

# NEW AMERICAN MOVEMENT

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strike at shell

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election

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(Photo by Howard Read)  
SCABS? Student interns at the Norco Shell refinery were withdrawn after the union on strike there protested that the students were being used as "scabs".

# Vietnam, S.D.

NOTE: St. Paul attorney, Kenneth Tilsen, spent the week of March 21-29 in Wounded Knee, South Dakota, representing the Minnesota Lawyers' Committee for Justice. He was there to help the leaders of the Independent Oglala Nation on some legal matters, and brought out the seven negotiating points to federal officials through heavy fire from vigilantes and federal agents surrounding the town. Before returning to Wounded Knee, he described the political situation there. I compiled this report from three days of interview notes and tapes. Tilsen did not have a chance to read it before leaving and I take responsibility for the "slant of this piece."

The press has presented a highly distorted picture of apparent factional infighting among the Indian people there, a confused, confusing but often factual report of events which, in itself, is a major weapon in the U. S. government's struggle against the Independent Oglala Nation.

Tilsen is very pessimistic about the possibilities for a just settlement and regards "massive bloodshed" as likely. If this happens--or has happened by the time you read this--the mechanism will probably be a pullout of the U. S. marshals and the FBI which will allow the government-armed vigilante squads to move in and kill the defenders of Wounded Knee. Such an event would probably be described by the press as an "internal" battle among Indians, in which the "moderate" locals had "recaptured" their land from "outside" agitators. Groundwork has been laid for such a report.

Compare this press account with Tilsen's report, and examine the evidence he provides to support his assertion that Richard Wilson and his vigilante squads are playing the same role at Wounded Knee as the Thieu-Ky regime and ARVN troops play in Vietnam:

"Minneapolis Tribune, Page 1, Mar. 27--Armed Sioux Indians from the Pine Ridge Reservation seized the major road leading into Wounded Knee Monday. Tribal chairman Richard Wilson vowed to drive out the dissidents holding this tiny prairie town.

"Earlier, Wilson and his 'Oglala warriors,' all dressed in civilian clothes, shot down the telephone lines leading into Wounded Knee, effectively cutting it off from outside contact.

"Wilson said that no food would be allowed into Wounded Knee, where about 200 members of the American Indian Movement and sympathizers are down to their last day's rations.

"Some food went in Sunday night [this was Tilsen's car] under a court order which directed federal agencies not to interfere with the efforts to take food and medical supplies to the AIM group. . .but that would be the last, Wilson said.

"He and his men set up a roadblock. A carload of food from Rapid City was stopped about one mile along the trail. Three lawyers in the car [these were three other lawyers from the Minnesota Committee; Tilsen was in the village at this time] showed the Indians a court order signed Sunday by a federal judge, but one of the Indians said 'That's no good here; this is Oglala Sioux Nation territory.' The Indians seized the food and ordered the lawyers to depart. They did.

[But they returned, without the food. Government legal honcho Richard Wellstrom told Tilsen later, "Wilson and his gang were more drunk than usual, so they let your friends go through," with some physical hassling.]

"Wilson said that the majority of the 11,000 Sioux on Pine Ridge Reservation were ready to drive the dissidents out. He has said repeatedly that if the government would remove its agents and marshals, the tribe would recapture Wounded Knee." [But when Wilson called a well-publicized general meeting of the Reservation's Indians to discuss "driving out the invaders," only 8 people came.]

That wire service copy--widely carried by newspapers across the country--was an effective U. S. government weapon. Whether by ignorance or by deliberate complicity, the press has been the means of delivery of many weapons of this kind. Right now, when there is beginning to become available much information to "set the record straight," there seems to be a press "white out" on news from Wounded Knee.

--Paula Giese



## TILSEN'S REPORT

ON FRIDAY, MARCH 23, I went to Wounded Knee with court instructions for the federal marshals in connection with a confrontation at the barricade the government had just set up. Several Onandage chiefs, who had been in Wounded Knee before the town was closed off, now wanted to leave. They refused to allow the FBI to fingerprint them or search them at the barrier checkpoint and were being held until they did. Our instructions ended this confrontation and allowed them to leave unmolested. In spite of the legal nature of my errand, I personally was told by the U. S. Justice Department attorney at the scene that if I so much as approached the barricade from the outside and spoke to anyone, I'd be arrested, court or no court.

On Saturday, March 24; we spent all day in court in Rapid City, eventually obtaining a court order which permitted access for one week of six lawyers to Wounded Knee, and was supposed to allow six carloads of food and medical supplies to come with us. This order enjoined the federal police from interfering with our passage. On Sunday, March 25, we entered with three carloads of food. The other lawyers left that night, while I stayed at the request of the people in Wounded Knee. During the next two days, heavy firefighting--nearly continuous shooting from the surroundings into the village--prevented me from leaving. Later, after a "cease fire," lawyers attempting to bring in food were shoved around (as were two federal marshals escorting them) by Wilson's vigilantes, and their food was seized and dumped at the unofficial and illegal roadblock.

The role of Wilson and his recruits is obvious to anyone who is in the area for any length of time. At a public meeting in Rapid City on March 28, the highest government official in the area, Kent Frizell, the U. S. Interior Department Solicitor-Nominee, openly admitted that an agreement had been made with Wilson not to arrest his vigilantes for their law violations and violence. This allowed them to set up an illegal roadblock, to violate court orders requiring passage of food and medicine and to continue, unarrested, firing from surrounding positions into the streets and

houses of the village. Frizell said the agreement not to arrest was that Wilson should "try to get the vigilantes under control," because their crossfire from between and outside the federal lines was "endangering the lives of FBI men and federal marshals." (It is generally acknowledged that a vigilante most probably shot marshal Lloyd Grimm accidentally, Monday night. Many reports have implied the defenders of Wounded Knee shot him, despite the direction of fire making this impossible.) When asked by lawyers and others why the Justice Department did not deal with the vigilantes, Frizell replied, "The situation isn't right now" for arrests of vigilantes, even though they are quite apparently interfering with U. S.

officials in the performance of their legally-sanctioned duties.

U. S. officials obviously want the vigilantes to do their dirty work. The officials do not want communication between Wounded Knee and the outside world, legal representation, press presence, food and medicine to enter.

Frizell and other government officials have also admitted both publicly and privately that the Wilson regime was not fairly elected--there was ballot stealing and other irregularities--and that a new election is needed--something members of the tribe have been demanding for some time. They also declare openly that under present conditions of repression and terrorism imposed by Wilson's "reservation police," a "free" or fair election is impossible. They speak vaguely of the need for special precautions like those taken in the recent United Mine Workers Union election, where, for years, a corrupt and repressive leadership used force, fraud and murder to maintain its power against the UMW members. This comparison of the UMW and Pine Ridge situations is frequently made by government officials.

The Wounded Knee-Pine Ridge situation became a crisis because of government complicity with Wilson and other government-supported "tribal leaders." During the months immediately before the takeover of Wounded Knee, reservation Indians filed some 150 separate written complaints of civil rights violations against Wilson and his "reservation police." Many of these involved physical violence and threats of it. Not one of these legal complaints was responded to by the federal government.

Wilson has now considerably expanded the numbers of vigilantes he commands. Local white ranchers--who have advantageous arrangements made with the present "tribal leadership" to lease tribal lands, have been recruited. Notices were posted in bars for hundreds of miles around, offering the "job" of "cleaning out the communists from Wounded Knee." Wilson also obtained Ku Klux Klan-type films, widely used in the South in the early 1960's to stir up feeling and actions against civil rights workers and black people. Wilson shows them now to recruit whites. Sometimes Wilson deputizes his barroom recruits, as "reservation po-

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The New American Movement (NAM) exists to help organize a movement for democratic socialism in the United States. Our aim is to establish working-class control of the enormous productive capacity of American industry, to create a society that will provide material comfort and security for all people, and in which the full and free development of every individual will be the basic goal. Such a society will strive for decentralization of decision making, an end to bureaucratic rule, and participation of all people in shaping their own lives and the direction of society. We believe the elimination of sexist and racist institutions and the dismantling of American economic and social control abroad are central to the struggle for socialism.

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# SHELL STRIKE

NEARLY 5,000 Shell refinery workers across the nation have been out on strike since February in a struggle unique both in the issue it raises and in the groups it can draw together. For the first time a major union, in this case the Oil Chemical & Atomic Workers (OCAW), has struck around what is basically an environmental issue (see box below). This has opened up the space for new linkages between disparate sectors of the working class who recognize a common interest in protection and control of the environment in which they live and work.

## THE ECOLOGISTS

SOME ELEVEN NATIONAL ecology groups such as Sierra Club, Friends of the Earth and Environmental Action have given their support to the strike and a boycott of Shell products. This itself represents a positive development, given the conflict Sierra Club and the AFL-CIO have come to in California. Whether an across-the-board labor-ecology coalition can be built is another story. There is a liberal connection between such figures as ecologist Barry Commoner or Leonard Woodcock of the UAW. But most top labor leaders and the elite ecology groups accept the corporate framework which allows "trade-offs" of jobs, wages and prices vs. environmental quality, viewing these as commodities locked in economic competition.

The anti-Shell campaign has provoked some confrontation with liberalism in the ecology movement. The magazine, *Environmental Action*, for instance, tried to have it both ways by running catchy headlines like, "Workers and Environmentalists of the World, Unite!" while at the same time calling on Shell to recognize its own best interests. "...everyone... will triumph if the strike wins" it was argued, even "in the long run, Shell Oil itself." At meetings of the magazine staff there was some struggle over this rather unconvincing argument, and it was finally resolved that for reprints of the article "Shell Oil itself" would be dropped from the list of those who "will triumph."

In New Orleans, a local newspaper editor, Bill Ruston, a leader of the New Orleans Center for Housing and Environmental Law (NOCHEL) first publicized the strike. At early meetings of a Shell Boycott Coalition, however, differences appeared between people who identified themselves as ecologists and those from NAM whose primary identification was as socialists. Some of the people from ecology backgrounds seemed uncomfortable about taking strong sides in a strike, rather seeing their role as providing expertise to evaluate the issues between labor and management on their technical and legal merits. The socialists from NAM, on the other hand, were seen by the environmentalists as bringing in irrelevant rhetoric whenever they argued from a class perspective.

Although most of the New Orleans environmentalists have drifted out of the coalition to work on other legislative campaigns, they will help to build a rally for April 26 which is being called for by the national ecology groups. There are many opportunities for working relations to improve, but differences in class outlook will continue to generate different approaches to the strike. At least some of the environmental groups are planning to make the rallies on the 26th focus on persuading Shell stockholders to vote along with the workers, while New American Movement in New Orleans has been building community and labor support for the strike.

## THE BOYCOTT

THE INTERNATIONAL UNION decided to run a high-cost boycott campaign with billboards and radio spots. This seemed one of their only options because modern refineries are highly automated, employing few

## A QUESTION OF UNITY

By Jim Stodder  
New Orleans NAM

production and maintenance workers relative to the scale of operations. Shell has managed to keep the plants running at about 60% of capacity by using skeleton crews of management, foremen along with technical and office workers who have not been unionized. Also, even if the transportation unions were giving strong support to the strike, which they are not, most of the product leaves the plant by pipeline, making it difficult to interdict or even trace. Put any union in this position against the largest non-American corporation in the world (Shell is 65% Dutch and British controlled), and you clearly have an uphill fight. There have been three strikes against Shell at Norco in the last ten years. The first two failed. The union has gambled that an expensive publicity campaign against Shell products will make the difference.

The first action of the coalition was a press conference/rally held in early March around One Shell Square--the tallest and, by general acclaim, most depressingly ugly building in New Orleans. About one hundred and fifty union men and their supporters showed up. Shell and Union spokesmen made their points before the TV cameras, while NAM members staged a brief pantomime. This depicted the common plight of a worker and consumer both dying from the fumes emanating from a trashcan marked "Shell." They find their remedy in tearing up the huge credit card that weighs the consumer down and depositing the Shell boss in the can. (Although the TV station's comment was that the presentation was without dramatic merit, most of those assembled seemed to appreciate its finer points.)

Since this kick-off NAM's main concentration has been on picketing gas stations. This has presented a good opportunity to talk to people about the strike, and is a real help to the union since they are prohibited from this action by laws against "secondary boycott." Since the boycott began, three Shell stations in the New Orleans area have been closed down.

Several problems with the union's boycott method have become apparent, however. One is that Shell sells very little of its gas to individual consumers in the New Orleans area. Far bigger customers are the city's bus lines and airport. Another is that the union has, in most of its leaflets, made much of the fact that Shell is a foreign corporation that is not giving American workers as good a contract as the American companies. This is not only bad politics; it's also doubtful whether patriotic appeals convince many consumers, if the continued sales of Volkswagens and Toyotas are any indica-



Shell workers call for consumers' boycott to support their strike

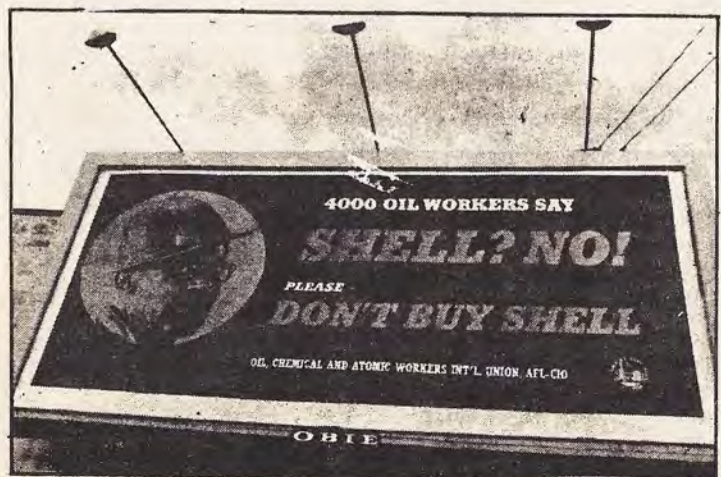
tion. The most serious problem, however, is that people are not effectively organized as a class when they decide to buy or not to buy.

## SCABS AND UNIONS

THE NORCO PLANT management has a firm ally in St. Charles Parish Sheriff, Junior Sellers. Sellers owns two companies that do business with Shell. He has not only been careful to protect the hundred or so scabs a day who enter the plant in three busses; he has actually helped recruit them. Since one of the scab busses was greeted by a "hailstorm" of rocks, security has been beefed up with Pinkertons and plainclothesmen. Sellers has only been in office six months, but sentiment for his impeachment is already rife.

Most scabs are recruited from Baton Rouge and rural areas, but NAM people have done what they could locally to fight the scab policy. A minor victory came after several NAM people and a striking worker attended a Tulane University student senate meeting to protest the use of five chemical engineering students as scabs at the Norco plant. The sleepy meeting was thrown into a turmoil by this disclosure, especially because of the offensive label "scab." Students were actually getting university credit for their work, being enrolled in a "plant practice" course advertised as providing "trips ...to a wide variety of plants" and lectures on "plant safety and ethics." Tulane did not apologize, but agreed to pull the students out because of "danger" to them.

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The OCAW is demanding that Shell submit health and safety standards to the same bargaining and grievance procedures that cover more traditional areas of wages, job classifications, etc. The tremendous gaps in the enforcement of the Occupational Health and Safety Act (OSHA)--there is, for instance, only one federally licensed industrial hygienist in Louisiana--have forced unions who want any sort of protection to write it into their contract. Shell is the only major oil company that has not agreed to the substance of the OCAW health and safety package. Its position on the strike is that since management has legal responsibility to safeguard its employees, it alone should have decision-making powers. Shell's record, however, does not inspire great confidence.

In 1968 a badly corroded pipeline exploded at the Pasadena, Texas, refinery, killing two men. When a Shell offshore oil platform near the mouth of the Mississippi burst into flames in 1970, four men died, 50 were injured and the waters of the Gulf suffered another major oil spill. Shell was later fined by a district court for failure to provide proper safety devices. At the Norco, Louisiana, plant, thirty miles north of New Orleans, a man was recently burned to death with hot asphalt when steam escaping from a damaged pipe caused an explosion.

Less spectacular, but more insidious, are the long-range effects of daily exposure to a long list of dangerous chemicals. Over 40 middle-aged men are under medication for heart conditions at the Norco plant. In the Texas refinery's phenol department, where about 20 men work, heart attacks have killed four men in the last three years. Another man from the department is presently in critical condition. Shell ascribes all this to natural causes, but at the same time refuses to release vital statistics on the health and longevity of its workers.

Shell's poison does not, however, stop at the plant gates. The Norco refinery, which was granted the 1971 National Wildlife Federation award (by two Shell executives) for its "beautiful landscaping," has dumped thousands of gallons of hydrogen-sulfide-laced water into bayou Trepagnier, killing all the fish. It pumps several tons of aluminum-silica compound into the air every day. Thus, it is another threat to Louisiana's endangered wetlands estuaries which produce 10% of the nation's fish and most of its oysters. It's also no help to New Orleans' notoriously foul tap water, which some experts blame for the fact that this city leads America in its rate of stomach and gall bladder cancer.

# the Cat Comes Back: BLACK PANTHERS IN OAKLAND

by John Judis and Nick Rabkin  
Berkeley NAM



TWO YEARS AGO the Black Panther Party was enduring brutal government repression and bitter internal division. Today the Party is a tightly disciplined election machine that confounded political experts by placing Bobby Seale in a May 15 runoff election for mayor of Oakland with incumbent Republican, John Reading. In the municipal election of April 17, Seale defeated Otho Green, a black closely tied to powerful left-liberal Democrats in San Francisco, and John Sutter, a white liberal city councilman. Elaine Brown, another Panther, ran for City Council against Joshua Rose, a liberal and the only black now on the Council. Though she failed to reach a runoff, she also made an impressive showing, garnering more than 35,000 votes.

The Panther campaign for city offices is part of the new Panther strategy for building a revolutionary movement—a strategy that can be traced back to Eldridge Cleaver's break with the Party in 1971. It is the first attempt in many years by a revolutionary organization in the U. S. to make a serious run for electoral office. To the extent that they made a credible showing in Oakland, the Panthers succeeded in breaking new ground for the American left.

## THE NEW PANTHER STRATEGY

The Panthers were founded in October, 1966, as the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense. Taking as their model, the Southern black self-defense groups that grew out of the civil rights movement, the Party tried at its inception to create an example for the black masses to follow:

The primary job of the party is to provide leadership for the people. . . . When the people learn that it is no longer advantageous for them to resist by going into the streets in large numbers, and when they see the advantage in the activities of the guerrilla warfare method, they will quickly follow this example.\*

This perspective, influenced by the NLF and Fanon, led the Panthers through the late sixties toward an increasingly militant posture, in which "picking up the gun" assumed a key role in Panther strategy.

By the spring of 1969 the Panthers had created such an impression that Nixon's Justice Department, in collusion with local police, undertook to destroy them by a series of raids, murders and arrests. By late 1970, most Panther leaders were either in jail or under multiple indictments. In response to the Nixon repression, the Panthers attempted to organize a "united front against fascism," which centered on a proposal for community control of police. They also began their "survival programs"—at this time mainly the free breakfast-for-children program. The need to change the Panthers' image in the black community was implicit in these programs which were designed to create a base of support where, before, respect mixed with fear had prevailed. But until the spring of 1971, the main thrust of Panther politics remained armed struggle.

In the spring of 1971, however, the Panther 21, on trial in New York, wrote an open letter to Weatherman in which they not only criticized the Panthers for devoting too much time to their breakfast programs but expressed agreement with Weatherman politics. The 21 were expelled from the party. Then, Cleaver, supporting the 21, attempted to split the party. He publically denounced it for taking a "revisionist" course, for abandoning armed struggle.

The break with Cleaver prompted a general re-evaluation of Panther strategy. In April 1971, Huey Newton issued a statement, "On the Defection of Eldridge Cleaver from the Black Panther Party and the Defection of the Black Panther Party from the Black Community." Newton tied Cleaver's ascendancy in the Party during the late sixties to its having become a "revolutionary cult group;" the Panther insistence on "picking up the gun" had alienated it from the black community.

In subsequent articles, Newton re-examined the Party's relation to black capitalists and to the Church, replacing the Party's unequivocal rejection of both with a careful estimation of their positive and negative roles within the black community. Newton stressed in these writings the desirability of unity among all blacks as members of an oppressed colony, while insisting that black businesses use their profits to the benefit of the black community. Newton also suggested a new strategic direction for the party. The attempt to "raise consciousness" would have to occur in the course of meeting the immediate needs of black people for food, shelter, safety and jobs. Instead of carrying out armed struggle before they had created support among the black community, the Panthers would seek political power and support for their programs by "working within the system."

From this period, the survival programs multiplied, beginning with the campaign against sickle cell anemia and continuing with programs of free food, free shoes and glasses, free clinics and free busing to prisons for families of prisoners. In April 1972 the Panthers attracted 16,000 people to a series of Community Survival Conferences where groceries were given away, sickle cell tests administered and voters were registered. In May, the Panthers endorsed Shirley Chisholm's candidacy for president. Soon afterwards, Seale and Brown announced that they would run for office.

The Oakland election became the key to the new Panther strategy. Relying on Oakland's predominantly liberal electorate (McGovern carried Oakland by 2 to 1) and a potential majority of third-world registered voters, the Panthers saw the possibility of making a significant showing in the Oakland elections and in this way building "a base of operations" there. Through winning public office, the Panthers could use city funds to implement and augment existing and new survival programs, while transforming city government into a "people's government." Oakland would become an example to the rest of the cities in the United States.

## OAKLAND AND ITS CITY GOVERNMENT

Oakland is a city adjacent to Berkeley and across the bay from San Francisco. It has a population of 362,000. Like San Francisco, its economy has become increasingly tied to the needs of corporations with investment and trade in the Far East. The port of Oakland—the second largest containerized port in the world—is the city's leading employer. In the last ten years, Oakland has experienced the same problems as other American cities. Industry has moved southward. Middle-income whites who work in downtown offices have moved to the suburbs and poor blacks have come into the city, raising the percentage of black people from 20% to nearly 50%. Among these Oakland blacks unemployment has been around 20%. Because of the shrinking tax base, the city services have steadily deteriorated, a process that has affected blacks particularly.

This deterioration has been accelerated by Oakland's city government. Oakland is 70% democratic but the city government has traditionally been dominated by conservative Republicans, representing William Knowland, the publisher of the *Oakland Tribune*, and by local small business people. (In the last 20 years, only one candidate has been elected to public office in Oakland

without *Tribune* endorsement.) These politicians (Reading is a good example) have used city funds to subsidize downtown office construction and middle-income housing projects and have neglected predominantly black schools in favor of all white schools in the Oakland hills. By the standards of modern urban politics, Reading is an anachronism.

When Seale entered the mayoralty race, Knowland convinced Reading, who had decided to step down, to run again. "I don't want Oakland to become another Berkeley," Knowland commented. From the beginning, the race was billed as between Reading and Seale, in spite of the fact that Green was thought to be the only candidate capable of beating Reading in a runoff. Seale and Brown ran a classic grassroots campaign. Between December 29 and March 11 over 500 campaign workers registered over 11,000 potential voters for Seale and Brown. Precinct work was on a door-to-door basis. Seale and Brown began each morning by talking to people on the buses and continued with daily walks around the city streets.

Reading and Knowland were quite willing to play up Seale's candidacy and even to intimate that Seale had a chance. They hoped in that way to scare white voters from the Oakland hills to come out and vote. And they hoped to reduce the importance attached to Green's campaign.

## THE SEALE-BROWN CAMPAIGN

The Seale-Brown campaign went through two stages. In the first, which lasted from May 1972 to February of this year, they concentrated on a registration drive in Oakland's black community. In their campaign speeches and literature, they emphasized that Reading and the city council had misused city funds and explained how they would use such funds to provide new jobs and services for Oakland blacks and poor whites. They also detailed how they would purge the city government of its "racist flunkies and lackeys of the capitalist system." On July 1, at a Panther survival conference, Seale summed up the Party's intent:

We're talking about taking over the whole city of Oakland. We're talking about kicking out of the Police Department, even talking about kicking every racist out of every agency that refuses to recognize the People's basic desires and needs. We are talking about moving in on every jive exploiter; we are talking about moving on every businessman that sells us rotten meat; we are talking about moving on the total power structure and giving the power structure to the people, because the Mayor's seat is not the Mayor's seat. It is the people's seat.

By February of this year, though, the focus of the campaign shifted. The Black Panther Party was not mentioned in the Seale and Brown campaign literature. Instead it read "Elect two Democrats." The proposals to kick the racists and capitalist lackeys out of the city government, as well as the plan to make white businesses contribute to community programs, was subordinated to the Seale-Brown 14-point program for economic development and by a plan to build a "multi-ethnic international trade and cultural center."

Several factors motivated this change of focus. When black liberal democrat Otho Green entered the race, he threatened to take away Seale's support among black democrats. (Green in his literature billed himself as "THE Democrat.") When asked about his membership in the Democratic Party, Seale was quick to say that he was not a "lackey of the Democratic machine," but simply considered that his registration as a Democrat should entitle him to as many advantages in the minds of voters as it did Green. Both Seale and Newton suggested the possibility of taking over the Democratic party. (In his recent *Playboy* interview, Newton speculates on the possibility of the Democratic party becoming a socialist party.)

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# WHY WE'RE STILL THERE

by Martin Murray

AMERICAN BUSINESSMEN have a history of interest in private investment in Vietnam which has been expressed in three major ways: first, direct investment; second, feasibility studies that plan for future investment; and third, rebuilding Vietnam's economy in a way that creates dependence on increased foreign investment.

FIRST, AMERICAN businessmen have been investing in Vietnam since the imposition of the pro-U. S. Diem regime in 1955. Early that year, the U.S. Operations Mission in Saigon initiated a Finance Division and commissioned a number of American banking and foreign exchange experts to aid in the establishment of the National Bank of Vietnam. Almost simultaneously, former New Jersey resident Ngo Dinh Diem proclaimed Vietnam's willingness to accept private investment. In 1957, within the framework of the Investment Guaranty Program and the International Cooperation Administration, the Diem government signed an agreement with the U. S. government, under which the U. S. guaranteed American investment against the risks of inconvertibility of currency, nationalization and war. Also in 1957, American advisors helped establish a Vietnamese Industrial Development Center "to assist investors both by providing technical advice and by making loans or taking other measures to facilitate the financing of worthwhile projects." At the same time, an organization known as "American Friends of Vietnam" (a CIA cover group) promoted investment in Vietnam through a series of conferences in New York City.

Direct American investment did not exceed \$6 million by 1965 but a beachhead had been established. Chase Manhattan and Bank of America had branch banks in Saigon. Standard, N. J., Caltex and Shell were negotiating for the eventual construction of a \$19 million refinery financed by Morgan Guaranty and Trust. Parsons & Whitmore held 18 percent interest in a \$5 million American-managed paper mill at Bien Hoa. Johnson International owned partial interest in another textile mill. Brownell Lane operated a plant to assemble earth moving equipment. American Trading Co. was doing \$10 million a year in business assembling tractors. While there were fewer than ten companies in Vietnam with investments exceeding \$100,000, six of these were financed by American corporations. In all, more than 35 U. S. companies in Vietnam were doing business amounting to \$45 million in 1965 and averaging profits of 20 to 30 percent on their original investment.

Business optimism about Vietnam has occasionally waned but never disappeared. In 1969, *Business Abroad* reported that "businessmen around the world are anxious to move on with new trade and development plans in Asia. Many aren't waiting for a Paris-negotiated peace in Vietnam to propel them into action; the time is now, say experts back from tours of the region. They are impressed by the market's potential—and even more by the eventual possibilities in the postwar economic surge many are predicting." By 1972, Ford and American Motors had completed plans for joint ventures with local entrepreneurs to build assembly plants in the extensive industrial park at Bien Hoa. The Ford plant is part of an overall plan to invest nearly \$1 billion in Asia by 1980.

Two final examples dramatize encouragement to foreign investment and promising assets in natural resources available in Vietnam. Under the guidance of U. S. economics experts attached to the government, the Saigon regime has pinned its future political hopes on the attractiveness of the climate for foreign investment. The 1972 investment bill mentions no limit on the profit return of foreign corporations. Business tax exemptions are extended to fifteen years and corporate income taxes have been decreased by 10 to 50 percent for five years beyond this period. If these inducements are not enough, the law guarantees Saigon will not permit the creation of local companies to compete with these foreign firms.

The second example is the announced discovery of oil in Southeast Asia, an economic asset that invites continued U. S. support for the Saigon regime. In the words of *Forbes*, "if oil is there, or even probably there, the question of who rules in Saigon takes on a more than political significance." The importance of this oil "boom," can be seen in the industry's mouthpiece's (*Petroleum Engineer*) comment that "if and when the U. S. wins its objectives [in Vietnam], oil exploration conceivably could be successful enough to turn that part of the world into another South Louisiana-Texas-type producing area. This would be one of the biggest booms in the industry's history. It all depends on the Vietnam war, how long it takes to get the job done and how well the job is done." The trade journal *Far Eastern Economic Review* commented that "Saigon is highly optimistic these days about an oil bonanza being round the corner. Mining officials talk as though the South Vietnamese continental shelf is one of the richest in the world. A National Resources Agency technician asserts that the oil track that lies hidden somewhere off the

shore will some day make the Middle East green with envy. . . . And some politicians even speculate that President Nixon is having second thoughts about withdrawing from Vietnam because the oil potential is simply too good."

In addition, Chase Manhattan's branch bank in Singapore predicted that by 1980 the oil industry would spend almost as much in the Asian Pacific as the total slated for Latin America, Africa and the Middle East combined. Seismic and aeromagnetic surveys were conducted offshore between 1966 and 1968. The Saigon government has even gone so far as to call on Iranian experts and engineers from the Imperial College of London to conduct geophysical surveys off the coast. At least ten American corporations have expressed interest in obtaining oil rights concessions for offshore drilling.

ANOTHER MAJOR FEATURE of American economic interest in Vietnam are the numerous U. S.-sponsored confidential and semi-official studies on economic development. These feasibility studies began immediately after the collapse of the French colonial rule. The Commerce Department, for example, published a series of reports on prospects for agricultural, industrial and mining development, the import tariff system, tax and currency information and the like, from 1955 to 1957. A first National City Bank report in 1958 provided summary information on American aid to Vietnam, balance of payments information, trade patterns with American firms and plans for future economic development. The famous Michigan State Advisory Group provided numerous studies between 1955 and 1962. The most optimistic report that projects the future of economic development of Vietnam is *The Postwar Development of the Republic of Vietnam: Policies and Programs*, prepared by the Joint Development Group under the direction of former TVA chairman, David Lilienthal. This \$2-million report published in 1969 commented that "by many measures South Vietnam is in an enviable position in relation to the experience of other countries at the end of a war" and proposed that over \$2 billion should be mobilized from public and private international investors to stimulate the Vietnamese economy.

THE NIXON ADMINISTRATION'S discussion of economic aid must be seen as part of the plans to integrate Vietnam's economy into the world capitalist system. A RAND report in 1971, for instance, argued that the U. S. should provide balance of payments support by upholding the commodity imports program. This report continued to say that about \$5 billion in economic aid before 1980 would be required "to sustain [Vietnam's] economy while it

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# Letters

(Excerpts of letter from Karen Fowler, Sacramento, California, 3/14/73)

Dear Friends,

... Less than two years ago I was what society called a "social character disorder" at the age of 21. My previous six years of survival were spent much the same way most white middle class girls do. I did the whole trip of starting my drug experiments with pot and pills. As the story progresses I spent 2½ years using heroin, traveling back and forth across the country with a man the same age as me that took the final trip. He overdosed almost three years ago.

... Seems to me like I was always looking for something. I tried everything to fill the void in my life, from drugs, prostitution, God, school, books, to fairy tales. There seemed no end...

... In May of 1971 I was introduced to a resident of Synanon Foundation, Inc. After one visit there I thought I had found Utopia. Everyone "seemed" happy and "seemed" content. This was what I was looking for. After one more heroin bust I decided to move in. People kept throwing around the words "revolution" and "equality." I decided to do some research. My mind was stagnated. I read Angela Davis' book first, then George Jackson, Eldridge Cleaver, etc. I could not believe the injustices these people had been dealt. Out of guilt feelings, I suppose, I started patronizing third world people. I felt so bad about what my people had done to theirs, completely butchering and castrating their whole culture, to the extreme point of them wearing wild clothes and naturals, thinking that made them black.

Soon I started going with a Puerto Rican brother who turned my whole world around. He was 20 years old and very proud of his culture. Our relationship went through some real humps but there was something unique in it. We read together, we bought nothing but radical literature, as opposed to

the "glamor" mags I used to read. I would debate the theory that all Latino men have the most machismo in them. We managed to have a relationship that was politically and socially equal; we never tried to compete with each other. But still I had my problems as a white woman who was beginning to feel the burden of deaths of generations before me. ... I needed some of my own people to identify with. There were none in Synanon. They told me I should not worry about problems in the larger society, only try to deal with my own hangups. I would not listen. Time went so fast. I could not read enough: I spent every spare moment reading everything--Mao, Marx, Engels, feminist literature, Puerto Rican, black and Mexican literature, old copies of the Monthly Review I managed to collect, literature on the Venceremos Brigade and mucho on Cuba. I did not feel so alone; there were more white women like me. I finally began to realize that it was not just my problem--I am a product of my environment, meant to feel alienated so I will not unite with other forces and discover the real source of the problems in this world and this imperialist country.

Then came my confrontation with the hypocrisy in Synanon. The Synanon Game was the only place I could question management about why Chuck Dederich, the founder, was the only one in a Cadillac and mansion when they preached equality and being for the people. The game is their form of group therapy, but I know it is indeed the biggest racket of the century. They use the game to control your thinking. They have only one point of view, the Synanon way. The game is a real act of aggression where I was suppressed most of the time because I attempted to attack the system instead of the individual. ... After a while they really tried to control my thinking by making such inane statements as "sure there is genocide, racism, sexism, capitalism and even in Synanon the Board of Regents deserve to live much better than I do--but what about your own problem as a character disorder?" I could not stand it. Synanon recycles people. It turns them into robots who do cheap manual labor. In turn, Chuck Dederich capitalizes off them by sending more robots to bigger corporations, asking for donations of goods, services and financial support. They do this to keep the drug addicts off the streets so they will not steal from you, Mr. Jones, the things that are rightfully theirs because it was produced off the sweat of the backs of their ancestors. Reality is distorted in that place. Only one point of view is emphasized there--it is a very pure form of facism and communal capitalism. And to think I had actually thought I was beating the system when they were really always ripping me off.

... Four days ago I left. I could not compromise my ideals any longer. There wasn't anyone there, except for two other men who saw the corporation in its true light. They will be leaving soon. Even the blacks, Puerto Ricans, the Chicanos there are counter-revolutionaries. They are satisfied there, meeting their immediate needs and thereby helping to maintain the status quo. I tried to talk to them. Their only reaction to me was "What does a white girl know about being black?" I'm very angry with them for being sellouts. They are content with their piece of the American pie. They can have it. My only escape was to ride horses (I lived in Marin County) and reading. I could not sell out any longer.

... I must make contact with some organizations or movement. Some people have told me not to be deluded, that a lot of radical movements have disbanded and a lot have gone to drugs. ... I believe there is one that's called the "New Americans" or something like that. ...

I have no roots anywhere. ... I only know that I must continue to educate myself politically. ... Yours in the struggle,

Karen Fowler

## NAM SCHOOL FOR ORGANIZING SKILLS

NAM IS SPONSORING a school to teach techniques of organizing from July 15 to 22 on a farm near Sperryville, Virginia. Between 50 and 100 "students" will be accepted from NAM chapters, pre-chapters and other non-NAM collectives. People with specific projects that they are planning or currently working on are encouraged to apply. These projects can include community organizing, workplace organizing or women's projects.

There will be around 20 "teachers;" no small group of people will "teach" for the whole period. Instead each "teacher" will teach one workshop for a few hours and during the rest of the time will be a "student" and be available for informal consultation. Workshops will cover specific skills such as door-to-door organizing, and organizing in metropolitan areas, neighborhoods, and rural areas. Some will focus on building organizations, labor unions, caucuses within unions, citizens groups and coalitions between different organizations over specific issues. Other workshops will concentrate on how to make service projects political; people will discuss how to set up crisis counseling centers and women's health and legal projects and then begin a dialogue about how to get these projects involved in direct action. Still other workshops will be on developing media skills such as making slideshows, writing speeches, giving impromptu speeches, silk screening posters, putting out a newspaper and using radio and TV.

Many of the workshops will be taught by people active in NAM; others by people friendly to us. Along with the specific workshops will be more general discussions about organizing within a socialist perspective, and how to talk about socialism while organizing. Towards the end of the week much attention will be focused on the projects that students are planning or involved in.

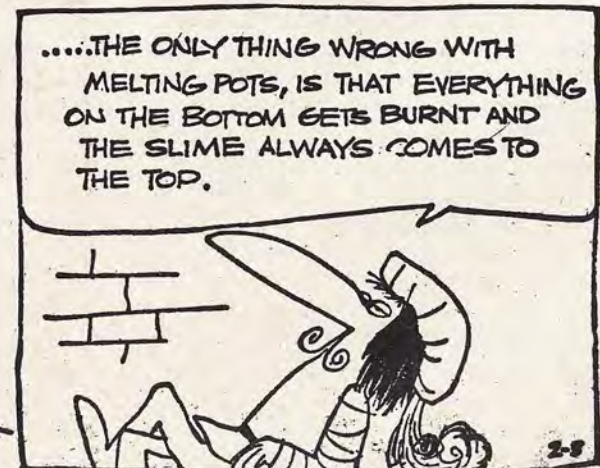
The school is being coordinated by Sally Avery and Loren Weinberg. The expenses of teachers will be paid out of the school's budget. Students themselves will pay for their own travel, food and registration fee. Response to the school so far has been encouraging. Although we already have commitments from a number of teachers, we are open to suggestions for teachers and workshops. For application forms and more information, write

Loren Weinberg  
2332 19th Street NW  
Washington, D. C. 20009

THE SECOND NATIONAL CONVENTION of the New American Movement will be held July 5, 6, 7 and 8 on the campus of Northern Illinois University at DeKalb, Illinois (about 60 miles west of Chicago). Chapters are entitled to one delegate for each five members, and individual members (either in chapters or at large) may come as individual delegates (chapter delegates have five votes each, individual delegates have one). NAM now has thirty dues-paying chapters and 14 pre-chapters, or circles. We expect something over 300 delegates to attend the convention.

A tentative agenda (subject to lots of change) was drawn up at the last meeting of the National Interim Committee in Cleveland (April 7-8). A major topic at the convention will be the problem of building an interracial socialist movement, coalitions with black and other ethnic groups. The convention will start with a general discussion of NAM, its history and its problems as a national organization attempting to develop a popular socialist politics. Women's and men's caucuses are scheduled near the beginning. Three blocks of time are planned for workshops on program and chapter experience. Discussion and proposals for changes in the structure of the national leadership are also planned, as is discussion of an electoral perspective. And, of course, a new National Interim Committee will be elected.

Those interested in working on the convention or having proposals to submit to it should write to the national office soon. Time is short and swift.



# "LET THEM EAT CAKE"



My husband and I would like to buy a porterhouse steak.



by Arthur MacEwan

RICHARD MILLHOUS Nixon said that no one was to blame: not the supermarkets; not the wholesalers or packers; not the feeders; and certainly not the rangers. Perhaps, he suggested, the consumers could make things better for themselves by becoming more careful shoppers. One of the President's advisors embellished on this theme: he suggested that the American people should try eating a little less.

In other words, the Nixon Administration did find some to blame: the same culprit the President has uncovered so many times before--THE PEOPLE! A few months ago, it was the people who were responsible for low productivity; they weren't working hard enough, had lost that old American ethic: some were loafing on welfare. Before that, the people had been responsible for inflation; they were demanding too much pay and thus forcing business to raise prices. Now, one more time, the people were guilty: eating too much, the silly gluttons.

Absurd? Of course. But not particularly surprising. Far more surprising would have been to hear a President go before the people and speak the truth, which could have been summed up with something like the following:

"The fact of the matter is that the rapid rise in meat prices has grown out of the long-lasting crisis that American capitalism is in the midst of. As long as you put up with capitalism, the people will pay the price of such difficulties. Business does not want to pay the price of the country's troubles, and they are the ones in control of the economy; so they pass the problems on to the people as workers and consumers.

"As President, there is not really very much I can do about it--we simply cannot control the fluctuations of the system very well. And besides, if the Government did come up with some policy to put a greater burden on business, it would mean a reduction in profits, a slowdown in growth and business investment, less jobs and even greater difficulties. Sorry about that; but that's the way it is--under capitalism."

As long as we are going to imagine a president who would tell us such things--and I am not sure whether he would be a Republican or a Democrat--we may as well go whole hog (to use an appropriate metaphor) and imagine the rest of his speech about meat prices:

"You will all remember," said the President, "the economic troubles that we were having in the late 1960's. The problems of those years grew out of our aggression against the people of Vietnam. That

aggression was quite necessary in order to protect the operating principles on which the international empire of U. S. business is based. U. S. business needs to maintain open market and to have the freedom to invest and exploit labor throughout the world. Nonetheless, the U. S. aggression in Vietnam was quite costly.

"I am not going into the details here tonight [presidents always speak to the people at night], but suffice it to say that by spending so much on an unpopular way, we in the government precipitated the inflation that became so serious by 1970. In an effort to curb the inflation we cut back government spending, which made things even worse: by 1971 we had unemployment along with the inflation.

"These ups and downs are not new to capitalism. But what is important to us tonight is that the particular fluctuations of the late 1960's and early 1970's have several aspects that led to the current problem with meat prices. One of these was quite specific. Meat producers lost their confidence in the economy. If I may: they were not bullish on America. They decided not to increase their herds so rapidly. When the economy began to recover in 1972, the meat producers were left behind. The problem is that it takes a long time to produce beef--about 2½ years before a calf reaches maturity. Today's prices are a delayed effect of the recession of two years ago.

"The trouble is--and as your president I must be honest with you--that for the same reason, it will take another two years before we can hope for a real relief through increased production of beef. High prices now will give us more cattle, but not for at least two years.

"But that is not all. Getting out of the 1971 inflation-unemployment situation required an improvement in the international position of the U. S. economy. We needed to find more ways to sell more things abroad in order to be able to import all the commodities that U. S. business cannot produce so cheaply here. I was able to arrange the sale of a huge quantity of wheat to the Soviets to help our balance of payments--and put the farm vote in my pocket. Anyway, the Soviet wheat deal, augmented by some natural difficulties, led to a shortage of food grains. The shortage led to a price increase, and so it costs more to produce cattle and other meat.

"The food grain problem will probably last. The Soviet deal extends for three years. There are steps I might take to encourage more food grain production--like stopping farm subsidies that pay farmers not to use land--but I do not want to do that. I might make token efforts, but farming has come more and more into the hands of big business in the U. S., and I do not wish to offend big business or, for that matter, the longer standing, traditional farm interests. Also,

I wouldn't like to offend those five meat packing companies that control 35 to 40 percent of the industry!

"Finally, I come to the most general aspect of our current problem and perhaps the most serious. The economic difficulties triggered by American aggression in Vietnam came when business in Japan and Western Europe had recovered from the effects of World War II and was thus creating serious competition for U. S. business. When the economy got in trouble, the Japanese and Western Europeans moved ahead of us in many fields of international trade. Trying to catch up, I have chosen, on behalf of the U. S. business interests, to devalue the dollar twice in the past year and a half.

"While we in government usually attempt to obfuscate such international monetary dealings, they are really not so complicated. In effect, we made American goods cheaper for foreigners and foreign goods more expensive for you. This means that business can sell more abroad and also can charge higher prices at home--they don't have to worry so much about competition from Toyota or Sony.

"As far as the meat problem is concerned, the devaluation of the dollar means that we cannot do very much about it by lowering our quotas on meat imports. The new situation makes it more profitable for Australia, Argentina, New Zealand to sell meat to Japan and Western Europe than to us.

"So folks, it's a bad show all the way around. What can you do about it? Not much, I'm afraid. The meat boycott won't have more than a temporary effect, if any, on prices. It may even encourage food grain and beef producers to produce less and so lead to even higher prices. So maybe you should forget about boycotts. After all, the political organization and activism that they generate could be a real threat to me and to members of the ruling class that I represent.

"But if you're willing to quit thinking of yourselves and start working for the welfare of capitalism, then you might be able to do something. You learned during the boycott, that you didn't need so much meat anyway. So keep eating less meat; try it, you'll like it. That way you'll be less trouble when it comes around to re-negotiating your labor contracts, as it will so very soon for so many of you. If you eat a lot of meat, you'll need a lot of wages. American business won't like that. Keeping capitalism going means keeping business happy."

At this point in his speech the President stopped talking about meat prices and started talking about the death of his dog, Checkers. Some people thought it was intended as a profound allegory but informed sources tended to dismiss that part of his speech as irrelevant to the current economic situation.



# censorship hits film world

By John McChesney

NIXON'S ATTEMPTS to repress criticism in the media are usually discussed in terms of television and the press, but most recently this coercion has also been directed at the world of film. The results have not been pretty, although progressive members of the film community give evidence that they will not take this coercion lightly.

On Friday, March 30, it was announced that Constantine Costa-Gravas' new movie, "State of Siege," would be eliminated from the American Film Institute's much-touted inaugural film series at its new facility in the Kennedy Center in D. C. The explanation of the cancellation given by AFI director, George Stevens, Jr., was couched in the foggy obfuscation of bureaucratic language. "State of Siege," Stevens said, was an "inappropriate" and "undesirable" choice for the inaugural series at the Kennedy Center since it deals with an act of political assassination. He added that in his opinion the film "rationalizes an act of political assassination."

The sensitive psyche of the Kennedy clan was thus invoked to suppress critical material. Filmmaker Jonas Mekas remarked that "the building in which the institute is housed begins to determine the content of the films shown there." Closer examination of "State of Siege," its makers and the film world context in which it was created indicates that Stevens, however, had more on his mind than the delicate sensibilities of the Kennedy family.



First, a few incidents that are indicative of the political atmosphere of the film world. Carlos Pontecorvo's film, "The Battle of Algiers," (1966) has often been cited in trials of the Black Panther Party as the recipe book for Panther politics. Pontecorvo's latest film, "Burn" (starring Marlon Brando), a thinly veiled attack on U. S. imperialist policies in Indo-China, had only a brief run in commercial theatres and has since been withdrawn from circulation. The maker of "Billy Jack," a film which obliquely attacks U. S. treatment of Native Americans, fought a long, uphill battle with a major studio to have his film distributed. The U. S. film industry has produced next to nothing which deals directly with the contradictions of our involvement in the longest war in our history. A furor was created in Hollywood by Brando's rather silly and mild introduction of politics into the latest Academy Awards. The Cuban Film Festival in New York was broken up by U. S. officials who seized the "illegal" films. Also, the Secret Service recently raided and seized Cuban films from Newsreel offices across the country. "State of Siege" was scheduled during opening week of AFI's series and many Washington luminaries were expected to be there. Finally, AFI has been angling for a fatter budget from the Nixon administration. With this context in mind, George Stevens' effort in the continuing political censorship of film in the U. S. has implications beyond a consideration for the traumatized Kennedy mind.

In making his decision about "State of Siege," Stevens could hardly have been unaware of the past histories of the film's two creators, Costa-Gravas and Franco Solinas. Both men have helped make political films that are critical of fascist regimes that are propped up by the U. S., and films that are sympathetic to national liberation movements fighting neo-colonialist domination. Costa-Gravas directed "Z" and Solinas wrote the screenplay for and authored "The Battle of Algiers." Costa-Gravas, incidentally, does not see himself as a "political" filmmaker; he simply says that all film is political whether or not it recognizes itself as such. Both men have been unusual in their choice of political subject matter and their development of a fictional-documentary form, since most U. S. and European filmmakers have stubbornly ignored the major social upheavals of our times and have relentlessly pursued their own involuted formalist fantasies. So the case of "State of Siege" was, no doubt, already prejudiced in Stevens' mind when his staff informed him that it was one of their choices for the opening program.

"State of Siege" would undoubtedly have grated on the eyes and ears of those who attended opening night: Averill Harriman, Charles Percy, George McGovern, Mrs. Robert Kennedy, Edward Kennedy, Birch Bayh, Mike Mansfield, Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. and John Sherman Cooper. The movie is a fictional treatment of the story of Daniel Mitrione, an official of the Agency for International Development, who was kidnapped and executed by Tupamaro guerrillas in Uruguay in 1970. Mitrione was employed through AID's Office of Public Safety as an advisor to the metropolitan police force in Montevideo. According to a Washington Post story published in November 1970, the Office of Public Safety was allocated \$24.8 million in fiscal 1970. The funds were used to "assist" police forces in 27 countries, with the lion's share of the budget, \$11.1 million, going to South Vietnam. Costa-Gravas and Solinas fictionalize the episode so that the South American country is unnamed and the official is called Philip Michael Santore, played by Yves Montand. The killing of Santore is never depicted and Washington Post critic, Gary Arnold, says, "In pictorial terms, the use of violence in 'State of Siege' is unusually spare and restrained." Furthermore, according to Arnold, the concluding scenes of the movie clearly indicate that the actual execution of Santore was politically futile, and did nothing for the insurgents' cause. There was thus no rationale for assassination. We must conclude that George Stevens, Jr. is either a dolt or had other reasons for suppressing the film.

THE FILM'S SUPPORT for Latin American revolutionaries and its biting critique of U. S. foreign policy undoubtedly had more to do with Stevens' decision than did his desire to shield the senators from the horror of bloodshed. Costa-Gravas insists that his fiction is not a fantasy. "All events are true," he says. "We can prove it. We have come into some very rare documents." Solinas and Costa-Gravas spent many months in Latin America researching their material. "State of Siege," did not start out, however, as a film about the Mitrione incident. "Many years ago in Greece," Costa-Gravas explains, "there was this extraordinary guy. His name was John Peurifoy. He was the U. S. ambassador to Greece and later to Guatemala, during the United Fruit Company affair. After the Civil War in Greece he helped put in a government which governed for 10 years." Costa-Gravas' father was with the Greek resistance during World War II and then was imprisoned after the war as a communist.

Peurifoy was ambassador to Greece from 1950 to 1953. In 1955, while serving as ambassador to Thailand, he and his nine-year-old son were killed in an automobile accident. "Under very mysterious circumstances," says Costa-Gravas. So Costa-Gravas and Solinas went to Mexico and other Latin American countries to build a movie around Peurifoy. "But I discovered that the American presence in Latin America was different. The mechanism of intervention had changed."

Costa-Gravas did not elaborate on how it had changed in this interview. What probably happened is that the filmmakers started to make an Ugly-American film around Peurifoy as a slap-dash, brazen manipulator. What they discovered was that the mechanism of intervention was a far more subtle penetration of the whole infrastructure of an underdeveloped nation. This brings us back to Mitrione. The official story on Mitrione is that he was simply an innocent communications and traffic expert. This version resurfaced recently in an article in the "Dayton Journal Herald" (April 16) by Smith Hempstone who denounced "State of Siege" as "an anti-American lie." However, since Mitrione's death, documents have come to light which rather conclusively prove that Mitrione was far more than an innocent technician. These documents can be read in NACLA's "Latin America and Empire Report" on the Ferré family. Mitrione's direct connection with torture and the organization of death squads was revealed by the former chief of Uruguay's Office of Information and Intelligence, Alejandro Otero in an interview with Rio de Janeiro's largest newspaper, "Jornal do Brasil." He argued that until Mitrione took charge as chief U. S. internal security advisor to the Uruguayan police, the Tupamaros had only used violence as a last resort. At the time of Mitrione's death, there were rumbles of a senate investigation. In the wake of ITT's nefarious activities in Chile, it is hardly surprising that George Stevens found "State of Siege" an "inappropriate" film to show in AFI's opening series.

Stevens made his announcement at the time he was preparing to welcome Nixon to the AFI dinner in L. A. honoring John Ford. At the same time, as Pete Hamill of the New York Post points out, Stevens was dodging a call from various trustees to publicly oppose Nixon's proposed new laws on obscenity, laws which would force unprecedented Federal controls over the arts. Doug Rugoff of Cinema V theatres remarked to Hamill, "I think Mr. Stevens was afraid of losing funds for the AFI which he hoped to obtain from Nixon's administration. I believe he was afraid to run the risk of offending the President by showing 'State of Siege.'"

AS SOMETIMES HAPPENS with attempts to gloss the contradictions of our empire, Stevens' efforts backfired. Instead of calm, a storm of protest ensued. Many filmmakers responded immediately to his transparent ploy by withdrawing their films from AFI's inaugural series. The boycott was largely organized by Julia Reichert and Jim Klein, members of Mad River NAM, and makers of "Growing Up Female."

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## NAM RADIO SHOW



rehearsal

One cold night last winter, radio listeners in Durham, Chapel Hill and Raleigh, N. C., were surprised to hear, in place of the usual rock, an opening performance by the Durham Workers' Chorus. In loud and determined, though uneven, tones, "Solidarity Forever" carried over the airwaves, followed by an old Wobbly song: "Working folk of all countries unite/ Side by side we for freedom will fight/ When the world and its wealth we have gained/ To the bosses we'll sing this refrain -- You will eat bye and bye/ When you've learned how to cook and how to fry/ Chop some wood/ 'Twill do you good/ And you'll eat in the sweet bye and bye. . . . This has been a presentation of the New American Movement."

Every week night since September the Chapel Hill and C. P. Gilman chapters of NAM have sponsored a radio program, two to five minutes long, on a local radio station, heard by about 15,000 people. The listenership is mostly young working people, with a sizeable student audience and a surprising chunk of the radio subscribers over 30. The station began as a Duke-sponsored radio, and several years ago received an FM license.

Shows have covered a large range of topics, but generally fall within several categories. Most of the shows, in a variety of formats, have been "informational," socialist analysis and information about issues ranging from health care, political prisoners, welfare, taxes, runaway corporations, to U. S. policy in Africa, the Philippines and, of course, Vietnam. A number of shows have been "sketches" of life, life in the suburbs, the feelings of an old person, what it's like to be on welfare, description of life on the assembly line. Many shows have reported struggles--from prison strikes, union battles, guerillas in Portuguese Guinea to welfare demonstrations. The show has also featured a number of projections of what life will be like under socialism.

Tom Denyer, a graduate student at UNC and member of Chapel Hill NAM has directed the show for five months. Several others have spent much time in announcing and technical work, including especially Susan Van Dale, Gail Tougar and Marilyn Roaf of Gilman, and Don Pellis of Chapel Hill. Many people have contributed scripts, including regular scripts from Bob McMahon and Harry Boyte.

The show has featured dramatic conversation, poetry, folklore, readings, interviews, songs, reminiscences and fake panels, press conferences and speeches. Folks doing technical work have also developed considerable skill interweaving music with almost all the shows.

The show has gotten a few direct communications, but the primary effect seems to be indirect--making NAM publically visible and generally well thought of. Many NAM members have encountered people in other contexts who remark, "Oh, you're the group that puts on that show."

By Leon Blum, New York NAM

An enthusiastic meeting which opened and closed with the singing of the International, ended the first Congress of the United States Section of the Puerto Rican Socialist Party (PRSP). The working session of the Congress was held the weekend of March 31-April 1. The Congress was attended by some 125 delegates representing many cities. They adopted a political declaration, voted a series of resolutions and selected a leadership of 30 members to lead the mainland organization. This leadership is responsible to the Central Committee of the PRSP.

At the closing public meeting of the Congress, held Sunday, April 8, in Town Hall, New York, Secretary General Mari Bras explained that the Party will fight for an independent socialist Puerto Rican nation. The mainland section of the Party, "fighting inside the entrails of the imperialist monster," will organize revolutionary pressure for an independent Puerto Rico. Secretary Bras declared the solidarity of the Party with all countries that have defeated the capitalist system, such as the Soviet Union, China, etc. The Party will work to build a Socialist Movement in the U. S.

## PUERTO RICAN SOCIALIST PARTY

## UNITED FARM WORKERS

By Lisa Murphy

A MAJOR STRUGGLE has arisen between the United Farm Workers and the Teamsters as the contracts signed between the UFW and the grape growers three years ago have come up for renewal. The growers and the Teamsters have been engaged in a conspiracy against UFW that has involved large cash payments (\$5,000 each) from the growers to Teamster officials. Though evidence of the cash payoffs was given by a Teamster official to a Federal Grand Jury last June (they are illegal under the Taft-Hartley Act), the government has failed to act on it. Token investigations have been initiated by the FBI since Cesar Chavez produced the charge on April 9th, but they have been based on the premise that the Teamsters would have nothing to gain by the contracts. Already, 15 growers have signed contracts with the Teamsters including Coachella valley where over 5,500 workers are employed.

Contrary to the FBI statements, the Teamsters have high stakes in securing the contracts. The farm workers are the last link in their total control over all stages in food production. It is evident by their forceful tactics and limited controls that they are more concerned with the power they can gain than improving the actual conditions of the workers. Their contracts contain no pesticide control, are only up for renegotiation once every four years and call for the use of labor contractors (where wages are paid to the contractor and "sifted" through to the workers after the contractor has withheld a large amount for his personal expenses).

The United Farm Workers' contracts imposed a strict pesticide control, are renegotiated yearly and demand that a high hourly wage be paid directly to the worker. Although a California senator, Edward Roybal, conducted a survey among the farmworkers that proved that 85% of them preferred the UFW union, farm workers are not covered under the National Labor Relations Act rules that determine the representing union through elections.

Cesar Chavez recently held a press conference with the president of the AFL-CIO, George Meany, who also denounced the Teamsters' attempt at "union busting." The UFW has called for a boycott of table grapes and a House Labor Committee investigation of the collusion between the growers and the Teamsters.



FARM WORKERS DEMONSTRATED AGAINST TEAMSTER-GROWERS PACTS

Another factor making for a change in the Seale-Brown program was Nixon's budget cuts. The initial emphasis in their campaign had been on how they would use the funds available to the city--for survival programs rather than middle-income housing. The main question asked the candidates now was how they would raise revenue for the city and create jobs. It could no longer be assumed that such revenue or jobs would come from the federal government. Seale and Brown responded by proposing such measures as a tax on stocks and bonds (which would probably be impossible to implement), a 5 to 10% capital gains tax on transfers of income property and large businesses and an increase in payments from the Oakland Coliseum. The publicly-owned trade and cultural center was proposed in this context--as a means of insuring Oakland's economic development.

A final factor was Green's charge that Seale was not a serious candidate capable of running a city. Similarly, Knowland and Reading suggested that Seale would bring anarchy to Oakland. In the final months of the campaign, Seale and Brown found themselves running as much against the old image of the Panthers as against their actual opponents.

Even so, the shift in the Seale-Brown campaign raises questions about the Panther's new strategy. The Democratic Party is controlled by and works in the interest of corporate capital. By identifying with it, Seale and Brown sacrificed their ties to the long-run socialist program of the Black Panther Party. The plans for a trade center, however the funds it raises are used, unwittingly endorses the plans of corporate capitalists to make the Bay Area the headquarters for Pacific imperialism.

The danger the Panthers now face is one that all revolutionary parties have had to face: how to build a mass movement that is also revolutionary in its consciousness. The history of the American Communist Party, for instance, has been one of building mass movements, like the industrial union movement, at the expense of creating socialist consciousness. In the Oakland elections, the Panthers have increasingly tended to subordinate "raising revolutionary consciousness" to building a mass electoral following. It might be argued that the fruits of immediate victory in Oakland would be great enough to justify a policy of subordinating the creating of socialist consciousness to winning the election. What this will mean for the Panthers, however, remains to be seen.

For the May 15 election, Seale's strategy will be to capture the Democratic votes that went to Green, and as many as possible of those that went to Sutter. (The vote count was: Reading--55,434; Seale--21,329; Green--17,469; and Sutter--15,554.) Seale can assume the Green votes on the basis of the 34,845 votes that Elaine Brown received. The other source of votes will be from among the 60,000 registered voters who didn't vote in the April election, 50,000 of whom were from the ethnic communities in East and West Oakland. The Panthers hope that through door-to-door work many of these people can be induced to vote for Seale. Finally, Seale is hoping to pick up respectability among white Democrats through endorsement from Congressmen Dellums and Stark. Seale's victory over Green and Sutter has placed these Democrats and the party as a whole in a difficult position, having to choose between Seale and a conservative Republican. Dellums, who initially endorsed Green, has now come out for Seale.

Reading himself is welcoming the runoff. He could easily have justified asking for a recount, but he preferred the national publicity that a runoff election will bring. But, whereas they were confident of victory in May, Reading and Knowland have reason to be fearful of their future in Oakland. Seale's showing in the April election has demonstrated that the Panthers have become a powerful force in Oakland politics. ●

# Capitalism & Racism

By John French  
Amherst NAM

"WE ARE NOT CLOSING the conference," said Johnetta Cole of Amherst NAM, "but rather adjourning it, for the struggle against racism and capitalism is an ongoing one. Come struggle with us." So ended the three-day Symposium on Racism and Capitalism held in Amherst, Massachusetts, on April 4, 5 and 6.

The Symposium, sponsored by the Amherst chapter of the New American Movement with the help of other groups, was the result of two months of work. Sessions were held at the Amherst campus of the University of Massachusetts. Attendance at the main sessions was between 75 and 150 people; 300 attended the opening presentation by Herbert Aptheker. The generally positive and enthusiastic sentiments were expressed by one person, "I got a lot out of it and had an overall positive feeling. It managed to reach out beyond the normal confines of the left." It was a multinational group and many of the third world people were surprised at the number who attended.

The idea originated within the Amherst chapter in November and intensive work began in early February. As for the Symposium's content, as Robert Cole of the local chapter put it, "I think it's important to note that we didn't organize around racism as such but organized it around racism and capitalism, and that we clearly raised the issue of socialism." The people who were invited all had extensive knowledge about racism and its interrelationships with capitalism and imperialism and at the same time people who were and are activists. The conference was not just a denunciation of racism but an investigation of its concrete roots and operation, pointing to, as the final panel did, "The Socialist Alternative."

## HISTORICAL ROOTS

THE HISTORICAL ROOTS of racism were examined in two presentations at the Symposium. Herbert Aptheker, a well-known writer on racism and American history, gave the well-received opening talk, "U. S. Imperialism and Racism: A History of their Relationship." One of the general ways in which racism and its roots are ignored is by asserting that it has always been so. Professor Aptheker explained with ample and shocking documentation the development of the most vicious forms of racism in the 1890's and early 1900's. Racism as "science" and a developed ideology of inferiority dates from that period not only in the South but also among the best educated--at Harvard, at Yale, in the academic journals and mass circulation newspapers. Quotation after quotation brought this point home. This development was tied in with two processes: the development of American imperialist expansion abroad (the "Spanish-American" war, the seizure of the Philippines, Puerto Rico



and so on) and the subjugation of the blacks in the South, their internal colonization and reduction to peonage. This was the period when lynchings were at their height and the need to dehumanize the victim was such as to lead to the "scientific" proof of the inferiority and subhuman qualities of non-whites.

George Rawick, author of *Sundown to Sunup: The Making of the Black Community*, dealt with different aspects of the development of racism. He began by stressing the depth of the racism that pervades our society--taking as an example the history of the left, from the abolitionists onward, and the very slow progress that was made in coming to terms with the problems of blacks. He then went much further back in history, stressing the way in which racism "was rooted in the monumental changes of life and society that capitalism meant, in its distortion of the human character."



rawick

## ORGANIZING AGAINST RACISM

ONE OF THE STRENGTHS of the conference was, as one local NAM member put it, "It offered analysis of racism but also clearly pointed in a policy direction in terms of organizing and the long-run objective of socialism." This was at the heart of much of the Symposium. Earl Ofari, author of *The Myth of Black Capitalism*, and now doing work in Los Angeles with the Black Writers Collective and Watts Community Center, made this part of his talk. Explaining black capitalism as a "Method of Pacification," he stressed the need, above all, of class analysis and class organizing across racial lines. "We know frankly that there is no such thing as black capitalism. There is only one kind of capitalism and it's not white capitalism or brown capitalism. There is only capitalism and imperialism. Capitalism means basically the control of the mines, banks, factories, farms, shipping--essentially all the means and methods of production--and no blacks do that--Motown notwithstanding." The basic issues of working class life--unemployment, bad working conditions and so on--and not culture as such must be the center of our activity, with an eye constantly on the need to contest ruling class power.

The general exploitation of the working class and particular exploitation of blacks can be seen in the operation of the system of taxation. Ed Greer, now a professor at Wheaton College and one-time aide to Mayor Thatcher of Gary, Indiana, gave a very detailed and exacting analysis of this as regards the property tax system. Next to the income tax, the property tax is the biggest tax in the country, with state and local governments receiving half of their revenues from



it. He gave a detailed presentation of the way in which its organization benefits the corporate ruling class to the detriment of the working class as a whole and blacks in particular: industrial underassessment, overassessment of multiple dwelling units (which means tenants pay more taxes than home owners--more blacks are renters) urban/suburban tax-rate differences, tax-exempt property and the problem of direct racial bias. In general the property tax has been increasing faster than people's incomes--the tax issue being political dynamite at present, exploited only by the racist right. The point was made that the basis exists for class-wide organizing by socialists on this crucial issue--building the unity of the working class, black and white, against the ruling class.

Michelle Russell, basing her talk on her experience organizing in Detroit for the Labor Defense Coalition, a mass-based independent socialist group, discussed the question of racism and sexism in the context of American capitalism. In particular, she discussed the historical problems facing the black and women's liberation movements today. From the activity of the sixties there was an inability to consolidate leadership and tactics in the context of working class life. There has been a lack of transitional strategy in terms of our objective of overthrowing the existing power relations in the society. In its place, there has been a tendency in the women's movement to reductionist analogy to blacks and to the personalization of the enemy as the white male. There has also been a tendency to middle class self-indulgence. As she put it, "I'm not talking about reorganizing our lives so we can wake up in the morning with a smile on our faces."

Unions are one of the major organized working class institutions, and as such, an examination of racism and organized labor is of vital importance. A workshop of thirty-five people drew on the long experience of Harold Williams, a black worker and I.U.E. shop-steward at the Monsanto Chemical plant in nearby Springfield. He stressed the importance of racism as a method with which to split and weaken the working class. The present union leadership and bureaucracy, unlike the earlier, often socialist or communist, leadership of the thirties, is more often than not sold out to the bosses and does not really represent the workers, black or white. The need is for a rank and file struggle around racism as something that hurts not only black but also white workers. The workshop was characterized by lively discussion: one person told about a survey of metropolitan areas in the U. S. that found that most racist areas were those with the greatest degree of inequality between whites. The study also indicated that unionization results in decreased economic differences between blacks and whites.



*williams*

#### THEORY OF RACISM

A LONG-TIME POLITICAL activist and historian of racism and imperialism, Harold Baron, gave a penetrating and incisive presentation, "Racism and Nationalism in Advanced Capitalism." Baron's presentation was based on his work, "The Demand for Black Labor," and dealt with the problem of conceptualizing the position of blacks in America. He uses an analysis that combines class and na-

tional divisions. He began by emphasizing the need for theory in understanding the dynamics of racism and the need for overcoming the tendency of radicals to impatience, developing a perspective of long-range struggle. A few of his important points were: 1) The demand for black labor in the structure of today's economy makes the black proletariat a key force; 2) The basis of the black community is the black proletariat and it must provide the leadership of the black liberation movement; 3) There is no longer an economic basis for an independent black nation with the disappearance of the black peasantry in the South; and 4) Black workers are not simply members of the American working class--a class approach within a national perspective is essential.



*baron*

#### SOCIALISM

THE FINAL PANEL consisted of discussion of the ways in which socialist societies have dealt with racism and the national question. Stanley Kwong, recently returned from China, discussed the Chinese example. The Chinese now follow a policy of pluralism and accommodation of national minorities, which have their own autonomous areas. Much the same approach is taken in the Soviet Union, according to Ed Texeira. Johnetta Cole, who was recently in Cuba, made the point that the discussion of whether racism exists or not depends on your perspective and definition. At least in Cuba the institutional structures of racism have been destroyed and serious attempts are being made to change racist attitudes among the Cuban people--racism being regarded as a counter-revolutionary attitude. All in all the panel was very well received by the 150 people present and there was a sense of real solidarity.

The Amherst NAM chapter has found the Symposium as a whole was extremely successful. In addition to its educational success, it has helped to establish us as a major organization in the area, one that can accomplish things. It brought many new people into the group and gave energy to our other projects such as the Farah boycott. A basis has been established for us to grow and act. Building a mass socialist movement can be done. ●



*ofari*



*cole & kwong*

#### POLAROID AND APARTHEID

BY John Wiltshire  
Amherst NAM

A WORKSHOP ON Polaroid and Apartheid was held during the Amherst Symposium on Racism and Capitalism. Two people, brother Ken Williams and sister Carolyn Hunter, from the Polaroid Workers' Revolutionary Movement came from Boston to run the meeting.

They began by expounding on their involvement with Polaroid and their Polaroid boycott. This all started with their realization as employees at Polaroid of its large sales of I. D. films and cameras to the racist South African government for their Apartheid I. D. system. They then organized to force Polaroid to curtail these sales. This included doing research, organizing and pushing a boycott against Polaroid.

Polaroid reacted to all this by spending \$50,000 to buy ads in leading U. S. newspapers to point out their so-called apolitical and benevolent involvement in South Africa. They shortly fired both Ken and Carolyn. The commission they set up to investigate the publicized criticism came to the solution of setting up a "Polaroid experiment" which involved educating 500 black South Africans. This is the extent of their reaction: a "white wash." They have not even admitted their true relations with Apartheid.

Ken and Carolyn then went on to explain how I. D. systems in general (they are widely used in this country as well as in many others) are important tools which any fascist government could use to establish a police state (South Africa, Brazil). We must be aware of this and oppose the deployment of I.D.'s.

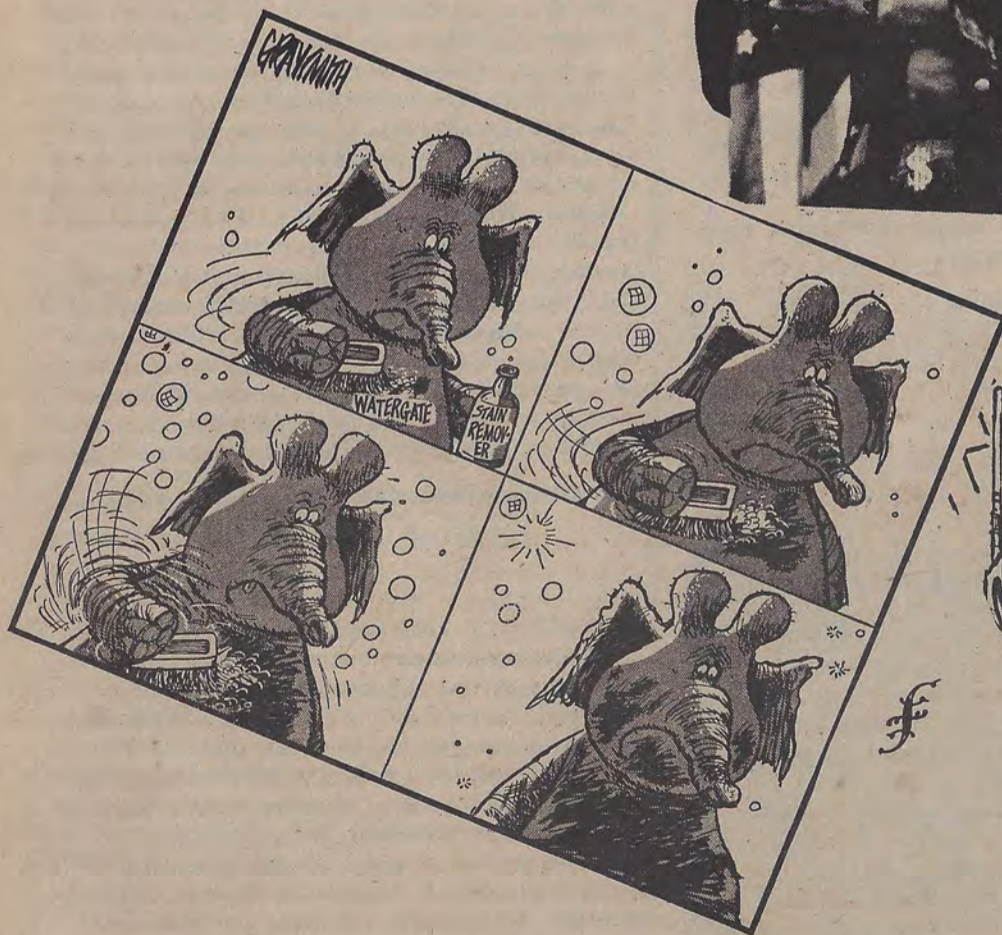
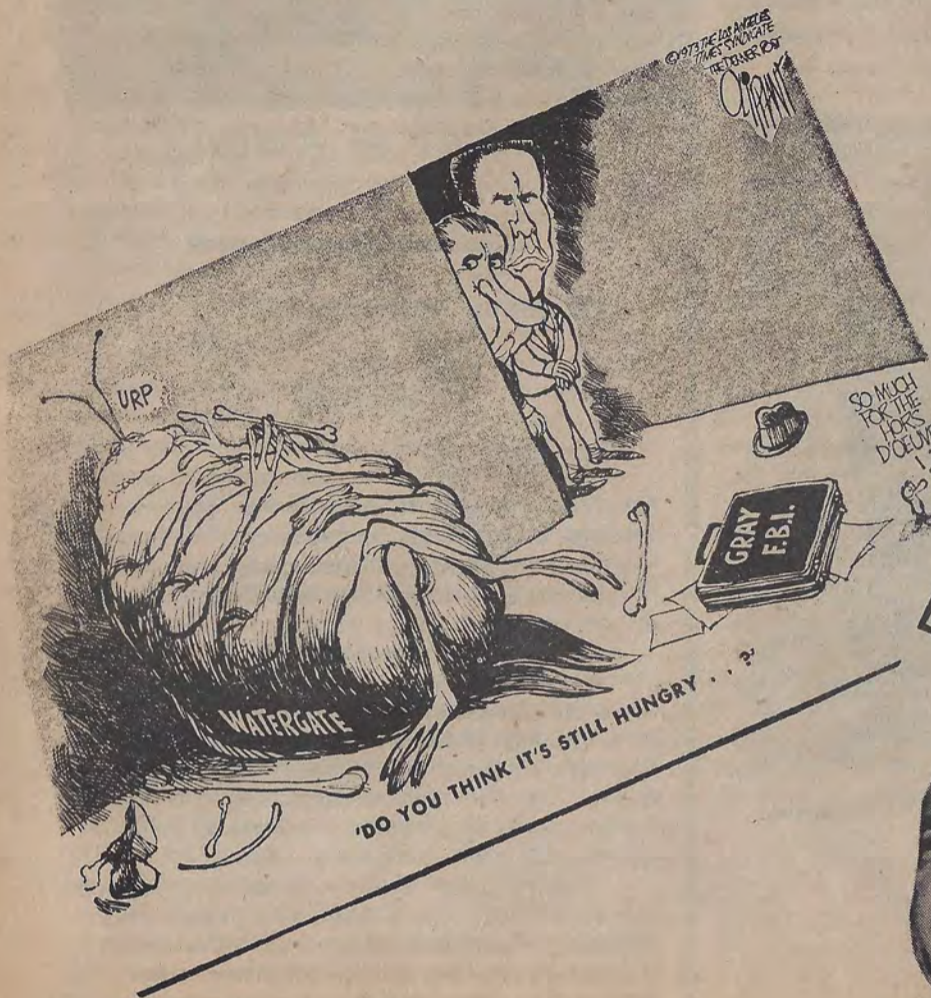
After discussing these topics for about an hour the workshop adjourned with agreement to organize future actions. On April 22, the organizational meeting was held with ten people attending. There was a report that the Polaroid I. D. system, which the University of Massachusetts was going to acquire, was put off for another year. It was reported that our previous pressure on the administration had been crucial in this decision. With this immediate issue out of the way it was decided that 1) intense research will be done on Polaroid and Apartheid, 2) an educational package for schools will be put together and 3) some publicity on the postponement by the University of Massachusetts be put out. The *real* work has just begun. ●

#### STOP THE CREDIT BLOCKADE AGAINST CHILE

A NEW CHILE FESTIVAL devoted to the enjoyment and interpretation of the political and cultural process of Chile attracted hundreds in San Francisco, April 28-29. New Chilean revolutionary folk music was played; films and slides were shown and workshops of high quality were heavily attended. An action session organized further education and pressure related to U. S. governmental and corporate aggression against Chile. A Chilean visitor expressed his appreciation for the conference but, he said, the best thing the movement in the U. S. could do for Chile is to get itself together building its organizations and programs.

NICH (Non-Intervention in Chile) organized the successful Festival and will continue work in behalf of action for Chile. It can be reached at P. O. Box 800, Berkeley, CA 94701. ●

# NIXON'S THE ONE!!



"law and order"

# Electoral

## WHAT IS TO BE UNDONE?

—A Reply to the Upton-Lynn Statement on Electoral Politics

by Ed Clark  
New Orleans NAM

There was a time in the history of the socialist movement in which socialism was considered a "scientific" advance over the pragmatic self-seeking of capitalist political theory. It would be a good thing if such a time were to come again. If socialists would subject any proposed strategy for the socialist movement to the same kind of harsh examination that any other scientific hypothesis is subjected to, we might still be in the dark as to "what is to be done" but at least we'd have a pretty good idea of what is not to be done.

The Upton-Lynn statement on "Electoral Politics" (*New American Movement*, 2:6, April 1973, p. 10) is a case in point. Their paper attempts to both criticize the failures of past socialist strategies and put forward an alternative strategy for building a socialist movement in this country. Not only is there nothing "wrong" with this, it is something we should all be trying to do, but once the attempt is made, it then becomes subject to the same harsh examination, the same critical evaluation as it applied to all the old strategies.

The immediate and obvious failure of the Upton-Lynn statement is that the authors make no attempt to provide any evidence for their conclusions. Perhaps they thought that their views were "obvious" or "self-evident," or perhaps they thought that producing evidence would make their paper long and "unreadable." Still, I do not think it is too much to ask that anyone who does propose a new strategy for the socialist movement (or the junking of an existing strategy) should try to show us why this should be done. In fact, I think we as socialists should demand a serious and scientific approach to strategy. Otherwise, how can we expect to get anywhere at all?

Upton and Lynn point out that socialists in the past have concentrated on "radical social criticism and education through demonstrations and protest, slogans, slide shows, lecture series, teach-ins" and on "radical social work such as draft counseling, strike support, abortion counseling, welfare rights and free clinics." But the authors go on to say that "we have not developed a visible, serious socialist political organization that could significantly effect any change in present policy let alone bring about a revolution. We have not contested for state power, nor have our programs been adopted by those who do."

The authors seem to feel that the conclusion follows from the premise. Wrong strategy leads to failure. Well, it does but so can many other things. For example, left groups in this country have not only had the "education, protest and social work" strategy in common. They've also shared a "strong leader/disciplined follower" concept of a socialist movement. They've also shared an infatuation with foreign revolutions, regardless of the actual merits of those revolutions. They've also had to deal with the strongest (or one of the strongest) ruling classes in history. Upton and Lynn do not even consider such potential explanations of socialist failures long enough to reject them out of hand—they simply ignore them. But ignoring them is not going to make them go away.

The authors go on to outline what they see as a "split" in our own thinking between "socialism" and "politics:"

This approach cannot see any way in action of organization to unite the real world of practical politics, State power, political parties and unions, the "dirty," "corrupt" aspect of life, with an essentially moralistic, idealistic and pure socialism.

I am afraid that such a statement is a classic example of empty rhetoric. Do the authors expect us to believe that the real world of practical politics is not dirty and corrupt? Or do they want socialists to learn the art of giving and receiving bribes? No, I don't think they mean

LAST ISSUE WE printed an argument by Melissa Upton and Larry Lynn in favor of NAM adopting an overall electoral perspective. This was part of our pre-Convention discussions. The statements that follow are responses to the Upton-Lynn piece, two in support and two opposed. These are the only responses received so far and we are printing them in full (with no editing of the two opposed at the request of the authors). We hope to receive further responses and will print a reasonable number, but we must place a limit on length of future statements. Nothing longer than 1,400 words (a little over four double-spaced pages) should be submitted, unless you are willing to let us trim it down.

Electoral politics is tentatively scheduled for a morning's discussion at the Convention. That discussion is not designed to close the subject in NAM. Its purpose is not to force a decision one way or the other, but for us to consider carefully and as fully as possible the reasons for making electoral activity a general framework for our continuing activity around issues and in various reform movements—and also to consider the dangers that such a course would create. This discussion, we hope, will then be brought back to the chapters for further discussion before an overall perspective is adopted for NAM as a whole (maybe at the 1974 convention).

Jim Weinstein

either; the statement is merely meant to set us up to accept an electoral perspective as "part of the real world" without having to prove that one way or the other. As for myself, I will assert as self-evident that it is impossible for socialists to be effective in the real world without being dirty and corrupt—for if it is not, then socialism is impossible and the capitalist "scientists" who assert the corruption of human nature are right.

Upton and Lynn believe that this "split" has resulted in socialists participating in electoral politics by hiding their own politics and "trying to move people to the left" from behind the scenes. Other socialists have refused to participate in electoral politics, preferring to proclaim their socialist sympathies, "especially in relation to countries in far different circumstances," on large banners in small demonstrations "isolated from the political attention, needs and activity of the people."

Now, I think as little of those alternatives as Upton and Lynn, but it's interesting that those who do advocate such strategies do so in the same terms as Upton and Lynn. Liberal elements in NAM have argued for support of liberal candidates in terms of "having an effect on the real world of practical politics." Others have argued that support for the Provisional Revolutionary Government of South Vietnam should be one of our priorities because "the real struggle for socialism is in the third world." My point is that arguments about "reality" are meaningless unless it can be really shown why one alternative is more realistic than another.

Upton and Lynn believe that the arena of electoral politics is the only area where different struggles by different sectors of the working class can be unified in a common struggle against the capitalist class. This is probably the strongest argument they make in favor of an electoral strategy.

We do have a genuine problem of how to unify different sectors of the working class. In recent years, the multi-issue organization approach has been viewed more and more favorably; indeed, NAM itself is a multi-issue organization. Upton and Lynn view this approach as mechanistic and doomed to failure because it "had neither unifying principles nor a unifying arena of struggle."

It is certainly justified to be critical of the way some groups arbitrarily "line-up" issues, often without any regard for the issues themselves. But, is the hypothesis of a "unifying arena of struggle" a real alternative?

Upton and Lynn believe it is, though for a negative reason. In the absence of this arena, there is "no place where each separate activity can be understood as part of a common struggle against capitalism." Therefore, "the typical result has been to have our issues separated and each issue brought into the existing (liberal) electoral arena and explained by liberals as one more competing interest."

Of course, even if NAM were to adopt an electoral strategy, the liberals would still separate our issues, would still do their best to divide the working class. The question is would our participation in the electoral arena, our socialist alternative, really serve to unify the working class as a class for itself?

I do not think so, for many reasons. First, there is no evidence in support of the idea that a "unifying arena of struggle" is necessary at all for building a socialist movement. The struggle for socialism has always been seen as taking place on many fronts, among many sections of the working class. Indeed, NAM itself came into existence partly because many socialists in this country have

# Discussion

become aware of the error of concentrating on one section of the working class alone.

What unifies socialists and what we hope will unify the working class is the collective knowledge we call socialist principles: what we want to achieve and what we have learned about how to and how not to achieve those goals.

The arena where this unification takes place is within the socialist movement itself. Whatever form our activity takes, we hope to spread our ideas among others of our class. To the degree we are successful in this, our knowledge of how to struggle for socialism increases. As we are successful, more and more working people join us and bring their own ideas into our movement. The struggle that goes on (or should go on) constantly among ourselves over the best ways to struggle for socialism and the activity that results among working people serves to forge increasing unity among working people.

It might be added that this hypothesis presupposes a movement with a high and increasing degree of membership participation, whereas the Upton-Lynn electoral strategy would allow most socialists the "participation" of casting a vote every two years. Since the development of socialist principles and socialist consciousness is heavily dependent on active participation in the movement (including the determining of the content of socialist principles), it is hard to avoid the conclusion that a "socialist" electoral strategy might produce more votes for socialism and less socialist consciousness at the same time. People might well vote for "socialist" politicians the same way they now vote for liberal politicians. . . and with precisely the same results!

In short, it seems to me that the task of unifying the working class in a common struggle against capitalism and for socialism is not achieved through participation in a common electoral arena. Unity is achieved through struggles on many fronts, in many arenas, around common socialist principles. The electoral "short-cut" may also produce a kind of unity, but it would be the unity of politicians and voters. Frankly, who wants that?

Upton and Lynn follow their "strongest" (though inadequate) argument with their weakest: "Self-determination and democracy have been identified with and understood through electoral activity throughout American history." Well, so what?

Either capitalist democracy is really "democratic" or it is not. Since most socialists (and rather large numbers of working people generally) do not believe it is really democratic, how does it help the cause of socialism to pretend that it is?

The authors, I'm afraid, are not pretending. In their view, a socialist electoral strategy will "expose and develop the conflict between representative democracy and capitalism." They evidently really believe that such a conflict exists, or would exist if there were a large socialist electoral party.

Why? Well, "socialist consciousness and politics do not come from thin air but are developed from the experience and expectation of democracy inherent in electoral activity but suppressed by capitalist class hegemony."

In plain English, it would go like this: socialists run for office; socialists get elected; socialists unable to institute socialism because capitalist class controls organs of government regardless of elections; working class gets mad and makes revolution. In my view, several other outcomes are just as likely: (1) working class gets cynical and disgusted, returns capitalist politicians to office; (2) capitalist class junks democratic facade, destroys socialist party by arrests and murders, working class totally unprepared for such a likelihood retreats into apathy; (3) working class gets mad and makes revolution, first act of revolutionary government is to hang all of the socialist politicians for selling out the workers; etc.

It may sound funny, but such things have happened. The Socialist Party in this country was partially destroyed by government persecution; it had done nothing to educate American workers about such a possibility, much less what could be done to overcome it. Socialist parties have been elected to power in Europe, failed to introduce socialism and been turned out of office in favor of the old capitalist parties. And as some Communist parties in Eastern Europe have learned, they are not immune from the wrath of the working class.

The flaw in the Upton-Lynn scenario is what could be called a "multi-stage" theory of how political consciousness develops. Such theories arbitrarily presume that people develop their ideas in a logical and orderly procession, from A to B to C, etc. I do not think, however, that because we normally set ideas forward in a logical and orderly fashion that that is how such ideas are developed in the first place. Indeed, writers in the history of science have numerous examples to offer of the hunch and the guess, the inspired leap leading to a breakthrough in scientific knowledge. After the fact, it all seems very logical. I suspect the same is true of political knowledge and in the development of political consciousness.

The Upton-Lynn hypothesis presumes that people begin with a political outlook, say, liberal-centrist. As they accumulate political experience, they move to a more coherently liberal position, then left-liberal, then moderate socialist and finally revolutionary socialist (or even anarchist) positions. But real people move forward and backward, skip over many of these stages, or have elements of different stages in their heads. In such a world, does it not make better sense to advocate socialism in as clear and coherent fashion as we can? Rather than try to guide the working class through its "inevitable" illusions about capitalist democracy, doesn't it make better sense to tell working people the plain unvarnished truth about capitalist democracy?

Which is, of course, that capitalist democracy is not democratic in any sense. The evidence for this is overwhelming, from massive works like *The History of the Great American Fortunes* and *The Rich and the Super-rich* to the pages of every daily newspaper.

But, if we don't have an electoral strategy, what do we do? I frankly admit that I at least have no immediate concrete alternative to offer. What I do offer as an alternative is a set of criteria for evaluating any proposed strategy:

(1) Because change in a capitalist country results from the interference in the working of capitalist institutions by part or all of the working class, does a proposed new strategy promote such interference? Are we teaching people to actively interfere with the operation of the system?

(2) Has the proposed new strategy been tried in the past under relatively similar circumstances? Have the results been constructive for the movement or have they been destructive? Why?

(3) Does the proposed new strategy build unity among different sections of the working class around socialist principles?

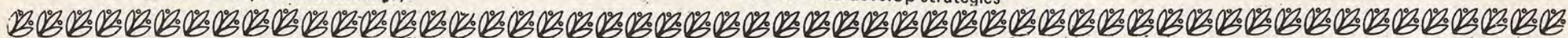
Of course, there may not be an "ideal" strategy that would pass this test with a perfect score; or there may be such a strategy but we just haven't discovered it yet. I believe we should strive to develop strategies

that will pass this test as least on a minimal level; indeed, such strategies already exist. They are precisely the "education-protest-radical social welfare" activities that Upton and Lynn condemn. Such activities could certainly stand improvement, particularly in the area of "socialist principles." But even in their present inadequate form, such strategies remain immensely superior to the Upton-Lynn electoral strategy.

Since Upton and Lynn conclude their paper by threatening us with being thrown onto the "dustbin of history" if we do not adopt their electoral perspective, I don't think it's unfair to remind the reader that there are worse alternatives. Consider the role of the German Social-Democratic Party in the crushing of the German Revolution and the murder of Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht, for example.

\* \* \* \* \*

(The reader may also be interested in an article on the experiences of the American Socialist Party which I have submitted to the NAM *Internal Discussion Bulletin*. —EC) ■



## 2

### ELECTORAL POLITICS

By Dan Luria

AFTER READING JIM Weinstein's and Upton and Lynn's articles in the NAM newspaper, I am feeling somewhat more relieved about the kind of thinking going on in democratic socialist circles. What I would like to do is to relate some of my experiences in a highly successful third party movement in Michigan, and to begin to develop some of the political issues involved in opting for an electoral strategy for socialism in the U. S.

First, some history. In 1970, a group of people, self-consciously socialist, and veterans of the anti-war movement in Ann Arbor, began a party called the Radical Independent Party. An openly socialist platform was written and approved through the structure of mass democratic meetings. In April, 1971, the party ran a mayoral candidate and a city council candidate, neither of whom garnered over 150 votes in an election in which some 10,000 people participated. But an important lesson was learned. Namely, we found out that the Democratic Party, at that time a right-liberal entity, could get a good deal of mileage out of the claim that a third party on the left would merely guarantee Republican Party victories at the polls. (Incidentally, the Democrats swept the election 62% to 38%.)

In 1971, the Radical Independent Party, despite its electoral fiasco earlier in the year, grew tremendously, a growth that consciously reflected a consensus of feeling about the change in left strategies. We were agreed that SDS had been an anachronism, a left organization that existed in between mass upsurges and demonstrations but which was not a sect or political party. We felt that such an organization was unlikely to exist any more. Also, we recognized that U. S. colleges and universities were no longer turning out people who had the common experience of 1960's campus anti-war activism and that a different, less *ad hoc* vehicle had to be developed if socialist views were to gain currency and potency.

So, the Radical Independent Party (RIP) went statewide, changed its name to the Human Rights Party (HRP), worked up a remarkable platform, ranging from rent control to workers' control, from legalized marijuana to anti-strikebreaking legislation. From the time that HRP wrote, again democratically, its 1971-2 platform, to the time of the 1972 city elections, the party had grown to over 500 members, including over 150 people willing to put a lot of time into party shit-work.

And in April, 1972, despite once again Democratic scare tactics of "a vote for HRP is a vote for the Republicans," we won two city council seats. Within a month, marijuana was essentially legal, the city had been shaken by an HRP motion to cut off gas, water and electricity to Ann Arbor war contractors and the city council had been forced to protect its own mem-

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bers, engaged in legal strike-support picketing, from the Ann Arbor police.

In July, 1972, HRP decided to move seriously to change the conditions that lent credence to Democratic claims that we were causing Republican victories, by moving for a system of preferential voting. Such a system would have meant the virtual elimination of the Republican Party as an electoral force, and yet the Democrats steadfastly refused to vote for it, opting instead (and openly so) for the destruction of HRP, even though it meant perhaps a decade of Democratic defeats.

Another Democratic claim, and one that any third party with principles is open to, is that we were running candidates *tied to a platform*, unable to vote "their own conscience." This we admitted, pointing out that if Lyndon Johnson had been tied to the 1964 Democratic platform, the U. S. would not have sent 500,000 people to destroy Vietnam. I will return to this issue of a strict party platform later.

HRP continued to grow, both in size and in ideology. Partly due to the fact that the founders were one-time members of International Socialists, and partly owing to the democratic tradition of early Ann Arbor SDS, HRP has always been a democratic socialist organization. The 1972-3 platform was stronger than ever, with programmatic analysis of cuts in social service funding, inflation, union bureaucracy and community organizing. It was on this platform that the April, 1973 candidates ran for mayor and city council, winning no seats, but garnering 17% of the city vote.

Out of this defeat came some of the most sophisticated political thinking that I have ever been exposed

to. It did not imply a setback from an electoral strategy for socialism, but rather a lesson in how to improve such a strategy. HRP's percentage of the city vote was higher than ever, but simply more dispersed. Two lessons emerged from this. First, it was clear that overall support for principled socialist positions was not waning, but in fact spreading beyond the student neighborhoods that had won HRP its 1972 seats. And second, it was decided that the loss of an election told us nothing about the acceptability to people of the platform, which all too few voters had been given an opportunity to inspect and debate.

This brings us to HRP's strategy for the future. First of all, we realized that we were indeed falling into the electoral trap; not the trap of electoral politics itself, but the trap of the "win strategy" which tends to accompany electoral organization. The answer to this problem was and is simply this: *year-round organizing to spread understanding of and support for the platform*. Secondly, we affirmed that electoral success was not to be measured in terms of the number of seats won, but in terms of a work-effort and total vote return. While we decided to continue running candidates for whatever seats were available, we plan to change the meaning of this activity. From now on, GRP is *running the principles of the platform itself*. This means that if HRP's candidate loses by 1,000 votes while HRP gains 300 new members and workers, it is not a loss. If the candidates lose but HRP goes from 16% to 20% of the total vote, that means that one-fifth instead of one-sixth of the voters are *voting for socialism*. Because the candidates run on the platform, HRP knows that this is the correct interpreta-

The discussion about electoral politics in NAM has picked up as we approach the January N.C. meeting. Although this meeting cannot make policy decisions, there is to be a debate on electoral politics as a thrust for organization in NAM. Because such a program has an automatic attraction for many people in the organization, as it provides a ready-made, familiar way to move, and seems to solve some of the problems of "We have a chapter, what do we DO?" we in New York No. 2 feel it particularly important to argue against such a program.

Historically there have been, in the U. S., populist and socialist electoral struggles, some of them successful on a local level and fewer on statewide levels. That these campaigns may have had educational effects (even if the candidate lost) we do not doubt. But we ourselves have had this education, and it leads to a dead-end: now we know that there is a real lack of democracy (e.g., that the military-industrial complex runs our foreign policy and is not responsive to public pressure, even as expressed in elections)—WHAT DO WE DO ABOUT IT? Further, there is a contradiction even if the candidate is elected. Without a real power base—a real element of control of some productive or service agency—the lone socialist (or populist) in office can do little or nothing to change power relationships in the community, and in fact anything she/he does do will be done without real participation by the community base.

People may be more responsive to political ideas at election times than at others; this is an argument radicals have used repeatedly for electoral activity. We agree that socialists should take advantage of this openness by putting out literature and discussing campaign issues during the election. But we feel that we should not mislead people by suggesting that the way to implement our alternative program is to vote for

## LURIA Continued

tion of the electoral outcome, because HRP knows that that's what the voters were told a vote for HRP meant.

A final important point in all of this involves the issue of whether a socialist electoral strategy can work in the U. S. I would argue that not only can it work, but that it is the only strategy that can work in the absence of a working-class movement on a scale far greater than the world has ever known.

First, I would say that such blue-collar militancy as would be required for a socialist revolution in this country is unlikely to be forthcoming in the near future, despite what I see as heightening contradictions in the world capitalist system. Second, it seems to me that any undemocratic movement that could potentially seize state power would not be preferable to the existing state of affairs, especially at this point in time, because of the tendency, during transition periods, to allow older forms of social hierarchy to persist in order to stabilize the "new" system. Third, the electoral tradition is strong in the U. S., and the use of this form grants some automatic legitimacy to a third party movement. Anybody who lived through Eugene Debs' presidential campaigns knows that the ruling class is unlikely to take lightly any serious alternative party. Fourth, and lastly, I am at a loss to see good alternatives to an electoral strategy for socialism. While I am aware of some highly successful community organizing projects, especially neighborhood clinics and tenants' unions, I would argue that their net effect is inevitably small. The issue in "communities" is not the allocation or existence of local services, but rather, who holds power and from what this power derives. That is why a political party makes sense. The very fact of its electoral existence means that political power is the goal. And by being explicitly both democratic and socialist, it is a vehicle for transmitting information on both the lack of democratic control of society and the economic basis of the current distribution of power. ■

our candidate. In fact, we should put forth positive alternatives to voting as a process for change—going on a demonstration, taking a particular supportive action (boycotting lettuce) or becoming active in their own union organizations, etc.

Running candidates in electoral contests as an educational device is an exercise in bad faith. If it is clear that the candidate will lose, and that the purpose is only "enlightenment," there is a large element of patronization and condescension in that action, and workers may correctly respond to say, "You can't win—you don't really represent me anyway. I'll vote for the machine politician who at least provides some patronage." Where there is some serious chance of electoral victory, if the forces providing that possibility are mobilized primarily in terms of an electoral campaign, it will divert energy from the possibility of autonomous action in a real struggle over a substantive issue, and "teach" the lesson that the way to change things is through elections (exactly what the bourgeoisie would have us learn).

### HOW THEN CAN PEOPLE IN SOME CONSTITUENCY AFFECT POWER RELATIONSHIPS IN THEIR POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS?

Particular economic and social institutions should be attacked directly by the people concerned at the level of particular malfunctions: they don't provide enough jobs; they pollute the rivers; they are producing shoddy and inadequate goods; they discriminate in promotions against women and third-world peoples; the schools provide horrible education and oppress children. Through direct intervention rather than the much more indirect electoral participation, people gain a much greater understanding of the economic and political forces which prevent meaningful change in these institutions. Direct involvement increases consciousness of the process of change much more than the electoral approach, which concerns itself primarily with the ends.

Producers and/or consumers must be involved at their real level of power; the producers (or givers of service) in their control over the work process, and the consumers (or the community served) in their organized power to consume or to boycott. When producers challenge the existing power pattern in an institution they have the additional option of altering that power pattern themselves; because it is their labor power that is the major resource, they can alter the way they do their work. They can shut down the institution, reorganize the production process to make it less alienating and the product (service) more reliable, stop pollution or alter the product to better serve the needs of the community. Through altering the existing power patterns in this way, workers gain knowledge of the relationships of their particular functions to the whole. Consciousness is increased, leadership skills are gained and workers

gain experience in controlling change. The beginning of the new system is created and developed in the midst of the old.

### CAN SOCIALISTS THEN NOT PARTICIPATE IN ELECTORAL ACTIVITY?

Marx suggested that the struggle for bourgeois democratic institutions—such as free elections with universal suffrage—would be necessary before the contradictions of bourgeois democracy became apparent to the working class as a whole. Most of us feel that, in certain situations, the exposure of the contradiction of electoral politics under capitalism may be beneficial in advancing consciousness and advancing the level of struggle. What are these conditions? This is a very difficult question, but we suggest the following as a possible general answer.

Where a class-wide coalition or a particular workers' struggle organization is waging a campaign around a particular issue, and the support for the issue in a particular electoral district makes an electoral campaign realistic, and where electing the individual may make a real difference in implementing the program, then an electoral extension of a class-based struggle may be appropriate. In NAM-related situations, for example, socialists active in the occupational health struggle in Gary

may justifiably support the workers' organization running someone for environmental commissioner, so long as they point out that such an election is just the beginning, not the end, of the struggle. Similarly, Berkeley tenants' organizations considering running someone for the Housing Commission as an expression of the success of their organizing efforts should be discouraged and warned about the diversionary aspects of such a campaign, but if they decide to run someone for the office they should be supported by socialists with the same attitude as above; electing one of your own to an office is just the beginning, and if the individual wins, their role as an official must consist in using the office to organize and educate the workers they are representing.

Where the electoral office is not and could not be related to the struggle, a referendum campaign should accomplish the same end without damaging consequences of campaigns around individuals, as these inevitably tend towards personality contests and obscure the real issues.

### IN OTHER WORDS, WHAT WE ARE REJECTING IS:

A. Socialists running electoral campaigns to raise consciousness about a particular issue or group of issues without a real base in the working class, as this type of campaign can generate only top-down organizations and validates workers' suspicions of socialists' bad faith and condescending attitudes, and doesn't change people's relationships to power; and

B. Any sort of strategy or organizing, either national or local, that attempts to substitute electoral activity (even if undertaken by the purest sect) for real base-building, or that puts forth elections as a realistic means of taking power. We are not saying that we should not push for a workers' party, or support one if it emerges, but that we should maintain that the role of such a party is base-building and organizing transitional struggles, not creating new elected bureaucrats; and

C. Support by socialists (even "critical" support) for bourgeois candidates, candidates who do not come out of the working class and who do not have any responsibility to a working-class-based organization.

We know that one goal of communist practice is the eventual withering away of the state. That is, in a post-scarcity economic system, where needs are provided by the appropriate allocation of resources by workers' councils, there should no longer be a need for a state repressive apparatus. Whereas an elected official's authority now derives from the whole superstructure of the state, workers democratically chosen to lead their comrades in particular situations in a new society would get their authority only from their constituents and would only maintain their situations as long as they performed the job they were chosen for. So the lack of formal checks on political officers under bourgeois democracy means that electing officials encourages, again, the alienation of the electorate from real power, while providing the perennial opportunity for opportunist betrayal by elected officials.

### CONCLUSION

The American working class seems to have two main historical problems. One of these, which much of course be addressed, is the lack of solidarity among subgroups in the class—by race, ethnicity, sex, age, religion, geography, industry, job type and just about everything else. The unity we need will be achieved only through joint struggle around common needs, although leadership for those struggles may indeed emerge from the movements growing within particular oppressed groups.

The other major problem has been the working class' overly trusting nature, our refusal to learn from history (admittedly restricted by the unavailability of that history) and from experience. Over and over, workers are defeated by the political system, by the courts, by our own bad leadership, by politicians we elect. The advanced labor movement in Quebec (CSN) ad-

# MORE ELECTORAL STUFF

vises workers to "rely only on our own means" ("ne comptons que sur nos propres moyens"). Maybe the U.S. working class could come more readily to this realization if socialists would stop trying to divert energy into electoral efforts and concentrate on building spontaneous self-organization of workers at our loci of real power, as producers and as consumers. ●

To the newspaper collective:

IT BOTHERED US THAT the tone of the Upton-Lynn article on electoral politics was so superficial, especially when the topic is so important to the future of NAM. There was no attempt to discuss electoral politics in terms of the role played by electoral politics within the capitalist system. Stanley Aronowitz, in the Sept. 1972 issue of *Liberation*, begins to do this in terms of national elections, and we would like to see more analyses along these lines before NAM adopts any electoral course of action.

Some more of our comments about the article's content follow:

1. Melissa and Larry begin their discussion by simplifying the basic assumptions and activities of various left groups over the past decade. The activities listed under "radical social criticism and education . . . and radical social work" were not the only activities undertaken by the left. What of workplace organizing, full scale community organizing and, of course, electoral politics, all of which had socialist analyses and assumptions to back them up?

2. Melissa and Larry tell us we haven't contested for "State Power." But what does "State Power" mean? Does it mean socialists *taking over* the capitalist means of production and social relations? If not, then the question becomes, how do we begin to *change* the capitalist means of production and social relations beginning now? If this is NAM's goal, then where is the analysis that leads to electoral politics as a strategy for achieving it? It is not enough to just say we must enter the "arena of electoral activity."

3. Melissa and Larry contend that "For the working class, electoral activity is central to politics" and "avoiding these dangers [of participating in electoral politics] . . . will also keep us removed from active engagement with the great mass of working people." However, this is both misleading and untrue. We should remember that only 55% of the eligible voters voted in the last national election--the best publicized circus of them all. What about the mass of workers who do not bother to vote? They can't have the same politics as some of us. Are we to go into the "arena of electoral activity" and try to draw them into the whirlpool with us? And are we to continue to string along those workers who do vote by not showing them how electoral politics helps keep them oppressed?

4. The analogy that Melissa and Larry use comparing trade union work with electoral politics is just not valid. You cannot equate a union with governing a country. Those of us who are stewards in trade unions feel that in some ways the union can be made to meet workers' *class* interests; and when we become stewards, we do not enter the enemy's camp. The steward's position vis a vis her/his base is, we feel, qualitatively different from that of an elected official.

Throughout their discussion Melissa and Larry equate "political movement" with electoral politics. However, the "ability to develop a socialist critique and program within a political concept" does not necessarily lead us to electoral politics. For example, members of NAM have been seriously discussing the ideas put forth by Somers and Johnson about the role of women as workers in the home. But where is the practice relating to this? As long as we're breaking new theoretical ground, let's also work on relating theory to practice in new ways if possible.

In conclusion, we hope the attached position paper will begin to discuss electoral politics in a way that incorporates some of our criticisms of Melissa and Larry's position. We also ask NAM chapters and members for their criticisms of our position.

In struggle,

N. Y. NAM No. 2 Chapter

## 4 COMMENTS ON LYNN-UPTON

BY John Judis  
Berkeley NAM

I WAS HAPPY TO SEE UPTON AND LYNN'S article urging us to get involved in electoral politics. Such an emphasis is now crucial to NAM's development, as well as to the development of a socialist movement. I want to restate or clarify some points made and add a few of my own.

1) HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE: Whenever a left organization enters elections, it has had to face charges of being "social democratic"--a term that refers back to the practice of European Social-Democratic parties immediately after World War I. For these parties, from which the British Labor Party and German Social Democrats have descended, a commitment to electoral activity meant that elections were the only legitimate path to power and that the party should work only within existing bourgeois institutions. Social Democrats in Germany and elsewhere opposed the Russian Revolution of 1917 because it was an insurrection and, within their own countries, supported the use of state power to crush workers' "illegal" insurrections.

In Europe and the United States, in the period immediately following World War I, the newly emerging communist parties advanced a perspective diametrically opposed to the Social Democrats. They called for armed insurrections, boycotting elections and the immediate formation of workers' councils. Although Lenin and others subsequently repudiated these tactics, the debate between the two opposing extremes has recurred ever since. When socialist tendencies began to emerge in the late sixties out of the new left movements, they affirmed their revolutionary character by following strategies similar to the communists of the immediate post-World War I period. I am thinking of Weatherman, the numerous anarchist collectives and the Panthers during their "Clever" period. The results of these strategies were disastrous. A re-evaluation of socialist strategy was then begun.

To get around this debate, we have to distinguish our situation from that of post-World War I Europe. We do not face the immediate problem of how to seize state power. We have no mass socialist movement. At this time, the actual path by which a socialist movement will take power must be (and is) unclear.

The period of building a socialist movement requires different strategic priorities than the period of seizing power. It requires working within and through existing arenas of political struggle--participating in elections, organizing caucuses within labor unions, organizing pressure groups around specific issues like health or housing. We should participate in these arenas of struggle with a view toward transforming them. For example, we should fight for new forms of representative democracy while participating in elections, but we should not operate under the illusion that it is possible now to build organs of socialist power totally outside the existing institutions. These will become possible only when a mass socialist movement exists that can give them credibility as semi-autonomous instruments of power.

In building a socialist movement, we must also express our intention to win state power through our activity. Our actions should bear some relation to a possible path to power. For this reason, among the arenas of struggle open to us at present, electoral politics is especially important. In the United States, this could be one path that a socialist movement takes toward state power. We as socialists should not exclude it, but should struggle against any attempt by the capitalist class to do so.

On the other hand, we have to remember, and make explicit in our politics, the fact that electoral politics can at best be one among several paths to power. Unless a socialist movement is capable of challenging capitalist power in many areas and ways (particularly within the workplace), there will be no "final victory" at the polls. (Either the capitalist class will be able to use its power over other areas of life to destroy the movement and create a fascist state, or the socialist gov-

ernment will be forced to rule within the context of capitalist control over the private economy.) Therefore, to build a socialist movement is to build a many-sided movement. To build a movement exclusively around electoral politics would be a mistake.

2) THE IMMEDIATE PRIORITIES: During the period of building a socialist movement, our immediate objectives should be to make socialism vs. capitalism a widely-discussed public issue and to embody the growing sympathy for a socialist alternative in a number of organizations. Primarily, this should be done in a multi-racial, multi-sectoral mass socialist party that on a national level can make the alternative of socialism a living possibility in the minds of Americans. These two objectives are closely interrelated. Unless socialism becomes a public issue, we will be unable to break out of our sectoral isolation and generate mass support. But, without growing organization within the left, most Americans--however deeply angered and estranged--will not take socialism seriously as an alternative.

Electoral politics is the arena of struggle pre-eminently suited to making socialism a public issue. It is the major place where working people can exercise *any* influence over the course of society. It is the major context in which political problems are discussed, and in which alternatives are offered.

If we don't participate in electoral activity, we will be unable to make socialism a public issue. As long as the capitalist controlled parties completely dominate the electoral arena, they will be able to deflect into the Democratic Party whatever movements we have created around issues in the workplace or the community. The issues will then be redefined in liberal terms and the movements reduced to interest groups within the existing liberal pluralism.

The capitalist class uses electoral politics and the state to mediate among the competing claims of different groups of working people--organized labor, blacks, women, the unemployed, students, senior citizens, etc. Within the Democratic Party, these groups are united around immediate objectives while their long-term antagonisms and disunity is maintained and even encouraged. An important task of socialist electoral activity will be to unite these groups around a long-term commitment so socialism, while creating programs that respect the special needs of each.

Finally, electoral politics is important to developing a national movement. Participating in regional and statewide elections will be one way in which local socialist organizations can begin to work together, and in which state and nationwide movements around particular issues can work together in developing common programs. Extending this process to national elections will be an important step in creating the conditions for a nationwide socialist party.

3) NAM AND ELECTORAL ACTIVITY: At the present time, NAM has no answer to the question of what a NAM chapter does. In most areas, it is simply another local organization, albeit one with a theoretical connection to a national organization. To survive and grow, NAM will have to develop a national strategy by which it can see its local efforts coming together in the creation of a national movement and an organization capable of fighting capitalist power nationally.

In the past, we have tried to develop such a strategy around particular issues like the wage-price controls and the war. But unless such issues become an overriding concern in national politics (as the war was during the late sixties), trying to build a national organization around such programs leads to restricting the local development of chapters.

Electoral activity is one important way in which we can begin within and between chapters to unify the different community and workplace activities we have engaged in, without dropping the activities themselves in favor of an artificially imposed "national program." Our eventual goal would be the creation of statewide and nationwide socialist electoral alliances and coalitions.

If we do decide to engage in electoral activity, we should do so with a full appreciation of how difficult it is. Upton and Lynn, in contrasting past movement practice (mostly social work and education) with a future electoral practice, and in criticizing the Socialist Workers Party for running purely educational campaigns, imply that in our electoral practice as socialists we will



The brief Tulane campaign raised questions about the class nature of the university and the role of students and technicians. Over a third of Tulane's stock is in petro-chemicals and utilities and it has a long history of recruiting scabs. Those of the engineering students who were not permanently alienated by the word "scab" learned that many technicians who are forced to work in the plant or lose their jobs are actually in sympathy with the strike, which will improve their working conditions if it wins. The OCAW has been successful in organizing technical along with production workers at other sites and will hopefully do the same at Norco. Young students, looking for jobs and eager to please, are also used to speed-up the older technical workers. It was a group of such engineers in the plant, in fact, who first complained about the use of students during the strike.

NAM is also trying to pull other labor unions into more active support for the strike. Leafleters have been warmly received at the Longshoremen's hiring hall. Longshore jobs are threatened by Shell's and other oil giants' plans for an offshore "superport" to service the new deep-draught tankers. A more direct linkage is possible with the National Maritime Union (NMU) which has recently organized the first successful union election in the offshore oil industry--on Shell rigs. About 200 food service workers of Boatel, Inc., a catering outfit that contracts to Shell, went out on strike within a week of the OCAW strike.

In this situation, where two unions had an obvious interest in working together, the sad reality was that they were actually hurting each other. An NMU ship discharged a batch of crude oil into an "independent" terminal which pumped it directly into the Shell refinery. Even when OCAW pickets arrived on the scene, NMU sailors said they could not untie without authorization from the national union. But before the union leadership could be contacted, and the niceties of their contract examined, the ship was long gone. This incident pointed out how badly fragmented and isolated the labor movement has become. In talking to various unions about the Shell strike, it has become obvious that not only the rank and file, but often the local leadership is unaware of events in other unions--even to the point of realizing they are fighting the same company!

It is possible that NAM may have improved the situation in a small way. A NAM member, who had worked offshore and had personal contact with the chief organizer of the Boatel strike, relayed information between the OCAW and NMU. NMU is now interested in participating in a solidarity rally with the OCAW, especially since it has been learned that Shell is paying for all of Boatel's court costs in its fight against the caterer's union. The situation with other transportation unions, however, remains pretty bad, with the railroad workers and teamsters giving only formal support--letting Shell staff take their vehicles across the picket lines and then carrying the "hot cargo" on as before.

## ELECTIONS Continued

immediately be winning elections and forcing major policy changes. This will not be so. Much of our electoral practice will be "educational." The main reason why the SWP's practice is educational is that they run as socialists in a society mostly hostile to the idea of socialism.

In distinguishing our practice from the SWP's, the two most important points are non-sectarianism and maintaining the relation of electoral to other activity. When we participate in elections, we should use the process of developing a program and nominating candidates to create the greatest possible unity among socialists, particularly white and third-world socialists, and socialist men and women, and to bring into such coalitions people who are unsure of themselves as socialists but are attracted initially by our programs. The SWP, by contrast, uses elections not to build unity among the left but to single itself out.

Also, in contrast to SWP, our electoral activating should be integrally related to our other ongoing political activity. There should be a constant two-way relation between our attempt to build an independent socialist organizations around such issues as housing and health and our electoral activity; similarly, for workplace organizing. In this way, we begin to lay the basis for building permanent electoral coalitions to which candidates are responsible and which at the same time transcend a purely electoral focus. ●

Within the OCAW, among some major cleavages have also appeared. At the time of this writing, the president of the Texas local has just announced that his local wants to return to work and the international had better not interfere. The actual sentiment of the local has not yet been made clear, but the effect on the strike can only be bad.

Another group of workers who are not organized, but should be, is the 1,000 white-collar workers in One Shell Square, more than twice as many as there are in the Norco local. This huge concentration of people is not so easy to reach, however. Many of the secretaries, who might be supposed to be sympathetic with the strike, are intimidated or identify with their bosses to the point where they are afraid even to accept a leaflet. This is obviously a long-term job for people who work in the offices.

### THE COMMUNITY AND THE STRIKE

SHELL HAS TRIED TO win community support by appearing on TV with Governor Edwards and announcing it would soon be expanding the Norco Plant and creating many new jobs. For us in NAM, one of the questions that has emerged from work around the strike is how best to involve community people who are not organized into unions. No answer has been found, but at least two groups of community people have already begun to organize themselves. These are the wives of striking workers, and a grass roots organization of people in St. Charles Parish opposed to industrial pollution.

At Houston, about 50 of the wives managed to halt truck traffic by keeping a tight picket. Later, many of these women staged a sit-in at the corporate sanctuary of Shell's national offices. In Norco, where an openly hostile sheriff keeps things hot, six women were arrested on "criminal mischief" charges when they staged a Sunday "Ladies' Day" picket.

Audrey Livingston is the grandmother of three and wife of the Norco local's president, Alex. Asked why women were taking such a militant role in this strike, she said she could not speak for anyone else, but that this just seemed naturally more of a "whole community effort." "It's not just a strike about money," she explained. "You know this catalyst stuff really gets around. It covers our house with black stuff and it eats the paint of your car. After a rain you can see it washed off the grass. This strike is for the protection of everyone."

The women spent about an hour and a half down at the station. Mrs. Livingston says she was not bothered by the police, but was "mostly worried my husband was going to be mad at me for getting arrested." Apparently he was not mad, though she says he does not want the women to "become too much involved in the strike."

Many of the men have this ambivalent attitude towards their wives' participation. On the one hand they feel that union business is too rough to be conducted "in the presence of ladies." Women are not expected to come to union meetings. Beyond a false chivalry, some of the men feel uneasy about the implications of exposing their wives to danger "just to get sympathy." Nevertheless, the women seem determined to play a

## STATE OF SIEGE Continued

Pointing out that the AFI staff had done an excellent job in selecting "State of Siege" for opening night, the boycotters, in a press release, demanded that Stevens publicly explain the criteria used to override the staff's decision. They also asked "that consideration be given to an alternative method of decision making so that AFI can more closely serve the public and the film industry that supports it." Stevens refused to respond or to amplify his original "vagueries."

Leaders of the boycott were New Day Films (Reichert and Klein), Radim Films, The Henry Street Settlement House and Ed Emshwiller. They were followed by Francois Truffaut, Lindsay Anderson and Jaques Rivette. A Paul Robeson tribute had been planned for the series ("The Emperor Jones"), but Robeson withdrew his film. Over one-third of the program was withdrawn. Boycotters focused on the general principle of "no censorship." But Stevens did not cancel "State of Siege" out of a general lack of concern with civil liberties, but rather out of concern for the film's particular politics. Probably, "State of Siege" will enjoy a larger audience as a result of this flap in Washington, and some people will take that as evidence of the "openness" of American Society. That is hardly the crucial point. Acts of censorship like Stevens', if allowed to pass unnoticed, can have a cumulative effect. Such acts must be publicly opposed every time they happen. Otherwise, critical images of the American empire will be expurgated by the likes of Ethel Kennedy who said, "I thought (Stevens' act) took profound courage and it was the only right thing to do."

bigger role. They would be willing to picket every day, one said, "if the men would let us." She wondered if they shouldn't "go ahead and form a ladies' auxiliary whether they like it or not."

However the struggle is resolved, it is certain that the wives have won widespread support among women's groups in New Orleans; there have been announcements and collections taken for the strike at a number of feminist meetings here. And every man in the union with whom we spoke agreed that the women had strengthened the union's morale.

Before the strike and the wife's action, there was another local group fighting for ecology issues. Fifty or so community residents first came together to oppose a proposed "free industrial zone," which would allow expanding industrial interests outside the parish to come in virtually tax-free. Most of the group was not only opposed to this tax dodge, they did not want any new industry in the parish.

Nolen Rochele, a striking Shell worker, explained how local attitudes have been changing. "Thirty years ago, when industry came in, everyone said it was a boon to the area. Now people look around and see what these companies have done to the hunting and fishing." Besides the damage to the local environment, Rochele said, "We've found out that, the way things work, these industries don't really bring into an area, they take out." He went on to explain that many of the new industries do not employ many people from the area, but bring in new population. Most of the management and highest paid employees come from the outside and almost all the profits leave the community. This is particularly true of the oil companies. Local taxpayers, however, have to provide their uninvited guests with roads, utilities and schools. The St. Charles group has lost the first round to the Parish Police Jury (Louisiana's form of County Commissioners) who voted with the outside industrial interests even though their meeting was packed with community residents telling them to vote the other way. This is a real grass roots ecology movement, made up primarily of working people from around the parish, including union men and technical workers from Norco. It is opposed not only by the local power structure but by ecology organizations like the National Wildlife Federation. The two officers of the Federation who helped arrange for a conservation award to Shell in 1971 also happen to be part of Norco plant management--H. J. Leblanc and Francis Braud, by name. In spite of the opposition, Rochele said the residents' group would definitely keep on fighting.

### RACISM WEAKENS THE STRIKE

Serious problems of racism still weaken the credibility of the strike in the black community. A NAM person who was on the picket line when three white strikers were calling a black scab "nigger," argued that this was not the best way to discourage blacks from scabbing since they would conclude the strikers were against them whether they scabbed or not. One white striker agreed, the other two said they hadn't "meant anything by it." In general the white strikers seem more ready to confront black than white scabs; the only scab bus to meet with any forcible resistance was full of blacks. Another problem within the union is that although blacks play an active part in union affairs, there are no blacks in positions of elected leadership.

These criticisms, however, should be seen in perspective. The OCAW has been one of the most principled unions in the prevailing racist climate of Southern labor. Union efforts have abolished the porter classification which used to employ the only nine blacks who worked at Norco; now there are 70 or so black union members out of about 460. This hiring ratio is still low and the union will have to do more for blacks if it wishes to win really widespread support in New Orleans, which is close to being a black majority city.

### THE CHALLENGE OF WORKING-CLASS UNITY

THE SHELL STRIKE LOOKS almost like a testtube experiment for the classic problem socialists face in this country--"overcoming divisions in the American working class." Technical and office workers, students, workers in transportation unions, unorganized and unemployed workers, women, blacks and the community as a whole--all are skillfully played off against each other in a strike like this. But, at the same

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has almost one-fourth its total labor force tied up in national defense." Perhaps the most highly regarded of the recent feasibility studies is a confidential report prepared for the Asian Development Bank by Columbia University's Emile Benoit. He argues that wages should be kept at a minimum and local capitalist enterprises encouraged if they don't compete with larger multinational corporations. Benoit suggests that aid should be diversified so that Japan, the Asian Development Bank, the World Bank, etc. relieve the burden placed on the American budget and give a humanitarian veneer to this penetration. In conclusion, Benoit projects a total aid for the six-year period 1970-1975 of \$13 billion. The Asian Development Bank study itself stresses two "escape routes from the narrowness of the domestic market." The first is the "Green Revolution," or the capital-intensive development of the agricultural sector for export. The second is the development of increased economic cooperation among Southeast Asian countries. Of course, the report concludes that these routes require massive foreign investment. The Asian Development Bank projections caused the French commentator Decornoy to remark that this survey views Southeast Asia "as kind of a paradise for international bankers and investors."

THE THIRD MAJOR feature of American economic interest in Vietnam has been the American role in rebuilding Vietnam to facilitate more foreign investment. In 1971, *Fortune* argued that Vietnam possesses "probably the best infrastructure in Southeast Asia" as a result of the American military effort. The construction consortium RMK-BRJ, for example, built fifteen major airfields, 100 lesser airfields, seven deep-draft ports, fuel and other storage facilities, barracks, hospitals and about 600 miles of roads over a ten-year period. Many of these projects have already been converted to civilian use. In addition, American aid is underwriting the construction of a number of industrial parks, the most important of which is located at Bien Hoa and represents a total investment of over \$40 million.

IN CONCLUSION, a number of points can be made. First, the Saigon regime's political future depends on continued U. S. aid and the attractiveness of the climate for foreign investment. If investment expands, it will be limited to a small number of urbanized enclaves along the South China Sea coast. Cheap labor will be provided by the millions of refugees in these regions. Foreign investment has already begun at Bien Hoa, Saigon, Qui Nhon, Cam Ranh and An Khe. Second, multilateral economic aid from combined sources such as the United Nations, the World Bank and other apparently "neutral" sources will only mask the goal of providing the economic basis for the expansion of American investment. Third, the U. S. hopes to hold the presently Saigon-controlled urbanized enclaves by a combination of increased widespread political repression, expanded National Police responsibilities and techniques in the cities and increased covert military operations organized by civilian-disguised CIA operatives.



A final note. There is no doubt that the Provisional Revolutionary Government has a strategy of its own. But one dilemma remains for both the Saigon regime and the PRG. In order to survive without massive amounts of economic aid, the Saigon regime must expand into the countryside for much-needed foodstuffs production and agricultural surpluses for export. The PRG, on the other hand, must capture the urbanized areas in order to consolidate its victory.

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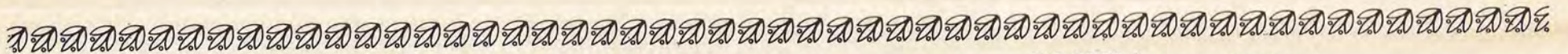
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NEWSPAPER COLLECTIVE

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During the weekend of April 13-14, the Lexington NAM Chapter was host to a successful statewide peace conference, "For the Long Haul," at the University of Kentucky in Lexington. Some 90 peace activists were present, representing Lexington, Louisville, Owensboro and six other communities throughout the state.

A permanent state-wide organization, the Kentucky Peace Network (KPN) emerged from the conference. A steering committee was selected from the different communities. Kentucky People for Amnesty, a committee of the Network, was formed to lead a statewide campaign for a complete and unconditional amnesty.

A workshop on imperialism in Africa led to the formation of a Lexington-based research group that will collect information on speakers, films and literature for the KPN, and on research companies doing business in Kentucky that also do business in southern Africa.

The American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) presented plans for their summer project, "How Kentucky Pays for War," which will detail how much of Kentucky's taxes go to the defense establishment and what pressing social needs in the way of local health, education and public services could be met with that money.

An important aspect of the conference was the participation of a number of older peace activists connected with various religious peace groups. The conference was co-sponsored by the AFSC, Clergy and Laity and a Catholic peace group from Owensboro.

The address of the Kentucky Peace Network is 322 W. York Street, Louisville, KY. 40203.

**CORRECTION**

NAM's last issue reviewed James Forman's *The Making of Black Revolutionaries* (New York: Macmillan, 1972). \$12.50 In the review we misspelled Mr. Forman's name and cited the wrong publisher and price. We regret the error.



Members of the Cambodian National Peoples Liberation Armed Forces drilling in street combat. Contrary to Nixon's statements, the fighting in Cambodia is being carried out by Cambodian forces (as even the U. S. press admits). As in Vietnam, the U. S. is now massively bombing Cambodia to prop up a corrupt unpopular dictatorship in the face of a domestic rebellion. Bombing raids are now equal to or greater than the record set during the bombing of North Vietnam. Again, the effect has been a monstrous toll of civilian casualties and the total failure to stop the rebel forces. The NAM newspaper will publish a detailed account of the situation in Cambodia and the rest of Southeast Asia in our next issue.

**SHELL** Continued

time, this strike begins to raise issues that are of vital importance to the entire working class, which makes it possible to overcome these divisions. The emphasis on the environment and the call for a boycott are attempts of a small and isolated union to establish a bond with the working people who are not usually touched by union struggles. As such it is a major step in the right direction, and it should be strongly supported by socialists.

There is, however, a negative aspect to the OCAW's efforts to gain wide support. In some of its literature it makes no reference to the environmental issue and concentrates its fire on Shell as a foreign corporation that is not treating American workers as well as the U. S.-based oil corporations. This effort to substitute nationalism for working class unity is tactically wrong because some of the groups it is most important to reach--unorganized workers, national minorities, students and women--are not going to be won over by the AFL-CIO's red-white-and-blue "Buy America-Buy Union" campaign. They are much more interested in the gut issues of the strike. Second, it is just plain wrong to call multinational corporations like Shell or Standard Oil American, Dutch or any other nationality. A majority of both these company's profits come from outside their "home" countries. As a vice-president of Ford recently boasted: "We do not consider ourselves basically an American company. . . We carry many flags."

It will take all the solidarity that can be mustered (and as little flag-waving as possible) to win this strike. Although the American oil corporations who must compete with Shell are scoring publicity points by announcing that Shell is being unreasonable, they cannot help but hope Shell wins. Actions speak loudest and the U. S. companies are selling or swapping Shell oil when the strike causes immediate shortages in an area. This solidarity is not just an empty idea. In the most concrete and material sense imaginable, in the sense of protecting one's own body, the old words take on new life--"An injury to one is an injury to ALL!"

# '50'S LEFT

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evident: we meet vaguely unfulfilled wives, pregnant single women, possessive mothers. They remain labelled and uncritically perceived. Swados mirrors the way such women are socially accepted as reified personality types. Neither for society at large nor for Swados is their unhappiness seen as problematical.

There would seem to be two responses possible to this aspect of the novel, both unsatisfactory. One could, a la Kate Millet, describe Swados as some version of a left sexist and leave him condemned. Or, one could say, "Of course Swados is a left sexist--such was the fate history gave to him. His historical situation allowed few other options." The problem with this response is simply that to accept sexism as historically normal while still living within a virulently sexist society underestimates the role of anger in struggling against sexism. Enlightened anger may be the answer; in any case, for those socialist feminists who are struggling to see that a male-dominated left become a part of history rather than being a continuing problem, this aspect of STANDING FAST reminds one of the roots of the problem.

For everyone who feels some pain and pride in being a socialist, and intends to continue to work as one come what may, STANDING FAST is frightening. Precisely for that reason it is imperative reading. ●

## WOUNDED KNEE

Continued from page 2

lice," sometimes not, depending on whether it is more expedient to present their actions to the press and public as "Indian" or more expedient to be able to disavow the actions. Arms, ammunition, supplies and U. S. government trucks and other vehicles have been supplied in large amounts to these vigilants--we could see the equipment they were using, and, of course, were under fire from rapid-fire weapons. We saw them being resupplied from helicopters when they had used all their ammunition in constant firing into the village Monday.

The press has given the impression that a few "outside agitators"--particularly AIM leaders from the Twin Cities--are responsible for this situation. This is not true. The basic cause is intolerable living (and political) conditions for the reservation's 13,000 Sioux, conditions made worse by corruption and brutality of an "Indian" regime that has no power to redress political and economic injustices, or to alter conditions for the better. The only

opportunities are for graft and patronage--opportunities which are taken. This regime's real function is to serve as an intermediary that "legitimizes" actions and policies that favor white economic interests.

The Sioux Liberation Movement actually began at the end of World War II. It was an attempt to get back the Sioux lands seized during the war, some for a gunnery range. The land problem is very serious. Pine Ridge Reservation's lands have been cut from 9,000,000 acres to 3,000,000--and the land they are left with is some of the worst in the world. The somewhat better land was taken. The part of their land that can be used for grazing (much of it now under lease to local white ranchers) is so poor that it takes 25 acres to graze one steer. A government agronomist estimated that if the 3,000,000 remaining acres were fairly divided and distributed, the usable portions could support only 300 families. This is the land on which Pine Ridge's 13,000 Sioux eke out a miserable living. This economic background has to be kept in mind when we consider what the Independent Oglala Nation--350 of whom are occupying the village of Wounded Knee--want. They want freedom to determine their own lives and destinies as a sovereign people, a freedom they were supposedly guaranteed under a host of broken treaties.

The U. S. government's representatives do not want to understand this desire and what it means; nor has the press transmitted what the struggle is really about. One feels what the desire means when one is in the "liberated zone"--Wounded Knee. Even though the town is under almost constant fire (for one day and night no one could venture out of any of the buildings, so heavy was incoming fire from the surrounding hills), even though the food is scarce and living conditions poor, this is one small spot of ground where the people have created their own government, where they run their affairs according to their own traditions.

The defenders of Wounded Knee have wide support from the 13,000 Oglala Sioux living in villages scattered around the reservation for hundreds of miles. Wounded Knee is a hamlet in which about

400 people usually live. There are about 350 people there now (March 31). About half of these are original residents, and most of the others are from Pine Ridge. There are 240 "original residents" who want to return, even under present conditions, but the government won't let them. Some of these are defendants who were arrested either because they tried to leave Wounded Knee or because they tried to return there, which may sound fantastic, but that was the way it was.

First, the government distributed fliers through the village about two weeks ago, telling the residents they must leave--that the government was going to come in shooting. So some people left. As they left, they were stopped on the road:

"Where are you coming from?" "Wounded Knee, where I live." "You're under arrest." Later, information was distributed telling residents to re-

turn to their homes. "Where are you going?" "Wounded Knee, where I live." "You're under arrest." We were able to get the outrageous bails reduced for these cases and most of these people are out now, living more or less as refugees.

Another indication of the high level of support for the Independent Oglala Nation and the defenders of Wounded Knee is the help the people living on the reservation have given them. The defenders of Wounded Knee have been able to move freely through the Oglala Sioux territory, visiting villages many miles away, calling public meetings attended by hundreds raising money, food and other supplies. This territory through which they freely move (eluding several hundred federals and vigilantes) is the area that supposedly supports the "elected tribal leadership" and is patrolled by the "reservation police." The defenders of Wounded Knee are very much "fish swimming in a friendly sea," the classic description of guerrillas who have wide and strong support from their people. If that were not the case, the occupation of Wounded Knee, now entering its second month, would long ago have collapsed under the siege of the U. S. government.

The federal officials repeatedly try to find "natives," who bolster their claims that the local residents don't support the "handful of outsiders" in Wounded Knee. I was present during one of the most blatant of these attempts, Tuesday, March 27. Several of us lawyers had entered the town Sunday and I was selected to stay overnight, perhaps because I have worked with St. Paul AIM people in the past and am therefore known to them. Sunday night, the heavy firing into the village began. We estimated the village took 20,000 rounds of fire during the next two days; the government says 5,000. The press says nothing.

While I was there, the Independent Oglala Nation drew up seven negotiating points that I later carried out through the lines. These are preliminaries to talks, setting conditions under which they are to be held, with whom and where. Tuesday, the government announced (and the press carried it) that some "Indian civil rights leaders" were going to sign an agreement on Wednesday in Rapid City, which is 105 miles from Wounded Knee, settling "the problem" and ending the occupation. At the same time, the government told the press (which docilely reported it) that AIM leaders Dennis Banks and Russell Means "had slipped away from Wounded Knee under cover of darkness" presumably to avoid arrest, and that most of the local "sympathizers" and "outside agitators" had also left. All this was false. I was there.

Tuesday night, using small videotape equipment, which is in the town, the defenders made a videotape of the people in Wounded Knee, still there, of Banks and Means, still there, and the seven points were read. They stated on the tape: "There is no settlement going to be made by bought-up leaders' claiming to represent our people in the old style

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# the '50's Left

STANDING FAST by Harvey Swados  
Ballantine paperback; New York, 1970  
689 pages, \$1.50

by Deborah Hertz, Minneapolis NAM

THE OTHER DAY SOME OF us in our chapter were discussing commitment to NAM and someone lightly remarked that "when it's painful, you know you're involved." Pain is hardly the only quality connected with radical politics--there's also "the joy of struggle," "the sanity of rebellion." But this comment does touch upon a delicate area in our lives which we understandably seldom talk about. That area is the relatively private area of commitment. The depth of that commitment, its endurance, and the degree of sacrifice one will make because of it remain, for most of us, questions of a nature more private and individualized than our politics might dictate. The theme of *STANDING FAST*, by Harvey Swados, is the counterpoint between personal commitment to socialism and larger historical events. This theme makes the book extremely timely, even imperative reading now, since many feel that the historical context of our struggle may be different now than it was in the late 1960's. The advent, and even the shock of such a change should make us especially attentive to the role that historical change plays in our work.

The book covers the bleak political period from the outbreak of World War II until the early 60's, as experienced in the lives of diverse radicals including a black union organizer, an Italian artist, a Jewish dentist, a nutty scientist and the offspring of several socialist families. The story covers their various arrivals in Buffalo, New York, in 1939, their personal lives and their political work in Buffalo throughout the war and the general outcome of their lives as revealed through the portrayal of their friendships, which outlast both their respective stays in Buffalo and the political commitment of some of them. The novel is panoramic: we learn something about a whole spectrum of individuals rather than getting any in-depth, psychological portrait of any one or two of them. It also is more historical than many novels. We are always with the characters as they experience cataclysmic events such as the Hitler-Stalin pact, the bombing of Pearl Harbor, the Hiroshima bombing, etc. The style is consistently realistic; no character is completely admirable, and one is rarely transported, as it were, while reading the book. Such techniques are conscious and even somewhat Marxist, and thus parallel the political content of the book. Nevertheless, they are often executed rather gracelessly and perhaps a bit too consciously. I sorely missed meeting a character whom I could admire intellectually, morally and politically. On the other hand, the very point of Swados' method is not to allow one to escape an understanding of the "toll of history" on most people by idealizing any individual whose share and type of attention implies his or her transcendence of time.

The most substantial issue raised by the book is this ambiguous relationship between commitment and history. Certain passages stand out: the cadre's vision of a depression that they thought would follow the war; the incredible isolation of those faithful to socialism during the 50's. Why did their prediction turn out so wrong? What was out of kilter for a socialist in the 1950's? There is always a tension in attempting to identify which elements in one's historical situation are determined, irrevocably, from the outside, as it were, and which continue to depend upon the willful action of dedicated revolutionaries. It is because humans have made any given historical situation that humans can change it; still, most would agree that many factors are often outside of one's control. At the individual level one must

still decide how long one can and will "stand fast" if the historical situation gets worse before it gets better. Swados' characters are assaulted by many and often subtle temptations as the "collective reality of their political space" diminishes. Some succumb to careers, some to labor bureaucracy, some to outright betrayal of the cause. One is forced to reverse the causal implications of the statement, of course, and to ask whether their sputtering of commitment had anything to do with the diminishing of that collective political reality. What role can we give to history itself in the blame? What role to any individuals?

Are these the alternatives? What is "history itself?" What about organizations, movements, parties--as opposed to individuals? Swados can perhaps be criticized for focusing so exclusively upon the fate of individuals and failing to direct enough attention to the mediating factors of organization and larger social changes. Such a criticism reveals, however, the deep need for a complex Marxist theoretical treatment of the individual. In any case, organizations and political parties can only be built with the life commitment of motivated individuals, and it is this factor which Swados concentrates upon.

Because many of us perceive ourselves to be poised on the threshold of a different political era than the one in which we came to political consciousness, the book is painful to read just now. Most of the characters were trying to sustain the radicalism of the thirties into the new decade; for the most part they, and history, failed at this task. The parallels may be trivially obvious or even misleading; nevertheless, they should be examined.

Perceptive thinkers have stressed the importance of correct theory and educational work during dormant historical periods since what is done, or not done, during such times can have significant consequences when the opportunities for socialism open up again later. Stan Weir, in

discussing the history of the sect that seems to have been the model for the one in Swados' book, the Workers' Party, connects the exit of some of the membership with the decline in the theoretical vigor of the party.

"The next to leave were a significant group of artists and intellectuals. They departed as individuals, but for a complexity of related reasons...they had been victims of the generally accepted notion that for socialists to be anything 'less' than industrial workers meant inferior commitment. They wanted to resume their careers as musicians, artists or poets, and did not feel that socialist activity among their peers would be viewed as meaningful...Down deep they believed artistic endeavors to be socially necessary labor, but they found no acceptance of the idea in their own organization. Their exodus, among other things, accelerated the withering of theoretical activity and creative internal life."

Everyone suffers from this false dichotomy: the intellectuals, who sacrifice their political commitment to their careers; the party, whose theoretical decline may contribute to its decline as a social force; posterity, which could have prospered from solid theoretical work even if such work was not immediately useful in its own time. But false dichotomies are not exorcised merely by the recognition that they are false. I would maintain that the psychological pressure against full-time intellectual or artistic work by socialists is still strong on the left. And whatever the good historical reasons for such implicit pressure, the problem, and its toll, remains.

A final, but urgent, point in regard to *STANDING FAST* is the business of its correct reception by socialist feminists. The book clearly reflects a male-dominated left; none of the major figures in it are women, although their collective work is essential in keeping the party together, and one of them becomes a labor lawyer. Yet no consciousness of their oppression is anywhere

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# Wounded Knee

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in which so many treaties were signed in the past. If there is a settlement, it will be arranged with us, at Wounded Knee, in the tipi that we have set up in the demilitarized zone around our village."

The video cassette was carried out through heavy firefighting, through the vigilantes and the federal lines and bunkers early Wednesday morning, when I also left, carrying copies of the negotiating points for federal officials in Rapid City. The evidence on the videotape stopped that particular attempt to have a fake "treaty" signed for the press by some Indians the government had hand-picked to sign it. The first real negotiations between the federal government and the Independent Oglala Nation occurred March 31, in the tipi. It is too early to say what may happen.

I am not optimistic. Very few people understand the depth of commitment of the defenders of Wounded Knee. It is not rhetoric when they say they are willing to die for their people's independence. A part of their culture, a part quite different from ours, is an emphasis on a "good" death as a measure of a person's life and worth. "What is 'impractical' about spending my life for my people?" was often the response to my lawyerly cautions.

The young men defending Wounded Knee are militarily skilled and trained. Almost all are Vietnam veterans, and most of those were in the Special Forces--the Green Berets. In Southeast Asia, they learned about guerrilla warfare, courtesy of the U. S. government, and now they are using what they learned from their own people. Of course their situation is different from that of the Asian guerrillas--there are relatively few Indians now in this land that once was theirs.

We should understand the political significance of their struggle, and support it. They are confronting the U. S. government's complete unwillingness to take seriously their claim to be recognized as a free and sovereign people--a claim guaranteed by numerous treaties whose violation is a continuing shame to us all. In part, the Inde-

pendent Oglala Nation is trying to "go back" to the freedom and sovereignty they had before they were conquered and robbed. They were then a people of free nations. This is what they want, rather than a paper recognition of "sovereignty" that has self-contradictory characteristics of many of the treaty agreements, which robbed them of the lands to support a meaningful independence. They are trying to build a free society in which they can live by the beliefs and values of their culture, and also survive in the 20th century. Whether they can win will depend on their own determination and on mass support. Government propaganda has been a major factor in discouraging this kind of support.

There have been almost no letters

There have been almost no letters, calls or telegrams (except hostile ones) to public officials; this convinces them that they have utterly free rein to suppress the struggle. Officials I've talked to all think they can tinker with minor parts of Bureau of Indian Affairs tribal government and solve the problem.

Letters, calls and telegrams to Senators, Congressmen and Justice Department officials are needed, supporting the Independent Oglala Nation and making it clear that many people do understand the federal manipulation of the "tribal government" and the federal role in supplying arms and vehicles to the vigilantes.

Also needed are financial contributions for what will be a long and complex legal struggle. There are some temporary collection points. A permanent address for legal aid (financial) contributions is: WOUNDED KNEE DEFENSE FUND, UNITED BANK OF DENVER

17th and Broadway, Denver, Colorado

If the affair is settled without massive bloodshed, it can be expected that there will be many hundreds of trials, and probably an attempt to "break the Indian leadership" of the struggles for independence and sovereignty by imprisoning leaders. The Wounded Knee defenders have made it clear that they will not bargain away their substantive demands for amnesty promises. ●

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