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# NEW AMERICAN MOVEMENT

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on being a nam woman

convention proposals: agenda,



nixon's weapons vanguards

constitution,  
political statement



# Letters



Comrades:

The suggestion of Berkeley Chapter No. 2 in the last issue of NAM suggested that literature published by the National Office should be circulated by chapters in advance for their approval. I disagree strongly, for the following reasons.

1. Many statements have to be issued in response to immediate events and can't be circulated in advance because of lack of time. Other statements of general positions or NAM's image could also not be done for months if they had to be circulated to all chapters. What if most chapters like the proposed statement and some don't, or if several chapters have conflicting disagreements. Either result is more likely than unanimous approval or disapproval and there is no way to solve these problems without paralyzing the NO and preventing any literature from being produced.

2. The distrust of the NIC implied in Berkeley No. 2's letter is more disturbing. I assume that the NIC has a better idea of the overall ideas of the chapters than any other group in NAM, and that within the NIC there is a spectrum of opinions on a piece of literature. Further, people in the national organization (and in local chapters, for that matter) will never develop if they are not given the opportunity and encouragement to act even if they make mistakes. Perhaps the fear Berkeley No. 2 expressed is that we in local chapters still are not well enough organized to hold the NIC accountable for its actions. Perhaps we in the chapters should be doing more to promote the kind of political discussion that insures the NIC does not work in a political vacuum.

Carl Halpern  
Berkeley No. 1

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Editors:

I intend to introduce a resolution at the June Convention to change the name of our organization to the Movement for Democratic Socialism. The name, New American Movement, is unsatisfactory for several reasons. First, the initials NAM make it easy for us to be confused with that reactionary group of industrialists known as the National Association of Manufacturers. This is an important liability among the general public, but when NAM begins to do serious organizing among the traditional working class, it will be political poison.

Second, the word "socialist" or "socialism" does not appear in the name. For an organization that wishes to be identified as socialist and whose purpose is to build a mass democratic socialist movement, this is an important omission.

Finally, NAM offends the sensibilities of many people by its tasteless pun—whether intended or not—on a certain Southeast Asian country and also by its use of the word American to describe only the United States, which is taken as a slight by many Latin Americans.

The argument that too much energy has been invested in creating name recognition for NAM is not a compelling one. The organization has not yet had its founding convention and a bad mistake should not be perpetuated.

For these reasons and because it is an accurate description of our effort, the name of the organization should be changed to the Movement for Democratic Socialism.

Yours truly,  
Jerome Dodson  
San Francisco

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Dear Folks:

An article in NAM No. 6 concludes that all individuals who adhere to the belief in a vanguard party should be denied membership. The recommendation is well-intended but is totally unacceptable in this form. I was somewhat shocked to see such sectarian purity in your paper. No individual should be barred because of beliefs but only for active membership in an opponent political party. Moreover, all other organized socialist groups, whether vanguardist or not, are in opposition to your perspective or you would not have felt the need to build a new organization. The only exceptions are ad hoc committees as distinct from organized socialist tendencies.

It is necessary to understand why another tendency would want to enter NAM to arrive at a correct policy. When a radical organization is stagnating it often seeks to boost its membership and influence by entering another with a more fluid form of structure; takeover is rarely a goal. Eventually they withdraw or are expelled, usually taking a big hunk of the organization with them and leaving it in disarray. The essential observation is that their main loyalty is always to their own faction and not to the host organization, no matter how sincere the appearances. This is a political fact of life and has little to do with the cynical belief that some organizations are less conspiratorial than others. On the other hand, NAM would benefit enormously from ex-members of other organizations (vanguard or not) as these people are keenly aware of both the strengths and weaknesses of their old groups. Persons of dual membership tend to only see the good side.

To sum up, I recommend your policy to be no dual membership in any other organized socialist tendency, vanguardist or not, ad hoc groups and collectives excepted. No individual should be excluded for believing in the eventual need for a vanguard party or for any beliefs on the future course of NAM, for that matter. What counts is general agreement with NAM's present perspective which is best demonstrated not by any meaningless pledges but by a willingness to work in NAM to the exclusion of any other radical party. Any other policy would bog NAM down in factional infighting.

An added note: NAM should not resort to phrasemongering in its publications, though it should not censor it out of letters. Referring to the SWP as "vulgar liberals" is cheap gloss for real differences. When necessary, political divergencies should be spelled out, the use of easy catchwords like this serves only to reduce your own credibility. The mark of American Liberalism is support for the reformist wing of the Democratic Party as this serves to con the people into believing that the capitalist system is worth saving. The SWP, unlike the American New Left was never guilty of this and any issue of The Militant testifies to its being in the revolutionary socialist camp. Just criticisms of the SWP will have to go deeper than that but I am not recommending that NAM carry on endless polemics with them; there are far more important tasks than that.

For socialism,  
Pete Joseph





# Bombs, Mines, & Lies

BY JIM WEINSTEIN

President Nixon's May 8 speech, his mining of North Vietnam's harbors, and the massive bombing of the North are cynical attempts to cover up the failure of American policies and to create the illusion that he has a military plan to save the Thieu regime from total collapse. As at every stage of this war, the victims of Nixon's new escalation are the people, North and South. Thousands more Vietnamese will be slaughtered by American bombs and vast areas of the North will be destroyed as a result of Nixon's actions. Yet the new bombings can have no more effect on the fighting in the South than did the earlier ones—which, as every military expert now admits, was not much. And, of course, the mining of the harbors can have no effect on the current offensive for many, many months since supplies are heavily stockpiled throughout the South.

The North Vietnamese offensive proves that the Thieu regime has almost no popular support and is unable successfully to defend itself even with overwhelming American air support. The Vietnamese people, North and South, have victory in sight

after 25 years of fighting against imperial control of their country. To reverse this impending victory Nixon would have had to send large numbers of American troops back into Vietnam. He was unable to do this partly because it would have been an admission of the bankruptcy of his policies (and of the corruption and unpopularity of the Thieu regime), and partly because American troops—especially the army—might have refused to fight. Either event would have created the threat of a new crisis at home, without achieving victory in Vietnam.

Rather than admit the impossibility of defeating the NLF and the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, Nixon chose, behind a smokescreen of lies, to increase the slaughter. Trapped by the long run failure of "Vietnamization," Nixon is maneuvering for time while appearing to act decisively.

On the face of it, the mining of North Vietnam's harbors appears as a dangerously provocative act that could lead to confrontation between the Russians or Chinese and the Americans—and thus to World War III. But both the Russians and Chinese

have chosen to respond mildly and to accept the blockade. They have done so both because they know that the fighting ability of North Vietnam will hardly be affected by the blockade, and because the last thing they want is another world war. Nixon must have known that his latest violation of international law and order would not provoke the Russians or Chinese. Otherwise the risk would have been too great and he would not have mined the harbors.

What did Nixon hope to gain from the mining and stepped-up bombing? He may have thought that he could now negotiate with the Russians to put pressure on North Vietnam to settle the war short of victory against the Thieu regime. Or perhaps he hopes that the NLF and DRV, after they gain control of most of South Vietnam, will agree to a ceasefire and return of the war prisoners in exchange for an end to the bombing, removal of mines, and an American withdrawal. Either result would allow Nixon to say that he acted forthrightly to end the war, that he supported the Thieu regime as long as possible, and that he forced the North to release American prisoners promptly. In short, that he defended the honor of the United States. If this all works out what will have been lost? Only a few thousand Vietnamese lives, thousands more maimed and made homeless, and a few hundred more American casualties. Within capitalist morality that's a good bargain. ■

## Nixon vs. the Truth

1. The "North Vietnamese launched a massive invasion of South Vietnam." "An American defeat in Vietnam would encourage . . . aggression in which smaller nations, armed by their major allies could be tempted to attack neighboring nations at will."

### THE TRUTH IS:

The Vietnamese people have been fighting against colonial status since before World War II. They have fought the Japanese, and French. After winning their independence from France in 1954, Vietnam was temporarily divided into two zones by the Geneva accords. This agreement provided for a nationwide election in 1956 to reunite the entire country under a single government. The US, fearing a communist victory at the polls, induced the Saigon regime to cancel the elections and permanently split the country. ". . . had elections been held, possibly 80% of the population would have voted for the communist Ho Chi Minh." (President Eisenhower, "Mandate for Change," p. 372). This US-imposed division forced the Vietnamese to fight again for national independence, first politically and then militarily. The Vietnamese know why they are fighting. Thieu's South Vietnamese puppet troops (ARVN), opposed by the masses of Vietnamese people, collapse in battle even though they are backed by the enormous might of US bombers and the electronic battlefield. Nixon, recognizing this, attempts to confuse the American people by making them believe Vietnam is 2 countries, not 1.

2. "The role of the United States in resisting this invasion has been limited to air and naval strikes on military targets in North and South Vietnam."

"Throughout the war in Vietnam the United States has exercised a degree of restraint unprecedented in the annals of war."

### THE TRUTH IS:

A) From 1965 through 1971, United States forces used 26 billion pounds of explosives in Indochina. That is twice what the U.S. used in all theaters in World War II.

B) Of those 26 billion pounds, 21 billion were exploded in South Vietnam. That amounts to 497 pounds per acre of the country, or 1,215 pounds for every inhabitant.

C) The bombs and shells are estimated by the study to have left 21 million craters in South Vietnam, displaced 2.75 billion cubic yards of earth and sprayed fragments over 26 million acres of the countryside.

The striking thing disclosed is not only the immense volume of American ordnance used in this war but the proportion of it used inside South Vietnam. In that small country, the one we are supposedly there to save, we have employed explosives with the energy of 363 Hiroshima nuclear bombs.

The bombing of Vietnam shows the United States to be, today, the most dangerous and destructive power on earth.

(From an article by Anthony Lewis, *New York Times*, May 8, 1972.)

3. "The North Vietnamese arrogantly refuse to negotiate anything but an imposition by the United States of a Communist regime on 17,000,000 million people in South Vietnam who do not want a Communist government."

### THE TRUTH IS:

In order to settle the political problem in South Vietnam, the provisional revolutionary government demands that the US Government respect the South Vietnamese people's right to self-determination and put an end to all its interferences in the South Vietnamese people's affairs.

The United States has set up the Nguyen Van Thieu administration and its huge machine of coercion and repression. Thieu has used this machine of coercion to brutally repress and terrorize people of all strata, all political and religious forces who do not work hand in glove with them. This is the main obstacle to the settlement of the political problem in South Vietnam.

Thieu should resign immediately and the Saigon administration should guarantee the democratic liberties as provided for by the 1954 Geneva agreements of Vietnam.

The resignation of Thieu, the change of the Saigon administration's policy and the dismantling of its machine of oppression and constraint are absolutely

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# Who is the Invader?

Historically and culturally, Vietnam is one nation. At present there are two Vietnams, north and south, and it is true that since 1965 North Vietnamese troops have assisted the National Liberation Front in the south in trying to drive the U.S. out of Vietnam.

The only reason that there are two Vietnams is U.S. interference in Vietnamese affairs. The division between north and south was created in 1954 after the Vietnamese defeated the French. That division was intended to be temporary, until elections in 1956. But the U.S. helped Ngo Dinh Diem seize power in the south and prevented the elections from taking place. The U.S. stopped reunification because reunification at that time could only have meant a socialist government in Vietnam,

Eisenhower said:

"I have never talked or corresponded with a person knowledgeable in Indochinese affairs who did not agree that had elections been held 80% of the population would have voted for the Communist Ho Chi Minh."

The United States invaded Vietnam, prevented its reunification, and when a movement was formed in 1962 to topple Diem and drive out the U.S., U.S. troops were sent in to prevent Vietnam from finally gaining its independence.

## WHY THE U.S. INTERVENED

In 1952, explaining why the U.S. was supporting the French in Indochina, Vice-President Richard Nixon said:

"Why is the U.S. spending hundreds of millions of

dollars supporting the forces of the French in the fight against communism? If Indochina falls, Thailand is put in an almost impossible position. The same is true of Malaysia with its rubber and tin. The same is true of Indonesia. If this whole part of Southeast Asia goes under communist domination, Japan must inevitably be oriented toward this communist regime."

Nixon never mentions the people of Southeast Asia in stating his fears, only Malaysian rubber and tin. Nixon's fear of communism stems from the way socialist economies work: in eliminating production for profit, they drive out U.S. corporations that want to export their natural resources back to the U.S. for a profit, and they don't permit U.S. corporations to control local industry and finance. If the people of Vietnam chose a socialist government, it would be an example for the people in the rest of Asia to follow. This would damage the political and economic interests of major U.S. corporations, and those corporations and the U.S. government are determined to prevent it.

## DO THE VIETNAMESE FEAR COMMUNISM?

When the U.S.-backed Diem regime seized power in 1956, the land reforms started by the Viet Minh during the war against the French were reversed. Diem threw 450,000 people into his jails. In the late 1950's, the National Liberation Front developed in South Vietnam. It pledged to give the land back to the peasants, to stop the repression of Diem's government, to end foreign domination and to move toward a peaceful reunification of Vietnam. If the U.S. had not sent in troops, the NLF would easily

have won the war by 1965, so great was its popular support. For the Vietnamese, as for the Cubans and Chinese, socialism means genuine land reform, the elimination of dire poverty, and national independence. For these nations capitalism can only mean continued foreign control, depletion of national resources, endless poverty and need, and political corruption.

The U.S. government has for years tried to convince us that we should "save Asia from communism." The government's appeals have been based on distortions of what life is really like for the Chinese, Cubans, Koreans, and Vietnamese, and on distortions of our true interests. Whenever the U.S. has tried to attack one of these socialist countries, and told us that the people would be waiting for U.S. troops with open arms, the results have been the opposite. In Korea in the early 1950's, in Cuba at the Bay of Pigs, and in Vietnam, people have fought against the U.S., and have demanded that they be able to control their own nations. The lies which the U.S. government has told support a policy aimed at keeping as much as possible of the world open to U.S. political and economic domination. ■



## more on vanguards

by John Judis

I was happy to see Ed Clark's proposal on 'vanguard' parties in the last issue of the newspaper. I am also opposed to having other socialist organizations inside NAM and would like to see them excluded. And I also agree with Clark that the issue is not the behavior of the particular organizations, but the integrity of NAM as a socialist organization with its own political perspective. If I had thought IS or PL's political outlook satisfactory, I would have joined those organizations and not NAM. I joined NAM because I saw in its original statement and in the decisions of the Chicago and Davenport meetings a political perspective different from and preferable to that of other socialist organizations.

But I am afraid the Clark proposal for excluding from NAM all those who advocate vanguard or Leninist forms of organization will be misunderstood, particularly by people whose idea of Leninism differs from Clark's and from that of the sects Clark wants to exclude. Clark's 'Leninists' think of a socialist party as a select group of organizers who keep the purpose and direction of the revolution to themselves while they try to guide 'the masses' in struggles for lesser ends. But this form of organization, although justified as 'leninist' or 'vanguard', is closer to the liberal elite reform movements than it is to anything Marx or Lenin advocated.

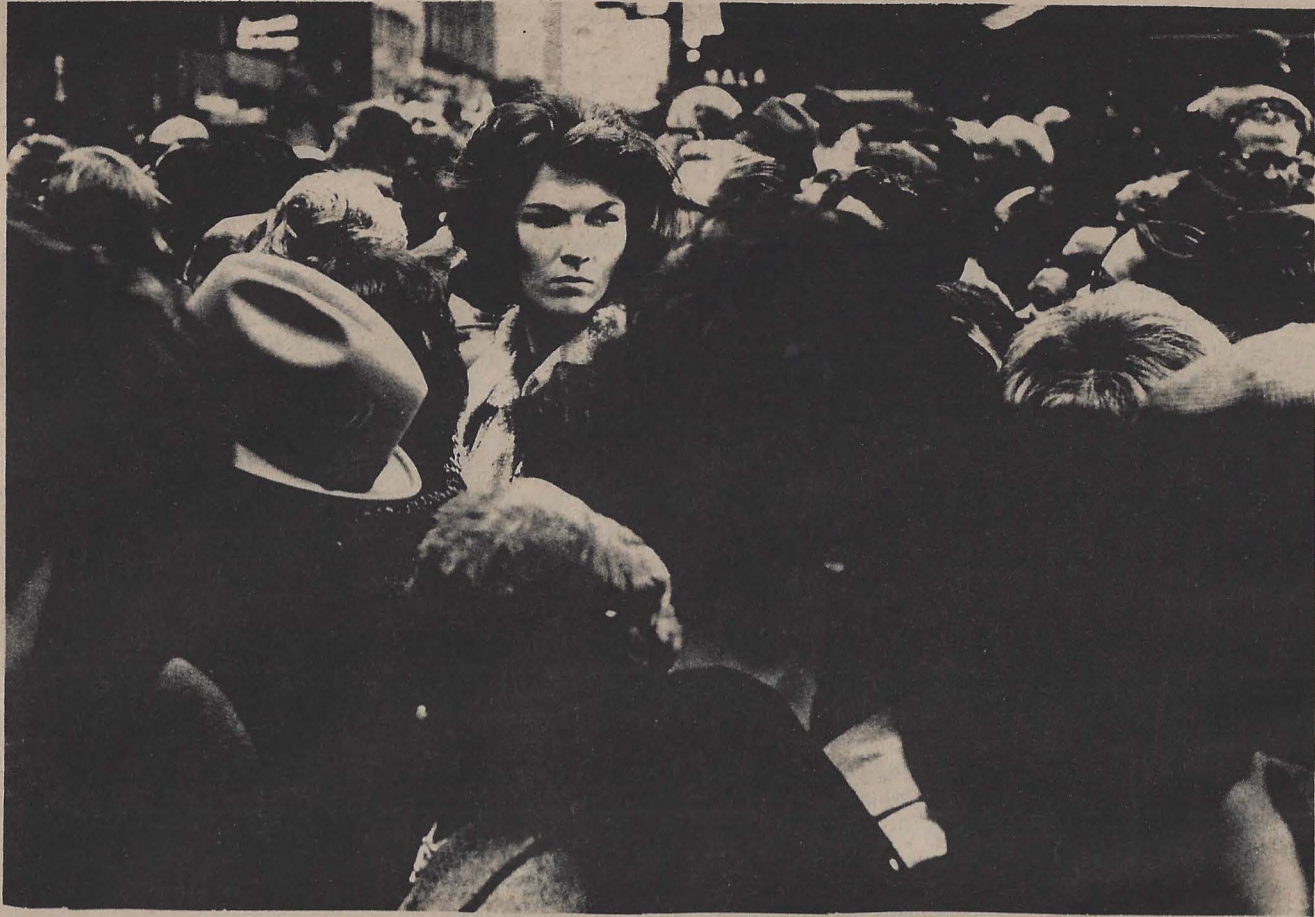
It is fruitless to try to discover a single difference between us and all other socialist groups that can serve as grounds for their exclusion. As we discover

by running down a list (IS, PL, SWP, CP, RU, the Spartacists, etc.), we have different differences with each organization. With some, it is primarily their international outlook and their idea of socialism; with others, it is primarily their idea of the working class, their position on autonomous movements, or their economism. Moreover, among these organizations, there are divergent ideas of what a vanguard party is or what Lenin stood for -- from, say, the Revolutionary Union to the International Socialists to the Communist Party -- which should suggest that to oppose all these groups as 'Leninist' is to cause confusion.

Our task in NAM is to guarantee our organizational integrity by making explicit the principles that are already implicit in our past statements and practice. The Chicago statement declared that NAM should focus on organizing working people 'broadly defined,' and that NAM 'will encourage work in

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# on being a nam woman

BY PEGGY SOMERS

it started this morning during a conversation about an article on women in the family—about the experience of being a woman. i was critical of it for its lack of historical rooting in capitalism. . .and yet i felt a conflict between believing in the need to personalize reality and yet delegitimizing the experiential approach because it was ahistorical, phenomenological. and the polarization i was caught between was more than a creation of my mind; it is a real conflict in the women's movement, the conflict of a political woman. . . .

what has it meant for me to say i'm part of the women's movement, to have in fact been a vital part of the women's movement for almost four years? has it been my work around women's issues—like the day care collective, welfare rights, our women's conference? and/or is it also my feminist consciousness? what does this mean anymore, what has feminism come to mean in my own life? it seems to have become a static thing that i have; it has ceased to be a dialectical process of my total existence—a process that involves the constant struggle between the potentially binding forces of what i am at this moment (the sum of all my experiences, my self as determined by history) and the distant vision of what i might, what i want, to become, what i will be able to fully become potentially only in a socialist society. and feminism is the exploding space between the two, itself always in flux, that i must carve out in order to feel my own strength, and to begin to act and fight creatively during the revolutionary process.

but my anger and frustration comes from the realization that that space is no longer part of that process of change, but instead a vacuum left from the two parts of me splitting in separate directions; a void that is void of everything but pain. for what has happened to those two parts? the first part, what i am, seems to be a woman who has raised her consciousness to the understanding of all that is tormenting in being a woman—a constant awareness of the stunting, the oppression—and yet i carry my raised consciousness like a yoke. it creates the double pain, à la doris lessing, which means understanding in political/social/economic terms the origins of my oppression and yet finding this awareness combines with the consciousness itself to become a paralyzing force.

and the other part, the vision of the future, is a political vision—now a socialist vision—that has been defined by my political involvement, my political life as defined and perceived by men. and what has my political life been in reality? was it a movement of politics defined by the anti-war movement men, to politics defined by student radical men, to politics defined by community organization men, to politics defined by marxist-leninist men, to politics defined by my short lived apolitical romance, to politics now defined by nam and socialist men? and all through the middle i have been “into” the politics of women's liberation. but has this been no more than a nook scooped out in the corner of a “political analysis”—one that has no integrated understanding of me?

i think about juliet mitchell. like her i believe in building socialism on the terrain of feminism. . .feminism—it's available to all women, it's about being women, but without a structural understanding of our society or capitalism, it can produce no revolutionary ideology. so i break my ass developing that structural analysis; it is not a painful thing, i feel at home with socialist theory, but what about the feminism? is it still alive? and what about that “socialist” theory, is it really my home?

the two parts have gone painfully askew, leaving me split between a personal identity with women and political identity with men and epitomized by

my involvement in nam. feeling the limitations of the separate women's movement—critical of a “lack of class analysis” and being myself a socialist—i have been fully involved in trying to “link feminism and socialism.” but this has been nothing more than me desperately trying to fit feminism (or is it women's issues) into a pre-defined (by men) slot into a pre-defined (by men) total entity of socialism. but how could it be feminism? because as a political and dialectical understanding of my own life, has it not been forced to become a myth? has it become nothing more than “being into the women's movement,” commanding respect from men for that involvement, but allowing my autonomy to go only that far? has the rest been defined by them, to fit into their conceptual frameworks? their notion of socialism, a socialist movement, its organizational forms, etc, etc, with allocated blank spaces for strong, right-on feminist women whom they trust—i.e., who've accepted their politics—to insert feminism into?

BUT THAT IS BULLSHIT. . .for how can it be feminism as a creative, on-going, critical understanding of what the struggle for the liberation of women will entail in a capitalist society? how that will be an indispensable basis of a socialist movement, and how that will be one of the keystones of creating a socialist society unless my feminism is an ongoing continual struggle and process involving the experiences of being a woman. which means not only experiencing the oppression but getting in touch with the rage it creates inside of me and then struggling to use that rage as a constructive force in my daily life as well as in a long term perspective. and that means sisterhood, the shared experience of being a woman, and the excitement of feeling our collective strength. . .

because nam hasn't met my personal needs, i've turned naturally to women alone for support, and in the process i've reinforced that reification of consciousness, that almost paralyzing consciousness. because relating personally, being close to people, so often means sharing problems. with women there is empathy, there is an understanding and a trust i will never have with men; but it is because as women we have the same problems, the same oppression, an implicit trap. but with men i feel a “positive” identification because i'm forced into another realm, a totally political realm (absent of sensitivity?) that i also identify with, that i lose myself in. . .with men i feel strong because they don't relate to my “weaknesses” (sensitivities?) but my strengths. they assume i'm fine, functional, etc. unless i specifically state or act to the contrary. therefore i always feel i have to be strong (is it withholding?) or they'll think i'm weak (woman like, negative?). but it works both ways because i actually do become stronger (less in touch?) when i'm with them because they are seeing me as such (the exceptional woman?), or at least demanding it. part of me needs to identify politically with the group in which we all reinforce each others (correct?) politics, in which we all reassure each other of our vision of the world. this has to be men (the dominant group?), the group i look to to affirm my political identity; but it is women to whom i look to affirm my personal identity, my problematic identity and sexual fears which is a woman's identity—one which speaks to the common pains of being a woman; one that cries out to me from the pages of the golden notebook, from the topless dance halls, from the office pools, from the tenderloin district, from the p.t.a. meetings, from the college dorms, from the janitorial closets, and the delivery wards in the hospitals. . .

and suddenly i feel rage towards my separate woman's group for not relating to total political change, and also toward the nam women's caucus for reading marx first—to catch up with the men; but more than ever i feel the rage

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# Draft Political Statement

The left in the United States has an unprecedented opportunity to reach the American people in the 1970's. American capitalism is in crisis and millions of Americans are losing confidence in the system. In the 1960's this developing crisis was reflected in the growth of radical movements of blacks and other oppressed national groups, students, college educated workers, and women. These movements began with a liberal, interest group consciousness; their emerging revolutionary consciousness reflects the increasing inability of American capitalism to solve its social and economic problems.

The war in Vietnam and the inability of American capitalists to defeat the liberation forces has been the central experience in creating a widespread understanding of American imperialism, including its limits and weaknesses. While American corporate capitalism spends billions of dollars to kill colonial people who are trying only to liberate themselves, this same system is unable to provide security, comfort, health, or decent education for tens of millions of people at home. Despite the industrial capacity to provide abundance in the United States, all aspects of public life continue to deteriorate and well over half the population have incomes substantially below the government-defined moderate level for a family of four. Increasingly, people experience anxiety, meaninglessness, or despair in their daily lives. Working people have less and less power over social decisions and over their own destinies, while power is increasingly centered in the hands of a few giant corporations and their political servants.

The New American Movement exists to help organize a movement for democratic socialism in the United States. The aim of that movement is to take control of the enormous productive capacity of American industry to provide material comfort and security for all people and to create a society in which the full and free development of every individual is the basic goal. Such a society will mean decentralization of decision making, an end to bureaucratic rule, and participation of all people in shaping their own lives and the direction of society. A socialist movement of this kind is based on the following beliefs:

1) The social basis for a democratic socialist movement in the United States is the increasingly diversified and stratified working class created by large-scale corporate capitalism. This working class consists of all those who have to sell their labor power in order to live or who are forced to work without pay in the house. We do not set priorities between different groups within the working class or between institutions in which we live and work. All these institutions (the home, factory, office, university, labor union, municipality) are potentially vital arenas of the struggle for socialism. And all groups within the working class ("blue collar," "white collar," housewives, state workers, the unemployed, etc.) are necessary parts of a socialist movement in the United States.

This perspective on the working class leads us to encourage a variety of activities, including community, institutional, and factory organizing, and implies that no one area of work is inherently more important than all others—although at any given time a particular area may be more important than another. The important thing is to work toward the creation of class-wide alliances among now diverse and antagonistic sectors. While organizing around our own needs (in the workplace, the community, the schools, etc.) we must also seek to unite struggles across institutional and sectoral lines in opposition to the ruling class. From the standpoint of the working class of advanced capitalism, strategies that concentrate on a "key" sector only exacerbate existing divisions within the working class and prevent us from understanding ourselves as part of a class that is capable of taking over the process of production as a whole.

Advanced capitalism has created a working class with all the skills and technical resources to run society by itself. The working class no longer requires members of other classes to direct it or to provide technical knowledge. It has become a universal class in the sense that it is capable of governing itself and of operating the most advanced and highly integrated society on earth.

2) NAM sees a revolution occurring in the US only through the active organized commitment to socialism of the great majority of working people. We intend to build a socialist movement that will potentially include the entire American working class, not merely the industrial workers, who, according to socialist tradition have been more "susceptible" to socialism than others.

The increasing integration of American capitalism and its dependence on the state to organize opportunities for investment in all realms has made it increasingly necessary to conduct struggles on many fronts and to make clear the connections between social institutions. But capitalism increasingly creates antagonisms between social groups by making their immediate interests seemingly realizable only at the expense of others. In organizing around people's immediate needs NAM must develop specific programs that bring out the common class interests of various sectors against capital, rather than the competitive and divisive character that is presently built into social relations.

This can be done in every day practice by formulating all demands in class terms, by demanding that all reforms be paid for by the corporations, and by challenging the quality and organization of life that corporate capitalism has created. Our programs must make the need for socialism explicit and must attempt to create a socialist consciousness among all sectors and strata of the working class.



DRAWING BY ANDRZEJ STOK

3) NAM's goal is democratic socialism—a society characterized by economic, racial, and sexual equality and by collective ownership and democratic control of the means of production. Socialism in the United States will provide what capitalism falsely claims to mean—democracy and abundance. Socialism in the United States will be based on our advanced technology and the potential that now exists for eliminating all involuntary or invidious divisions of labor among human beings. In addition, our immediate priority must be to challenge racial, ethnic, and sexual oppression through class programs that demand the end of oppression at the expense of the ruling class, and that being to institute new social relations.

Because the United States is the most highly industrialized nation and the leader of the world imperial system, socialism here will have a different meaning than earlier socialist revolutions both for Americans and for the rest of the world. Socialism in the United States will make possible the rapid attainment of world socialism by dismantling the American empire. Other revolutionary countries have all been in the earliest stages of industrialization, and each has been forced by circumstances to recreate some of the characteristics of industrialization under capitalism. But in the United States the potential for eliminating social divisions of labor, hierarchies, and bureaucracy already exist and are unrealized only because of the continued existence of capitalism.

4) NAM sees itself as part of the world socialist movement. The principal enemy of world socialism since the end of World War II has been American corporate capitalism, which has assumed responsibility for maintaining and defending the world empire. We will support national liberation movements against American imperialism and defend the positive accomplishments of existing socialist states. At the same time we recognize the social divisions within and between socialist countries. Our attitudes toward these countries can only be decided on the basis of specific issues.

5) NAM will challenge the racism and sexism that traditionally divide one part of the working class from another, and will oppose all divisions of labor between the sexes, between national groups, between adults and children, and between the young and the old—as well as the international division of labor. It will integrate the liberation of women and oppressed national groups into its programs. We recognize that a consistent struggle against sexual and national oppression cannot be waged without the existence of autonomous women's, gay, and black and other national movements. But sexism and racism can be finally destroyed only through a socialist movement unified through class struggle around the principles of these autonomous groups. To help shape its own direction, NAM must include women, blacks, and members of other oppressed nationalities.

6) NAM is presently made up mostly, but not entirely, of people from one sector of the working class—college educated workers and people in or close to the counter culture. This is inevitable at this stage of our development, since this sector has been the major social base of the left, particularly among whites, in the 1960's and early 1970's. But our goal is as quickly as possible to broaden our social composition to include substantial numbers of blacks, Chicanos, Asians, industrial workers, older people, high school students, etc. This will not be accomplished through self-repudiation. The first stage of our development must be to engage in activities that grow out of our own skills and needs, and to clarify our political perspective as a basis for moving beyond ourselves. From its inception NAM must actively recruit industrial workers, blacks, and people of other groups. The basis for doing this, however, can only be the development of a movement that speaks to our own needs and concerns, as well as to the needs of others.

7) In order to build a popular movement for socialism it is necessary for the NAM to embody in its organization the principles and social relations of the society we hope to create, to the extent that is possible. This means that NAM must not only be formally democratic, but that it must constantly strive to raise the level of theoretical understanding of its entire membership, develop as fully collective methods of work as possible, and encourage maximum initiative by individual members and chapters. We realize that this can only be begun, but if there is no concrete demonstration of our principles in action there is no reason to expect people to take us or our principles seriously. We need a national organization and national leadership bodies in order to organize a movement that can challenge the rule of the corporate capitalists and their federal government, but we must simultaneously begin creating the forms of a new society within NAM.

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# Introduction

This proposed constitution was adopted by the National Interim Committee to be discussed by the membership and adopted or amended at the National Convention. It is important for all chapters to discuss the constitution in their pre-convention discussions, especially those parts on which there are substantial differences among us. The two main problems we had in the NIC discussions were around the exclusionary clause, Article II, and whether two of the National Office staff should be appointed to the National Committee as voting members. Whether or not we want a National Council should also be discussed.

The main argument for the exclusionary clause was that it was necessary to protect the integrity of NAM, and that SDS had been destroyed by its refusal to protect itself by excluding Progressive Labor. Those who favored the exclusionary clause did so on the basis of the previous behavior of members of the organizations they proposed to exclude—PL, the Socialist Workers Party and the Young Socialist Alliance. They did not propose a political test.

Those opposed to exclusion agreed on the necessity to protect our organizational integrity, but argued that this should be done by defining our politics and making it clear how these differ from the various socialist sects. Exclusion of named organizations was opposed for two reasons. 1) excluding groups on the basis of past behavior does not advance our politics, but substitutes administrative measures for political clarity. 2) excluding named groups implies that groups not named are better or more desirable than those excluded. 3) excluding people on the basis of what organization they belong to would not prevent infiltrators who denied their membership in PL or YSA, but would exclude those PLers or YSAers who were beginning to question their membership and who might be moving toward NAM. In general the opponents argued that the best way to protect ourselves from the invasion of the body snatchers was to constantly define and discuss our basic political principles, and to require agreement with these as the basis of membership.

On the question of voting rights on the National Committee for two National Office people, the main difference of opinion was whether or not a non-elected person should have the right to vote on policy matters between conventions and National Council meetings. Those opposed argued this was undemocratic, and that it posed the danger of National Staff people getting too much power. Those in favor were more concerned about the working relationship between the staff and the NC and did not want this to have the form of an employer-employee relationship. Since the National Staff members are appointed by the NC, those for the voting rights thought there was no serious danger of usurpation of power involved.

Chapters should also discuss the proposal for proportional representation on the National Committee. This would not take effect until 1973 (next year). It would formalize the existence of tendencies within NAM by making them recognized caucuses with proportional representation on the NC. ■

## Proposed Constitution

### PREAMBLE

(The preamble shall be a brief statement of NAM's political principles and practices condensed from the Political Statement adopted at the June convention in Minneapolis.)

### I. NAME

The name of the organization shall be the New American Movement.

### II. MEMBERSHIP

1. Membership is open to all individuals who subscribe to the statement of political principles, purposes, and practice of the organization.

NOTE: A majority of the NIC voted *not* to include a specific exclusionary clause, but rather to depend on this clause allowing membership only to those persons who adhere to NAM's political principles, purposes and practice (to be voted on at the June convention), as a way of excluding those persons belonging to socialist/communist sectarian groups or parties whose politics and practice are at odds with NAM's. The vote was close and the *minority* view was that there should be an exclusionary clause which would read: "Members of the Progressive Labor Party and the Socialist Workers Party/Young Socialist Alliance are not eligible for membership in NAM."

2. Membership in a chartered chapter of NAM shall be the only form of membership and implies membership in the national organization. Guidelines for exceptions may be made by the National Committee.

3. Guidelines for exclusion of individual members will be provided to the chapters by the National Committee.

### III. CHAPTERS

1. The chapter is the basic unit of NAM. Any group of ten or more individuals may constitute themselves a chapter and apply to the National Committee for a

charter by sending a written request signed by ten members to the national office of the NAM. Exceptions regarding the size of the chapter may be made by the National Committee. Controversy arising from recognition of particular chapters shall be resolved by the National Council or the Convention, whichever comes first.

2. Chapters have the following rights and responsibilities:

a. Chapters are required to pay such dues and assessments as may be levied by the National Committee, but they may distribute the cost among their membership in whatever manner they choose.

b. Chapters are entitled to elect delegates to the National Council and the National Convention of NAM.

c. Chapters are self-governing and may establish whatever internal structure they see fit provided that it is democratic, makes provisions for full participation of all members and is not in conflict with any part of this constitution.

d. Chapters should participate in at least one national priority program of the national organization.

3. The National Committee may upon two thirds (2/3) vote suspend the charter of any chapter. Grounds for suspension shall include but not be limited to:

a. Statements or actions contrary to the national policy of the organization as expressed by the national convention.

b. Activity detrimental to the organization.

c. Domination or manipulation by members of a national organization external to NAM.

4. The National Committee shall observe due process in the suspension of a chapter:

a. Any chapter being considered for suspension shall receive full written particulars of the charges against it not less than one month before the meeting at which suspension is to be considered.

b. Upon request of a chapter being considered for suspension for reasons other than non-payment of dues, the National Committee shall provide travel

funds to and from its meeting for no more than two members of the chapter in question.

5. Any chapter in arrears of more than three national dues payments shall be automatically suspended and shall be automatically re-chartered when dues are paid from the date of first arrears to the date of re-chartering.

### IV. CONVENTION

1. The National Convention shall be the highest policy making body of the organization. Disputed decisions from lower bodies may be referred to the Convention whose decisions shall be final.

2. The Convention shall meet once a year and is open to all members. The National Committee must issue the call for the convention including its location and dates, not less than two months prior to the date of the convention. The Convention shall be conducted for a minimum of three consecutive days. The final day shall be a Sunday or a holiday.

3. Each chapter in good standing may elect one delegate to the convention for every five (5) members for whom national dues have been paid. Chapter delegates may cast no more than five votes at the convention.

a. At the convention, a chapter is entitled to vote the full strength of its membership. If due to distance or financial hardship a chapter cannot send one delegate for every five members, then a lesser number of delegates may represent the chapter provided that the National Committee has approved such a request.

b. Individual chapter members in good standing may represent themselves at the convention and shall cast one vote. No member may be represented by him/herself and by a chapter delegate.

c. Members-at-large who have received this designation from the National Committee and who are in good standing may represent themselves at the convention and shall cast one vote.

(continued on page 8)



# constitution

(continued from page 7)

d. Other individuals may come to the convention as observers. Observers shall have no vote at the convention and no voice during plenary sessions. They may be granted voice in workshops or committees by majority vote of the delegates present in those meetings.

4. In order to be represented at the convention a chapter or member-at-large must have received recognition from the National Committee at least one month prior to the date of the convention. Chapters may adopt a one month membership requirement for elected delegates.

5. The convention shall operate according to this constitution and in the absence of an alternate shall use *Roberts Rules of Order Revised*.

## V. THE NATIONAL COMMITTEE:

1. Between meetings of the Convention and the National Committee shall be the highest administrative body of the NAM.

2. The National Committee shall be responsible for but not limited to the following functions:

- a. It shall meet not less than four times a year.
- b. It shall organize program task forces and other sub-committees as it sees fit.
- c. It shall hire the national staff.
- d. It shall charter chapters.
- e. It shall levy such dues and assessments as deemed necessary.
- f. It shall conduct relations with external organizations.
- g. It shall conduct relations with the press and issue statements on behalf of the organization that are consistent with the policy of the organization.
- h. It shall designate spokespersons for the organization.
- i. It shall acquire and hold possession of all funds and other property of the national organization (Note: this clause to be checked out with a lawyer).
- j. It shall convene the National Convention and the National Council.
- k. It shall publish all official documents and the official newspaper.

l. The National Committee shall hire and fire national office staff, at least half of whom shall be women.

NOTE: There was a close vote on the question of whether national office staff members should be given voting power on the National Committee. The majority position was that there should be no such provision, since it would not allow for direct election by and accountability to the membership of NAM of such National Committee members, and might give too much power to the national office staff members. Concern was voiced that we might experience a repetition of SDS when non-elected staff gained great power in the organization. The minority position reads: "The National Committee shall hire two persons, at least one of whom shall be a woman, to serve as national office staff who then shall be considered members of the National Committee with full voting rights."

The argument for this provision is that at this point N.O. staff have no initiatory responsibility and thus, feel a lack of any way to participate meaningfully in the organization. Giving two N.O. staff members voting power on the National Committee would allow them to take part in the committee meetings on a much more responsible level than now when they have voice but no vote, as well as remove some of the sense of employer/employee relationship now felt by N.O. staff.

3. The National Committee shall be composed of 13 members elected by the National Convention. No less than seven (7) members shall be women. A quorum shall be nine (9) members or alternates.

4. Election to the National Committee shall be on an at large basis. All Convention delegates are eligible for nomination.

(The following shall not take effect until 1973)

a. In order to provide for the representation of minority viewpoints within the National Committee, those delegates who so desire may participate in the following procedure for electing members of the National Committee.

At the start of the election the chairperson of the convention shall ask if there are any calls to form caucuses. Any delegate may then rise and shall be given not more than five minutes to read a statement calling for a caucus on any issue the delegate chooses.

After all such statements have been made, the maker of each statement shall be assigned a caucus area. All delegates who wish to align themselves with any one caucus shall then leave the convention floor and go to the caucus of her or his choice. All delegates who do not wish to align themselves with a caucus shall remain on the convention floor.

A delegate may run for election and vote in only one caucus.

The chairperson of the convention shall count or cause to be counted the number of votes held by the delegates in each caucus. The caucus shall then be assigned a percentage of seats on the national committee equal to the percentage which the votes held by the delegates in the caucus constitutes of the total number of votes held by all delegates to the convention.

The delegates not aligned with a caucus but remaining on the convention floor shall likewise be apportioned a percentage of the National Committee equal to the percentage which the votes held by the delegates on the convention floor constitutes of the votes held by all the delegates to the convention.

Any caucus which does not receive sufficient support to entitle it to one whole seat on the national committee shall be declared dissolved. Its members may then join another caucus or return to the convention floor.

Following the apportionment of seats each caucus and the main body of the convention shall conduct nominations and an election to fill the allotted number of seats. The main body of the convention and each caucus shall designate a number of runners-up equal to the number of delegates as alternate delegates to the National Committee. Alternates elected by caucus can only substitute for delegates from their own caucus. Alternates elected by the main body of the convention can substitute for any member of the National Committee provided that the female-male balance is maintained.

Half of the members of the National Committee must be women, therefore half the members and alternates elected by each caucus must be women. If an odd number of delegates is to be elected, the odd person must be a woman.

6. The method of conducting the voting shall be as follows:

- a. Elections shall be by paper ballot.
- b. For each convention vote that she/he carries, a delegate may cast one ballot.
- c. Each ballot shall allow for the designation of candidates equal in number to the number of National Committee seats to be filled.

d. The candidates shall be ranked by the total number of votes they receive. Half of the number of seats shall then be filled by the highest ranking women. The remaining seats shall be filled by the highest ranking women and men.

e. After the members of the National Committee have been designated, the next highest ranking nominees shall be designated alternate delegates.

7. A special meeting of the National Committee shall be convened upon petition of seven (7) of its members or of half of the chartered chapters.

## VI. THE NATIONAL COUNCIL

1. The National Council shall be the highest administrative body of the NAM between conventions. It shall meet once a year, approximately 6 months after the convention. The exact time and location of the meeting is to be fixed by the National Committee.

2. The National Council shall:

a. Review the work of the National Committee and of the staff.

b. Review the programmatic work of the organization since the last convention and give such instructions to the National Committee as shall improve the quality of the organization's work and growth, consistent with the mandates of the previous convention.

c. Hear appeals from the decisions of the National Committee.

3. The National Council shall be composed of two delegates from each chapter.

a. An additional delegate shall be given any chapter having 30 members for whom national dues have been paid. Thereafter, an additional delegate shall be added for every ten members in good standing. Where possible, at least half the delegates shall be women.

b. Each delegate to the National Council shall cast one vote on the council regardless of the size of the chapter represented.

4. The National Committee shall sit on the National Council with voice but no vote.

5. Individual chapter members may attend meetings of the council with neither voice nor vote. There shall be no observers from outside the organization.

6. The organization shall be given one month's notice of the National Council meetings.

7. The National Council shall make its own rules of procedure. Matters not covered in such rules shall be subject to *Roberts Rules of Order Revised*.

## VII. THE OFFICIAL NEWSPAPER

1. There shall be an official NAM newspaper. The location of the newspaper will be decided by the National Committee and one member of the National Committee shall be responsible for the newspaper.

## VIII. AMENDMENTS

This constitution may be amended by a vote of two thirds (2/3) of the delegates present and voting at any national convention, provided that the exact text of any proposed amendment was either printed in an organ of the organization or sent by mail to the chapters no less than one month prior to the date of the convention. No other amendments will be considered. ■



# CONVENTION AGENDA

## WEDNESDAY EVENING JUNE 21st

Convention begins. Women meet Wednesday evening and Thursday morning. Registration.

## THURSDAY JUNE 22nd

9:00 a.m. - 1:30 - Continuation of women's meeting. Registration.

1:15 Presentation to the delegates by the National Interim Committee and National Office of the history of the New American Movement, an organizational report, purposes of the convention, description and explanation of the agenda, consideration of the limits of a 4 & 1/2 day convention.

2:00 Discussion and final setting of the agenda.

4:00 Program workshops: meet to share experience of work since Davenport. Workshops might want to initially feature invited resource speakers before they get down to discussing programs & proposals.

5:00 p.m. Supper. There is usually an hour and a half scheduled for meals. This allows for time to eat, move around, caucus, nap, etc.

6:30 Introduction of political statement on analysis and strategy. Attempt to clarify the issues in analysis & strategy for discussion throughout the convention.

7:30 Small mixed group discussion of statements. The small mixed groups will be organized at registration. The purpose is to have small groups meet

each day that contain a cross section of delegates according to region, sex and program area.

9:00 A&T Theatre presentation of their original play on the history of Minnesota. The A&T Theatre is a radical theatre group, who have just finished a play based on a people's history of the Minnesota area.

## FRIDAY JUNE 23rd

A day devoted to sexual politics.

9:00 a.m. Plenary.

9:00 - 9:45 a.m. Panel on sexual politics. Women, men, gay & straight, a presentation of the issues.

9:45 - 10:15 Time for questions for panel. Clarification of issues by the whole body. This is not the time for a debate by the whole body.

10:30 a.m. Caucus time.

12:00 - 1:30 Lunch.

1:30 - 2:45 Mixed small groups. Discussion of sexual politics in light of morning plenary, caucus, statements of analysis and strategy.

3:00 - 4:30 Program workshops. A discussion of program in light of sexual politics.

4:30 - 7:00 Swim, recreation & dinner.

7:00 Plenary on Sexual Politics.

8:30 Plenary to choose draft as basis for Saturday's work on analysis and strategy.

10:00 p.m. Dance. A combination of rock and barn music!

## SATURDAY JUNE 24th

9:30 Small mixed groups discussion of analysis and strategy.

11:00 Lunch.

12:00 Plenary on analysis and strategy.

1:30 Small mixed groups again meet.

3:30 Final Plenary on analysis & strategy.

5:30 Supper.

7:00 Introduction of materials on structure with the specific task of making a decision concerning elections.

7:30 Small mixed groups to discuss election process.

8:30 Reconvene in plenary for debate and vote on election process. Nominations. The purpose for considering the election process separately from the constitution as a whole is to provide as much time as possible for people to consider nominees before voting.

10:30 or so - If anyone has any energy left, there could be some form of recreation. . . .

## SUNDAY JUNE 25th

9:00 a.m. Small mixed groups on constitution.

11:30 - 1:30 Lunch and voting on national leadership.

1:30 - 4:30 Plenary on Constitution.

4:30 Result of elections. ■

## NIC minutes

### NATIONAL INTERIM COMMITTEE

May 6 & 7 — PITTSBURGH, PA

The major subjects for consideration at the latest NIC meeting were:

1. The war
2. Political Statement of the analysis and strategy for consideration at the June Convention
3. Finances
4. Constitution for consideration at the June convention
5. The convention agenda

#### 1. THE WAR

We got started with a brief report from each person about anti-war activity in his or her region. Some general observations and comments were drawn from the report.

1. NAM chapters and members throughout the country provided political and organizational leadership in anti-war activity by coalition building, leaflet writing, speaking, preparing political discussion of the war, stressing class analysis and strategy where lacking.

2. The organization was strengthened and expanded in many cities because of the leadership that chapters provided.

3. The media, especially the press, are playing down both the war and anti-war activity.

4. The need for NAM to recognize its limits and to set goals in anti-war activity.

5. The need for NAM to continually assert the class basis of this war in speaking, writing and participation in actions.

6. The importance of building broad-based coalitions was again emphasized. Also stressed was the necessity of providing the most acute political analysis possible to both build NAM and provide political leadership.

After formal and informal discussion a motion was passed without opposition to set up an Emergency Coordinating Committee whose tasks would be:

1. In an emergency situation to call a national action with other national groups.
2. To encourage and develop broadly based mass actions,

3. To provide clarification and class analysis of the war to provide political leadership and to build NAM  
Brian Coyle of the NO, Marv Davidov, Sara Lee Hamilton, Pam Beardsley of the NIC volunteered to work on the Emergency Coordinating Committee.

#### 2. POLITICAL STATEMENT OF STRATEGY AND ANALYSIS FOR THE JUNE CONVENTION

We broke into two groups for about an hour to discuss the two drafts before us: the Boyte, Boyte and McMahon draft revised by Jan Rubin and others and the Judis-Weinstein draft.

The differences between us did not appear to be so much political differences on the substance of either draft, but rather the form the statement would take. We decided that the statement would be a set of principles with some strategy presented in a readable form.

Roberta, Jim and Harry met as a committee and incorporated the groups criticism and presented the body with a revised draft. After review and criticism, a final tentative draft appeared. This statement is printed in the current issue of the newspaper in the Convention section.

#### 3. FINANCES

A report of the National Office showed NAM's financial condition to be critical. As a response to our financial situation, two motions were passed unanimously. The first motion states that the National Office will send a record of dues paid to each chapter, requesting corrections, notifying chapters that MAY 22 (changed from May 15) is the deadline for first quarter dues, and consequently for number of delegates who can vote or be represented at the June Convention.

Those chapters or prechapters that have not paid dues will be given the same notice of May 22nd and be clearly informed that after that date, they are not eligible for delegate status at the Convention.

There will also be a fund appeal to all chapters at this time to help prepare for the Convention and with ongoing work.

will write a direct mail fund-raising letter. The NO will send 50 copies to each NIC members who will

send the letter to potential contributors in his or her region. One copy of the letter will be sent to each chapter with encouragement to reproduce the letter and distribute it to potential contributors.

It was also agreed that some preparation must be done so that a major fund raising drive can occur after the convention.

#### 4. NAM CONSTITUTION

For an explanation, see the introduction to the Constitution, page 7.

#### 5. THE AGENDA FOR THE JUNE CONVENTION

The agenda appears in the current issue of the newspaper, along with the drafts of the political statement and the constitution.

There was much discussion during the last two NIC meetings concerning the question of women meeting all day Wednesday before the delegates all arrive and the convention begins. Those in favor of the Wednesday meeting reasoned that many women needed to work together away from men in order to prepare sufficiently for the convention. Others opposed to the separate meeting before the convention reasoned that NAM as an organization of women and men

should not separate sexual politics as a women's issue and by so doing not demand that women and men confront the issues of sexual politics together within a mixed organization. Those for an integrated program were not in favor of eliminating caucuses, but were for having the discussion of sexual politics within the general convention.

Thursday evening, the discussion of strategy and analysis will begin. Friday is devoted entirely to sexual politics, through plenaries, mixed groups, caucuses and dancing. Sexual politics will be considered in the light of strategy and analysis.

Saturday is primarily devoted to strategy and analysis. Sunday is devoted primarily to the constitution and elections.

It is very difficult to communicate issues and decisions on drafts unless the drafts are before you. Be sure to read carefully the convention material in the newspaper. Each document on the convention should be debated thoroughly within each chapter and pre-chapter in order for a more democratic and well-prepared Founding Convention in June. ■



# meeting in madison



BY KAREN SMITH

On May 13th and 14th, a Midwest Women's Conference was held in Madison, Wisconsin. Fifty-three women attended the conference from all segments of the women's movement with many different life experiences both in and out of NAM. We discussed the theoretical and strategic considerations in building a socialist feminist consciousness and organization. We also discussed the history of the women's movement, the family, the reasons for being in a mixed socialist organization, the need for a women's caucus to come out of the June convention, and an agenda for the day on sexual politics at the convention.

The Chicago Women's Liberation Union presentation of their strategic paper for building a socialist feminist movement was too long, though it did have some very good suggestions. The greatest difficulty with the Chicago Women's presentation was that they did not stay around after it to participate in the small discussion groups. This broke the continuity of the conference. Following the Chicago Women's presentation, the DeKalb NAM women presented a theoretical paper on socialist feminism. People at the conference generally agreed that the politics of the paper were excellent though the language was cumbersome and unclear. The DeKalb women will send the paper to women in all NAM chapters for criticism and will try to revise it.

The small group discussion on socialist feminism, which followed the presentation, never really got off the ground, partly because of the absence of the Chicago women and partly because many of the women present had not done the reading suggested for the conference. This raises the question of how serious we are in building a socialist movement. Women cited the stepped-up anti-war activities as the reason for this. We all agreed at the next day's evaluation session that we have to continue building our organizations day to day, in part to enable us to be better pre-

pared for the myriad emergency situations that capitalism will always create.

The failure later that day to get women into primary reference groups (i.e. women in education, women in health) to discuss specific socialist strategies pointed out yet another weakness in our movement. Many of the women at the conference, like many of the men in NAM, have not yet defined themselves in terms of their own background or interests and have thus been unable to define the constituencies they could best reach. Perhaps this kind of grouping was premature but it is an essential process to begin to organize on a local basis.

The evening session of the conference began with an excellent skit on welfare performed by the Minneapolis NAM chapter and a socialist song fest. It was a real up and helped pave the way for an excellent evening discussion on the family and the biology of sex. In the discussion on the family we concentrated on the present day family—its relationship to capitalism, its affect on people in society (men, women, children, old people and single people) and possible ways of altering the dependency relationships which develop in the family unit.

On Sunday we discussed why we felt it was important to work in a mixed socialist organization—that often times the politics of autonomous women's groups have degenerated into nationalistic type sectarian politics—and that for any revolution to be a truly socialist revolution it would have to include among other concerns the concerns of women as *integral* to the development of that revolutionary movement and not tagged on at the end as so often has happened in the past. In order for that to happen women must have a strong presence and input in a socialist organization. But most of the women who remained on Sunday agreed on the need for a women's caucus

to come out of the June convention. (Karen Smith in the NO is writing up that proposal.) We also questioned whether it was wise at this time to have invited non-NAM women to a conference before we NAM women had a chance to get our politics together. Most women there felt that the stated politics of the conference was enough to keep the size of the conference manageable—that it was good to have women outside of NAM, even at this beginning stage but that future conferences of this type should perhaps have a session just for NAM women.

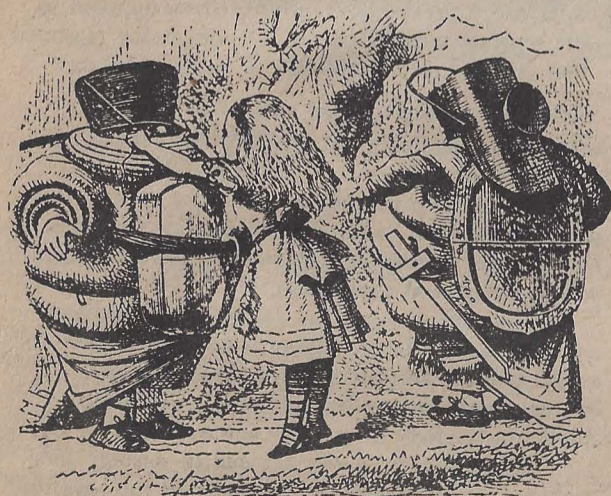
We also drew up a suggested agenda for the day on sexual politics, which is enclosed. The best thing however about the last day of the conference was that it helped to reaffirm among all the women there, that democratic leadership (with a strong commitment to the necessity for leadership) is possible and preferable to one person leadership. There was no chairwoman for the meeting on Sunday, only some women who served as resource people. An agenda was suggested and agreed upon by all. Each topic flowed into the next and the group kept themselves on the subject. It was a productive session in which everyone in the room participated fully.

Before we left, the Minneapolis women agreed to take the DeKalb paper, some of the ideas from the Chicago Women's Liberation Union paper and the key points from our discussion on the family and synthesize them into one paper to be ready on the first day of the conference. We are hoping that the paper will serve as the basis for discussion on the day on sexual politics planned for the June Convention.

## suggested agenda

This outline was agreed upon by the women at the Midwest women's regional conference. It is sketchy and will be given greater detail in the near future. By then we will hopefully have prepared some ideas on what we would like to see come out of this day on sexual politics.

If you have any questions or suggestions on this outline please write Peggy Dunham, 33 23rd Ave NE, Minneapolis, Minnesota.



### DAY ON SEXUAL POLITICS — 2nd DAY OF CONFERENCE, FRIDAY JUNE 23rd

1. Possible address by a keynote speaker, concentrating on the international perspective of the women's movement.
2. Panel on sexual politics. It is for other groups who wish to be represented, i.e. gays, straight men, to decide on the input they wish to have on the panel. As women we would only set forth what we saw as our role on this panel. We envisioned two women giving this presentation which would cover
  1. history and analysis of the women's movement
  2. statement on socialist feminism
  3. the family & reproduction (sexuality)

This is to be followed by a brief period of questions, not a discussion, as that is scheduled for the caucuses in the morning and the small mixed groups in the afternoon. We are suggesting that the chairperson at this session be a woman.

3. Caucus discussions (straight women, gay women, gay men, straight men, meeting separately as they desire). To be broken down into smaller groups, basically to discuss the issues that were raised in the panel:

- a. To discuss "The Paper" on socialist feminism. The paper will be a synthesis of the theo-



retical paper by the DeKalb women, some of the ideas from the Chicago Women's Liberation Union women, and some additional stuff on the family by the Minneapolis women, to be synthesized by the Mpls women and ready by the first day of the convention for people to read before the day on sexual politics.

- b. The proposal for a permanent women's caucus to come out of the convention to be discussed.

4. Small mixed groups to discuss sexual politics, the ideas presented in the morning session.

#### Agenda:

1. "The Family;" a. definition, b. historical, c. now, d. alternatives
2. Discuss the paper on socialist feminism

SUGGESTIONS for readings to go out as soon as possible for men & women;

1. The Dialectic of Sex, Shulamith Firestone, only chapters 1, 4, 6, 7 Bantam paperback, 1971.
2. The Woman's Estate, Juliet Mitchell, chapters to be suggested. Pantheon Books, 1971
3. Women & Subversion of Community, Mariarosa Della Costa, Radical America, Vol. 6, No. 1, Jan-Feb. 1972, p. 62 on.



# Woman in nam

(continued from page 5)

*towards the men who have relegated me to an "issue," who are threatened by a total women's politics, and therefore allow only slots & addendums, who have weighed so heavily on my political definition of myself and for whom i so often conjure up an adequate conceptual reality. and i feel anger towards myself for letting myself feel "intellectual" distance from those i trust the most, and drawn by those who can never fully understand what it means to be a woman. . .*

As the original pages of a journal, this is where my writing stopped; but in sharing the thoughts with other women, it is clear that this extends far beyond my own experience. It is so much a part of what it means to be a political woman; it is so much the result of how women's liberation has been expressed in mixed organizations, and how it continues to be expressed in NAM.

NAM's general political orientation has an intellectual understanding of the need for women to be part of the revolutionary process; extending the concept of worker to all those who work is in itself related to this understanding. But in the absence of women really being an integral part of the *original* definition of those politics, the organization has suffered from the lack of feminism in its founding. Because at this time so few of us have any clear idea of what socialist women's politics will potentially become, both in form and content, women's liberation has been understood only as the artificial tacking on of women's issues, or specific women's tactics, to the existing programs—the so-called "women's perspective."

There is an awareness of this problem; it has led to the conscious expression of the need to "link feminism and socialism." But the very word "linkage" is a reinforcement of the reification I felt in my own life. It implies two distinct and unrelated realities that will somehow come to adhere together. In fact, this can never really lead to anything more than a stuffing of what is called feminism into a carved out slot since it is socialism which has the long term (male controlled) perspective and feminism which seems so determined by the present. And clearly that is what the stunting of the feminist process itself is all about. It will be limited by existing ideas and inevitably overlooked by the organization as a whole. For as long as it is only an addendum, and not integral—actually a keystone—to our socialist movement, it will always be dispensable. And the form that it will be forced to take can be nothing but destructive to women.

Understanding feminism as indispensable to socialism involves an understanding of how women's liberation has really been the vanguard of *consciousness* in the movement. As women, who first used the expression "the personal is the political," we originally began to understand the political implications of the oppressive nature of social relations through the *collective* validation of our personal experiences. But the women's movement became caught in a bind: for male-dominated organizations relegated any talk of personal politics to the women's movement which forced all women into internal splits based on false distinctions between male/female relations and capitalist social relations. The result became a left "movement" politics which lacked a real understanding

of the importance of revolutionary social relations and a women's movement that misunderstood the historical origins of social relations and the consciousness which reinforces them.

For myself, that process I have described earlier as feminist consciousness—the struggle to spark what we are with what we can become—is incomplete without the socialist vision. For this involves moving from a consciousness of oppression to a consciousness of its *meaning*. At the same time, socialism as it exists in the minds of socialists today, is incomplete without the feminist experience of actually effecting change on existing social relations, as well as the incorporation of a total women's politics into its body of thought. Understanding the two incomplete tendencies implies the need for a movement that understands them together, not as links but as parts of a dialectical relationship. And this demands that the movement itself must be seen and felt by all of us as a beginning realization of the revolutionary process.

Structurally and historically, understanding women in society cannot be done in isolation from other groups without the danger of an isolated women's analysis and a sexist socialist analysis. As Juliet Mitchell has talked about, this is not to say that we are all oppressed equally, but rather to say that an understanding of the different forms of experience as both oppressed and oppressor, also involves understanding the structural interrelations between groups. At the same time, a collective relationship to the experience of all groups prevents an abstract theoretical approach, one that has no basis in human consciousness. As women and men we need to understand our experiences in relation to each other, in all social realms, in order to grasp our real social positions and consequently our roles as agents of social change in possession of a revolutionary ideology.

But the fact remains that it is a real alliance, not a temporary or an opportunistic one—one that must be perceived in the same way as NAM's need to become multi-racial. For although the relegation of the "personal" to women's liberation has been in large part fostered by the idea that we have radically different interests, if men are truly into socialism, they will learn it is in their self-interest as well to struggle for the realization of feminism.

I am involved in NAM because I know that socialist politics will continue whether or not I'm an active participant in them. And believing that the movement itself will constantly determine the results (and not underestimating the potential of NAM in its general appeal), by being a part of it I can fight for the need to control all aspects of our lives and not allow "the personal" to be pushed off onto "the women's movement"—at the same time trying to ensure a total vision of socialism—one that understands oppressive social relations to be a function of capitalism, one that speaks to the full range of human potential.

This by no means implies all women should join a mixed organization; it is posed only as an open ended possibility as to why I choose to be in NAM given all the anguish and ambivalence expressed above. It is open ended because while it is based on my interpretation of an historical need, there is certainly some amount of unfounded faith on the ability of NAM to meet this need. For although men objectively have the same long term interests as women—which revolve around the humanization of all forms of social relations, whether interpersonal, interracial, productive or international—our immediate and qualitatively different forms of oppression will mean the struggle of women against domination and absorption will be unending and difficult.

(continued on page 12)

## ella, in a square apron, along highway 80

*She's a copperheaded waitress,  
tired and sharp-worded, she hides  
her bad brown tooth behind a wicked  
smile, and flicks her ass  
out of habit, to fend off the pass  
that passes for affection.  
She keeps her mind the way men  
keep a knife—keen to strip the game  
down to her size. She has a thin spine,  
swallows her eggs cold, and tells lies.  
She slaps a wet rag at the truck drivers  
if they should complain. She understands  
the necessity for pain, turns away  
the smaller tips, out of pride, and  
keeps a flask under the counter. Once,  
she shot a lover who misused her child.  
Before she got out of jail, the courts had pounced  
and given the child away. Like some isolated lake,  
her flat blue eyes take care of their own stark  
bottoms. Her hands are nervous, curled, ready  
to scrape.  
The common woman is as common  
as a rattlesnake.*

BY JUDY GRAHN

## asking for ruthie

*you know her hustle  
you know her white legs,  
flicker among headlights  
and her eyes pick up the wind  
while the fast hassle of living  
ticks off her days  
you know her ways*

*you know her hustle  
you know her lonely pockets  
lined with tricks  
turned and forgotten  
the men like mice hide  
under her mind  
lumpy, bigeyed  
you know her pride*

*you know her blonde arms cut  
by broken nickels in  
hotelrooms and by razors of  
summer lightning on the road  
but you know the wizard  
highway, no resisting so  
she moves, she is forever missing*

*get her a stopping place  
before the night slides dirty  
fingers under her eyelids and  
the weight of much bad kissing  
breaks that ricepaper face*

*sun cover her, earth  
make love to Ruthie  
stake her to hot lunches in the wheat fields  
make bunches of purple ravens  
fly out in formation, over her eyes  
and let her newest lovers  
be gentle as women  
and longer lasting*



## nixon's weapon's

(continued from page 3)

necessary if one wants the people to recover their democratic liberties and to proceed to really democratic and fair elections.

After the above has been achieved, the provisional revolutionary government of the Republic of South Vietnam will immediately discuss with the Saigon administration the formation of a three-segment government of national concord with a view to organizing general elections in South Vietnam, to elect a constituent assembly, work out a constitution and set up a definitive government of South Vietnam. The general elections will be held according to procedures agreed upon among the political forces in South Vietnam so as to insure effectively their free, democratic and fair character.

The provisional revolutionary government does not demand a monopoly of control over political life in South Vietnam. A "take-over" simply is not our plan. On the contrary, we stand for the achievement of a broadly based national concord. ■

(From Statement by Madame Binh at Paris peace talks, May 4, 1972. Text in *New York Times*, May 5, 1972.)

## nam woman

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My intention in this has been for me and other women to work through what I think real feminist consciousness as a vital force must be all about. It means moving beyond the negative pain of a raised consciousness, into a positive political struggle with other socialist women, with the aim of creating the space for all of us to work for a socialist vision that accurately perceives our needs as women and as people—as social beings interrelating in a mixed world.

The hope in printing this piece, as frightening as this kind of "exposure" can be, as ambivalent as I feel about the fact that it is me—a woman—who is once more raising the issue of consciousness, is to open up some kind of consciousness dialogue. It is a "risk" that might be a step towards really moving from women's issues, to a politics of the liberation of women and to the discovery of true, socialist politics. This is a task and responsibility for us all.

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\*joni and john please come home\*



## Vanguards

(continued from page 4)

a variety of ways, including community, institutional, and factory work, and will not at this time favor one area over another.' This means rejecting any conception of 'key sectors' or 'key institutions,' repudiating any strategy that calls upon people in one situation (the schools, for instance) to leave that institution for another in order to make the revolution.

The intention of early NAM organizers that it become a 'mass socialist' rather than a 'cadre' organization is not inconsistent with the idea of 'vanguard parties' or with Leninism. Marx's idea of a socialist party, which was shared by Lenin, was that it be composed of those workers who were committed to socialism, and who in that sense were a vanguard in relation to other members of the working class. Marx and Lenin presented the idea of a vanguard party in opposition to that of a party with a reformist outlook. And the guiding light of Lenin was his opposition to economism—a politics that *denied* the necessity for organizing the working class for socialism. NAM, as an organization of socialists committed to building a socialist movement within the working class, is following out the best tradition of Marx and Lenin.

Most organizations that today call themselves 'leninist' or 'Marxist-Leninist' do so on behalf of principles that were specific to the historical situation on Czarist Russia (for instance, its centralization, its advocacy of insurrection), while overlooking the principles (such as the opposition to economism) that are necessary for any socialist organization. In the same way, these organizations take over ideas in Marx that are historically specific to nineteenth century capitalism (the concentration of wage labor in factories), while overlooking the principle that informed these ideas (that the proletariat is defined by its relationship to the means of production, not by the kind of commodity it produces). In short, we should not abandon Marx or Lenin to IS, PL, or the CP.

There are other distinctive features of NAM that distinguish it from other socialist organizations: our insistence on internal democracy and our support of autonomous third world and women's organizations. Our principles distinguish us from all other socialist organizations, and back up a demand that these organizations do not belong in NAM. There are and should be many tendencies within the the organization, but we have a right to be surprised and angered if other organizations that don't come close to sharing these ideas do their recruiting or act as 'minority factions' within NAM. \*\*\*\*\*

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