: The first is economic democracy. Rent subsidies allow poor and low income people to remain in their homes once those homes are rehabilitated and therefore

of increased property value. Thus the right to a decent place to live and to one's own home is guaranteed to low income people. This kind of measure provides some economic democracy for the non-propertied, non-privileged classes in a capitalist society.

Though there can be no socialism at the local level, Communist administrations throughout Italy are basing their programs on socialist principles.

The second aspect of Bologna's urban program that incorporates a socialist principle is the redistribution of wealth that results from rent controls. Tenants who own no property are often at the mercy of landlords and real estate speculators. Rent control limits the profits made by property owners and prevents tenants from having to pay a disproportionate amount of their income for rent.

A third feature of Communist government in Bologna is administrative decentralization. In the mid-sixties, the city was divided into 18 neighborhoods, each electing a neighborhood council of 20 members. These councils meet to discuss, to make recommendations and requests to the city government and take action on neighborhood concerns.

Very few cities have organized effective networks of neighborhood and factory zone councils. Those in Bologna are better organized and do function. Yet it is also true that the Communist Party dominates most of the councils. In fact, some operate as local sections of the party, rather than as autonomous popular governing

bodies.

While it is important to be aware of the limitations of the councils in Bologna and the failures in other Italian cities, there is much to be learned about socialism from these organizations. Truly democratic socialism requires the direct political participation of the population at the local level. Involvement of people in their communities and workplaces—in other words, putting politics first—is the only way to insure democracy and popular control.

This is also the only way to prevent an unresponsive bureaucracy manned by self-interested functionaries from developing. Neighborhood, industrial zone, and factory councils, if they are autonomous of political parties and unions, are elements of socialism. In fact, they can be the fundamental political structures of a socialist society.

Italy is not a wealthy country. In fact, it is exploited and kept in a weak economic position by the strong capitalist countries such as the United States and West Germany. Italy's economy has been stagnating since 1963 and since the last recession remains on the brink of collapse. For these reasons, capitalism just cannot provide a decent life—jobs, good working conditions, adequate housing, health care and so on—for *all* Italians.

Limitations of Reform

Unfortunately—and this is my main point—the reforms that the Communist Party has been able to enact in Bologna and Emilia-Romagna can not be extended to all of Italy under capitalism, even if the PCI were to control the national government. Bologna and Emilia-Romagna are in many ways privileged places in Italy. The labor force is skilled; industry there had suffered less during the last recession; wages are higher, and the Communist administration has limited the number of immigrants from other parts of Italy who can come to Bologna to look for jobs. Southerners who have

migrated north in search of work make up only 10% of Bologna's population. In Milan and Turin, this figure is 30%.

The PCI admits that Emilia-Romagna is a privileged region. In the rest of Italy, the situation is much worse: Unemployment continues to mount; there are no jobs, especially for the young; factories are closing; social services are deteriorating and being cut back; and prices are soaring (inflation this year will again be at least 20%).

In order to understand the contradictions of the Bologna experiment, it is necessary to know more about the larger economic and political situation in Italy right now. Since autumn 1976, the minority Christian Democratic government, which is being held afloat by the abstention of the Communist Party, has been enacting a program of severe austerity measures. Many of these are already in effect. Government controlled prices of basic services and commodities such as trains, utilities, gasoline, meat and so on have been raised. At the same time, both corporate leaders and the government have been attempting to dismantle (with some success, so far) the cost of living escalator mechanism (the scala mobile) that covers most Italian workers and has been their only protection against the extreme inflation of the last several years. The Christian Democratic government's economic program is designed to make the workers and the many unemployed pay the price of the economic crisis in Italy.

The economic program also includes a plan for relaunching the export oriented economy. The government would heavily subsidize certain export industries (such as those producing machinery, petrochemicals, and automobiles) and would let smaller, weaker industries die. This plan favors continued importation of advanced technology and financing from the United States and West Germany and therefore continued economic and political dependence on these powers.

The United States and West Ger-

many not only support this economic plan for Italy, they are practically forcing the government to enact it. Since last fall, the American news media have been reporting on how the United States and West German governments and the International Monetary Fund, which they control, have made loans to Italy dependent on the enactment of the austerity program. When Italy's Prime Minister Andreotti came to the United States in December 1976, he was told that the U.S. government would make loans to Italy only if the scala mobile were dismantled.

To illustrate in the most concrete way possible the contradictions and limits of capitalism in Italy, let's return for a moment to the PCI and Bologna. Free bus service in Bologna, for everyone during rush hours and for the elderly and students during all hours, had become a symbol of the socially oriented and enlightened communist administration. Then early last fall, the Andreotti government presented its austerity program. One provision stipulated that all social services should pay for themselves. The Communist Party leadership, which was in the position of supporting the program and keeping the minority government afloat, issued a statement declaring that prices charged for public transportation should cover the cost of providing the service. Such a measure would have shot the price of a bus ticket in practically all Italian cities up ten times what it now is or 1000%. And, of course, free bus service in Bologna would cease to exist.

This specific example is significant because it clearly points out how the policies and maneuverability of the Italian Communist Party are limited by the capitalist system itself. The conclusion of this analysis is that the only solution to the economic, political, and social crisis in Italy lies beyond capitalism. Italy must move in the direction of and begin to build a truly democratic socialist society. A long range program for this transition would include production to meet

social needs rather than production of export goods and luxury commodities for private consumption, democratic political control over financing and commerce, economic planning for the entire country, a different distribution of resources, development of the South and of agriculture, new mutually beneficial trade relations with the Third World, and the expansion of structures like the councils for popular participation and control.

As a final point, we might consider what we as United States citizens and as socialists can do. There is little doubt that the U.S. government will try to subvert a shift to the left in Italy. We, therefore, must keep informed of the situation and be aware of and limit our own government's involvement there. In this way, we can support the Italian leftist movement in its efforts to transform society in the direction of socialism and true democracy.

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Socialism and democracy

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represent their members' immediate interests and needs, even if those come into conflict with the priorities set by the government or the Communist Party. When such conflict occurs, as it necessarily would from time to time, then the various organizations sit down to negotiate their differences. There should be appeals procedures to higher, independent judicial bodies, a freely-exercised right to strike, and so on.

None of this is possible if there isn't the recognition that it is legitimate and acceptable for people to disagree publicly with the Communist Party or the government, at any level. The members and publications of organizations need the freedom to articulate their disagreements or

criticisms if those organizations are really to have independent power. Thus we are led back to the question of the guarantee of basic democratic rights.

Freedom to disagree

The much-heralded new Soviet constitution unfortunately undercuts political rights exactly where the greatest necessity exists for the defense of those rights: in the area of dissenting ideas, speech, etc. It is a neglected truism that freedom is only freedom if it is extended to those who disagree with the powers-that-be. Otherwise it is meaningless.

In Russia and China various kinds of speech and writings are branded as illegal or illegitimate due to their "anti-socialist" content. "Capitalist

roader", and "anti-soviet" are other dangerous categories. Such characterizations from those in power can be sufficient to send someone to jail or have them removed from power. And, to return to our starting point, those so accused rarely have the freedom to present to the people their side of the story for public discussion and debate.

In essence, it is a question of the interlocking relation among the questions of freedom of information and debate, the distribution of power, and guarantees of civil liberties. These are necessary elements if the Soviet Union and China are to consolidate the tremendous historical leaps they have made out of their feudal pasts and continue on the path of socialism to genuine democracy.

Richard Healey is NAM's Political Secretary.

Baseball

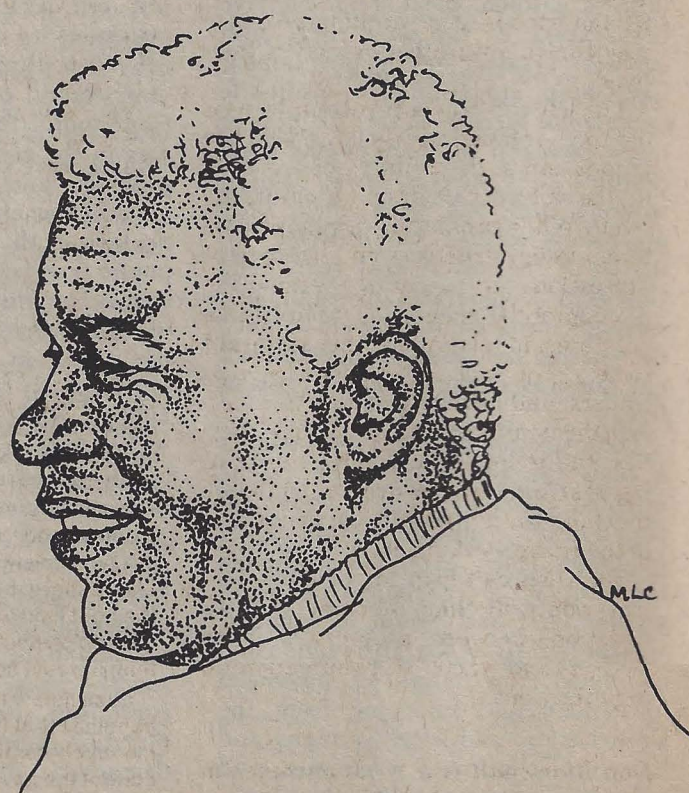
from p. 11

violence in the streets, Vietnamization and Watergate scandals, America's popular culture became a form of violence. Huge, hulking men who crashed into each other replaced the artful athletic maneuvers of a shortstop or third baseman. Violent sporting events like hockey and football have become more popular than the slower moving national pastime of yesterday.

But history repeats itself again, in an even more ironic way: there are few blacks who are allowed to assume the position of professional quarterback, the nominal leader of any team. Ice hockey is a fundamentally white man's sport simply because of its narrow organizational roots in Canada and in the northern states of our country.

There will be no more Jackie Robinsons or Frank Robinsons, to bring crowds to their feet for their courage and skill, for their flouting of racial barriers in sports. There will be no more Mayor Lindsays, gaining momentum within the political world from the achievements of an underdog baseball team. But there will be increasing violence in American sporting events, and a perpetuation of racial prejudice in more subtle but permanent forms. And the reasons for racism and violence within sports are political.

Manning Marable directs the Alabama Black Political Assembly and chairs the Department of Political Science at the Tuskegee Institute.



Jackie Robinson in later life.

Drawing by Mary Clark

Labor

from p. 5

Social Planning

At the same time, progressives are advocating planning on the basis of social priorities—full employment, public ownership and democratic control of some industries, etc.

While the changing leadership of some AFL-CIO unions may indicate a gradual shift to the left in political policies, this development does not preclude the necessity for more rank and file participation in union affairs. In both liberal and conservative unions, a wide gap of cynicism, apathy and undemocratic procedures separates the top hierarchy from the day-to-day working conditions of the membership. The ongoing fight to transform the trade unions into more democratic institutions is an integral part of encouraging working people to seek control over other aspects of their lives.

The left can play a pivotal role, as it did in organizing the early trade unions and in the building of the CIO, in the future direction of organized labor. While promoting democratic internal union structures and freedom of expression, the left must examine the position of the unions, as established institutions, in relation to other sectors of society. The political positions of union leaders, and of their organizations, affect the configuration of political parties, the economy and the passage of legislation, therefore intimately touching the living/working conditions of the entire working class.

Socialists can help to resolve a central contradiction inherent in this situation—between progressive labor leaders and their still bureaucratic organizations.

Dan Marschall is a NAM member in Chicago and a staff writer for In These Times.

Letters

Reynolds was broken in a bitter strike in the late 40s, part of the general offensive against the CIO which was particularly effective in the South. Today R.J. Reynolds remains the one hold-out against unionization among major companies in the tobacco industry, despite repeated efforts by the Tobacco Workers International Union to organize there in recent years. I'd be interested in knowing—so I can pass on to comrades organizing in Winston-Salem—where I can find out more about Moranda Smith.

Bob Mc Mahon
Chapel Hill, N.C.

Dear MO:

I have known a great many democratic socialists in my day. Your organization, at least what I've seen or read of it does not fall in the democratic socialist tradition.

I hold no special admiration for Mario Soares, Willy Brandt, or Harold Wilson but from what I know of the Communist alternative to them, they are infinitely preferable.

Your newspaper and your organization has been a great disappointment to me. Please cancel my subscription.

Ronald E. Girkins
Granville, OH.

Dear MO:

I appreciate the articles on energy in your June issue. The energy question gives us a great opportunity to present a socialist analysis to stand beside the more common populist approach. Populists believe that the problem is monopoly control, and that the solution is a breaking up of the conglomerates. They believe that if people just elected the right kind of people to office, and put enough pressure on the government, things would be all right.

Socialists must try to convince populists that it is inevitable under monopoly capitalism for big business to control the government. If any concessions are compelled by people's movement, the capitalists can refuse to

produce, which is exactly what happened with natural gas this winter. If worse comes to worst, the capitalists can resort to the use of force, as occurred in Chile.

Under socialism, energy prices would be set as part of a general plan. Inflation, as we know it, would be eliminated. We would not need to stimulate production with higher prices and profits.

Milton Shiro Takei
Santa Barbara, CA.

Dear MO:

The article on Breira in the July issue of MOVING ON was interesting, but I think it should have been clarified that NAM does not share Breira's position on the Middle East.

NAM's position, as passed in January, 1974, is as follows: "Zionism is a distorted form of the need of the Jewish people for emancipation and an inappropriate method to fight anti-Semitism. We support the right of the Palestinian people to national self-determination in Palestine. The only way these goals can be achieved is through their integration with a struggle for a socialist Mid East."

Breira's position is basically a liberal Zionist position, which, unfortunately, is nationalistic, racist, and imperialist in its implications. The position of any responsible socialist organization has to recognize not only the rights of the Palestinian people, but also the necessity for Israel to become a secular state in which Christians, Moslems, and all Arabs live under equal laws and equal opportunities as their Jewish brothers and sisters.

That position may sound utopian, but anything less will perpetuate the racism and imperialism that now characterizes any Israeli nationalist position. The charge that Israel and American Zionists make against this position is that it does not insure the survival of Israel. It's true that it does not insure the survival of Israel as it now exists—a state where one people dominate and exploit other peoples. But it's not true that this position is unconcerned with the survival of all people, including the Zionists themselves.

Anne Hill
Pittsburgh, PA.

NAM News

BATTERED WOMEN Francine Hughes of Dansville Michigan is a 29 year old woman—the mother of four children—who is being held in jail without bond on charges of first degree and felony murder in the death of her husband. Francine's case has been taken up by women's and progressive groups in order to call public attention to the desperate situation of battered wives. She had divorced her husband James after years of being beaten by him during their marriage. However, when James was seriously injured in a car accident, she returned to take care of him. As he recovered his strength, he again began abusing her. When she called the police, they refused to take any action. James threatened to kill her if she left him. After a particularly brutal evening last March, she called the police again, and again nothing was done. After James went to bed, she put the children in the car, went back into the house, and set a fire. James was later found dead of smoke inhalation. Francine drove directly to the police station. She has been in jail ever since. Bond cannot be set because of the severity of the charges. Ironically, the prosecutor, who refuses to reduce the charges, is the head of the local Committee on Domestic Abuse. Red Cedar NAM of Lansing has joined with the National Lawyer's Guild, Sisters for Human Equality, NOW, and other groups to build support for Francine Hughes and to change the situation of other battered wives. For more information or to make a contribution, contact: Francine Hughes Defense Committee, c/o Sisters for Human Equality, 1320 S. Washington St., Lansing, MI.

SOCIALIST CAUCUS The American Public Health Association has for decades been in the liberal wing of the medical establishment. As militance grew within the organization, a Socialist Caucus formed to provide new directions. Its purpose is to begin to develop a national strategy for health activists to help achieve a publically responsive, democratically controlled national health service. NAM members participated in a Midwest regional meeting of the Caucus to discuss current developments in health care. The central theme that emerged from the meeting is that the public health system is losing to the private. The closing of Philadelphia General Hospital is one of the most dramatic examples of this trend. But all over the country it is occurring in less visible forms: special Blue Ribbon commissions are proposing that money be taken from public hospitals to subsidize private ones, while private hospitals are increasingly denying care to the poor. According to Steve Tarzynski, a NAM member who participated in the Caucus, this makes the struggle for a national health service all the more urgent. He noted that this is particularly true if the struggle can be used to build

an activist network of organizations concerned with quality and availability of health care in America.

STATE WORKERS Like many other city and state governments, Pennsylvania is facing a fiscal crisis. The state's solution in this case is to lay off 7,000 workers, most of whom are part of its social welfare bureaucracy. The Pennsylvania Social Services Union, a local affiliate of the Service Employees International, responded quickly to these moves. NAM members in the PSSU helped to develop an approach that transcended the narrow response of many public sector unions when confronted with similar dilemmas. They urged that the union try to mobilize its membership to apply political pressure and that it seek alliance with other unions and with community groups. The result was a spirited rally at the state office building, attended by over 350 union members and supporters. The speakers included representatives of several other unions.

A number of community groups also sent representatives to express their solidarity with the union. Ronaele Novotny, who spoke for NAM at the rally, emphasized the importance of this labor/community alliance in opposing cutbacks and layoffs. Almost within a day after the rally, a contract was negotiated that fought off the attempts of the state to roll back the rights and benefits of the workers. Now the battle against the layoffs still remains.

NEW CHAPTERS NAM chapters are in the process of forming in Portland and Ashland, Oregon. Along with the existing chapters in Eugene and Seattle, they form the potential basis for a growing NAM presence in the Pacific Northwest. And NAM's first chapter in Colorado is now getting off the ground: Boulder NAM recently applied for chapter status. In Philadelphia a NAM chapter is re-organizing. And in Chicago, a new NAM women's chapter is forming in addition to the two existing Chicago chapters (see accompanying article). Nick Rabkin, NAM's Organizational Secretary, welcomed all these new groupings. He noted that they represent both the geographical breadth and flexibility of approach that has marked NAM. "But," Rabkin went on to point out, "we need to further strengthen our outreach to build new chapters. NAM is moving in a sound political direction, but we are still not large enough to have a national political impact. We know there are many people who share our political approach, yet are working as isolated individuals or local groups. We need to have more discussions and dialogue with such people." Rabkin urged those interested in the how or why of organizing a NAM chapter to contact NAM at 1643 N. Milwaukee Ave., Chicago, IL 60647.

ERA and gay rights activists form NAM women's chapter

This interview was conducted with Chris Riddiough and Hannah Frisch, two members of the newly formed Blazing Star NAM Chapter. The chapter is made up primarily of former members of the Chicago Women's Liberation Union.

MO: Why did you decide to join NAM?

Riddiough: When the Union disbanded we were faced with deciding what to do. We felt that it was very important to have an organized feminist and lesbian presence in the left community as well as to have a socialist presence in the women's and gay community. We feared that existing as an independent women's or lesbian group with no affiliation was akin to re-forming the Women's Union. This was too large a task for us to take on, for the present. The future is unclear.

We felt that it was important to have two things. One: an organizational context for our work. We wanted larger organizational support and we wanted to avoid the isolation that can come from being a locally oriented group. Two: we wanted a political context in which to operate that would provide us with political direction, and the resources and ability to link up with other issues than those we were specifically working on.

We were specifically concerned about NAM's perspective on lesbianism where the left does not have a good record. But NAM's perspective on sexism, which we evaluated in the context of the entire political perspective, was good.

MO: Why did you decide to form an all women's chapter?

Riddiough: First, it was a shared personal desire to maintain the positive aspects of being in a solely women's group. We felt that we could better work in a mixed organization while maintaining our own group support. Second, it's important to be able to tap the support for women's issues that exists today. We felt that it would be easier to bring women who were interested in those issues into an all women's group. There are women's groups performing these tasks, such as NOW, which is doing good work. But it's important to have socialist women working on such issues as the ERA.

Frisch: And there's more space to develop women's leader-

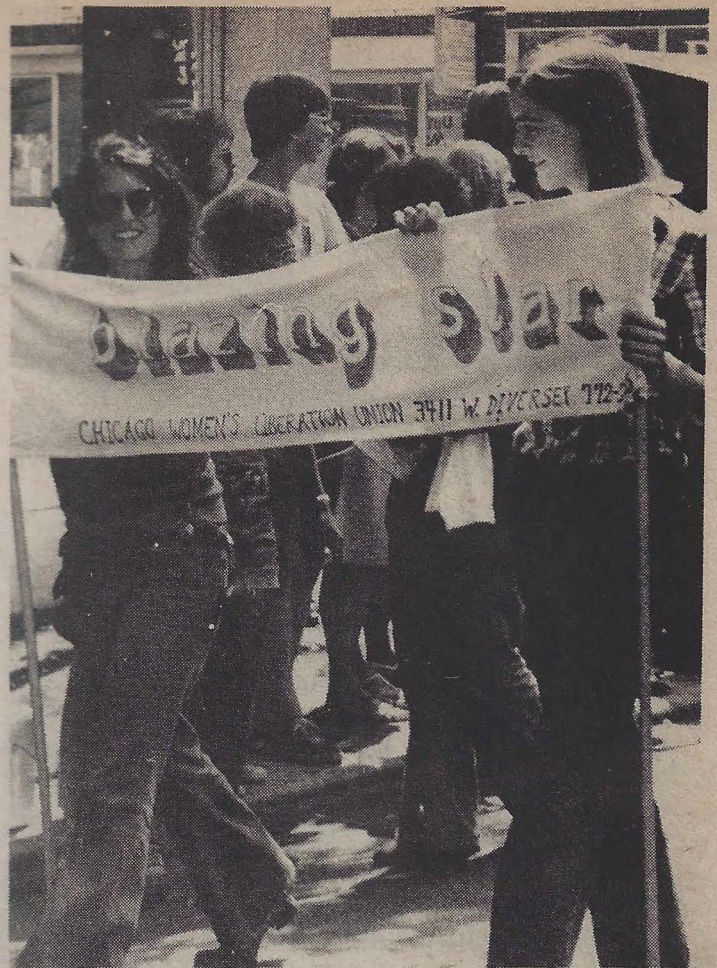


photo by Elaine Wessel

ship in an all women's organization. Women's thoughts and feelings often flow better in an all women's group. This experience can help women develop a feminist analysis. A lot of the insights of feminism might not have been developed in the mixed left, no matter how well-intentioned.

MO: What areas will your chapter be working in?

Frisch: Tentatively, women's rights and gay issues. The latter is best defined since it would be a continuation of the work that Blazing Star did as the lesbian work group of the CWLU. This includes: publication of the bimonthly newspaper, *Blazing Star*; bimonthly educationals; work with other groups on gay rights and community issues, including the Gay and Lesbian Coalition of Metropolitan Chicago, the Illinois Gay Rights Task Force, the National Gay Task Force, and others; rap groups on the "lesbian experience;" initiating a program on discrimination against lesbians by social service agencies; and sports work. Regarding women's rights, we are beginning to work on the Equal Rights Amendment. We will try to work cooperatively with NOW. We plan to do petitioning and we may invite women who sign ERA petitions to participate in a rap group or class on women's liberation. We would like to include women in the chapter doing other kinds of work, as well. We're optimistic about the potential for such an approach.

Blazing Star will sponsor a benefit concert with Holly Near, September 23, 8:00 p.m., at the People's Church, 941 W. Lawrence, in Chicago. For ticket information call: 342-2398.

A magazine for activists

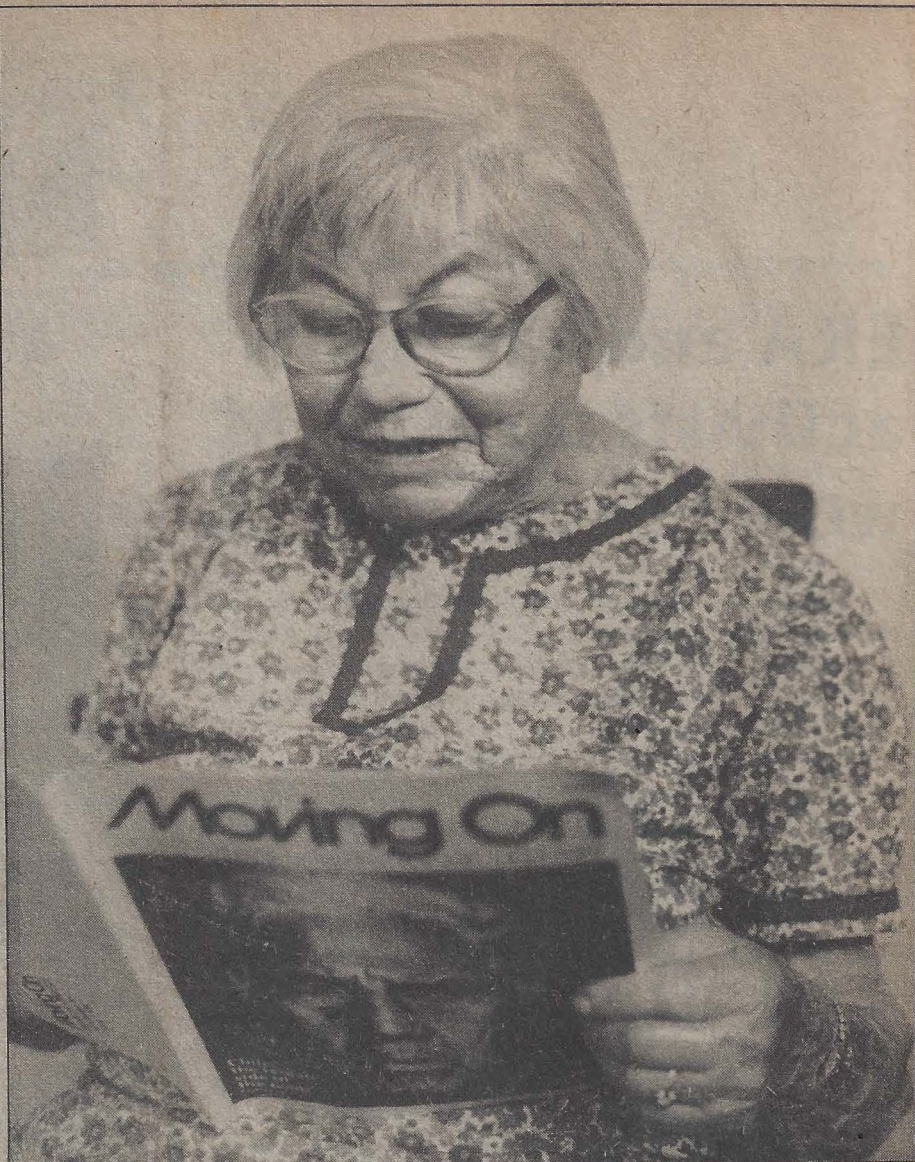
Photo by Jan Breidenbach

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.

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