

July

1974

NEW AMERICAN MOVEMENT

MOVING ON



Towards a Socialist America

PRE-CONVENTION ISSUE

Dear NAM members and Friends,

Most of the information in this newsletter directly concerns the upcoming convention in Lexington, Kentucky, July 11-14. Please pay special attention to the proposals which will be voted on at the convention. The proposals have primarily come from the National Interim Committee out of the last meeting. It also contains a revised agenda plus a very interesting article about the Ratcliffe-Harvard chapter that appeared in the Harvard Crimson. Finally, it is very important that you immediately fill out and return to the Lexington chapter the form on housing.

See you at the Convention! -- Linda Elston, Henry Guinn, National Office

AGENDA (Revised)

THURSDAY

12:00 Registration begins. Welcome. Song.

1:00-1:15 Agenda adoption.

1:15-3:00 NATIONAL REPORT (Chair: Judy MacLean)

NIC report (Sharon Stricker); National Office report (Linda Elston); Newspaper report (Dan Marschall); Structure Proposal (Art Larsen)

3:00-4:00 UNITY ON THE LEFT (Chair: Saralee Hamilton)

A report on NAM's recent discussions with the Mass Party of the People and the People's Party, with members of those organizations present to answer questions.

4:00-5:30 PROGRAM WORKSHOPS

The following is the list of established workshops, their focus, and the individuals or organization responsible for the initial presentation. There will, of course, be input from others in those workshops and everyone is invited to take part. Any group or individual who wishes to put together another programmatic workshop is welcome and encouraged to do so. Please notify the National Office so that facilities can be set aside for the additional workshops.

Health care organizing: Margaret Sanger NAM, Health Pac, MCHR.

How to combine workplace organizing with the development of community health services, research into hospital construction, and power structure analyses. How to build a multi-national movement of health workers to address both worker and patient issues. How to organize in the mental health area.

Campus organizing: Radcliffe-Harvard NAM, Yellow Springs NAM, ELF NAM.

Discussion of the outcome of the pre-convention student conference and proposals resulting from that conference. The need to expand the campus network both with an overall strategic framework and fundamental programs. The need for campus travellers. Presentation to the convention of a program for the campus for NAM.

Energy: California Regional NAM Energy Group, Chapel Hill NAM, Georgia Power Project, Philadelphia Resistance/NAM (Stephen Ostrach). Local utilities - city-wide organizing to fight rate increases, organizing to make utilities public, i.e. municipalization. National Utilities - national public ownership and democratic control of the energy industry, a statute proposal. NAM's relationship to the Movement for People's Power.

Revolution and Culture: Alive and Trucking Theater (Minneapolis)

How culture can be an integral part of NAM's strategy for revolution, dealing with consciousness as well as relations to production. The model of workers' theater in the '30's that were attached to ongoing organizations. Collective playwriting and research. How theater can be used to organize and educate. The forms that revolutionary culture takes today. The revolutionary role of culture in other socialist countries. Revolutionary culture and workplace organizing. Reading lists, books, and various forms of media will be available.

Puerto Rican Socialist Party Proposal: PSP

Discussion and explanation of the proposal endorsed by the NIC. Also discussion of how to develop better relations with PSP and how best their efforts can be supported.

Impeachment and Watergate: Ted Glick (National Campaign to Impeach Nixon), Saralee Hamilton. Discussion of an immediate summer program focused around NCIN proposal "Push to Impeach - Now or Never" and NAM's role. Possible participation in a conference in late August or early September tentatively called to organize a "conviction demonstration". Evaluation of impeachment as a national program and a socialist campaign. Proposals for models for local Watergate targets.

Indochina: resource people to be announced.

Discussion of proposals for summer and fall actions coordinated with other groups, e.g. IPC.

5:30-7:00 DINNER

7:00-9:00 BUILDING A MULTI-RACIAL MOVEMENT (Chair: John French)

Speakers: Sally Avery, *Jeff Scott (Berkeley NAM), Alfredo Lopez (member of the Central Committee of the Puerto Rican Socialist Party), *member of AIM.

9:00-10:00 REGIONAL MEETINGS

Convenors of regional meetings: Northeast (undecided), Industrial heartland (Anne Lawrence); Upper midwest (Connie Norton); South (Sally Avery and Henry Guinn); West (Art Larsen).

FRIDAY

9:00-11:00 FIRST WOMEN'S AND MEN'S CAUCUSES

Convenors for women's caucus: Anne Lawrence, Saralee Hamilton

Convenors for men's caucus: to be announced.

11:00-1:00 PARTY PANEL

Speakers: Miles Mogulescu and Dorothy Healey

1:00-2:00 LUNCH

2:00-3:30 PARTY WORKSHOPS

These will be convened according to regions, with the understanding that the political tendencies may want to call their own workshops on the party topic at this time.

3:30-5:30 PROGRAM WORKSHOPS #2

5:30-7:00 DINNER

7:00-10:00 NATIONAL STRUCTURE (Chair: Roberta Lynch and Henry Guinn)

This will include a presentation on national program, possible reports from the program workshops, a vote on the structural proposal, and regional caucuses.

SATURDAY

9:00-10:00 WORKPLACE ORGANIZING: STRATEGY (Chair: Anne Lawrence)

Speakers: a member of Philadelphia Area NAM, a member of Los Angeles NAM, and Silvia Federici.

10:00-11:30 SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

11:30-1:00 LUNCH

- 1:00-2:30 WORKPLACE ORGANIZING: EXPERIENCES (Chair: Mardi Klevs)
 Speakers: member of Taxi Rank and File, member of New Orleans NAM, Steve Max, Jim Houghton (from FIGHT BACK, a black rank and file construction trades group), Renata Jaeger (Pittsburgh NAM and CLUW).
- 2:30-4:00 WORKSHOPS ON WORKPLACE ORGANIZING
- 4:00-6:00 WOMEN'S AND MEN'S CAUCUSES
 Convenors of women's caucus: Kathleen Shankman, Toni Livingston
 Convenors of men's caucus: to be announced.
- 6:00-7:00 DINNER
- 7:00-9:30 NIC NOMINATIONS (Chair: Connie Norton, Linda Elston)
- 9:30- ? PARTY AT ADAM'S BAR!

SUNDAY

- 9:00-10:00 NIC ELECTIONS AND CHAPTER CAUCUS TIME
- 10:00-11:00 SOCIALIST FEMINISM - STRATEGY (Chair: Robin Suits)
 Speakers: Sara Evans Boyte and Barbara Easton
- 11:00-12:00 SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION
- 12:00-1:00 LUNCH
- 1:00-4:00 RESOLUTIONS PLENARY (Chair: John Judis; Parliamentarian: Steve Max)
- 4:00- ? OLD AND NEW NIC TO MEET
 Convenor: Toni Livingston.

NIC NOTES

In addition to working out the details of the agenda, the NIC had discussions of several topics: developing a proposal for a new national structure, regional development, recruiting new leadership, program development, and building a multi-national movement. For the results of these discussions see the specific proposals below.

John Judis presented a draft of a policy position paper entitled "NAM'S National Programs." At present, John argued, most Nam activity is "local in scope if not in content." Because, however, "in the U.S. most basic decisions are made nationally through the federal government and big corporations," it is imperative that NAM move to "develop national programs that all chapters can work on." These programs would be "intermediate demands" which, although not themselves "demands for socialism", would, if won, "alter the balance of power between capitalists and the working class." After some discussion of the problems encountered in past efforts by NAM to launch national programs, John suggested three steps that NAM might take in the next few years towards this end. NAM should 1) "work out a national program that consists of the basic changes we would like to see in the U.S. within the coming years," 2) create a Washington D.C. office (in addition to the Minneapolis one) to coordinate national programs and to put out a newsletter on Washington events, 3) and to begin working on one or two national programs, possibly one for the public ownership and democratic control of the energy industry. Discussion of Joh's proposal was limited because of time constraints. The NIC moved that:

- 1) The new NIC be mandated to develop a detailed study of the feasibility of opening a second national office in Washington;
- 2) The new NIC develop a set of strategic guidelines in five programmatic areas (workplace organizing, party building, socialist feminism, building a multi-racial movement, and "national issue programs") for submission to the first meeting of the enlarged NIC, as a start towards a national strategy to be proposed to the convention in 1975; and
- 3) A special effort be made by the 1974 Convention to review NAM's past efforts to develop national program and to evaluate various alternative strategies for future national program development.

Sally Avery reported on a recent meeting between representatives of the Mass Party of the People and NAM members. The NIC passed the following resolution, which will be submitted to the convention for approval: "NAM should establish official liaison with the Mass Party of the People. The enlarged NIC should evaluate continued relations with MPP in terms of politics and structure of the MPP." In addition, a committee

will be set up to coordinate communications with MPP, in order that continuity in NAM's position be maintained even though various individuals represent the organization at various meetings of the MPP.

The following are proposals that came out of the NIC meeting and will be taken up at the upcoming convention.

PROPOSALS

DISCUSSION BULLETIN PROPOSAL

1. Articles should be no more than seven pages in length. It is recommended that articles be no more than five pages in length.
2. A three person editorial committee shall be designated by the NIC. This committee will have the authority to reject articles, according to the following guidelines:
 - a. articles must be compatible with the NAM political statement
 - b. articles should not needlessly duplicate other material in the same issue
 - c. articles should not have appeared elsewhere
 - d. articles will be given priority which are timely in terms of the organization's current practice and theoretical development
3. The committee shall send a letter to each author whose article has been rejected explaining the reasons for rejection.
4. The author shall have the right to appeal any decision of the editorial committee to the NIC. The NIC shall have the authority to override decisions of the three person committee.

FOR NIC CANDIDATES

Have a one page bibliographical sketch duplicated and sent to chapters or available for distribution at the Convention. Attached to this should be a brief statement of endorsement/comment from your chapter.

At the Convention: it has been strongly suggested by the NIC that chapters nominate their respective candidates if there are any.

Topics to be covered in the three minute nomination speech: 1. Name, 2. Chapter and for how long, 3. How long have you been in NAM, 4. How do you make money to live, 5. Political practice and perspective.

These areas will be explained by the chair and if the candidate doesn't answer some of the above points the chair should specifically ask that they be answered.

RESOLUTIONS:

At past conventions and National Council meetings, we've been engulfed on the last afternoon with a confusing mixture of major and minor resolutions. Often, we've had to cut short debate on major resolutions while discussing pure questions of implementation on minor resolutions. Often, resolutions have overlapped in content and intent. They have been stated unclearly, leading to confusing debate. They haven't specified means of implementation and have led people to debate on whether, even if passed, the program or whatever would be implemented. This year, we want to avoid this morass, and make possible clear and meaningful debate on major resolutions. We have taken two steps toward this end:

1) Wherever possible, major resolutions will be voted on before the Sunday afternoon plenary, either at the end of the session in which they are introduced or at the beginning of a subsequent plenary.

2) There will be a Resolutions Committee that will help people put their resolutions in presentable form and arrange the resolutions for the Sunday plenary in such a way as to avoid repetition and give priority to resolutions that are strategic and programmatic. It will make sure that all resolutions on program include some specification on how they will be implemented. It will distinguish these resolutions from others that simply commit NAM to a position on a major issue. If it looks like there are so many resolutions that meaningful debate on any will be impossible, the Resolutions Committee will recommend that less important resolutions be referred to

the first NIC meeting. Less important resolutions would be ones that simply commit NAM to a position of support to a struggle without committing chapters to work on it, and resolutions (e.g. on traveling, publications) that in general most people would agree with but concerning which there is a question of implementation--whether sufficient funds or staff are available.

If possible, NAM members should submit resolutions to the committee before Thursday noon, July 11. Before July 5, they should be sent to the National Office. Between then and the convention, they should be sent to the Resolutions Committee, c/o Lexington NAM, 1625 Nicholasville ave., Lexington, KY 40503.

Members of the committee are Frank Ackerman, Anne Farrar, Susan Grady, Richard Healey, John Judis, and Roberta Lynch.

PROPOSAL FOR A NATIONAL PROGRAM IN SUPPORT OF PUERTO RICAN INDEPENDENCE

The Puerto Rican Socialist Party is organizing a massive Puerto Rican Solidarity Day for October 27th around the slogans "Independence for Puerto Rico" and "A Bicentennial Without Colonies!" The focus will be a 20,000 person rally in Madison Square Garden with entertainment by Stevie Wonder and many Latin artists and numerous political speeches. There will be smaller actions in other cities around the country.

The PSP has formally requested that NAM become a co-sponsor and play a major role in building the NY rally and in organizing solidarity committees in other cities. It is here proposed that NAM make a major national commitment to these efforts. First, the issue is of utmost importance. Puerto Rico may well be the next revolution in the Western Hemisphere. Imagine the impact of 2,000,000 Vietnamese living in the U.S. during the Indochina War -- this is the reality for Puerto Ricans. Secondly, the PSP is the largest Third World organization in the U.S. This is an opportunity for NAM to establish extremely close ties to a very important third world group. However, because the PSP is an extremely disciplined organization, we should only pass this program if we intend to carry it out with the utmost seriousness. To give token support and to follow through would weaken relations, not strengthen them.

1. NAM should officially endorse the Puerto Rican Solidarity Day activities and become an official co-sponsor.
2. The national organization should do everything possible to encourage East Coast chapters to put a major effort into building the Madison Square Garden Action, selling tickets, and working in local solidarity committees.
3. The national organization should do everything possible to encourage chapters in other parts of the country to work in or help organize Puerto Rican Solidarity Day Committees and to plan local support actions for October 27th.
4. Chapters should be particularly encouraged to integrate the slogans for Independence for Puerto Rico and A Bicentennial Without Colonies into any work they do around the Bicentennial.
5. The NIC and the NO should be mandated to prepare literature for use by the Chapters.
6. The NIC should appoint a Puerto Rican Solidarity Day Coordinator to maintain liaison with PSP and to coordinate the efforts of NAM chapters. If possible, the coordinator should be paid to work during September and October to insure consistent work by NAM.

BOYCOTT LETTUCE AND GRAPES

The Political Education Project has produced a new leaflet for the United Farm Workers called "Boycott Grapes and Lettuce." Copies of this leaflet are available from the PEP, 107 South St. 3rd floor, Boston, MA, 02111; individual copies are 5¢, 2-999 copies are 3¢ each, 1000 or more copies are 2½¢ each.

NAM Demonstrates Against Ford Visit, Supports Printers With Yard Picketing

By MICHAEL MASSING

If a university is at all politically active, spring is the time when things begin to hop. Harvard is no exception. April 1969 saw the takeover of University Hall. Spring exams were cancelled in 1970 after students struck against the invasion of Cambodia. In March 1972 a student takeover of Massachusetts Hall sparked widespread demonstrations against Harvard's ownership of stock in Gulf Oil. This spring there has been no outpouring of political enthusiasm, but perhaps there would have been none at all if it were not for the efforts of the New American Movement (NAM).

Replacing SDS as the major left-wing political group at Harvard, NAM—a national but decentralized group with several student chapters, founded two years ago last fall—has worked hard to generate support for several different issues among a largely apathetic student body. Using a wide array of tactics, including leafletting, rallies, teach-ins, and guerilla theater, the approximately 30 members of the group have culled a moderate response at best.

Initial signs for an active spring were encouraging, as over 120 people marched and chanted in a late February rain to protest the presence of a recruiter from the Honeywell Corporation at the Office of Career Plans and Off-Campus Learning (OGCP). Organizing the protest in the two days before the recruiter's appearance, NAM publicized Honeywell's role in the manufacture of "anti-personnel" weapons for the Defense Department. After marching and chanting in front of the OGCP for about half an hour, the protestors held a mock trial in which a student dressed in tuxedo and top hat and calling himself "Mr. Honeywell" was found guilty of "crimes against humanity." When the real Honeywell

representative failed to appear (he actually had left before the demonstration began), the pickets marched to University Hall to protest the administration's granting permission to Honeywell for the use of the University's facilities.

NAM members and sympathizers looked forward to the March 10 appearance of Vice President Gerald Ford to receive the Man of the Year award from Harvard's Young Republican Club. Working with several other leftist groups, NAM called students to meet Ford at the Harvard Club in Boston as a sign of



protest against the Nixon administration. After a preliminary rally of about 200 people in the Yard, over 400 demonstrators—most of them students—chanted slogans outside the club while Ford addressed the Harvard Republicans within. Most of the demonstrators never saw Ford, who entered and left by a back door, but a splinter group of about 100 who had broken around to the back of the club chanted "Impeach Nixon, dump Ford," when the vice president's car flashed by. He waved. The remaining pickets blocked traffic in front of the club.

As the bite went out of the March air and the showers of April began, there seemed to be little prospect for enticing students out of the libraries and into the streets. Then, on April 9, 32 printers went out on strike against the University, demanding a larger wage increase than the 5.5 per cent that Harvard offered. A week later, NAM, together with SDS, announced its campaign to generate support among the Harvard community for the striking workers. Members of the group began collecting money for advertisements, and circulated a petition among students and faculty.

Visibility has been the keynote of NAM's campaign to rally support for the continuing strike. The group called for demonstrations in front of Holyoke Center at noon in an effort to attract not only students but also Harvard employees on their lunch break. Support from these employees was moderate at best, but the rallies

still managed to attract between 120 and 150 sympathizers. A third demonstration of 80 pickets greeted alumni donation-givers as they gathered for dinner at the Faculty Club on May 6.

As the strike continued and neither side showed any willingness to compromise, NAM, in coalition with other groups, announced its plans for a series of "militant and large-scale" actions in the weeks leading up to commencement to dramatize the situation of the workers. Recognizing the administration's desire for an orderly graduation, organizers prepared what they termed "legal and non-obstructive" activities, including picketing at the gates of major entrances to the Yard as well as demonstrations at reunion affairs.

NAM's major activity last fall concentrated on a petition calling for a University-wide referendum on whether ROTC should be permitted back on campus. The action was a response to President Bok's implication before alumni last June that the University might countenance a return of ROTC to Harvard. The petition, circulated at the end of September, eventually garnered 2500 undergraduate signatures. However, the CHUL, which was presented the petition, refused to take action on it, saying that ROTC was not yet an issue. By its action, one NAM representative said, the CHUL was "trying to bury its head in the sand in the face of a national movement that is aimed at returning ROTC to cam-

puses where it has ended."

Signing a petition has been about the extent of most students' involvement in Harvard political issues this year. Despite the hard work of its members, NAM has had trouble building any type of sustained movement. It has been a cool spring, as the lonely printers, picketing in the breeze that sweeps through the gates of the Yard, know. But if NAM members are able to cull some student support for the demonstrations they plan for Commencement, some administration officials might still find graduation day pretty hot.

NAM Takes Lead in Organizing Protests During Politically Quiet Times at Harvard

RIGHT ON RADCLIFFE-HARVARD NAM!!

THERE WILL BE A PRE-CONVENTION CAMPUS ORGANIZING CONFERENCE IN LEXINGTON, KY AT THE UNIVERSITY CENTER JULY 10th. THERE WILL BE DISCUSSION OF A PROPOSAL FOR CAMPUS ORGANIZING THAT GREW OUT OF AN EARLIER CONFERENCE IN NEW YORK. RADCLIFFE-HARVARD NAM, YELLOW SPRINGS NAM, AND ELF NAM WILL COORDINATE IT. ALL CHAPTERS INTERESTED IN CAMPUS WORK ARE INVITED TO ATTEND..

The areas of concern for a revolutionary socialist organization are certainly formidable: the totality of human relations, indeed. Yet the vastness of the subject matter has exacted a major tool in NAM's short history: with little in the way of an effective framework to help us even think about program and organizational priorities, the resources and attention of NAM have been "scattershotted" in haphazard and rapidly changing ways, and the organization has simultaneously been constantly prone to envision grand and all encompassing programs far beyond its capabilities. With these past and present tendencies in mind, it is of major importance at this point in NAM's history to develop a general, realistic and more systematic framework for action in areas that are central to building a socialist movement. The National Convention mandates the new NIC, in each of the following 7 areas, to work with regional leadership, chapters and task forces to prepare a strategic plan of organizing and program. A draft of a plan for each area should be available for discussion and preliminary review by the time of the first enlarged leadership meeting in the mid fall (or the NC, depending on the structure adopted). Such plans should include: a realistic appraisal of the NAM's past efforts in the area; a strategy for relating to current organizational and insurgent developments nationally, regionally, and locally; a draft program for NAM initiatives which are based on a sensible assessment of organizational resources and potential, and that reflect the general political framework of NAM.

1. Workplace organizing and the labor movement. Acknowledging the theoretical and practical weaknesses of NAM in the past, the plan should address such questions as how to build ties to existing rank and file insurgencies and major developments like CLUW, how NAM should relate to unions, and particularly the more progressive unions like UMW, UE and OCAW, different approaches to organizing in the workplace, and a strategy for addressing both "qualitative" questions like job satisfaction and conditions, and the enormous pressure on wages which is rapidly gathering momentum. Finally the program should have the elements of a strategy for NAM expansion into sectors of the workforce -- especially industrial workers -- in which the organization is especially weak.

2. Party Building. The current disarray of the left in a climate of mounting popular frustration points to the acute need for discussions about unity on the left. A plan of action should review the last year's discussion, recommend procedures for continuing participation in the "mass party" dialogue, and outline methods for independent dialogue with other groups: e.g. the more flexible and democratically inclined Leninist circles, local groups, the socialist forces within ALSC, etc. A plan for party building should also project a vigorous program for NAM growth as an essential complement to the discussions.

3. Building a multi-racial movement. A plan of action should review in non-moralistic and objective fashion the reasons for NAM's major deficiencies in developing an adequate program and practice that addresses racial oppressions and the need for a multi-national movement. A plan should outline a clear strategy for formalizing relations with third world struggles and organizations such as the ALSC, Puerto Rican Socialist Party, La Raza, Black Panthers, BWC. Moreover, it should offer a realistic blueprint for developing NAM itself as a multi-national organization. Finally, it should suggest the first elements of a program that NAM can undertake, that addresses crucial issues of the period such as police repression, busing, welfare cutbacks, racist ideology, and closure of minority studies programs.

4. Socialist feminist program. NAM's theoretical initiatives have been in sharp contrast to NAM's programmatic work in many ways, and a plan of work should review the past practice of the organization. It should also develop a strategy for work with the organizational and insurgent developments in the autonomous women's movement: CLUW, NOW, city wide women's unions and women's centers, etc. It should plan ways in which NAM can regain a leadership role in socialist-feminist theoretical discussions. And it should plan the fundamentals for a realistic program of action.

Similarly, NAM should evaluate the reasons for its dramatic inactivity around gay struggles, and plan a program for relating to gay insurgent movements.

5. In recent months NAM's college chapters have begun to outline a strategy for action on college campuses. A plan of action would review such work, outline how NAM might relate to other organizations on college campuses -- from the Attica Brigade to Student Y's and the NSA, and suggest a program for realistic organizing. It may well be too early to address broader questions, but ultimately the organization will have to speak to the much broader spectrum of concerns, organizations and institutions within which young people are active (and perhaps a plan should outline the first steps for such work): the spectrum ranges from athletic programs (an attack on the fiercely individualistic, sexist, and competitive character of which would be an explosive focal point of struggle) to socializing structures such as the Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts and religious groups.

6. International and anti-imperialist work. Especially on local and regional levels, this arena has been one in which NAM has taken many initiatives. A strategic plan would include ways to formalize relations with existing anti-imperialist organizations and research groups, a modest plan for establishing preliminary links with foreign left groups of similar political perspective, and perhaps a focus for action in areas which may become crucibles of conflict in the new future.

7. Culture and media. A number of the most successful NAM and NAM related projects have involved cultural and media struggles: radio shows, people's history projects, drama groups, songs and Fairs, local newspaper. In a time of deep cultural crisis and disintegration, such work is of crucial importance in laying the foundations for an massive socialist insurgency. A plan of action should include concrete proposals for establishing ties to a variety of groups: The People's Bicentennial, Alive and Trucking Theatre, Radical Therapists, alternative movie, video, radio, media information projects, etc. It should develop an inventory of existing NAM resources and plan for their reproduction and distribution where possible. And it should suggest the first elements of a plan of action -- there is a huge range of potential activity the organization could initiate, from establishing socialist caucuses in different arts, progressions, etcl to making ties with the left wing of movements like the "human potential" undertaking, to producing clutural actions that different groups could use to involve large numbers of people and publicising struggles, etc.

8. National policy and National presence. An evaluation of existing mechanisms for program decision making and implementation/feasibility study for a Washington legislative/liason office/development of a plan for concentrating resources in areas likely to be central political and social battlefronts in the coming years. Ultimately each of the other areas will relate to national policy and decision making structures (e.g. if we ever develop a strong program around childcare, it would likely be coordinated nationally through a Washington office, which would prepare material view legislation for its impact, etc.

-- Harry Boyte, NIC

NATIONAL STRUCTURE PROPOSAL

After several months of discussion, the NIC adopted the following proposal for a constitutional amendment to change the national structure of NAM. We feel this proposal will best solve the current organizational problems of NAM and provide a sound basis for growth.

1. Regional leadership committees of 3 members each shall be elected in 5 regions. The regions are: West (California, Oregon, Washington, Nevada, Arizona, Utah, Idaho, New Mexico, Colorado, Montana, Wyoming, Hawaii, Alaska), South (Texas, Oklahoma, Louisiana, Arkansas, Mississippi, Alabama, Tennessee, Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, Virginia), Midwest (Kansas, Nebraska, South Dakota, North Dakota, Missouri, Iowa, Minnesota, Illinois, Wisconsin), Industrial Heartland (Kentucky, Indiana, Ohio, Michigan, West Virginia, Maryland, Delaware, Pennsylvania), New England (New Jersey, New York, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, Vermont, New Hampshire, Maine). Two people may fill a single position on a regional leadership committee, subject to the same limitations as are specified for NIC positions. Each regional leadership committee shall be elected by the convention delegates from that region. The responsibilities of the regional leadership committees shall include developing regional organizing strategies,

organizing regional conferences, establishing mechanisms for organizing and integrating new chapters, and developing inter-chapter communication.

The regional leadership is an attempt to overcome NAM's current state as a loose federation of local chapters. The political life of NAM above the chapter level is almost entirely defined by the National Interim Committee and the National Office. Significant input to the political discussions and decision-making of the NIC is in fact limited mainly to those chapters represented by a NIC member. The National Convention and National Council, which are fairly accessible to chapters, are so large and meet so infrequently that they can only set very broad policy guidelines and make the final decision on matters that have been extensively debated beforehand. The regional leadership, through personal contact with the chapters and by organizing regional conferences, will enable chapters to take part in the national political life of NAM on a regular basis. This intermediate level of leadership will become more and more important as NAM grows.

The sharing of ideas and experience among chapters is one of the main benefits of belonging to a national organization. The regional leadership provides a means for ensuring that this inter-chapter communication takes place. The establishment of regional leadership will increase the number of people involved in leadership above the chapter level. The fact that there are more people responsible for the vital activities listed in the proposal will mean that these activities will be carried out much more thoroughly. By assuming primary responsibility for many activities which up to now have been the responsibility of NIC members, the regional leadership will allow NIC members to spend more time on providing national political leadership.

2. Abolish the National Council.

3. The NIC and the members of the regional leadership committees shall meet together twice a year to review the organizations work and program.

As the number of chapters has increased, the NC has become a small convention. It takes too much of the NIC's time to plan and is an increasing financial and energy drain on the organization. The leadership meetings will accomplish most of the functions of the NC at much less cost.

4. Repeal last year's amendment setting up a 3 person political/administrative collective.

This provision was adopted primarily as an indication of the convention's desire for more effective national political leadership. It is unlikely that there will be the 6 candidates required to implement this provision. In addition, we feel that there are better ways to provide the desired political leadership.

--Art Larsen, NIC

AMENDMENT TO NIC STRUCTURE PROPOSAL

We would like to amend the NIC proposal to reduce the size of the NIC to nine(9) positions. Our rationale for this is:

- 1) It is easier to arrive at decisions with a smaller number of people, making NIC meetings more productive with time to discuss implementation (always a limitation at past NIC meetings).
- 2) There seemed to be general agreement on the present NIC that an active national leadership, responsible for carrying out decisions it makes, is necessary. However, spreading responsibility (as well as the psychology of being one of many in a group) works against an active NIC since there is a tendency for less individual commitment and more dispersity.
- 3) Also, we would like to see NIC elections be a real selection of people qualified and best suited to represent NAM and assume leadership.
- 4) For financial reasons a smaller NIC is more practical.
- 5) It would be easier to keep in close personal contact if the NIC is smaller which will be important for an active leadership body.

-- Linda Elston, Miles Mogulescu, NIC members

DUES

DUES - A GUIDELINE FOR THE CONVENTION AND A PROPOSAL

In the past there have been exceptions made to the rule that a chapter may only vote the number of dues paying members it currently has. This year the NIC decided that only in the most extraordinary of circumstances will anyone who is not up to date in their dues be able to speak, cast a vote, or have a vote cast for them through their delegate to the convention. Determination of the number of dues paying members each chapter has will be made at registration. All appeals to this rule will be made to the credentials committee: Mary Tulley, Harry Boyte, and Henry Guinn.

Given that we now supply to each member for her/his dues a bi-monthly discussion bulletin, the monthly internal newsletter "Moving On", and any special mailings, and given that the cost of these alone (not including the salaries of staff to produce these items and other necessary organizational expenses such as travellers, etc.) exceeds \$20 per member per year the NIC proposes the following amendment to the existing dues structure:

<u>Annual individual income</u>	<u>Dues</u> (annual, to be paid three times a year - November 1, April 1, and August 1.)
under \$4,000	\$15
\$4,000-\$8,000	\$30
\$8,000-\$12,000	\$45
\$12,000 and up	\$60

The general rule of thumb to be followed is that each member should pay $\frac{1}{2}$ of 1% of annual income.

MEDIA

Anyone who has any media displays such as films, slide shows, or video tapes that they wish to bring to the convention should contact Saralee Hamilton, 5108 Newhall St., Philadelphia, PA, 19144, (215)-849-8916, so that their showing can be co-ordinated. People are encouraged to bring any media they think is appropriate.

HELP!!

Members are expected to sign up for work time during the convention for such jobs as security, vote-counters, and note-takers. Members should see this as part of their responsibility to the organization. There will be sign up sheets at the registration table.

BUILDING A MASS PARTY

A report on the meeting of the National Interim Committee for a Mass Party of the people held May 31-June 2 and attended by Sally Avery, Roberta Lynch, and Miles Mogulescu.

For the past year, the National Interim Committee for a Mass Party of the People has been travelling around the country, attempting to involve key activists in discussion aimed at the formation of a new party. While many of us in NAM have been excited by the possibilities this initiative represents, particularly its effort to engage third world people at the outset, we have also been somewhat sceptical, initially, of its viability. In light of this simultaneous excitement and scepticism, the three of us attending the most recent meeting in Columbia (anti-colonial name for Washington, D.C.) felt that the outcome of the meeting represented a real step forward; for the first time, we feel that this effort has real chance of succeeding in laying the basis for a new party and that NAM can play a real leadership role in defining its political direction.

The May 31-June 2 meeting was a crucial one. The NIC/MPP

has been rather vague to date on political definition and organizational form. Either some concrete definitions had to be agreed to by a fairly representative meeting or the effort was likely to falter. In general, this goal was met.

The meeting was attended by about 60 people from 15 cities. Of these, about 45% were women and about 20% were third world. Among the organizations those attending belonged to were NAM, Fight Back, S.C.E.F., Rising Up Angry, Puerto Rican Socialist Party, Chicago Women's Liberation, Black Economic Survival, Great Speckled Bird, Movement for Economic Justice, Socialist Party, People's Party, Liberation Magazine, National Lawyers Guild. However, most of those attending would be reporting to their organizations, few were official representatives or could pledge definite support from their organizations. (Important exceptions were NAM, Fight Back and PSP. PSP has established an official liaison committee with NIC/MPP and the three of us were delegated by the NIC as liaison, not delegates, to the meeting - Miles representing the NIC and Sally and Roberta providing Eastern regional representation.) There had also been the hope that the meeting would include representation from organizing committees in various cities. But it soon became clear that there had only been one or two meetings in most cities and there were few solidly functioning organizing committees. Thus the meeting was reasonably broad-based but represented only tentative support from most of the groups present. However, during the course of the weekend support seemed to substantially strengthen, at least for most of the individuals present. Most seemed ready to go back to their cities and organizations and argue for the ideas passed by the meeting.

The purpose of the meeting was to develop a statement of politics and to strengthen the NIC/MPP's organization and structure. The attempt to begin to articulate a shared politics was an important one for the MPP people who have been criticized by NAM and others on the Left for their failure to define, except in the vaguest terms, what they were trying to bring people together around.

Out of concerns raised at the meeting's outset, there was a discussion of what it means to build a multi-racial movement and how we go about doing this. The questions were posed in concrete terms and focused on the divisions among black and white workers, what kind of organizing can be done where immediate interests seem to conflict, what issues have a unifying potential (specifically jobs, foods, housing), and how racism can be fought among whites.

An initial political perspective had been sent out before the meeting, in the form of "An Open Letter to Activists of the Fifties, Sixties and Seventies". The initial draft was already a vast improvement on the original Kinoy paper, generally compatible with NAM's political statement, and in certain respects an advance over it. The paper was further amended for the better during the course of the weekend. NAM people took real leadership in this process, writing many of the amendments which were adopted particularly on the questions of socialism, the nature of the working, organizational structure, and the nature of the state. The amended statement should be printed by our Convention, but its main points included:

*An argument for a party as the best political instrument through which working class movements can be coordinated and exercise their power at the weakest points in the system

*For the first time, the MPP group voted that the party should be explicitly and unambiguously socialist in its program and self description, though not necessarily in its name.

*The statement recognizes the changing nature of the working class and includes white collar workers, housewives, students, etc in its description of the working class.

*It expresses a commitment to building a mass, democratic, and politically coherent party, but does not at this point define this as either leninist or non-leninist.

*While it argues that the party must be prepared to struggle in every available arena, including electoral struggles, it insists the party must be an activist party, never primarily or exclusively electoral in thrust.

*It recognizes the social and economic role of women's labor in the home and the importance of personal life, consciousness, culture, etc. in building a revolutionary movement.

*It stresses the importance of a multi-national party in which third world people are strongly represented in the initial leadership and commits itself to working out a clear position on the national question, as it develops.

*It supports freedom of sexual orientation and lifestyle and the struggles of the gay liberation movement.

The organizational discussions agreed to create a more broadly based Interim Committee. It was decided to have paid organizers in five regions in the coming months to begin laying the basis for broadly representational organizing committees in a number of cities. Approval was voted to organize towards the goal of a major conference over Thanksgiving weekend to officially found a national party organizing committee. The IC was given power to delay this conference until spring if sufficient groundwork had not been laid. It was agreed that while it should be a large conference, it should not be open to all individuals on the left. Participants should be in general agreement with the statement of principles and will generally be contacted through activity in local organizing committees or national and local organizations which are supporting the effort. Emphasis will be placed on gaining broad representation that means something rather than sheer numbers. A credentials committee will be established for the conference.

The NAM representatives left the meeting with a generally positive feeling. Some important steps were taken which are compatible with NAM's politics. And NAM took real leadership in the meeting, gaining wide respect from most of those present. We strengthened our contacts with some important organizations like Fight Back and Puerto Rican Socialist Party. In general, we feel NAM has nothing to lose and everything to gain by continued participation in these discussions. Should the effort succeed and the basis for a new party be laid, NAM will have had major influence in its founding. On the other hand, should the founding of a party prove premature at this time, we will

have strengthened contacts with some important groups and individuals and probably brought some new people into NAM who we have not previously contacted. We feel NAM should continue to participate in these discussions, while continuing programmatic and organizational development to build NAM as an increasingly dynamic organization.

DRAFT OF RESOLUTION ON PARTY-BUILDING

New American Movement commits itself in the coming period to helping lay the basis for a new socialist party--a party which is at once solidly revolutionary but practical, socialist but non-sectarian, democratic but coherent and disciplined, mass-based but with an active and coherent membership, ideologically defined but constantly in process. Only the process of building such a party can determine its exact configurations, but it is possible to lay down some fundamental definitions NAM adheres to at the outset.

1. Such a party must be unambiguously socialist in its vision and political program. It must vigorously project socialism as its goal while finding ways to express this vision in concrete and understandable terms and to begin making the vision practical now.
2. It must in the most fundamental sense be a working class party. But it should also recognize the increasing proletarianization of ever widening sectors of the population--Not only blue collar workers but many white collar workers, social service employees, government workers, welfare people, students, and workers in the home share a common class interest in the overthrow of capitalism. A new party requires a detailed analysis of the potential of various strata--one which can encompass those aspects of their condition that points towards revolution and those aspects that tie them to capitalism. A new party should help lead an alliance--a new historical bloc--of all oppressed people. Such an historical bloc must be based first and foremost on the working class. But it must also recognize that at various stages, various strata will have particular contributions to make to the course of the struggle and will set examples for other strata. In welding a new historical bloc, a party will seek to overcome contradictions between various strata and to emphasize those aspects which can unify them around interests which cut across the class.
3. A party must institute the kind of democratic life that will allow it to arrive at an effective level of unity to carry out its political work with strength and coherence. It should foster a style that encourages healthy experimentation rather than dogmatic reliance on old ways. It should encourage fullest discussion and widest participation on all levels. And it should develop a style which can both give and accept criticism and can offer its members genuine support. At this point in the discussions, we should neither reject out of hand nor wholeheartedly endorse the concept of democratic centralism. In the course of the coming discussions, there should be long and serious discussion of what organizational forms can guarantee both genuine democracy and also political strength and coherence.
4. The party should be mass-based. But it should also be a party of active members. It cannot base itself on passive adherents. In its relationship to the class, it should sink deepest roots into the daily life of the class. Listen carefully to

people's grievances and articulate these grievances in a wider political context people will recognize as their own.

5. A new party will at times employ elections as a tactic--at those times when it advances the strength and confidence of the working class. But it will be first and foremost an activist party. Electoral activity will always be subordinate to the strategy of building a strong, active, and conscious working class movement. While recognizing contradictions in the bourgeois state, the party should not foster the illusion that the bourgeois state is a neutral instrument that can be used equally well by the working class and the ruling class.

6. A new party must, at the outset, be a multi-national party in which Blacks, Chicanos, Puerto Ricans, Native Americans, and Asians play an active role in its founding and initial leadership. Until this condition is fulfilled, no new party that will have meaning can be founded. At the same time, because of the national as well as class oppression of these groups, we should support the existence of autonomous third world formations, as well as their participation in a multi-national party. The relationship between autonomous third world formations and a multi-national party will have to be further defined in the ensuing discussions.

7. A new party must, at the outset, include a strong and active role by women in its founding and initial leadership. Until this condition is fulfilled, no new party that will have meaning can be founded. At the same time, because of the special oppression of women, we should support the existence of autonomous women's formations as well as their participation in a mixed party. The relationship between autonomous women's formations and the party will have to be further defined in the ensuing discussions.

8. A new party should unequivocally support freedom of sexual orientation and the struggle of gay people for complete freedom to define themselves.

9. A new party is not likely to be formed simply by NAM growing until it reaches party proportions. It will be formed through the consolidation and unification of various fragments of the organized left. On the other hand, NAM's practical, theoretical and organizational experience over the past three years will provide an important foundation for this consolidation. Any party-forming process which attempts to bypass and ignore this experience is making a serious error. Simultaneously, the continued growth and development of NAM as an organization during the period of party-building is essential for NAM and can only benefit any serious party-building process.

10. While objective conditions would allow a new party, once formed, to grow rapidly, it is not likely, at the moment of its founding, to be a genuine mass party. The first step in party-building should be to identify those organic cadre--those activists who are involved in genuine mass practice and have roots in a real base--and involve them in the formation of the party. If a party is formed on the firm foundation of several thousand organic cadre, it will then have the ability to expand rapidly.

11. In the coming period NAM, on a national, regional, and local level, should begin taking concret leadership in a process of party-building. The NIC should publish a short pamphlet, articulating NAM's position on party-building, as summarized in this resolution. NAM should organize forums in major cities. NAM should Participate and take leadership in any serious party building discussion which are compatible with the principles outlined here. Specifically, NAM should continue to participate in the discussions intiated by the National Interim Committee for a Mass Party of the People. Simultaneoulsy, NAM should take independent iniatives to organize party-building discussions on a national and local level and to establish its own liason with important organizations and groupings. NAM should participate in and take leadership in forming unity committees nationally and locally which are compatible with these principles.

--Miles M⁰gulescu, NIC, Minneapolis NAM

The above is a proposal submitted by Miles Mogulescu not by the NIC as a whole.

PRE-REGISTRATION FOR NAM CONVENTION HOUSING

It is essential that people who wish housing in the University residence hall for the Convention pre-register for it. Rooms are available for \$10 a day, double occupancy (\$5 per person per day), for men, women, and married couples.

Please indicate on this form the number of people attending from your chapter or group, the number and type (women, men, couple) of rooms needed, specific names of two people per room, and the day you plan to arrive. Rooms are available beginning Wednesday, July 10th. These reservations are not binding on NAM or the registrants; they may be adjusted on arrival by substituting other names or dropping rooms if necessary.

Also note your interest in any free, private housing that may be available (very limited, with preference to delegates with children). Indicate the number of children and their age from your group that will require daycare.

If this form is not returned to Lexington NAM by June 30th, housing in the University residence hall cannot be guaranteed; you may be on your own seeking hotel or motel accomodations in the area.

1. Name and address of chapter, group, or individual:
2. Number of people from chapter or group planning to attend: _____
3. Number of rooms (double occupancy) needed: Women _____ Men _____
 (Write 1/2 if you must share a room with Couple _____
 someone from another group)
4. Specific names of two people per room paired as desired. Attach extra sheet if necessary. Note date of arrival for each room of two.

1. _____ (names) 2. _____

 (date of arrival)

5. Number of people who need free housing (preference to delegates with children) _____
6. Number and age of children from group who will use child care: _____.

MAIL THIS FORM BY JUNE 30TH TO: Lexington NAM, 1625 Nicholasville Rd., Lexington, Ky. 40503. Telephone: (606) 278-8386 or 269-4108

NAMLIT

The following materials are available from the National Office.

Revolution and Democracy - a pamphlet written by Frank Ackerman and Harry Boyte. 50¢ per copy; 30¢ @ for 10 or more.

Impeachment Tabloid - an 8 page handout. \$4.00 per hundred.

Movin' On - What NAM is Doing - a 4 page tabloid describing chapter activities written last fall. \$2.00 per hundred.

"Political Economy of Sexism" by Kathryn Johnson and Peggy Somers - Free (a 25 copy limit).

The Political Perspective of the New American Movement- 25¢ per copy; 10¢ @ for 10 or more.

General Brochure - \$2.00 per hundred.

Discussion Bulletins #4, #6, & #7 - \$1.00 per copy.

Chapter Builder's Handbook - 5¢ per copy.

Members of National Interim Committee

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Art Larsen (Los Angeles)
Elizabeth Rushing (Chapel Hill)
Henry Guinn (Austin and Minneapolis)
Toni Livingston (Dekalb)
Mary Tulley (Chicago)
Connie Norton (Fox River Valley)
Anne Lawrence (Philadelphia)
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Deborah Hertz (Minneapolis)
John Judis (Berkeley)
Saralee Hamilton (Philadelphia)
Sharon Stricker (Los Angeles)
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Linda Elston (Minneapolis)
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