

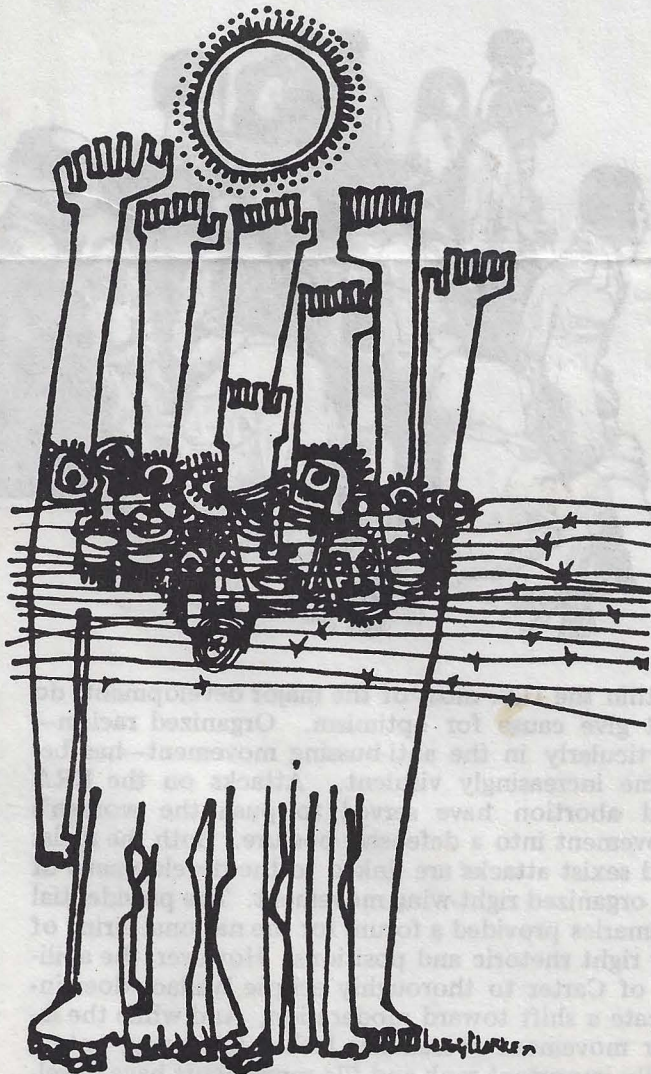
NEW AMERICAN MOVEMENT

MOVING ON

SUMMER 1976

NAM Convention '76

Cedar Rapids, Iowa
Coe College
August 19-22



The Fifth Annual Convention of the New American Movement will include

Discussion and Debate on:

- *developments within the U.S. working class;
- *organizing against racism;
- *organizing health care workers;

Workshops on:

- *utilities campaigns;
- *Puerto Rican independence movement;
- *unemployed organizing;

Educationals on:

- *Africa
- *Marxist methodology
- *labor history

And more . . .

Dear NAM members & Friends,

For those of us who are socialist revolutionaries in the U.S. today, any attempt to sum up or evaluate our efforts to make a revolution in this country is always marked by a certain tension. We in NAM can note important strides that have been made when we look at our own organizational development and mass work over the past year. But when we measure our growth--or that of anyone else on the Left--against the most crucial test--our ability to influence larger political and economic developments--we cannot help but be conscious of our own inadequacies. The necessity for a revolutionary organization is clear. Our ability to build an effective revolutionary organization will depend on our ability to balance a willingness to confront frankly our own weaknesses with a recognition that the particular history of the U.S. and the particular period that we're now working in make our task a slow and difficult one. Only in this way can we continue to build on the strengths of our political approach--to find a path out of the isolation of the Left--without giving in to either the abandonment of socialist politics or to the new sectarianism that frustration has led to.

In a sense NAM began this task from scratch when it was formed four years ago. We inherited a political synthesis that grew out of the experience of the '70s intersecting with the Marxist tradition. But we did not inherit an organization. Nor did we inherit the collective experience, the mass ties, and the infrastructure that can only be conveyed through an organizational form. If our limited experience has taught us anything, it is what a complicated and long-term process it is to be able to build an organization that really is democratic, rooted in contemporary American reality, and able to act effectively.

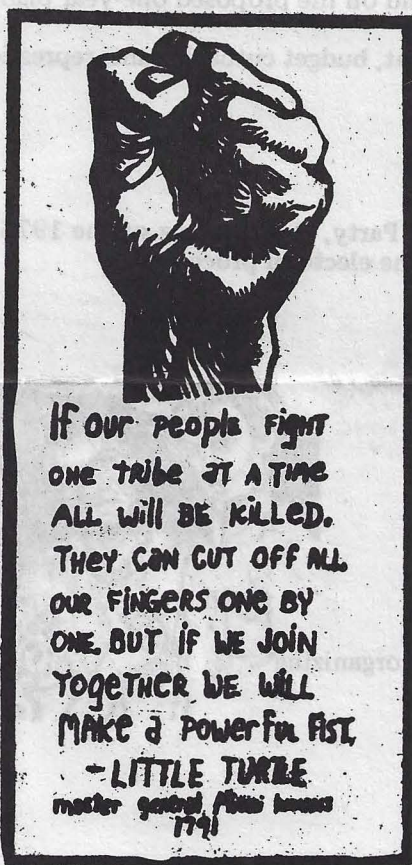
We have learned important lessons over the past few years as we have tested out different approaches and begun to make assessments. We have made substantial changes in the process. We have grown slowly in numbers, but we have grown decisively in organizational coherence. We have begun to include a small but significant number of people from the "old Left" who have seen in NAM the best hope for the emergence of a revolutionary socialist party in this country and who have added a vital dimension to our political understanding. We have begun to emphasize the need for long-term base-building as a means of developing mass ties and being able to present a socialist alternative. We have deepened our initial commitment to fighting racism and sexism as we have come to grasp more concretely the depth and pervasiveness of these forms of oppression. And we have moved toward a greater sense of commitment and common purpose within NAM itself.

The 1976 NAM Convention represents the new directions that the organization has embarked upon as well as a reaffirmation of some of our most basic political ideas. It marks for us the end of a year that has seen major advances in the worldwide struggle for liberation. The most dramatic developments occurred in Africa: today after centuries of colonial domination, Mozambique, Angola, and Guinea-Bissau are free. And the situation in South Africa has reached explosive proportions which are weakening the white racist regime there. While Portugal has not been able to recover from the shift that it took to the right, most of the other countries in Southern Europe have witnessed a significant growth in the strength of Left forces. Even Spain is beginning to show signs of challenging fascism with the growth of the opposition movement that came to the fore when Franco died.



Within the U.S. most of the major developments do not give cause for optimism. Organized racism--particularly in the anti-bussing movement--has become increasingly virulent. Attacks on the ERA and abortion have served to push the women's movement into a defensive posture. Both the racist and sexist attacks are linked to the development of an organized right-wing movement. The presidential primaries provided a forum for the national airing of far right rhetoric and positions. However, the ability of Carter to thoroughly eclipse Wallace does indicate a shift toward moderation. And while the labor movement overall has lacked militancy, potentially important rank and file movements have developed in the steel-workers and teamsters unions, and public employees have demonstrated some militancy.

The NAM Convention will have a central focus on the developments within the U.S. working class today and their meaning for building a revolutionary movement. Because we recognize the vital necessity of anti-imperialist struggle in building that movement, the Convention will also include workshops and educationals on revolutionary struggles around the world. There will be discussion of the developments within the labor force and the labor movement--analyzing what kind of organizing is going on and what kind of potential exists. Workshops and panel presentations will focus on health workers, industrial workers, clerical/office workers, teachers, and social service workers.



A major focus of the Convention will be a series of workshops focused on the fight against racism--what are the key issues; how can the Left actually help to develop an anti-racist movement; what are the crucial theoretical issues. There will be a position paper developed by the NIC on fighting racism to be considered for adoption as a guide for our work in the coming year. The Convention will also address issues of sexism--the oppression of women and gay people. There will be a forum on the much-debated question of the relationship between class analysis and the development of revolutionary strategy which will include introductory remarks from the Class Study Commission.

The Convention will have a concrete focus on the need to develop NAM as a revolutionary organization. We will evaluate our own development and have a plenary debate on whether NAM should move toward greater coherence through adoption of a resolution on unity in action. Workshops will be held on aspects of chapter development and carrying out mass work. There will also be workshops on the issues that NAM chapters are involved in organizing around: utilities, Puerto Rican independence, unemployment, budget cutbacks, etc. There will be women's, men's, and gay caucuses; a cultural evening; and political education sessions on a variety of topics.

We think that this NAM Convention will be important for the development of our organization and for the growth of a political perspective with which we identify throughout other parts of the movement. We urge friends of our organization to join us in Cedar Rapids. Observers are welcome. The task before us is a difficult one, but we believe that NAM has a crucial role to play in the building of a socialist movement in this country.

In solidarity,

Richard Healey, Roberta
Lynch & Mark Mericle

for the National Interim
Committee



AGENDA:

Thursday - August 19

- 9:00 - 12:00 *Registration
 *Orientation Sessions for New Members
 *Orientation Sessions for observers
 *Orientation Sessions on general convention participation
- 12:00 - 1:00 *NIC Report and Presentation of One-year Plan. Agenda Adoption
- 1:00 - 2:30 *Plenary on Class Struggles Today. Presentations on the labor movement, the struggles of women and the struggles of Third-World peoples.
- 2:30 - 4:00 *Small group discussions on class struggle today and on the proposed one-year plan.
- 4:00 - 5:30 *Workshops on Mass Work: utilities, unemployment, budget cutbacks, anti-repression, Puerto Rican independence.
- 5:30 - 7:30 *Dinner & Caucus Time
- 7:30 - 9:30 *Forum on Elections and the Left.
 An examination of the nature of the Democratic Party, the meaning of the 1976 campaign, the ways in which socialists should participate in the electoral process.

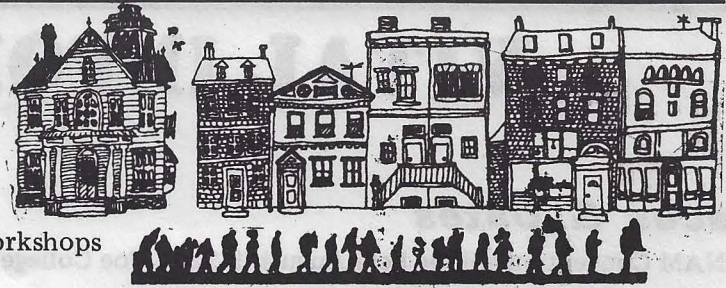
Friday - August 20

- 9:00 - 9:15 Introduction to anti-racism workshops
- 9:15 - 11:00 Anti-racism workshops:
 *Fighting repression of racial minorities
 *The busing crisis and the Left
 *Affirmative action, seniority, and unemployment
 *Anti-racist work on campus
 *Building alliances with Third-World organizations
 *Challenging racism in workplace and community organizing
 *Building NAM as a multi-racial organization
 *Theories of racism
- 11:00 - 1:00 *Women's Caucus
 *Men's Caucus
- 1:00-2:30 *Lunch
- 2:30 - 4:00 *Plenary on building NAM as an effective revolutionary organization.
 This plenary will reflect the ongoing organizational debate about what level of internal coherence and commitment to NAM is necessary to further our development. It will include an evaluation of our strengths and weaknesses and discussion of the proposed resolution on unity in action.
- 4:00 - 5:30 *Small group discussion on building NAM as an effective revolutionary organization
- 5:30 - 7:30 *Dinner and caucus time
- 7:30 - 9:30 *Forum on class analysis and strategy. Discussion of what is the composition of the working class, whether there is a key sector, and what the strategic implication of different class analyses are.
- 9:30 *Election speeches for Political Committee (if referendum is passes)



Tom Hess

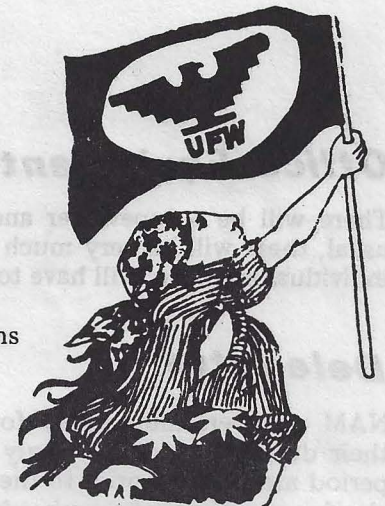
Saturday - August 21



- 9:00 - 9:15 Introduction to anti-sexism workshops
- 9:15 - 11:00 Anti-sexism workshops:
 *Fighting the oppression of gay people
 *Organizing women in the home (including childcare organizing)
 *Organizing women workers (with an emphasis on clerical organizing)
 *Fighting violence against women
 *Defending the democratic rights of women (ERA, abortion, etc.)
 *Working in, and allying with, autonomous women's organizations
 *Socialist feminist theory
- 11:00 - 1:00 Occupational mini-plenaries - These sessions will examine the major trends in organizing in each of these areas: where rank and file movements exist: how should socialists relate to these developments:
 *Industrial workers
 *Health-care workers
 *Social service workers
 *Teachers
- 1:00 - 2:00 *Lunch
- 2:00 - 4:00 Occupational caucuses - These caucuses will provide an opportunity for people involved in similar areas of on-the-job organizing to share experiences and develop a common approach:
 *Workshops on workplace organizing - These caucuses will provide an opportunity for people involved in similar areas of one-the-job organizing to share experiences and develop a common approach.
 *Political education sessions on the labor movement
- 4:00 - 6:00 *NIC election speeches
- 6:00 - 8:00 *Dinner
- 7:00 - 8:00 *Regional Caucuses (chapters must designate at least one member to attend)
- 9:00 *Cultural event

Sunday - August 22

- 9:00 - 10:30 *Issue-oriented workshops - second session
 *Political education sessions
- 10:30 - 12:00 Chapter-building workshops:
 *Recruitment
 *Effective political education
 *Chapter structure
 *Fund-raising
 *Supporting individual members working in mass organizations
 *Internal chapter dynamics and the criticism process
- 12:00 - 1:00 *Lunch
- 1:00 - 5:00 *Resolutions Plenary



VITAL INFORMATION

Places & Dates

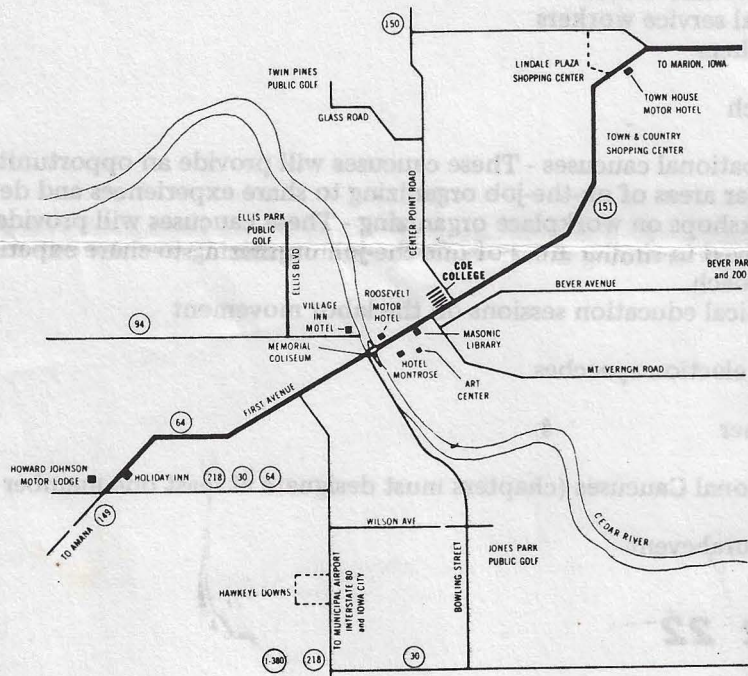
The NAM Convention will be held August 19-22 at Coe College in Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

Transportation

Car: Coe College is about one mile from downtown Cedar Rapids. There are six major highways leading into Cedar Rapids: Hwy 150 from the North; Hwy 151 from the Northeast; Hwy 30 and I-80 from the East and West; I-380 from the South.

Plane: The Cedar Rapids Airport is about 8 miles south of the city. It is served by United Airlines and Ozark Airlines daily. There is limousine service from the airport to the campus (\$2.00).

Bus: Continental Trailways and Greyhound go to Cedar Rapids. The bus terminal is about 10 blocks from the campus.



Office Equipment

There will be a typewriter and mimeograph equipment available at the convention for use by NAM members. As usual, these will be very much in demand, and you should print anything that you can ahead of time. Chapters or individual members will have to pay for paper and stencils that they use.

Delegates

NAM members must apply for delegate status during registration. All members are eligible for delegate status if their dues are paid up. Only delegates may vote. Every chapter should insure that its dues for the July-October period are paid up prior to the convention. The chapter treasurer should bring along local records and be prepared to clarify questions of membership status. Delegates may represent the members of their chapter who can't attend the Convention, but no one delegate may cast more than five votes without the approval of the NIC. Members-at-large in good standing may cast one vote.

Housing & Food

Housing will be in the college dormitories in double rooms (some single rooms are available). Meals will be in the college cafeteria. Cost for housing and food is \$10 per person per day. There will be a limited number of vegetarian meals available.

Children

Child care will be provided free during the convention sessions. There will only be limited paid staff and members are expected to share in the responsibilities of caring for the children. There will not be cribs at the child care site and parents of small children should bring car beds. Children can sleep for free in parents' rooms if they use sleeping bags. Cots can be provided for children for \$3.00 per child per night. Children's meals cost \$5.00 per day, per child. Only very small children can be fed from parents' plates.

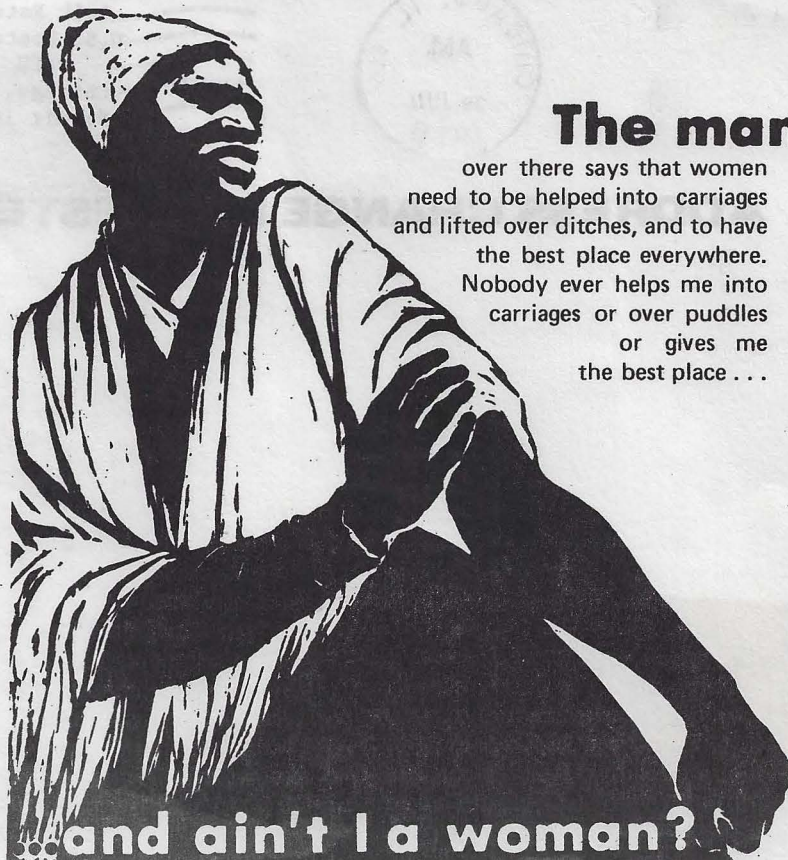
Observers

We welcome friends of NAM as observers at the Convention. Observers can attend all sessions, but cannot speak in plenary sessions. Observers can participate in workshops and small groups at the discretion of the members of the workshop.

Travel Pool

The travel pool is established to help equalize the costs that different people must bear in getting to the convention. Only NAM members contribute to or are eligible for the travel pool.

NOTE: Chapters should consider doing fundraising or establishing a special pool for any of their members who can't afford the convention costs.



The man

over there says that women
need to be helped into carriages
and lifted over ditches, and to have
the best place everywhere.
Nobody ever helps me into
carriages or over puddles
or gives me
the best place . . .

Look at my arm! I have ploughed and planted and
gathered into barns, and no man could head me
. . . and ain't I a woman?
I could work as much and eat as much as a man
when I could get it--and bear the lash as well
. . . and ain't I a woman?
I have borne thirteen children, and seen most of em
sold into slavery, and when I cried out
with my mother's grief, none but Jesus heard me
. . . and ain't I a woman?

...and ain't I a woman?

Convention Registration Coupon

Please fill-out this form and return it to the NAM National Office (1643 N. Milwaukee Ave., Chicago, IL 60647) immediately! We need to have your reservation for room and board no later than July 15th. Please send an initial deposit of \$10.00 with your registration form, if possible.



NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

MEMBER--CHAPTER: _____ OBSERVER--ORGANIZATION: _____

PLEASE CHECK APPLICABLE CATEGORIES (ALL COSTS LISTED ARE PER PERSON)

- | | | | |
|---|-------|------------------------------|-------|
| Registration Fee | _____ | Child Care*--free | _____ |
| Employed--\$10 | _____ | Children's Meal Plan | _____ |
| Welfare--\$3 | _____ | Thurs. thru Sun.--\$15 | _____ |
| Travel Pool (members)--\$5 | _____ | Fri. thru Sun.--\$10 | _____ |
| Room & Board* | _____ | Sat. thru Sun.--\$5 | _____ |
| Thurs. thru Sun.--\$30 | _____ | Cots for Children (optional) | _____ |
| Fri. thru Sun.--\$20 | _____ | Thurs. thru Sun.--\$9 | _____ |
| Sat. thru Sun.--\$10 | _____ | Fri. thru Sun.--\$6 | _____ |
| (Meals begin with dinner on the first day and go through lunch on Sunday) | | Sat. thru Sun.--\$3 | _____ |
- (*Please note number and ages of children)

**New American Movement
1643 N. Milwaukee Ave.
Chicago, IL 60647**



ADDRESS CHANGE REQUESTED

**RETURN REGISTRATION
NEEDED IMMEDIATELY!**

Jeff Gould (us)
5738 Kenwood Apt 3
Chicago IL 60637