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Motion Forward Motion Forward Motion

Getting Ready for '88

On the Cutting Edge of Chicago Politics

Repression in Puerto Rico

Vol. V. No. 5 Contents OCT.-DEC. 1986

Dear Friends,

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At the heart of this *Forward Motion* is the issue of opportunity. We continue in a period of dealignment and possible realignment in national politics. Though still gaining strength, the Right has yet to consolidate hegemony within the country's ruling coalition. Out of the ashes of New Deal liberalism has come—more New Deal liberalism, and alongside it, Old Deal neo-liberalism. Though the Left, progressives and the people generally remain on the defensive, several factors peculiar to the historical moment are opening a proverbial "window of opportunity" for the U.S. Left.

Some of these factors are discussed at length in this issue of FM. A year ago when Chicago activists Abdul Alkalimat and Slim Coleman debated Harold Washington's successful run for mayor (see FM, Feb.-March 1986), their differences revolved around the pitfalls and possibilities for the revolutionary left in local electoral struggles. In this issue,

several leading Chicago activists (including a newly elected alderman) speak with another year of mass politics under their belt, and what they have to say looks both forward and outward in a way that was perhaps impossible last year. In light of their experience in Chicago's streets and city hall, they outline the progress of the mass movement whose expression was Washington's victory; they debate the strengths and weaknesses of the Mayor's administration and the problems faced by leftists in office; and, significantly, they consider the ramifications of the encouraging developments in Chicago for the national political scene—in particular, for the growth of independent politics within and outside the Democratic Party, for oppressed nationality political power, and for fledgling third party initiatives.

Other contributions to this issue, including the statement by the Freedom Road Socialist Organization, outline the opportunity for the Left presented by another Jackson candidacy and by the Rainbow Coalition itself. Citing international events, continuing domestic political dealignment, and the critical role played by progressive labor at this time, these articles argue strongly for socialists to build the movement for Black political parity, continuing and extending Jesse Jackson's 1984 thrust against the Southern dual primary system.

A significant emphasis is for the left to use every possible avenue of influence on both organized and unorganized workers (and on Jackson himself) to make Jackson labor's candidate. Now is the time for labor's left wing—which has grown a bit across the country—to raise its level of unity, join forces with the Black and other oppressed nationality struggles for political power, and play its rightful role at the core of the independent politics developing around the Rainbow agenda.

The report and commentary on last Spring's National Rainbow Coalition Convention provides a grassroots view of some of the possibilities for the Left in that emerging organization, while two letters responding to the Alkalimat/Coleman debate raise some of the larger theoretical and historical issues surrounding current developments in the Black struggle.

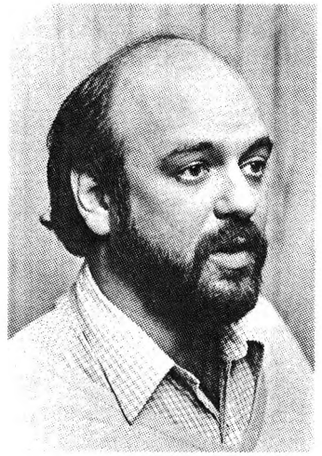
The interview with Jorge Farinacci of *Pensamiento Critico* should be an eye-opener for most of our readers. There is an unfortunate side to that fact: the show of force by the repressive apparatus of the U.S. government in its most important colony went largely unnoticed in the bourgeois media and on much of the U.S. Left as well. As Farinacci explains, ". . . the North American Left is not really aware of what is happening in Puerto Rico."

Our regular column "Lift Every Voice" addresses the issue of drugs and the Black community. On the cultural front, Lucy Marx returns with another provocative and far-reaching literary review, this time of Sue Miller's popular *The Good Mother*. And Tom Goodkind, focusing on the recent blockbuster "Aliens," chips in with a (rightfully) defensive discussion of the relation between horror movies and revolution. Finally, Jerry Harris contributes a first comment to the "Big Changes" articles of the last issue.

LocoMotion fans: Dennis O'Neil will be back in the December issue with part two of "The Def Beat."

In Memorium
Mauricio Gaston

This issue of Forward Motion *is dedicated to Mauricio Gaston, Boston-area Marxist educator and activist, who passed away September 13th. Mauricio Gaston's untimely death has shocked his close friends and comrades, and saddened all who he has touched over the years. Few words can summarize the extent to which he will always be missed. FM extends its deepest condolences to his family.*



Forward Motion is a magazine of socialist opinion and advocacy. We say socialist opinion because each FM presents analyses of important organizing work and reviews of political and cultural trends. We say socialist advocacy because FM is dedicated to a new left-wing presence in U.S. politics, and to making Marxism an essential component of that presence. We share these purposes with other journals, but we seek for FM a practical vantage point from within the unions, the Black and other freedom struggles, the women's movement, the student, anti-war, and gay liberation movements, and other struggles. We also emphasize building working people's unity as a political force for social change, particularly through challenging the historical pattern of white supremacy and national oppression in the capitalist domination of this country.

Editorial responsibility is exercised by the Forward Motion collective: Susan Cummings, Tom Goodkind, Jon Hoffman, Lucy Marx, Claire Welles.

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Editorial

Get Ready for '88

Statement from Freedom Road Socialist Organization, National Exec

Though the next national election is still two years away, the 1988 presidential primary campaign is now almost a year old. Last winter in New Hampshire, the committees were already forming to launch early fund-raising, jockeying for endorsements and personal appearances. Later on in Michigan, initial pre-primary testing for Republican comer Pat Robertson captured national attention. For a left pressed by the imminent step-up of this country's Central America war, by the steady unraveling of South Africa, and numerous other Reagan era horrors, 1988 seems still a ways off. Yet it already poses basic questions for us. One question certainly is, will Jesse Jackson run again?

One of the interesting things about politics is how in a very short space of time, events can cause people to change their minds, moods and stated positions. This was in fact what took place during, and as a result of, the Black-led electoral upsurge of 1982-84. Groups and individuals which all but ignored the electoral arena started to devote tremendous energy to electoral politics.

In those crucial years, the electoral process offered the Black movement, as well as other minority communities, the opportunity for further challenges to local white governmental power structures. This battle has ebbed and flowed for a generation, and in Chicago, in new locales in the South, and other areas, significant breakthroughs now came. In addition, these elections have provided a medium for a Black-originated challenge to collapsing mainstream liberalism and ineffective organized labor-oriented progressivism.

Democratic Party neo-liberalism has provided the only other such challenge. Some on the left have come to see the neo-liberals as the trend the Right will have to reckon with. But it is hard to deny that Jackson offered the most effective anti-Reagan message in the 1984 election—and since.

The Rainbow politics expressed by Jackson has two major thrusts. First, the simple notion that there is room for all under the Rainbow is a bold idea for these times. Today's Right preaches the righteousness of polarization within the people's camp: certain basic rights ought not to be respected. Meanwhile progressives largely continue to offer one or another stale politics of mechanical, negotiated alliance based on separate group interests. The left argues with the neo-liberals over who is really a special interest.

By contrast, the 1984 Jackson campaign seized the moral highground. Jackson articulated from the start a righteous popular will to resist Reaganism. In turn, the Rain-

bow has come to synmbolize a more radical concept of unity: that justice and equality are political goals *shared by all.* The Rainbow also challenges the foreign policy consensus: the Jackson campaign strongly contributed to the current wave of anti-apartheid support; rejected the liberal Democratic collapse on Central America; and took itself outside the pro-Israel Middle East consensus.

These are strong democratic themes, and they have meshed with a practical mass politics. What has been happening is not the generalized third party movement some (for instance, the Citizens Party) expected. Instead the Black community has been regrouping, taking primarily electoral form.

Labor's Candidate

Given all this, the question for 1988 could be, will Jackson run, but it *ought* to be, how can we influence that decision? Another late decision will tend to confine a second Jackson run to—at best—the pattern of the first. An early Jackson decision to run would make it harder to cast him in a largely symbolic role. Harder to dismiss, Jackson and the Rainbow could become more potent factors in the mess of political contradictions now operating nationally. Whereever it is active, the left should assume Jackson will be a candidate, and begin to consider the reasonable proposition that the campaign can be a powerful voice for a national progressive program.

For one thing, Jackson ought to be *labor's* candidate. For better or worse, the AFL-CIO has already announced it will make another early endorsement. Meanwhile, the federation's convention debate last year over Central America and the three thousand plus locals willing to buck their Internationals this year to support the Hormel strikers show positive signs at the base. We should promote the idea of competing for that endorsement, making it harder for unions like AFSCME or IAM to deny it to him. Beyond this, when the labor left gathers, as it did last year at the national anti-concessions conference or Labor Notes' fall "New Directions" conference, Jackson and the Rainbow ought to be invited in. Were Jackson named honorary national chair of the anti-concessions group, the media attention would have been significant—and might have continued past the end of the weekend. This is not to say that Jackson now offers a full labor program—though it is arguable that his 1984 program injected more of a labor program into national debate than the unions, other candidates, or the left for that matter managed to do. And should we make stronger entry more attractive to Jackson, the ideological and political effects could shake not only the labor movement but the mass movements and resistance to the right generally.

The Left's Electoral Dilemma

If the Jackson campaign demonstrated the national significance of the current Black movement renewal, this ought to be a good time and the Rainbow a good context for reviving Black left organization at the base. Inescapably, this means confronting the left's electoral dilemma.

Marxists, revolutionary nationalists and left-wing activists of all stripes have long been at the forefront of reform struggles, regardless of how close or far they may be from socialist goals. In the bulk of these struggles, however, liberal or conservative governments, or businesses for that matter, are asked to do something by a mobilized people. The left winds up with little or no say over the process of implementing the reform. Thus, we can absolve ourselves of guilt or responsibility when those same governments or businesses are inconsistent or treacherous in response to the people's reform demands.

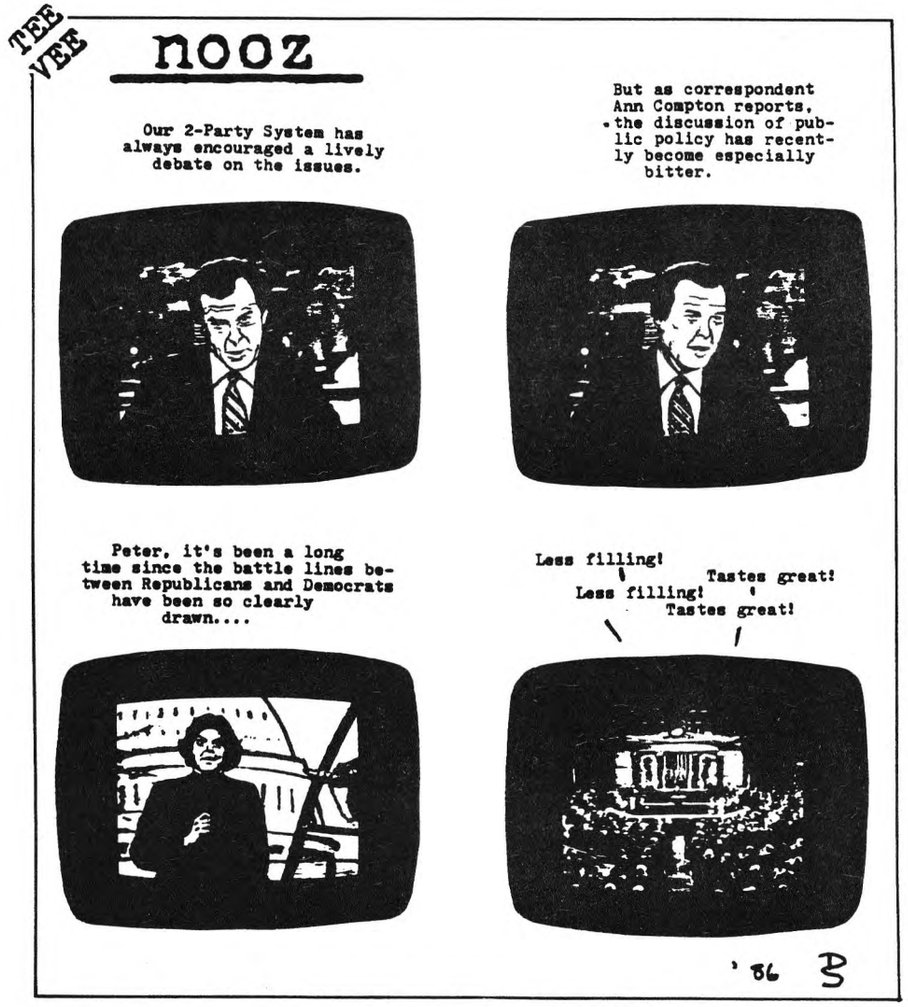
On the other hand, where they get into office, be it trade union office or City Council seat, left-wing elected officials confront the problems of managing, representing and leading in a situation where the electorate by and large is unwilling to challenge the basic precepts of bourgeois democracy. They therefore face co-optation by and into liberal Democracy (put on the suit; cut your hair; and by all means, *be realistic*) where we give up all but the pretense—and eventually even that—of being a revolutionary left. If we therefore stand aside, the socialist and revolutionary left face the danger of remaining a perpetual opposition, the "gad-fly" of the masses, and in that sense continuing to hold a position of marginality in U.S. politics. These dangers have always existed in U.S. politics. Today they are particularly acute for the Black left precisely because of the opportunities the current upsurge provides.

The election of strong left-wing spokespersons, representing a wider left-progressive block, can represent one *reform* step in the battle to promote peoples' power and community control generally, and specifically striking a blow today for proportional representation and enfranchisement of oppressed nationalities. Strengthening a left-progressive bloc in the electoral arena, including the running of local candidates who may be drawn from among the ranks of the revolutionary left, will greatly help in defining and organizing a visible left-wing base in the current Black movement renewal.

Where the movement is stronger, then, we can summarize four components of a left-wing position in elected office: First, to prosecute the reform struggle from within the bourgeois state apparatus—in other words, to use elected position to advance specific reforms raised by the people's movements. Second, to move from being an opposition with no program—short of socialism—to being an opposition which represents a people's agenda. We seek not respectability, but credibility, where credibility is born of a strong base and a clear stand. Third, we use elected office to encourage and give credibility to organization at the base. Back in the 1960s, Congressman Adam Clayton Powell held Congressional hearings in the streets of Harlem, but too little are such imaginative tactics used today despite the explosive effect it has on grass-roots organizing. Fourth, we use office as a forum from which to agitate and advocate for a left-progressive alternative, for today and for the long-haul.

So in starting to launch Jackson campaign committees this fall and winter, a project we should take up wherever we can, we ought to look forward to a tumultuous election period. Organizing at the base could make for a dramatically different and even more effective Jackson campaign this time nationally. A strong Rainbow will hamper the slide of the Democratic leadership toward further Reaganizing its party and policies

and help hold back a new, stable rightist ruling alignment. Local effects of a strong Jackson campaign could be equally significant. At the same time, a strong campaign could have a much greater potential of progressive local "coattails," inside the Democratic primaries or as independents. We have to do more than be ready for these opportunities: we have to start now.



Forward Motion **Forum**

On the Cutting Edge in Chicago Politics

Over the summer, Forward Motion sponsored a forum on Chicago electoral politics. FM Chicago correspondent Peggy Baker moderated. This forum followed by almost a year one sponsored by the Chicago Marxist Forum (see FM, April-May 1986) which focused on progressive electoral prospects in the aftermath of Harold Washington's first steps as Mayor of Chicago. The intervening months have been busy ones for Chicago progressives, with intense efforts going into a number of local elections. This 1986 forum was organized as a means to assess that work and examine its implications for Washington's reelection and the national elections ahead.

The three featured speakers were Luis Gutierrez, Robert Starks, and Richard Saks. Gutierrez is a newly elected Chicago Alderman of the overwhelmingly Puerto Rican 26th Ward. After taking part in radical student politics at Northeastern Illinois University, Gutierrez got involved in community housing development in the Humboldt-Park-Westown area. Now thirty-two years old, in Spring, 1986, he defeated regular Democrat and hand-picked machine candidate Manny Torres for Alderman. Robert Starks is Professor of Political Science at Northeastern Illinois University. He co-chairs the Task Force for Black Political Empowerment, the organization whose massive voter registration drive helped convince Harold Washington to run for Mayor in 1983. He also is Chicago co-chair of Free South Africa. Richard Saks is a member of the Common Ground Network, a grass-roots network of community activists. He managed Bill Borks unsuccessful campaign for State Representative and this year had an important role in Miguel del Valle's successful Democratic primary campaign for State Senate. (Pending final election in November, del Valle will become the first Puerto Rican to hold state office in Illinois.)

Bob Starks: This is almost like deja vu, in effect. Because I remember sitting in the basement of the Center for Inner City Studies for a very heated debate in the Spring of 1984, with Luis Gutierrez, Marlene Carter and about one hundred other people, Black, Hispanic white—everyone was there. We were screaming and hollering. And the number one issue was, should we have a third party or not? I chaired the meeting, and we came up with what we called the Cook County Coalition for New Politics, or something. The idea was there, it was a new one, and we had even gone to the point of getting incorporation papers and the whole bit.

We had a dual fight going on. And in retrospect we can see what was happening. We had a fight between people who wanted to support Mondale at the Convention and wanted a vehicle to hook onto the Mondale campaign, and those of us in the room who were saying that we were going to be a part of the Rainbow. We were part of the Rainbow Coalition and come hell or high water, Harold Washington included, we were going to support Rev. Jesse Jackson for the Democratic nomination. At any rate, the whole thing was derailed by the Mayor, and we had a fight over that, but the idea in my mind is simply on hold. We'll bring it back to the front burner.

I was asked to address three questions: what were the issues underlying the movement that brought Harold Washington into office; how has that movement's consciousness evolved as a result of the Mayor's election; and third, what is the relationship between the movement and the Rainbow Coalition and other organizations?

Background to a Black Mayoral Victory

The first question, again, is one that is extremely emotional. I'm sure that all of us in this room can understand that the period between 1979 and 1983 was an extremely emotional one in Chicago. It was the apex of a struggle that had gone on since Daley's demise in 1976. And I really think that the Daley people did not understand the impact of his refusal, I think consciously, to name a successor. The Daley people also did not understand that the machine itself was in a shambles at the time that he died. In fact, if you go back and look at the statistics on the voter turnout in 1975, when Daley was elected the last time, you'll see that there was a tremendous fall-off in turnout for Daley and support for Daley in that election.

The whole town was in turmoil after that 1975 election. But allow me to go back to about 1963 or so. I remember distinctly that in 1963 there was a movement to elect a Black mayor. And at that point it was about twenty people, and most people thought they were crazy. They were people like Bob Lucas, A. A. "Sammy" Rayner, and some old timers around the South Side who were talking about electing a Black mayor. They were talking to people like Don Rose, who at that time was considered a crazy too. But at any rate, that talk died.

Some of you remember, 1967-68 was an interesting year, because Dick Gregory came to the fore and ran on a ticket, and that was around the same time as the Democratic convention in Chicago. And so the whole movement began to go forward. In 1969, of course, Fred Hampton was killed and the Black community revolted in the next election against Hanrahan [ed. note—the State's Attorney who ordered the raids which led to Hampton's murder] which was a serious, serious indictment against the Daley machine. In 1971, another movement to elect a Black mayor, and there were buttons printed "Elect a Black mayor in 1971." And that ·ied out.

But then, in '75, after several incidences of police brutality and the subsequent break between Mayor Daley and then-Congressman Ralph Metcalfe, a serious effort to find a Black candidate came about. And everyone homed in on Mr. Metcalfe himself. He

at that point refused to run, because he did not see the political resources or the financial resources with which to win. As you know, we ended up running State Senator Richard Newhouse and some other people ran, but it was an interesting statement, because what it did was mobilize people. And in most of those wards, those candidates got significant votes. The other paragon of liberal politics emerged at this point, a fellow named Billy Singer. I never will forget the statement he made: "If those Black people on the South Side are serious about running a candidate, I won't run." Can you imagine, this fellow being so arrogant as to say "those people—if they are serious enough, I won't run." And of course he did run. It was a crazy thing. [Singer was a lakefront liberal and former independent, now gone over to the Vrodlyak side.]

But what comes out of this is a progressive increment of the level of intolerance [for the status quo] that's building here. In 1977, people did prevail on then State Senator Harold Washington to run, and he ran against Bilandic. Bilandic won, and everyone thought the machine had rehealed itself and was ready for 1979. And then along comes Mad Jane, the wicked witch of the Northwest Side. With the 1979 blizzard Jane emerges as a candidate.

The handling of the snow was a political fiasco. Primarily, it exposed the breakdown of the transportation system, and the arrogance on the part of the CTA and RTA [ed. note-Chicago and Regional Transit Authorities] Boards who said "well, so what if the els and buses don't run in the Black community." It was tantamount to what S.I. Hayakawa said in the Senate when somebody mentioned the fact that gas prices were going up. Hayakawa replied, "Poor people don't have anyplace to go anyway, so what difference does it make?"

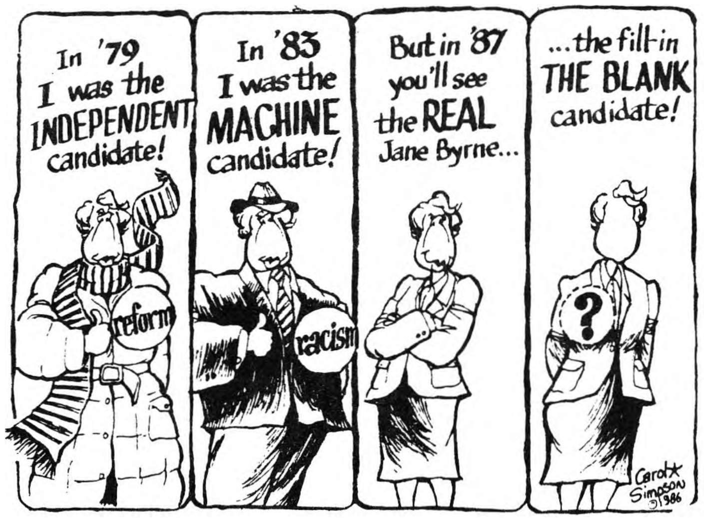
People were enraged at the Boards' stance that "who the hell cares if you have to go to work." And they thought Jane Byrne was a courageous woman to do what she did in the face of opposition and the mythical magic of the machine. So Jane Byrne said to the machine, "OK, I'll take you on," and people responded, "OK, I'll vote for you even though we don't really believe you're gonna win..."

When she won, absolute pandemonium spread all over the South Side of Chicago. Because coming out of '77, no one had the nerve to put up a Black candidate in '79, because everyone thought the machine had rectified itself. Bilandic had appeared to be invincible. Here was a guy who was a working class Croation who had married a WASP girl who was the princess of corporate Chicago. Jane was the only one who had the sense to say "Dammit, I don't care if things do look like this, I'm going to take them on." The Black community, the Hispanic community, the progressive white community embraced her. Everybody wished her well, and made available to her all of their political resources for a progressive Chicago.

Within two months, we knew we had created a monster. And from that point on, up to the end of the summer of 1982 when the boycott of ChicagoFest took place, there was absolute war between Jane Byrne and progressive Chicago. Because Jane Byrne took on one issue after another, resolved them in a negative way, and did it with impunity. The School Board. The Fire and Police Departments. Police brutality,

the CHA, the CTA. [Ed. note: Jesse Jackson helped organize a boycott of the publicly-funded ChicagoFest when organizers refused to hire Blacks. The reference to the School Board is that Byrne appointed to vacancies two women who were particularly noted white bigots and who in turn appointed a white woman to be superintendent of schools.]

I sometimes believe that in her heart she actually believed that confrontation politics was the name of the game, and that we should just keep it in motion. But what she didn't realize, and what most of the analysts failed to realize, was that in the midst of all of this, people were meeting, people were strategizing, and people were seriously assessing what political resources they had, and for one goal: to unseat Jane Byrne, number 1, and number 2, to put into place a Black mayor.

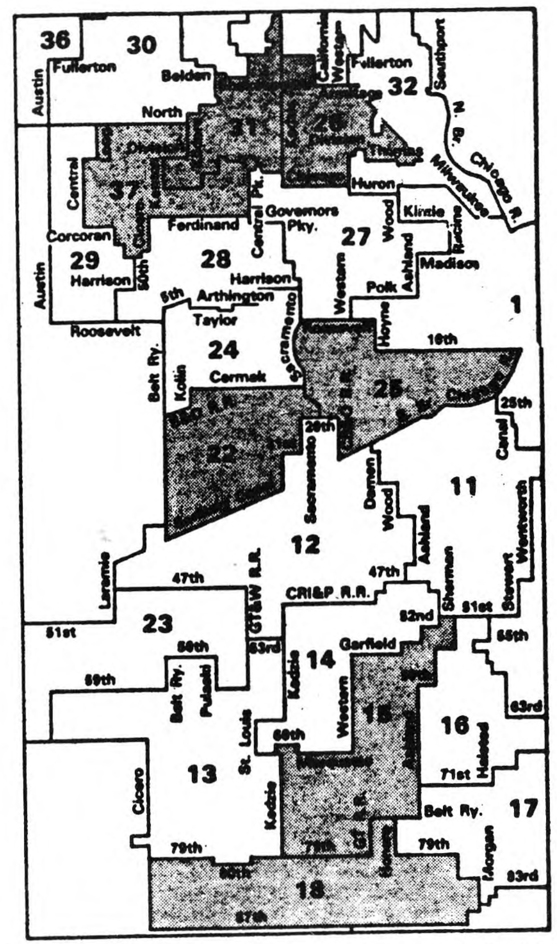


Chicago Tribune

And let me tell you the key issue that did it. In terms of events, the key thing was the boycott of ChicagoFest. But the key political issue was the remap. And this is an important thing: what every political analyst missed is that the remap politicized the hell out of the Black and Hispanic community in this city to no end. You don't understand how really dull a remap can be. The experts sit there with rows of columns and statistics, and tell the community people that they really shouldn't be involved in it. It's dull. It's crazy. You don't know what the hell you're doing. But let me tell you MALDEF—or the Coalition, as we called ourselves—drew its own maps. [Ed. note: the Mexican-American Legal Defense Fund, a community group on the South Side, was a party to the remap case.] It was the first time in history that community groups sat down and said "Dammit, we're going to draw our own maps because we know we've been cheated; we know if we rely on the city council they will continue to cheat us, and we're going to draw our own maps." Do you know who drew the map for the state? That paragon of virtue Michael Madigan. Michael Madigan purposely cut Hispanic and Black

people out in the state redistricting map. And he did it with impunity. Michael Madigan and Tom Keane concurred on drawing the city map. These are the characters that are now fighting to the death to hold onto what they've got. [Ed. note: Michael Madigan is Chicago-based Democratic Speaker of the House, more or less a regular but who has made some coalitions with Washington's forces in the assembly. Tom Keane was an alderman who went to jail for extortion, and upon release, was appointed by Byrne to work on the remap.]

The first court case was the Congressional one. It politicized the redistricting issue. We had meetings on the South Side. We had meetings up in this community [ed. note—



Remap showing wards that held special elections.

the predominantly Puerto Rican community near northwest side]. We had meetings at churches, at Operation PUSH. And every time we had meetings we brought the maps out. And every time people would say "I didn't realize this. I thought it was something magical." And all you do is draw some lines, make sure there's 60,000 people in each one, and people all of a sudden began to really believe that there was something they could do about the process. So by the time we got to the courts, people were willing to give money, to testify, to be partners in the suits. And what the machine did not realize is that we used the remap case as the best educational program we could possibly have. Because all the time that the case was going on, we kept linking the remap to the issue of resources allocation; to the issue of political representation, to the issue of services, etc.

As far as the evolution that has taken place in consciousness: basically, success breeds success. What has happened is that Chicago has become, brothers and sisters, a sort of Mecca for progressive politics in America. As bad off as we are, and as underdeveloped as we are, we are miles ahead of most coalitions across America. And we laugh about it and we cry about it, but it is a fact.

So the consciousness of all of us is moving forward. And the thing that gives me more hope than anything else is the fact that we are constantly doing the linkage. We are linking the domestic to the international. We're linking the political to the financial. We're linking the social to the economic. We understand the relationship between Peoria and Pretoria. We understand the relationship between Managua and Memphis. We understand the relationship between San Juan and San Francisco. And until we can do that collectively, and consciously, we've lost the ballgame. We can't just take on the City Council. As a progressive movement we've got to be on the march, talking about beating up on Reaganism because Reaganism breeds a kind of foreign policy that gives $120 million to the contras and at the same time gives $120 million to Jonas Savimbi. This whole notion of bifurcated politics—the separation between domestic and international—is a heresy and we in the progressive movement have got to begin to fight very actively against it.

On the question of Rainbow politics: The Rainbow Coalition is moving forward. It is clear that Rev. Jackson is going to run in 1988. He has already put together a fairly progressive platform, which includes farmers, industrial workers, women, the whole gamit. Everything, I think, depends on how his base looks in Chicago. Chicago is the key. Whatever we do here in 1987 will have a direct impact on what we do in 1988. If we want to see change in the Democratic party in 1988, we're going to have to stop Thompson in 1986 [ed. note: Jim Thompson, the Republican Gov. of Illinois who is running for reelection against Adlai Stevenson III]; and we're going to have to stop Thompson in 1987. Thompson has a very simple plan for '86, '87 and '88 that goes like this: win big in '86 for Governor; come back and defeat Harold Washington with yuppie, yucky Dan Webb in 1987 with the active connivance of Kelly and his gang, the three Eddies; and then come back in 1988 as a Vice Presidential or Presidential candidate. [Ed. note: Dan Webb is a young Republican former U.S. attorney who is

a crony of Gov. Thompson.] That's the plan. So you can see that the national implications in both the Republican and Democratic parties are right here in Chicago. Everything is revolving around Illinois. The LaRouchites got their biggest victory in Illinois. And the progressives have got to stand up and really begin to analyze this and take action right now to see where we are.

Richard Saks: I was asked to address four basic questions: first, what were the accomplishments and general achievements of the Washington administration, as well as some of the shortcomings. Second, what were some of the elements that make up the coalition that is the Democratic Party in Chicago and can this coalition last? Third, does the Washington campaign represent some new political alignment in the city, and is it some kind of a microcosm of a new formation that's emerging on the national scene? And last, within the current alignment, do progressive white activists have a particular role to play?

In terms of the achievements of the administration, I'd suggest four yardsticks to apply to the Mayor's administration. First, how successfully has the mayor transformed the actual apparatus of city government? Second, has he fairly redistributed the pie, the resources throughout the community? Third, has he been able to revitalize the economy, a moribund economy that has been in decline for the last couple of decades, and offer a vision of some kind of a progressive or prosperous future? Last, has the Washington reform movement exercised the political leadership that's needed to actually beat the machine and mobilize the people at the base to build an organization that can carry on?

Taking a Reform Administration's Measure

The first yardstick—structural reform of city government—is probably the easiest to quantify. That's the issue that brought a lot of progressives and independents into the Washington campaign originally. The old city government under Daley, inherited by Bilandic and Byrne, was characterized by unbelievable corruption, was blatantly ruled for and by a patronage system. There was a bloated city labor force which housed a political army of precinct captains subservient to ward committeemen who dispensed jobs based strictly on vote totals. Patronage ruled all city contracts; all contractors were expected to kick back either jobs or money to the machine; city business was conducted with no-bid contracts; we had an inefficient, unfair and unaccountable system. The record keeping was antiquated or non-existent; even as late as under Jane Byrne hardly any department in the city was computerized. There was no sense of what was going on, no way to see what was happening. Bureaucratic waste, corruption, no-show jobs permeated the entire city government apparatus. On top of this, Blacks, Latinos and women were virtually iced out of any kind of positions of leadership or appointments in departmental policy-making posts and furthermore received vitually zero in city contracts.

This issue of structural reform was probably the main thing that the Washington administration tried to address in the first couple of years. By almost everybody's yardstick, except the machine's, from the *Tribune* to progressive aldermen to groups like

the Independent Voters of Illinois (IVI) and League of Women Voters, the mayor has eliminated virtually all the major abuses of the old patronage system. The Freedom of Information Order opened up the city's files, and about 1500 requests are processed every month by the city to monitor prosecution of slumlords, crime statistics, and city programs. The bureaucratic dinosaur of the government is now being treated not as a political army, but basically what it should be treated as—a $2 billion business organization. Do-nothing jobs that house political cronies are being eliminated and about 7000 jobs have been cut from the city payroll.

When the Mayor took office there were 43,000 people on the city payroll; it's now down to 36,000 and there's been no noticeable drop in services to the taxpayer. In fact, a strong case can be made that city services have increased. All contracts are now done through competitive bidding, and local business and minority- and women-owned enterprises get first crack at any contract. All they have to do is fall within 1% of the lowest bid and the contract is theirs.

Under Byrne, the government was dominated by white males. About 70% of all top leadership policy posts were white; 83% were male. The Mayor's appointments reflect a 26% white, 54% Black, 20% Latino composition; nearly 40% have been women. On top of this, labor agreements have been made with AFSCME that are precedent-setting in incorporating principles of comparable worth. [Ed. note: Just as Washington took office, state legislation was enacted permitting collective bargaining for municipal workers in Chicago for the first time. Washington set union elections even before the law took effect.] In addition, the city balanced the budget, eliminated the $94 million deficit inherited from Jane Byrne, and stopped the falling bond rate.

All these positive things aside, and they are significant, a big chunk of middle and lower level leadership of the city departments are still dominated by leftover bureaucrats from the old goverments. At the best, these people can be characterized as cynical, demoralizing, and not feeling that city government can do much of anything. At their worst, they're obstructionist and saboteurs who try to stop any initiative that the Mayor tries to take. And even amongst the Mayor's own appointees, there's not always a lot of clarity or decisiveness in how to ferret out these old left-overs. The slogan of a lot of people who work for the Mayor is that the effort to transform city government is sort of like trying to fight a war with someone else's soldiers.

In terms of the second yardstick, which is one of social reform, we can ask if the resource pie is being fairly divided, with special attention going to the places in the city where the greatest need exists for food, shelter and health? The Mayor has initiated scores of programs. A number of programs funded for community development have shifted their target exclusively to low and moderate income areas. Emergency shelters, emergency food sites have tripled. The WIC program has increased its vouchers by 50%. Because of an initiative by the Mayor, the infant mortality rate has fallen to its lowest since the city started keeping records in 1867. It's hard to tell sometimes, but even the Mayor's Crime Intervention Network has reduced the number of murders from gang-related youth crimes. The city has also opened five new senior citizen nutrition

centers, established the first legal services program for the disabled, and the list of achievement goes on.

The problems that the city faces are very deep and long-standing. The Mayor's efforts really only begin to scratch the surface of what has to be done. To the Mayor's credit, though, he's not just trumpeting his achievements, but he's doing basic work to investigate the nature and extent of these problems, including recognizing that it involves a far-reaching struggle against Reaganomics and the whole priorities of the country.

The third yardstick, the extent to which the Mayor has revitalized the economy of the city, is very hard for me to measure. Statistics came out last year that showed that there was a jump in the economy. In fact, for the first time in a decade the number of manufacturing firms in the city increased, the number of jobs in the city increased, and there was a jump in new housing stock in the city. The Mayor took credit for this, and rightfully so. In terms of what the city's actually done to create this climate: by conservative estimates, the Dept. of Economic Development, through about ninety different kinds of programs and packages for loan assistance to help businesses to survive or get started, has created about 16,000 jobs. These are almost all industrial jobs. Under previous administrations there was never an effort to put a penny into any kind of program to save industrial jobs. The city also initiated the General Obligation Bond, which is the largest program in Chicago history to put capital improvements into the neighborhoods and the infrastructure. [Ed note: the General Obligation Bond, which was to be used to repair streets, sidewalks, and other infrastructure, was held up for two years by the anti-Washington majority on the council.]

Again, these statistics don't show the fact that many of the communities right here on the Northwest side have lost over 20,000 jobs in the last ten years. I think it will

CHICAGO REPORT CARD

NEIGHBORHOOD EMPLOYMENT CHANGES UNDER THREE MAYORS

	Central business district	*Central business ring**	*North Side*	*South Side*	*West Side*	*North-west*	*Far South*	*South-west*	*City-wide*
Bilandic 1977-78	+0.2%	+0.8%	+4.8%	+1.1%	-5.3%	+8.2%	-2.4%	+8.2%	+1.5%
Byrne 1979-82	+5.4%	-5.0%	-5.8%	-10.3%	-6.1%	-9.8%	-20.5%	-14.6%	-6.1%
Washington 1983-84	-0.6%	+1.1%	+4.1%	+5.1%	-0.1%	+1.9%	+4.7%	+5.3%	+2.2%

*Includes Main Post Office and Near North Areas.
Figures are percentage changes in number of jobs held. Does not include self-employed and government workers.

Chicago Sun-Time/Jack Jordan

be decades before the Southeast side [ed. note—the home and heart of Chicago's dying steel mills] ever recovers from the collapse of the steel industry. And this whole issue begs the question of the future of public education in the city, which is crucial to providing a base for a new economy in the city. Education does have to become the vehicle and base for Chicago's children, who will eventually become Chicago's workers. This is something that there is not a real clear vision on how to procede.

The fourth yardstick is political leadership. I think there is a lot of agreement now on the leaderhip that the Mayor has provided. When Washington first won in 1983 there were generally two syndromes that people fell into. One is the sell-out syndrome. Some people are so used to getting sold out by politicians they work for that every time the Mayor did something that they had the slightest doubt about, people projected that as a sign that the Mayor was surely compromising his principles. Other people were afflicted differently with this accomodationist syndrome. Having grown cynical by years of seeing the machine operate, by the machine's wheeling and dealing, they couldn't fathom why Washington wanted to stand fast against Vrdolyak and not cut a deal. They would just say "Harold, cut a deal with the Eddies and get down to running the city."

The problem is, neither group really gave the Mayor the credit that he or our movement deserved. Washington was never bound to strike a deal with the machine; he made that clear from the day of his inauguration, when he told the machine that it would no longer be business as usual. The machine tried to stand off the Mayor, but again, the Mayor stuck with a minority block of 21 in the City Council for three years, and continued step by step to reform city government with a minority bloc. He mobilized his supporters right from the beginning, starting back in the summer when he took office, rallying 15,000 people in the University of Illinois pavillion to demand money back from Springfield to open the schools in the fall. He mobilized community groups to defeat Vrdolyak's plan to deny Black, Latino and poor white organizations the right to get access to Community Development Block Grant Funds. He out-organized the Vrdolyakers in their own wards last year to pass the General Obligation Bonds. In '84, he put up a slate of committeemen to try to take over the Cook County Central Committee [ed. note—he lost, badly.] And finally this spring he defeated Vrodlyak in the March, 1986 primary and special elections. And he gained a working majority in the city council.

The Mayor achieved a victory when Luis Gutierrez and Marlene Carter won on April 29. [Ed. note: Marlene Carter also won election last spring to the city council; Carter was one of the plaintiff's in the "remap" case discussed by Prof. Starks.] But I think there's another syndrome that we've got to be careful of, which is the "downhill syndrome." That says that the Mayor's now taken over, and it's in the bag right now. The fact is that the Mayor's locked in two critical battles now—one with Kelly and the Park District, and another with Reagan over pres rving general revenue sharing for the city. We can't fall into the notion that local city government—aldermanic elections—are the whole ball of wax. The machine has a lot more friends at the federal and state level than we have right now. [Ed note: At the time of the forum, Washington was in the

process of seating his nominees to the Park District Board, effectively taking over the last major machine patronage enclave. The Park Superintendent is Ed Kelly—one of the famous three Eddies of the contemporary Chicago machine. The machine made a surprise last ditch effort to have the state take away the power of the Park board. Though passed by the Illinois House of Representatives, shortly after the forum, the bill was killed through behind the scenes maneuvering.]

The point is not to show that the Mayor is a fiesty or combative guy, which he is, but to show that the leadership and the direction he's provided have been those of independence, courage and vision. Most important, his leadership is not just built on personalities, but it has dealt very clearly with the very direction of city, state and federal priorities.

Coalition or Two Parties?

The second question is what elements make up the coalition that is the Democratic Party in Chicago. We're getting a clear lesson on what this coalition is in Springfield right now with the shenanigans of Ed Kelly trying to preserve his patronage in the Park District. What we are seeing is that there is no coalition in the Democratic Party. What there really is, is two parties, and they both call themselves Democratic. One is the Vrdolyakers, who base themselves on a straight-up racial appeal; and the second is the Mayor's coalition, which includes virtually the entire Black community, a majority of the Latino community, and a section of poor whites and progressive-minded whites.

I think one or the other is going to be forced out of the Democratic party. Either the Vrdolyakers will sell themselves to the Republican Party officially; or the Washington forces will be forced to form some type of third party. This doesn't depend just on what happens in Chicago, of course, but on what direction the Democratic Party takes on a national level: whether they drift to the right and drive out what the right wing of the Party calls the special interests—labor, the cities, women, Blacks, the peace movement forces. And conversely, I think what we do in Chicago is going to have big impact on the outcome of that struggle in the national Democratic party. If the Mayor loses in '87 in Chicago, I think that would open up the floodgates of reaction inside the Democratic Party in a way that we haven't seen in years. On the other hand, a resounding victory here in Chicago in '87 will portend very well, and will catapult the Mayor and other progressive forces into prominence in the national Democratic party, and will revitalize a progressive grouping within the national Democratic party.

Is the Washington campaign a microcosm of a new political alignment, or a potential third party? The Mayor has no ideological commitment to the two-party system. As he's stated on a number of occasions, he's not wedded to the Democratic Party; he doesn't even consider himself a member of the Cook County Democratic Party.

The Washington campaign in 1983 was and still is a microcosm of a new and developing political alliance in the city, and in the country. It consists of four basic groupings. First is a group of working people, including organized labor and farmers, who

basically repudiate Reagan's notion of supply-side economics, unbridled corporate supremacy of the free-market economy. A second grouping is of minorities, of oppressed nationalities who repudiate second class citizenship granted to the country's Afro-American, Asian, Latino brothers and sisters. Third is an alignment of women who want to enter the 21st Century on a basis of equality; and fourth is an alignment of the advocates of world peace, who repudiate Reagan's intervention in Central America, his condoning of South African apartheid, and the stockpiling of nuclear weapons.

The importance of this alignment is not just that it exists. We're not just for a third party or a new alignment just for the sake of it. What it shows and what we learned this last March, is that the Mayor has the only deliverable voting bloc in the city of Chicago. In the elections last March, every single candidate that the Mayor backed—Black, Latino and white—did extremely well. He gained four allies in the city council; three on the County Board; two new state senators; several judgeships, several state representatives. [ed. note—all but the council gains are primary wins, pending final victories in November, which seems likely.] Even the Black committeemen who endorsed machine candidates like Hartigan over the independent Oberman lamented the fact that voters going to the polls swore by the Mayor's sample ballot. And the fiasco around the LaRouche primary victories just underlines the disarray and lack of leadership that exists inside the Democratic party.

Mayor Washington greeting a constituent as he campaigns in the March special elections.

Last, the Mayor is often criticized because he doesn't have a real well-oiled or extensive political organization. People say, "Why not form a party right now? Why not slate our own candidates, do our own fundraising, build political organizations around the city?"

That is a tough question to answer, but it gets to the essence of what the Mayor's reform program is about: the Mayor is not just into pulling together an army of political operatives and city workers. His base rests on a mass movement. This is not to say the mass movements don't need organization. But I think we need to take the Mayor at his word when he says that he doesn't want to become a new machine boss, but wants to let the leadership flourish at the base, the grass roots level, let different perspectives within the struggle contend, different groupings contend within the electoral arena. And finally, the other factor that I think he has to grapple with is resources. The regulars used to rely on a patronage army of city employees and contractors who kicked back money to finance a regular Democratic machine. I don't think we can go that route, I don't think the Mayor wants to go that route. I think a future party led by the Mayor has to be based on education, and not just on the lure of city jobs and contracts.

Do progressive whites have a particular role to play? I think the answer is obvious: yes. Generally, there've been two approaches that white activists have taken. One is to try to get into campaigns and candidacies in predominantly Black and Latino communities and try to offer skills, energy and time to help elect those vital candidates. I think the other approach is to try to work within the predominantly white neighborhoods. Generally that has been Common Ground's approach. Common Ground believes it's absolutely critical for white activists and white progressives to be working in white communities and to try to publicize the issues of the reform movement, and to win people over to the achievements and policies of the Mayor's administration.

There are two approaches that people bring to this work. One is that it is just a question of fairness, that we need to organize whites to support Blacks and Latinos getting a bigger share of the city pie. But I think we also have to make an issue of the fact that the Vrdolyakers are hurting their own wards, as well as the rest of the city. Their obstruction of the General Obligation Bond was a clear example of how they preferred to see their own wards get absolutely no improvements rather than work with the Mayor. They opposed the plastic garbage cart program. They opposed the Mayor's reforms on bidding, hiring, the budget, even though it's saving tax dollars. The point is that we need to go out and plainly summarize the achievements of the administration and break the pall of racism and ignorance that the Vrodlyak aldermen are trying to cast over the white neighborhoods. It's possible, and I think the time to start is right now.

Luis Gutierrez: I'm going to try to limit my comments to the Latino community specifically, although some of them may very well be the same for other communities in the city of Chicago as well.

Let me start with the Park District controversy. We have Sylvia Herrera, a Puerto Rican woman, who we're going to appoint to the Park District. Everybody knows that of the top 330 employees in the Park District, in terms of salary and positions, there's

not one Latino and there's only one Black. If we're going to talk about disenfranchisement, here's the Machine once again. We finally have an opportunity to put some people on the Park District Board, and we're going to have a Latina on the Park District Board. They are going to finally be able to control the mess at the Park District and get a grip on it, and what does the machine do? The machine acts in Springfield in order to strip us [of the opportunity]. Right now the only reason the Park District services the Latino community is because they're under a consent decree. [Ed. note—as a result of several years of federal litigation, the Park District entered into a consent decree with the US government to remedy a policy of allocating an extreme disproportion of resources to parks in white communities, while blatantly neglecting upkeep, staffing, and other allocation of resources to parks in Black and Latino communities.]

P. Baker

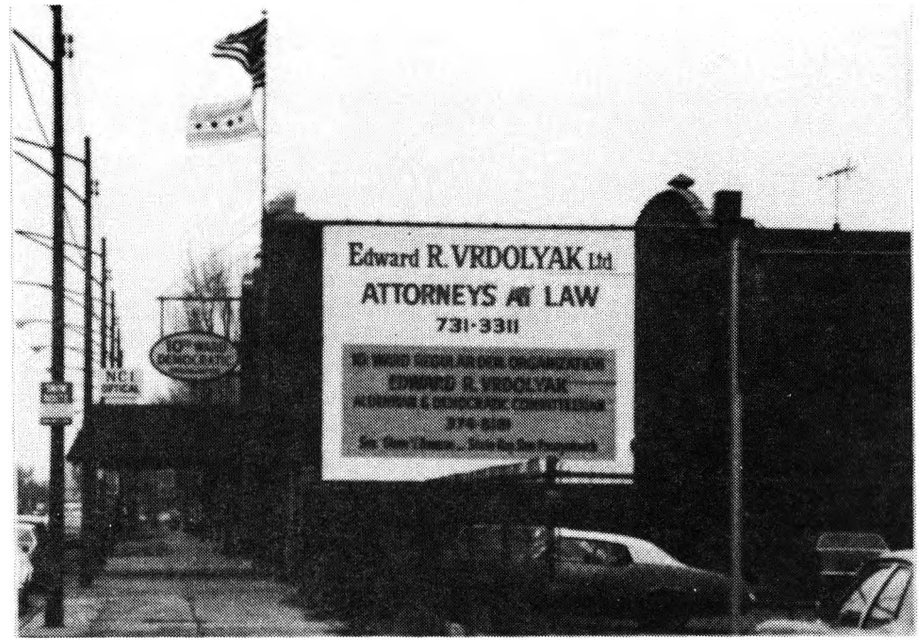
Special election campaigning, February 1986. Luis Gutierrez; his daughter; Mayor Harold Washington; Martin Oberman.

The Germ of a Third Party

So we see the same old thing happening again. And my real feeling about it all is that we're going to have to look at some alternatives. People have talked about a third Party. We realistically need to begin to talk about that. And I do think that Harold Washington's campaign in 1983 was the seed for that to begin to happen. There are already three parties in the city of Chicago except one hasn't been formally constituted.

There are real progressive leaders in the city. And that doesn't mean there are twenty-five aldermen on the City Council that would constitute members of a third party. Probably about ten of us out of the twenty-five. The other fifteen are there for whatever other reasons, but I don't know about their politics beyond their own self-interest and how they see what they need to do to survive. Remember, a lot of that grouping voted for the remap case [Ed. note—for fighting against a ward remap which would end gerrymandering in the Black and Latino communities]

One of the things I've realized about the city council is that there is only about six or seven of us of the twenty-five that say anything. You could say there's only six or seven that have big mouths and want to talk all the time. But I figured it out—there's only six or seven of us that Eddie Vrdolyak doesn't have anthing on, that Eddie Vrdolyak hasn't done a favor for, that Eddie Vrdolyak hasn't taken care of some problem,



that Eddie Vrdolyak doesn't have some dirt on. So when you want to get up and take Eddie on, you got to be clean. Because what is he going to do in the city council? He's gonna take those rags right out and say, "here."

But there are continuing pressures on the Council bloc. There were a couple of aldermen that got chastised because they left a City Council meeting. [Ed note: at a point when Washington needed all the votes of the twenty-five council members who were aligned with him to get a key vote through council, two aldermen in his bloc left the meeting. There was substantial outcry in their communities, headlines in the *Defender*, the local Black newspaper, pickets outside their ward offices, etc. They apologized, to some extent, and made very sure they were at the next council meeting. These two aldermen are not among those Gutierrez is referring to who would be part of the third party he speculated on earlier.] Then there was something circulated in the City Council saying we would forgive them. I didn't sign that. I think when community groups come together and get on an alderman's or other political representative's ass it's not my responsibility to go over there and say they were wrong. Because I think that really weakens the movement as a whole. And if we do something wrong and people get on my ass, I don't think I'm going to go around and ask twenty-four other aldermen to say what I did was all right.

I think we have the germ of a third party. We need to be looking at these November elections, and there has to be some serious thought to pulling the rug right from under Phil Rock [Dem. President of the State Senate, a party regular] and Mike Madigan . I don't know if we want them to be President of the Senate and Speaker of the House; I don't know if they deserve to be. I think either they give us the Park District or they lose their positions there as Democratic leaders. I think Hartigan's got to understand that if he wants to be attorney general, it is more than beating Carey [ed. note: Hartigan's Republican opponent for Attorney General]. It is making sure that the Park District is returned to the people of Chicago. And there's a whole number of people that have things at stake, and we can put it on the Democratic machine to give us the Park District, or they will blow the election in November...because we can be selective.

In the course of all this, people have grown. In the 26th Ward campaign, for example, we didn't just use a Luis Gutierrez passer card. Everybody who worked was very disciplined and very principled about the whole thing. Yes, my name was on the top, but that's the way it should be when it's your organization putting it together. But right under it was Miguel del Valle's name; right under that was Marty Oberman's name [ed note: Oberman is the Washington-aligned Alderman from the 43rd Ward who ran unsuccessfully for the Attorney General nomination]; Charley Serrano took 20 out of 24 precincts for State Rep.; Oberman took the 26th Ward and lost the 43rd Ward; Miguel del Valle won; Jeannie Quinn [Washington-backed candidate from the suburbs for County Clerk] got something like 46% of the vote. So when precinct workers engaged someone in conversation, they said "I'm here from Luis Gutierrez's campaign. Here are the candidates we want you to support." And people responded: they punched pretty consistently six numbers. Now in November maybe we want to be selective about

who we want to ask people to punch for. I'm not sure; it's a suggestion. I'm still angry over the Park District, so I may be talking a little bit out of emotion. I haven't really had time to think about what the strategy should be. But we need to consider it.

The recent special elections bode well for the mayoral campaign. They break the myth specifically about Puerto Ricans that they love Jane Byrne. Jane Byrne did a lot of campaigning. Or that they're mad about Richard Daley; Richard Daley came out and endorsed Manny Torres too; the whole machine endorsed him. And we whipped them pretty bad. The thing is that we probably got 70% plus of the Latino vote in the 26th Ward. We got 101% of the Black vote. So that was a real coalition there.

Everyone's talking about the white voters here, and they weren't too bad. If you remember the first campaign, when we had to count the 7th precinct—Association House. Manny and his friends thought they had the election wrapped up. He was ahead by nine votes without counting that precinct, as you all recall. So they counted, and there were 178 people voting. So they said "Well, 102 of them are white, 8 Blacks, the rest are Latinos. Well, we've won." Yet I received 98 votes to Manny's 67 votes. This is indicative that whites did come over and vote for me in substantial numbers in that precinct. In Logan Square, in Mell's precincts in the old 33rd Ward, we took 44% of the vote out of those 9 precincts. That was supposed to be the machine's stronghold. And it was. It proved to be stronger than anywhere else. But then we slaughtered them in other places, so their margin there did not become as significant. We saw people who could be called yuppies, and the gentrification and some of that liberalism that goes with it helped me. They came out and they did work, and they knocked on doors.

The important thing was we articulated issues versus offering people garbage cans, which we couldn't afford to buy anyway. And I think it shows that if Harold runs in 1987 and gets 25% percent of the white vote, he's won the election [ed. note: Washington got about 14% of the white vote in 1983.] So if Luis G. got 25% of the white vote in the 26th Ward, it's indicative that white voters are not in the old game. I think people are really sick of the obstructionism and the racism in the City Council. There's a real strong base out there: obviously Latinos and Blacks have come together in coalition in the 26th ward. And we need to articulate the kinds of things we can do. Because my real fear about electoral politics is raising of the expectations. And I have to live with it every day. I take the bus to work, and I eat in the neighborhood at the local restaurants, so I'm in contact with the people all the time. And I'm starting to think I need a limo with tinted glass and a chauffeur to take me from place to place so that I don't have this constant barrage of what's happening in the neighborhood. Some people don't care about what has been done as far as street improvements and infrastructure improvements. They see things getting better, but they want more. How we begin to articulate that? And how do we better people's lives socioeconomically?

In closing let me comment on issues of organization. In the 26th Ward, it wasn't the organization. We had good guys like Rich Saks and other people in here. But the reason we won is principled people coming together, and saying, "Hey I like this agenda; I like this candidate; he's progressive." And when they walked in the office and there

was no literature, and no one was listening to their problem or helping them resolve their precinct problem, they went and got a friend to fill in the gap. They worked in the precincts in spite of the problems of the internal organization. And I think that was important and that's because there's now a collective of folks out there that are principled and know enough that they don't need these hotshot kids in the office directing the traffic. Because if that's why we're gonna win, I should have lost, since there was chaos in the office all the time, up and down. There's a core of people out there that understand what needs to get done; they're willing to do it; all they need is someone to articulate some issues and come together around a platform and we can put some things together.

Questions and Answers from the Floor

Question: What does it take to constitute a third party, and what are the chances that Harold Washington might run as an independent candidate or in a third party [for Mayor in 1987]?

Bob Starks: The state law is stiff for a new party, but it is not insurmountable. It was liberalized as the result of a suit instituted by Rev. Jackson. Back in 1971, he wanted to run against Daley and Daley required 25,000 signatures in order for an independent to get on the ballot [for Mayor]. That liberal interpretation of the law is what Stevenson was counting on.

I think the people around the Mayor are saying to him "Let's plan to go into the Democratic primary and let's hold that until around October or so." I think you have to have your petitions in by December, so he's got up to that point to decide. I think what he's really waiting on are two things: if more than Jane Byrne gets into the race; and second, if the petition drive to have the non-partisan election gets on the ballot. [Ed. note: the regulars have been trying to get Chicago's party-based mayoral primary changed to a non-partisan election on the theory that they could beat Washington more easily that way. At press time, it is not clear what is going to happen with this initiative.] I think he's also looking at how the voter registration figures go at the end of the last day to register before the November elections (October 5). Those three factors are what Washington is looking at to decide whether he'll run as an independent or go into the regular primaries.

Question: Don't you think the mood exists for an independent party? I come from a background of voting on an independent ticket, growing up in Mississippi I couldn't vote any other way. The few Blacks we have holding state office in Mississippi started out on independent party tickets. So I we're already in Chicago voting independent, even though we don't have a constituted party.

Bob Starks: I think it really depends on the Mayor. He is the political leader of progressives. And if he decides that that's the way to go, obviously most people will follow. But you are correct. And nationally, it's basically the same thing. When you look at all the data from '80 and '84, the most reliable voting bloc in the Democratic Party is Hispanics and Black people. Remember the big push in '80 and '84 with the Bush and Reagan gang going to Texas and talking to our friends in LULAC and saying how many Hispanics they've got. They were even saying that they were going to get Cisneros (Mayor of San Antonio) to switch over to the Republican Party? I thought it was great. What white people don't understand is that Black people and Hispanic people know how to play the game. And in politics, the Texas group had just hyped up the Republicans [about the Hispanic vote] until they were salivating. And in 1984 if you look at the Hispanic vote, it all went for Mondale.

Question: First, I disagree that Chicago is so advanced, since it is the last stronghold of machine politics, which most of the United States has already rejected. It's true that the machine has been largely rejected, and we see empowerment of Blacks and Hispanics, but it would be a mistake to see that as the cutting edge of a new politics in the US, though it's exciting for those of us who live in the city.

Second, we shouldn't get confused: this success for reform politics in Chicago does not make Harold Washington the leader of the new progressive movement in this country. The challenge to the US foreign and economic policy which an independent party might be able to do for us is not embodied in the politics of Harold Washington.

Bob Starks: I have never said that Harold Washington was the leader of the progressive movement in the United States. I said he's the political leader of the progressive movement in Chicago. I don't think there's any doubt about that. There may come a time, but I don't think that at this point he can deliver more votes than any other political leader in the city. That's a demonstrated, statistical fact. What I'm saying to you is that what happens in Chicago will definitely have an impact on the rest of the country. Whether you want to call that the cutting edge or not is up to you. The whole world is looking at what's happening in Chicago. Because what you see is three or four of the political leaders who can make a difference in both parties. I don't think there's any doubt that Jim Thompson is a national Republican figure who has a hell of a lot of influence and will impact on what happens nationally within the Republican party. I don't think you can deny the fact that Rev. Jesse Jackson is going to have an impact in 1988 on what happens in national politics. I don't think you can deny that Vrdolyak is tied into the national Republicans, and he is a part of the Thompson maneuvering to help himself get re-elected. (That's what this whole Park District thing is about, maneuvering between Thompson, Vrdolyak, and Madigan; control of the airport and all the underlying stuff that we don't really understand.) So maybe I was using poetic license to talk about the cutting edge, but definitely what happens here will impact on the national scene in 1988.

Puerto Rican Independence

Question to Luis Gutierrez: I think your campaign was pretty heavily red-baited, and I was wondering what experience you had with the people in the ward on that—how they responded; and on the other side, when issues are raised legitimately, whether it be the independence of Puerto Rico, or whether it be other more political issues that have been in the past identified with the Left, how much of an opportunity do you think there is to build a movement and alliances around these kinds of issues:?

Luis Gutierrez: . . . As far as Puerto Rican independence, one of the good things of winning is that now I can go on TV and I can go on the radio. During the campaign, I went to a party, and there was a roast pig there, and about one hundred Puerto Ricans, a very working class crowd, not progressive, just folks from the neighborhood. And they all got together and they wanted to feast. I went around the whole room. They all know I believe in Puerto Rican independence. I just came from Trinity Lutheran Church, where the pastor of the church says "You know, I believe in statehood but I still voted for you, because you were the best candidate out here and you were against the oppressor." I couldn't understand that contradiction in him, but he saw me as an alternative out here. Now I have an opportunity. My problem during the campaign was that the media would not permit me to talk about Puerto Rican independence and to focus it in the way I felt it should be. I did it in the *Sun-Times*, but the reporter played it down, and says, "well, he dabbled in radical politics at Northeastern," after I spent about a half hour talking about Puerto Rico because I thought I had a grasp on him and thought he would tell my perspective. And I did the same thing with the *Tribune*, except that in writing the article he intermeshed it with Manny's thing that I was planting bombs all over the 26th Ward. So even though the reporters tried to make something, they didn't do it. I began to shun the issue, saying that wasn't a campaign issue. In retrospect I think we overreacted. . . .

Bob Starks: Let me just add one thing: that is part of the new-Right smear tactic, to paint everybody in the progressive movement as Red. Sort of a resurgence of McCarthy stuff. And that's real. If you talk about no aid to the Contras all of a sudden you're out of it. And the other part is that we should not be afraid to make the links between the domestic and the international. And I think Luis was quite forthright in his campaign in doing that. How can you expect a man of Puerto Rican heritage not to have some notion about what the hell should go on in Puerto Rico? That's absolutely stupid for anyone to suggest anything less than that.

Jackson in '88?

Question: I think Bob talked about trying to stop Thompson; and the Alderman talked about trying to punish the Democrats by voters not electing them. To me there's a dilemma

here: if we punish the Democrats by electing the Republicans, we're playing into Thompson's strategy. How do we work this out?

Bob Starks: A third party may be the only way.

Luis Gutierrez: It may be. And the other thing is, these discussions are new. I think what we need to do is get in that room again, and get back into that discussion. Because we're in a much better position now than we were when we had those discussions [referring to the discussions about forming a new party that took place prior to the 1984 primary elections]. We're a hundred years ahead. In the 26th Ward, I think we're already up to 250 people that have already signed up and paid their dues to become members of the Westtown 26th Ward Independent Political Organization. And I think that's advancing the struggle right there. So we're better off if we're going to put together people who are not tied to the Democcratic Party. I think if you took those 250 people, they could give a damn about the Democratic Party. They're ready to work on whatever it is that moves socioeconomic justice ahead. But I think we need to talk about that.

But on the other hand, Adlai to me is just a lot like Mondale. And let me tell you, one of the things that set back the struggle of development of leadership and of the organization in the 26th Ward was having to push Mondale/Ferraro in those Presidential elections. The organization was going just fine. I had run this committeeman's race, we were putting it together, and then comes Mondale/Ferraro. We had to outlive that, and right after the Mondale/Ferraro thing we began to rebuild the organization. There were tons of people who refused to work and to get incorporated in that work. So it's just a dilemma when we have to deal with all these folks.

Question: How would you assess Jackson's campaign in 1984, and how do people view his campaign and what it represents in 1988?

Bob Starks: I'm biased. I've known Rev. Jackson for a long time. I think that his 1984 campaign was extremely progressive. I must say that I was quite disappointed in the white Left in this country in terms of its response to the Jackson campaign. I was bitterly disappointed with the way in which the white Left totally rejected Rev. Jackson and his campaign. Here's the Left, who's been screaming for years about a clean environment. And the man had the most progressive platform on environment. Talk about the SANE people. I wish I could have back every penny I put in their collection cups. They rejected him. The nuclear freeze people. Right on down the line. Every single one of them screaming about No Nukes. And they admit it themselves—he comes out with the most progressive platform on every one of those issues and they rejected it. Now what does that tell me. Now whether it was racism or not, I don't know, but it played that way on the street where I live. I think if you're gonna be progressive you have to dance to the music the way it's played and not run around and play the kind of games that were played in 1984.

Obviously, the campaign was not organized as well as the Mondale campaign. We didn't have the money they had. We didn't have the slick Madison Ave. types that the Mondale campaign had. But in spite of that it made a great impact on national politics in this country. About Ferraro: Jesse Jackson was the first person to say, "I want a woman on the ticket." And the only reason Ferraro ended up on the ticket was because of that. We fought like cats and dogs on the Convention floor in San Francisco over that. I told people from the national press that by the time this campaign is over Geraldine Ferraro would wish that she was a washerwoman in the garment district in New York. She'll be bloody from one end of this country to the other. And that's what happened. Why did I say it? Because this is still a sexist press and they beat her up unnecessarily.

Luis Gutierrez: I'm not too sure about the Jesse Jackson campaign of 1988. I do think that when that comes, the Presidential campaign will give us an opportunity to expand. The 26th Ward is in the 8th Congressional District, where Dan Rostenkowski happens to be the Congressman. I think we need to put together an alternate slate, and I think we can make one work in the 8th Congressional District. We can challenge the Regular Democrats and their slate going to the national Convention. I'm not so sure we're going to run a Jesse Jackson campaign in the 8th Congressional District, if that would be the best thing to do in terms of getting our delegates there. Right now, my feeling is I'm waiting for '88 to kind of run an independent slate with no candidate, and go to the Convention, to deal with the rules, to deal with the platform, to deal with whatever, and then maybe we might all wind up voting for Jesse Jackson at the end. But I think we do have to look at the the 8th Congressional District and I think he's going to have an impact. And I think we can elect delegates to the national convention from the 8th Congressional District and send good old Rosty a strong message.

We will have Miguel del Valle as state Senator; we will have Luis Gutierrez as Alderman; we will have a new Puerto Rican Alderman in the 31st Ward; we're going to be running somebody against Rep. Berrios for that state rep's position. And the Puerto Rican community within the 8th Congressional District at that point, come 1988, is going to be in the leadership role in the 8th Congressional District to challenge the machine in terms of elected leadership and in terms of a movement to take it there. That's why there's going to be a lot of discussion, because there's not going to be a vacuum. In '84 there was no elected leadership out there. In '88 there will be. I expect the 31st Ward to flourish in terms of an organization after the Harold Washington election. Unless we blow it all from here to there, and I don't see how we're going to do that, I think we're in a trend to move ahead, and you're going to have all this leadership, and it's going to get together with the base, with the organization, and they're going to make decisions on that, and then people are going to coalesce. So I'm not saying "No" to Jesse Jackson; but I'm saying there's going to be leadership there to make a decision about where it's going to go.

Richie Saks: I think we've got to get that clarified a little bit before '88. Part of the

problem in '84 was getting stuck in a waiting situation in terms of whether or not we were going to go with an independent slate, go with Jackson, or go with the Mayor's slate. We have had four years to see that there will be a struggle in the Democratic party over whether or not the special interests are to be pushed out of the Democratic Party—Blacks, labor, the peace movement. I think that Jackson is a tribune for those forces at this point. He's the only national figure. Maybe Mayor Washington will emerge as that national figure. I don't know. But at this point Jesse Jackson is the only figure that is really a proponent of those progressive forces in the country that can pull together a progressive alternative within the Democratic Party and challenge the basic tenets of Reaganomics. It's important to avoid the debacle that happened in '84 with the white Left that Bob referred to. It is important to start to support now the campaign of Jackson. I don't want there to be confusion among people about what the relationship is between the Mayor's slate—a slate that the Mayor puts forward—and Jesse Jackson. I think that's a bad situation. A lot of people got caught up in that in '84, and it wasn't good. The stuff that the Mayor was putting out was good, and I agreed with most of what he was saying, but the net result of it was somewhat confusing. Jackson's platform is one that can unite the progressives, and I don't see any reason not to begin rallying behind it. Unless someone can come up with a good reason not to do it, we should do it. I don't think saying we should defeat Rostenkowski's slate of delegates is a good enough reason.

On Blackie's

by Richard Berg

What an ironic name for such a racist little tavern. The deeply rooted racism in this smokey hole is only exceeded by a more deeply rooted sexism. Here is where the men that make the Chicago machine work come after a day of hard labor. Boasts of vote fraud accompany their disdainful remarks about Blacks, liberals, and all brands of reformers.

Here in this grungy little tavern that has been gerrymandered out of the First Ward, men will buy an unemployed worker free drinks all night. They will buy him free drinks all night and ask him only to listen to them curse Chicago's first Black mayor, Harold Washington.

It is here I met men with more "machismo" than I knew existed. It is here that I met the most backward of Chicago's working class. The class of revolution. The class I have given my love, hopes, desires, and my future.

Although their racism and sexism couldn't rival the intelligence of a gopher, it's not what puts them amongst Chicago's most hopeless. But rather it is their lack of compassion, their lack of truth and their inability to accept or return love.

Presently, for all their hard work they are barely able to survive. They are dazzled by the latest video game, along with late night adult television. In all probability, they will never know love again. Their only hope for change is if someone they admire hands them a mirror. But those they admire only want to punch ten.*

*Note: Punch ten in Chicago means voting the machine ticket.

Impressions of a Rainbow

by Laura N.

Laura is a midwestern trade union and community activist. She attended last spring's National Rainbow Coalition Convention in Washington, DC, as a delegate from her union local; she is also a member of the North American Farm Alliance. The following is a report and commentary on the convention.

I came to the founding convention of the Rainbow Coalition very curious, not knowing what to expect. I left there feeling a part of something and, like many, with a sense of unity. There are still many questions about the Rainbow, particularly whether this will be the basis for another party or remain in the Democratic Party. Jesse Jackson himself remains an enigma. But one thing for sure: the National Rainbow Coalition, Inc. has become an entity not to be taken lightly. Here are some personal observations on the significance and work of the convention.

The kickoff was a Save the Family Farm Breakfast. About 100 to 150 white farmers from the Midwest were there, along with Black farmers from the Federation of Southern Cooperatives. There were peace activists, environmentalists, and feminists—not from the organized women's movement as such, but, for example, from rural women's groups from Pennsylvania and the Midwest.

Broad Participation

The convention as a whole was truly a Rainbow. In percentages, I would estimate about 60% Black, 35% white, and 5% Latinos and other nationalities. Tony Anaya, Governor of New Mexico, helped solidify in everyone's minds a real Chicano presence. There were also some Chicano farm workers. There was a representative from the Arab-American community. There were Asian-Americans and Native Americans. All peoples of color in this country were represented to some degree.

There were more grass roots activists from New York, New Jersey, the Virginias, and other nearby states. From more distant places, there were, for obvious financial reasons, more elected officials, professionals and so on. There were Black business entrepreneurs and educators. There were students from the anti-apartheid movement: Jesse Jackson, Jr., and Amy Carter (Jimmy Carter's daughter) spoke Friday night to highlight this presence.

The convention resolved on the inclusion of all the excluded and locked-out groups of American society. This point actually prompted one fairly intense debate, when lan-

guage was introduced from the floor to specifically reference lesbians and gay men among the groups making up the Rainbow. Some Black Christian fundamentalists opposed this from the point of view that homosexuality is unChristian. Jesse Jackson himself stepped in to smooth over and resolve the debate. Membership dues provoked a debate as well: the proposed flat dues of around $25 were opposed on the grounds that the Rainbow might thereby exclude the poor. A sliding scale was offered as an alternative, and the issue was referred to committee.

Overall, the convention was really more representative of various sectors of the potential peoples' movements in this country than any other I have participated in. There was a great cheer from the audience when it was announced that there were 587 delegates from 40 states present. The convention was, of course, predominantly left and progressive, though some liberal Democrats participated. Former Democratic National Committeewoman C. Delores Tucker, for example, played a very key role. I did not notice a Black Muslim presence, though there was no debate or hint of exclusion of the Muslims.

I was very impressed by the amount of white participation. The basis for this was Jackson's thrust for peace and disarmament, along with economic justice (particularly on the farm issue). The majority of whites present seemed to be peace and environmental activists, as well as Midwest farmers (who came in on buses chartered by IAM and AFGE). There were white students from the anti-apartheid movement.

There were a few white trade unionists. Jim Guyette, president of the Hormel P-9 local, was there. (Rev. Jackson had just spoken at a rally in Austin, Minnesota). The only internationals represented on the podium were the Machinists, AFGE, and the Comunication Workers. I believe this labor leadership was attracted based on their understanding of the necessity of building an anti-Reagan movement. Rev. Jackson has also recently spoken at AFGE-sponsored rallies against the Gramm-Rudman-Hollings Deficit Reduction Act.

More generally, white participation seemed to reflect a desire for national organization that can bring together a broad coalitional thrust against the attacks felt by various separate groupings. Undoubtedly there were some curiousity-seekers, and there is probably less white participation in many local coalitions, as in my area. But at the convention, there was a strong desire to plug into the Rainbow as a means to gain greater strength. Even the peace activists—probably the most organized predominantly white forces present—are fragmented among disarmament and freeze groups, Central America and other solidarity groups. They too seemed to be seizing on the need for a broader coalition to gain strength against the Right.

As for the farmers, they are still going to go home and concentrate on their own issues. Except where it comes to issues such as Gramm-Rudman, attacks felt by all, they are not ready to jump in around fighting for Black empowerment in the inner cities and so on. But they were introduced to and seemed to truly support, the Quality of Life Budget of the Congressional Black Caucus, for example.

In general, whites present seemed to realize that Rev. Jackson and the Rainbow Coalition are a national force to which they can turn for support for their local struggles.

Jackson made a commitment to Amy Carter, for example, to go speak at Brown University. In turn, white student support for the Rainbow Coalition's overall purpose and platform may grow. I saw a real potential that perhaps Rev. Jackson can sew together the Patchwork Quilt we need for protection from the cold-hearted right-wing.

This makes the Rainbow quite different from some other recent formations. The National Black United Front and National Black Independent Political Party were "too Black." While Black people, as well as Black left and progressive forces, do need our own organizations, the bigger need is for multinational coalitions as suggested by the Rainbow. As distinct from previous attempts such as the Citizen's Party, the National Rainbow Coalition has a much broader and deeper basis for development encompassing all parts of the country and strata of the oppressed. The South and Southwest, for example, are strongly represented. The Rainbow also has somewhat more of a grass roots flavor than did the Citizen's Party.

Also, in contrast with organizations like A.C.O.R.N., Rev. Jackson has attracted Black business and political groupings with a lot more financial oomph, which is crucial to a successful political movement. Black church groups also provided good support; several bishops where in attendance. The church groups provide an obvious link to the people, and they also provide financial backing and other resources. These are crucial components to rebuilding a national movement like that led by Dr. King.

Emerging Policy Directions

At the same time, the Rainbow Coalition is just at a beginning point. As far as program, the convention produced more or less a laundry list: groups are just beginning to come together to establish a collective voice. Nobody has an overall program for achieving peace, jobs, and equality at this time. Various elements are emerging, but we are still mainly reacting to the right. But the NRC statement of purpose highlighted these policy concerns: repeal of Gramm-Rudman-Hollings; a fair farm policy and complimentary urban policy; a toxic-free environment and a nuclear-free world; a non-interventionist foreign policy, based on peace, development and human rights; a humane alternative National Budget and a fair tax structure. The Quality of Life Budget was the most comprehensive alternative, but it is just that—an alternative budget. The main new thing from previous Black Caucus budgets was the new name, which I believe was intended to broaden its image beyond "Black."

On economic policies, there was not much of a thrust toward public service, CETA-type jobs programs. Rather, the effort seems to be heading towards fighting to reorient corporate economic policies. The clearest example of this was the Jobs with Peace, or Build Houses not Bombs, conversion proposals.

The statement of policy, echoed by Rev. Jackson's own statements, said that "we will, as Democrats, negotiate new relationships, with the national and local Party organizations, in an effort to further open up the Party and democratize its procedures." Yet the building of an independent, state-by-state, Congressional district organization definitely constitutes the possibility and threat of a break. Around the country—notably in Vermont—the NRC is supporting some independent candidates. But the main thrust, at this time, is still within the Democratic Party.

A new *serious* attitude toward organization focused the convention. Delegates seemed to feel that loose grass-roots organization won't do: we have to build a *powerful* organization. In his speech, John Conyers said there are two groups watching the National Rainbow closely—the Reagan Republicans and the Reagan Democrats. He suggests that the national Democratic Party has a choice: either accept and incorporate Rev. Jackson's non-violent approach to working within the Democratic Party or else recognize that there are those who would take the Party by force or walk out and create their own party.

The main thrust of the National Rainbow is electoral—in order to flex its muscles. Most of the main speakers were elected officials, who can turn out the vote. They want to show the Democratic Party just how many votes the Rainbow can turn out. But the real blood and guts of the emerging NRC is the activist groups, on peace, environmental, anti-apartheid issues, and hopefully on others. The farmers are also primarily an activist protest movement, at present, though they are beginning to run candidates in key Congressional races as well. I would say there is a fairly good balance between the electoral and the activist aspects of the NRC, as I saw it at the convention.

Labor Activists Meet

The Rainbow Coalition, unfortunately, had made no plans for labor, other than courting labor's money. No workshop was planned, and an impromptu session had to be pulled together on the spot. But it met Friday and Saturday, four or five times during the course of the weekend. And although starting small, by its last meeting, there were about fifty to sixty participants. There were some progressive officials and staff, but it was mainly rank-and-file union members there as a result of other political work.

These labor sessions considered a number of resolutions. Labor outreach efforts by Rev. Jackson and the NRC were emphasized, especially directed at rank-and-file worker struggles, such as the support for Hormel and Marvel poultry workers. There was a special emphasis on getting the NRC to support labor's boycott of Coors, because Coors had hosted a hospitality affair Thursday night at the convention. Support for the Shell anti-apartheid boycott was called for. There were also calls to promote a "Rainbow Agenda" within labor through support for equality and affirmative action, along with efforts to build labor support for the NRC and a potential Jackson candidacy in 1988. An interim committee to develop a labor outreach program formed.

The convention should give those present the impetus to go back and attempt to organize NRC chapters. Enthusiasm and unity were built at the convention. The key question now will be organizational follow-up. From my state (Missouri), there was no organized Rainbow Coalition group going into the convention. There has been a more or less self-appointed acting state chairperson since the 1984 campaign, but no meetings of the many grassroots people active in the 1984 campaign. Yet there had been an overwhelming Black grassroots participation in the Jackson caucuses in 1984, and he won much more than anyone expected. Some local Black elected officials participated, and there was white support from those few wards and townships with ongoing progressive white organizing. This electoral activity followed on the heels of a major (if unsuccessful) referendum campaign in 1981 to force the reopening of a public hospital (a first venture into electoral politics for many local progressives), and a successful effort to elect a Black labor activist as an independent alderman. Other electoral campaigns followed as well. But despite the peaking of this activity in 1984, afterwards, the grassroots people went back to survival issues, and left and progressive activists to their various union or neighborhood organizing. Many states already have ongoing Rainbow organizations, but here in Missouri, the Rainbow group is looking heavily to the NRC for guidance and assistance.

I would say that across the country, we should do whatever is possible to reorganize and build state chapters of the Rainbow Coalition, looking immediately to local elections. Together we can make the Rainbow an entity the major political parties will have to contend with.

For Fire Next Time: Jackson Needs Labor . . . Almost As Much As Labor Needs Jackson

by Charles Sarkis

As we slide into yet another interminable Presidential campaign, the right-wing march of the Democratic Party spells a continued right-wing drift in U.S. politics. The Left can take cold comfort from the demise of its 1960's nemesis, Democratic party corporate liberalism. What has replaced it in the White House is social and corporate reaction; what has replaced it in the Democratic party is corporate neo-liberalism.

The national debate over how best to undermine a sovereign nation to our south has illustrated a fundamental truth: he who can proclaim a consensus with little fear of contradiction has gone a long ways towards creating a consensus. The Reagan administration and its allies in business-funded approved-thought tanks proclaimed far and wide that a consensus existed about the nature of the Sandinistas. Once the fish are trapped in the barrel, the shooting part is easy.

This rule about consensus applies mostly to the power and media elite. Ordinary people stubbornly cling to their beliefs, because those beliefs are often born out of experiences governments might want them to forget (previous unpopular wars, for example). It takes a long war of attrition to wear them down. But you can eventually convince people about the existence of consensus, if nobody is allowed to challenge it.

The right-wing political realignment among the electorate is a lot like the nature of the Sandinistas. Convincing everyone of how thorough-going and durable that realignment is will go a long way towards bringing about a thorough-going and durable realignment. A durable realignment of the electorate will take place if nobody challenges it: challenges not simply the current leader of that realignment, but the policies and assumptions that have helped fuel it.

Disorganizing a Right-Wing Realignment

The Left has almost as many responses to this realignment as the Democrats. Some socialists continue to reject any involvement in Democratic party politics as a diversion from the building of mass movements that could challenge the corporate offensive and social reaction. In fairness to that view, there is a major piece of evidence for it, namely the cooptation of the nuclear disarmament movement by corporate Democrats. But

for reasons which socialists will have to explain but this article will not, we should reject the abstentionist line for the 1988 elections under certain circumstances.

Other socialists and progressives pin their hopes on a more attractive version of traditional Democratic liberal politics, usually associated with a candidacy of Mario Cuomo. In their view, such a candidacy represents the best and in some versions the only acceptable vehicle for the liberal/labor agenda. In other words, it does not capitulate to corporate assumptions as the Western and Southern neo-liberals do. Besides, it is as electable as anything else in the Democratic party.

A third section of the Left rejects this last premise. It has a sometimes interesting description of the degeneration of the New Deal coalition and the ideological fatigue surrounding New Deal liberalism. This section of the Left has often moved into the same sociological world as the Volvo-driving supporters of Gary Hart; it believes New Deal liberalism cannot win and probably does not deserve to; and it thinks only the neo-liberals can stop the Republican ascendency. It recognizes some of the problems with the neo-liberals, but sees more encouraging developments than others do. In its concern to stop the Republicans, it has adopted the traditional Democratic party logic to defeat them: the closer you get to the Right, the bigger your center.

Frances Jetter

This is another debate socialists are going to have to have, and quickly. For the moment, it is simply worth noting that in 1980 a neo-liberal who had the added advantage of coming from the South went down to the worst defeat of any incumbent President since Herbert Hoover. For a strategy that has nothing to recommend it except its supposed pragmatism, that is not good supporting evidence.

There is a fourth course: support and help shape the Rainbow coalition. With the exception of the abstentionist position, it is the only course that can frame its position in terms of disorganizing right-wing realignment rather than simply locking the barn doors now that the horses are loose. Unlike the abstentionist position, it advocates that activists can effectively intervene in the major form of political expression in this capitalist democracy during this period, namely electoral politics.

So what?, respond the left-labor progressivists on the one side and those advocating alliance with the neo-liberals on the other. Jesse Jackson does not have a chance. Those looking at Cuomo tell us that Jackson will only divide the progressive vote in the primaries, and either get the neo-liberals the nomination or discredit an eventually nominated liberal among Black voters. Those looking at Hart deride Jackson's candidacy (see some of the reporting in *In These Times*), and implicitly argue that Jackson's candidacy will only further alienate desperately needed white voters in the South and West.

Jackson is in a difficult position in the Democratic party. He is boxed in by the traditional labor bloc and party regulars, and by the neo-liberals. But Jackson is not the only person in a difficult position in the Democratic party, and the Rainbow coalition is not the only social actor in trouble in this country. For all the scarce financial and organizational resources organized labor pours into the Democrats, it has nothing to show for continuous Democratic domination of the House of Representatives, or from the last Democratic Presidency. The socialist neo-liberal supporters may dismiss the Rainbow coalition or McGovern-wing anti-war constituency as acting out of frustration, but those two are not the only sections of the Democratic electoral constituency whose votes are taken for granted. So is the progressive women's vote. So, crucially, is the organized labor vote in any neo-liberal calculation.

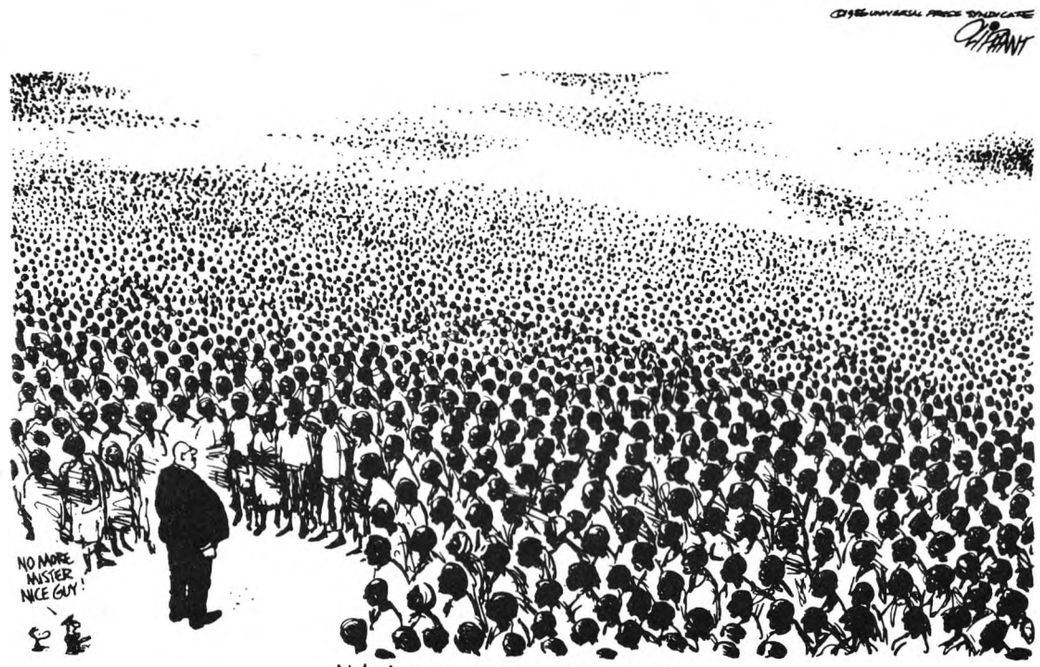
Winning

What is winning in the U.S. electoral context today? Winning is two things: disorganizing right-wing realignment, and organizing a progressive realignment. Jackson is the only possible Democratic presidential candidate who can advance that agenda. Jackson is the only possible candidate who can help the people win.

Jackson is the only possible candidate who can help us win because he is the only one whose candidacy hinges on consistent democracy, internationally and domestically.

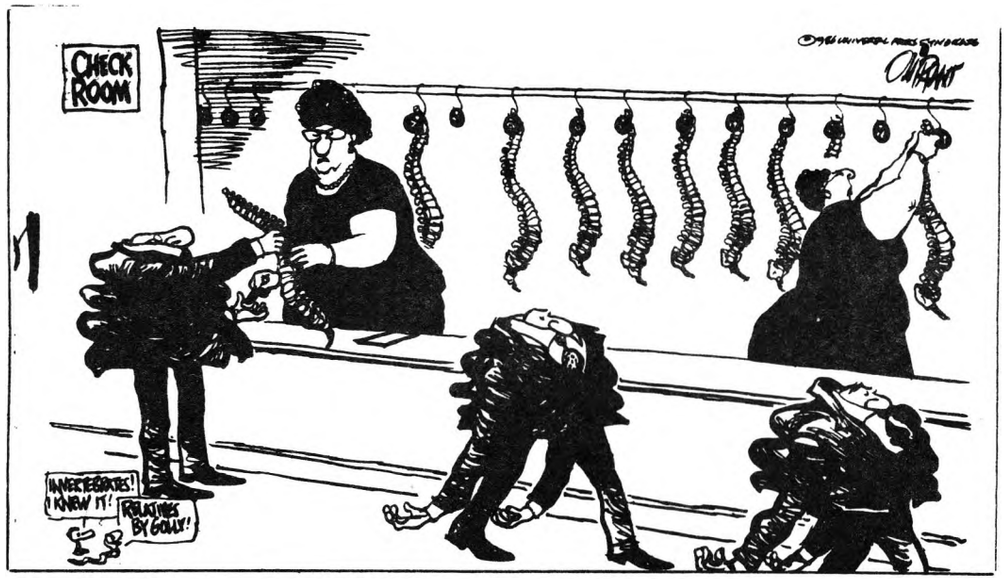
If the international situation is not exactly bright, it contains some extraordinarily important possibilities, and Jackson is the only candidate who can help us capitalize on them. There are two key developments since Reagan's victory. The first is that the single most important foreign ally of the U.S. Right—South Africa—is heading into a revolutionary situation. The second is the fall of another Republican favorite, the Marcos regime, with the current political instability there, the opportunities for radical politics and the possibility of a rapid escalation in U.S. intervention there.

The implications in Africa and on U.S. domestic politics of the threat to the South African regime cannot be overestimated. The options of the South African regime are narrowing, and as they do the potential political space for a vigorous, progressive attack on the foreign policy consensus widens. Neither the corporate-dominated remnants of traditional liberalism nor the neo-liberals could seize the opportunity presented by the crisis in South Africa to hammer at the immoral, racist, criminal alliance of the Old and New Right with apartheid, and of U.S. finance and industry with anybody willing to draw blood from their workers. Depending on what the Left does, Jackson might press that connection (he should not hesitate to call it a godless alliance either, to go straight at the evangelical Right).



The approaching revolutionary situation in South Africa and the possibility of escalating U.S. involvement in the Philippines constitute potentially favorable factors for mounting a challenge to the aggression against El Salvador and Nicaragua. Jackson is the only

potential candidate who does not accept the ruling class consensus about the Sandinistas. Though neo-liberals like Hart continue to oppose the *contra* war, they accept virtually every other assumption about the U.S. role and rights in the region and the nature of the Nicaraguan government. Despite anti-war claims made for the neo-liberals by their socialist advocates, many of them accept the *contra* war too. No foreign policy realignment is possible unless the consensus about Central America is attacked. Jackson has proved that he will attack it.



House members checking their vertebral columns before battling president on aid to contras.

Organizing Progressive Realignment

Domestically, Jackson's program has a variety of essentially social democratic proposals. But he also stood in the last election for a principle whose revolutionary implications for the U.S. political order unfortunately escape many socialists. That principle is parity. Above all else, Jackson has stood for parity of political representation for Black people, notably in his challenge to the Southern dual primary system. Socialists who do not understand the revolutionary nature of that demand have never looked at a political map of the South, and have never studied the place of the South in the U.S. system. More than any other issue, the issue of parity for Black people in political representation threatens the ruling order. It threatens rightward realignment, and it carries the hope—the great Rainbow hope—of a radically progressive realignment.

That may be the key for radically progressive realignment, but it is not the key for Jackson to bring it about. Running much the same campaign as he ran in 1984, Jackson cannot hope to better his showing significantly in 1988 or in 1992. With the exception of his anti-Semitic comments in 1984, Jackson did not make a mis-step in the campaign, a record he could hardly repeat. More importantly, Jackson is no longer a symbolic candidate to the Democratic party hierarchy or the ruling class. They are not going to be surprised a second time. Jackson is a threat to be dealt with, and dealt with early. Rainbow supporters remember the distorted media treatment of Jackson's last candidacy; they should know that he will not do as well the next time, particularly in the early phases, when free publicity is easiest. For Jackson to improve markedly on his 1984 showing, for Jackson to help us win, he has got to get out of the corner of the Democratic party he has been boxed into. To do so, he needs more of a realigning strategy, which in this case happens to be a more seriously extra-electoralist one.

Jackson has to become the candidate of labor. For Jackson to accomplish his goals, and for the people to advance on theirs, Jackson must orient his candidacy towards labor. Labor not as simply another member of the Rainbow coalition, labor not as simply another mention in the list of demands or constituencies, but labor as the backbone of the Rainbow, just as it is the backbone of the Black community, the reality of most women's lives and the broad back on which popular causes must stand.

Does labor mean only organized labor? Does a labor focus reduce the Rainbow to a single hue, reducing the autonomy of other social forces and movements whose natural home is in the Rainbow coalition—women, Black people, Chicanos and Puerto Ricans, the gay and lesbian movements?

Absolutely not. Besides, as matters stand, Jackson could not get much electoral support from organized labor. But disorganizing rightward realignment means challenging the way matters stand. Alone among the candidates, Jackson can challenge the way matters stand for labor. He has reasons to do so, in the Democratic party and in his fight for parity of Black political representation.

Toward a Rainbow Labor Program

For starters, Jackson ought to do three things. First, he has to continue to step up dramatically his support for the fight against concessions. At the very best, the candidate of traditional liberalism will be very vague about such an issue; the candidate of neo-liberalism will of course talk of growth and an end to outdated models of economic partisanship. But Jesse Jackson has very little to lose and a great deal to gain by emerging as a national spokesperson for the fight against concessions.

The membership of the labor movement continues to decline. Most top leaders of organized labor have not the faintest clue about how to slow much less halt or reverse that trend. No candidate of corporate Democratic party liberalism or neo-liberalism has the least intention of appearing as an advocate for expanding the power of organized labor on the U.S. political scene. In the last national election, one candidate advocated

a strategy for the Democratic party based on increased registration of the silent majority of non-voters. One candidate sought to infuse voter registration with some of the flavor of a moral crusade. Socialists are fools if they ignore the special capacities of certain individuals. Unionists used FDR to good advantage in organizing workers in the late 1930's. There is one person in this country who could help organize a lot of young people in low-paying service jobs into unions. That man is Jesse Jackson. The second thing Jackson should do is turn signing union cards into the type of moral and social crusade he has attempted to organize on voter registration and other issues. Advocate that those workers docilely follow the dictates of Lane Kirkland? Absolutely not, and Jackson's relation to existing unions and existing union leaders remains to be determined. But anyone who could bring dues-paying members into unions would suddenly get a different hearing in the organized labor movement.

Jackson opposes the dual-primary system that insures overwhelming conservative white domination of the Southern Democratic party. He speaks out consistently against the gerry-mandered electoral districts that have denied half the country's Black people representation in Southern congressional delegations and at every other level of the political system. The struggle for justice in the South needs more organizational resources, more active confrontational strategies, more money and more organizers. The logical popular base for this struggle is not only in the Black church, but also in social unionism. To get social unionism, to organize the unorganized, to lead in the struggle against concessions, Jesse Jackson should do the unthinkable in the current political climate. Jesse Jackson should actively, publicly, tirelessly campaign against Taft-Hartley.

In the face of the Reagan victories, socialists have divided four ways on the future of the Democratic party. But in reality they have two choices. To warm over traditional Democratic liberalism or to sign up with the neo-liberals entails accepting the inevitability of a right-ward realignment. To stand on the sidelines of the Rainbow coalition entails abandoning the most promising vehicle for disorganizing the conservative consensus and articulating a new commonsense for our times. To join the Rainbow coalition, to share its joys and frustrations, and to orient it towards the working class of this country, means fighting back.

Forward Motion **Interview**

Resisting the New Repression in Puerto Rico

On August 30, 1985, the heavy hand of U.S. repression once again fell on Puerto Rico and its independence movement. The August raid on the island, described in the interview below with Sr. Jorge Farinacci, was carried out by the F.B.I. and was coordinated with the Office of the U.S. Attorney General and the U.S. military. Independence movement leaders were arrested and many others were detained and their houses searched. Thirteen people were initially arrested, and immediately removed to the U.S. mainland. The government alleged they were members of the Macheteros, a militant, clandestine organization in Puerto Rico and charged them with conspiring to rob a Wells Fargo truck in Hartford, Connecticut. Constitutional protections of search and seizure were grossly violated in the raids of the more than forty homes and offices that were entered.

Those who were detained and the thirteen who were arrested represented a very broad cross-section of the independence movement in Puerto Rico, and were among Puerto Rico's most respected and prestigious writers, artists, journalists, lawyers and teachers. Nothing was beyond the reach of the government invaders who confiscated address books, musical tapes, manuscripts of novels, poetry, toys, family photographs and possessions. Art work of the famous painter Antonio Martorell was damaged in his home and notes, research papers, public government documents, books and typesetting equipment were taken from the office of the widely read and highly respected Left journal Pensamiento Critico. *The government has no evidence linking the arrested independence supporters with the Wells Fargo robbery or with the Macheteros. Yet, most of the defendants sit in jail in segregated cells. The few who were released had to meet very high bail and severe conditions of surety. After a year, it is still not clear when the cases will be heard.*

Support for the defendants has been demonstrated in many ways. For example, as reported by the Boston Globe, *1,000 people came to Hartford to participate in the August 30th demonstration mentioned in the interview below. Money is desperately needed for the trials when they do occur and to help bring families and supporters to the U.S. Donations can be sent to the* Boston Committee for Puerto Rican Civil Rights, P.O. Box 1222, Jamaica Plain, MA 02130. *Or write the* Puerto Rico Solidarity Committee, Box 319, Cooper Station, New York, NY 10003 *for further information.*

The full significance of this raid and of the general situation in Puerto Rico needs to be better understood by the U.S. Left. We hope this interview with Sr. Jorge Farinacci will help contribute to this end. Bill Fletcher, Jr. conducted the interview for Forward Motion. *Farinacci is editor of the political magazine,* Pensamiento Critico, *and one of the Hartford case defendants.*

FM: To begin, could you tell us a little of your own personal background and something of *Pensamiento Critico* and its politics?

Farinacci: Well, I have been active in the independence and socialist movement in Puerto Rico for the last nineteen years. I started my activity with the independence cause and in struggles for rights for the students at the University of Puerto Rico. Since then, I have become an attorney and for the last thirteen years, I have been a lawyer for the labor movement in Puerto Rico. I now represent eight unions in San Juan, most of which are progressive unions and part of our struggle for liberation. Since 1977 I have also been active with *Pensamiento Critico* which is a political journal of the independence movement of Puerto Rico. For the last several years I have been the editor. I am the only founder of the magazine still active.

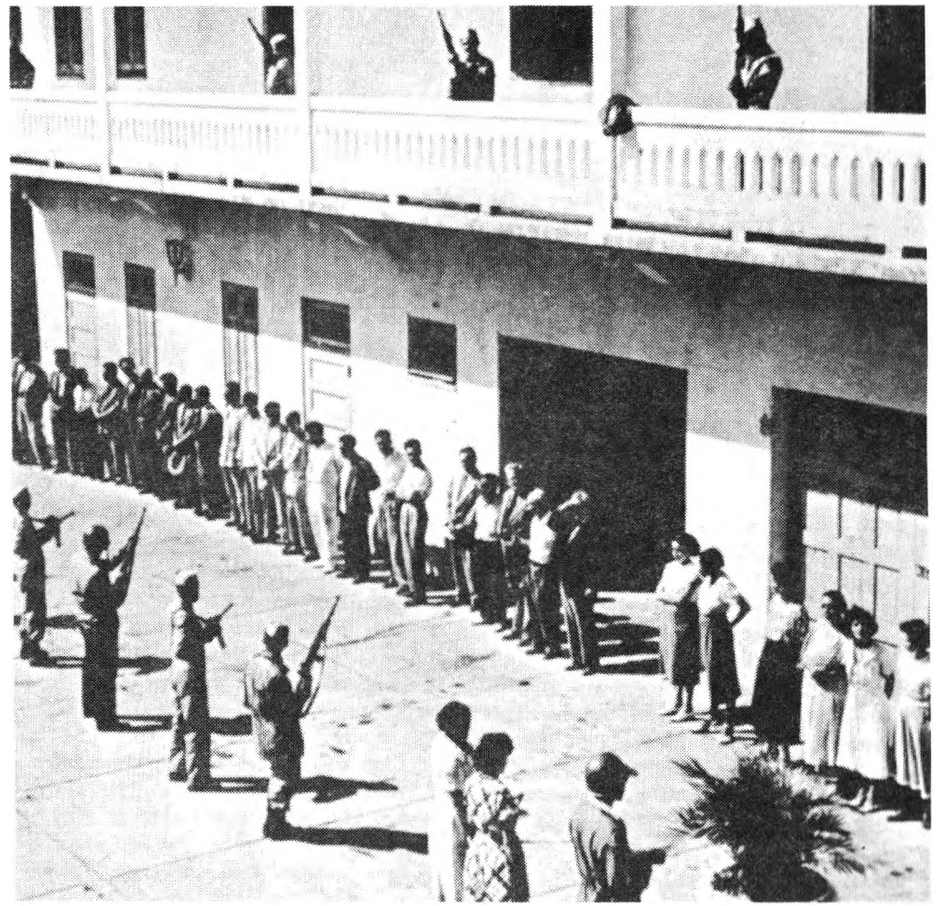
FM: Can you describe the assault that took place in Puerto Rico last year? What is going on in Puerto Rico and the independence movement such that the United States government would carry out that kind of action?

Farinacci: On August 30, 1985, about four to five hundred U.S. Marshalls and F.B.I. agents, dressed in military fatigues and carrying heavy weapons—M16s, machine guns, and the like—invaded San Juan and the whole island of Puerto Rico. They proceeded to detain and kidnap [arrest] thirteen Puerto Rican independence activists. In the process, they searched and ransacked Puerto Rican homes, the offices of *Pensamiento Critico*, and two printshops of the independence movement.

The economic crisis of the United States and capitalism generally is creating a very bad situation in Puerto Rico, resulting in a popular upsurge. Capitalizing on this, the revolutionary movement in Puerto Rico was growing and getting stronger and becoming a threat to United States interests in Puerto Rico. Specifically, this is a time when the United States is developing a strategy for aggression in Central America and Puerto Rico, and Puerto Rico is being used right now as the main base for this strategy. To maintain its hegemonic status over Puerto Rico, the United States found it necessary to send a clear message to the Puerto Rican people: the alternative of independence, the alternative of liberation is not open to you and we are willing to crush anyone who will vigorously oppose our role here. The U.S. authorities don't intend to let the revolutionary movement grow and develop and link itself to the masses of people now fighting against the very bad economic, political and social situation.

FM: One of the striking things over the years, particularly since the late 1960s, is that periodically the U.S. has identified an alleged urban guerilla movement, or some other sort of outfit, and launched repression. In the early 1970s, there was the M.I.R.A., I believe it was called; then there was the F.A.L.N. and the Armed Commandos of Liberation. How do you think that this most recent assault is different, if at all, from the repression that has gone on before?

Farinacci: Several things make it different this time. First, the amount of force used. This was the first time in Puerto Rico that a military force was used directly from the United States. Back in 1950, there was the big rebellion which the United States National Guard in Puerto Rico crushed, resulting in more than two hundred dead. But since the late 1960s, repression against Puerto Rican independence activists has been done *under the direction of* the F.B.I., but *by the police in Puerto Rico.* Right now that is impossible to do, because of the strength and the size of the independence movement and because the U.S. authorities don't trust the Puerto Rican police. So the U.S. armed forces were the ones directly responsible for this operation.



Nationalist women and men held prisoner during the Jayuya uprising of 1950. The U.S. military was directly involved in suppressing the insurrection.

Second, in other instances, the repression was limited to a few sectors and several people and was carried out without this sort of big propaganda show. This time, there was an invasion. We saw U.S. marshalls and F.B.I. agents in fatigues with military trucks, with M50 machine guns posted on top of buildings, literally take possession of San Juan. All this was a political message to our people that the scope of the repression was much greater. Sixteen people have been arrested. Eighty to ninety people have been subject to strong harassment by the F.B.I., while hundreds of persons have been visited, interrogated and intimidated by the F.B.I. Fifty homes of Puerto Rican families in San Juan, Ponce, Aguada, and Caguas and all areas of the island were searched. There is a recognition on the part of the United States that the liberation movement is strengthening, and in order to maintain the illegal domination, this level of force had to be used.

FM: You indicate that this most recent repression was broader. Is it true that several different political trends were actually hit, and it wasn't just one section of the independence movement?

Farinacci: Yes, they arrested people from all sectors of our community. They arrested workers, labor leaders, university professors, farmers, students and housewives. They went against printshops, against *Pensamiento Critico*, against several militants of the PIP [Puerto Rican Independence Party, the social democratic party in Puerto Rico.] The purpose seemed to be to send a broad message to all sectors fighting for independence for our country.

FM: How did the bourgeois politicians in Puerto Rico react when the U.S. came in over their heads to carry out this raid?
Farinacci: The politicians of the colonial parties didn't want to talk about it. So first of all there was a silence. But the actions of the U.S. government were so rash, with no consideration given to the colonial government, that several groupings in both parties spoke out strongly against what happened. They saw it as the whole people of Puerto Rico saw it: as an act of aggression against the whole nation, not just the independence movement, not just the defendants in the case. National dignity was at stake when we saw four hundred foreign troops just go out and try to crush our people.

The response, then, was due to the response of our people. The political leaders had to do something because our people were appalled and indignant. The popular feeling was demonstrated in many ways, such as the favorable response to the defendants when we were kidnapped on Friday morning. The next morning, with the island still occupied, more than 3,000 people showed up in front of where we were being held. It was a very militant protest, carried over a. the radio stations, newspapers, and the T.V. station in Puerto Rico. Representatives of many sectors very strongly denounced the actions of the U.S. government. People were saying this is not just an action against these companeros, these independenistas. This was a total disregard of us as a nation.

It really created a sense of indignation that the colonial parties were not taken into consideration. Even the governor of Puerto Rico was not told that this was going to happen. Nobody in Puerto Rico in the government knew.

FM: What government apparatus was behind this operation then?
Farinacci: We know it was a direct operation of the Department of Justice of the United States. It is very important to note that the same day Edward Meese held a press conference regarding this case in which he said they were smashing terrorism within the United States and that this was part of the U.S. struggle against terrorism. We think it was developed in the highest echelons of the executive branch of the government of the United States. Even Vice-President Bush made an important statement regarding this case to a conference of Cuban businessmen in Miami when he said that they had crushed a Cuban-inspired insurgency in Puerto Rico.

"This indictment is a signal to terrorists and their supporters that our response to their cowardly acts of violence will be decisive."

— Edwin L. Meese 3d

FM: What has happened to the defendants since August of 1985?
Farinacci: Well, right now there are sixteen defendants: thirteen who were kidnapped on the 30th of August and three more who were arrested on the 21st of March. Out of the sixteen, nine are still incarcerated in preventive detention. They were denied bail, including the two women in the group. For ten months they have been in solitary confinement, first in Otisville, New York and now in MCC [Metropolitan Correctional Center—ed.] in New York, where they don't have access to any other people and are locked up twenty-three hours a day. The other seven are out on bail. Although our travel is limited, we have been active in trying to develop solidarity for the case and

to continue fighting for the independence of our country and for our companeros still in jail.

FM: What kind of restrictions are there on your travel?
Farinacci: Well, for example, I am limited to travel to Boston, New York, and Hartford. That's all. I am not allowed to go to any other place, except Puerto Rico where I live.

FM: What kind of bail was posted?
Farinacci: It was different bail for each defendant. In my case it was one million dollars. The lowest bail was $100,000.

FM: As this is going on, are there other forms of repression taking place as well?
Farinacci: Definitely. We know for a fact, for example, that the F.B.I. is visiting, harrassing and threatening a lot of people in Puerto Rico, even threatening death. For example, they went to the house of the son of one of the accused persons in this case who was not arrested and told his mother and his kids that they were going to kill him when they find him. They are visiting the houses of relatives and neighbors and really harrassing and pressing them to give information about the whereabouts of the three persons they were not able to arrest. They have been watching the houses of a lot of independenistas. For example, one month ago, while surveilling the house of three independenistas, an eighteen year old retarded boy who lived in the neighborhood approached the car of the F.B.I. They were nervous because they do not feel at home in Puerto Rico and they killed the boy and just drove off and left him there. But they were seen by some neighbors and now there is an investigation regarding that murder by these F.B.I. agents. People have been subpoenaed to the grand jury. Other searches have been ordered. There is a constant atmosphere of repression and harrassment in Puerto Rico. And this had been going on prior to August 30, 1985.

FM: Is this repression more or less limited to conscious independenista forces or is it affecting other socially active groups as well?
Farinacci: It is broader than just the independenista forces. The labor movement and workers' communities have been under constant repression. For example, during the last two months, we have had four massive raids of workers' communities in Puerto Rico where the policemen and the F.B.I. just go in with 100-200 men with AR15s and M16s and literally take control of these communities and start arresting people, searching houses and looking for criminal activity. They have done things that were never done in Puerto Rico before. Four of these big raids have been done in the last two months.

FM: What has been the response? I am particularly interested in three sectors: the response on the island, the response among the Puerto Rican national minority here on the mainland and the response of the Left. But first,

tell us how the people as a whole are responding to this repression?
Farinacci: There is a virtual consensus in our country condemning the actions of the F.B.I. and the United States government. People feel it was a very gross thing; something that was against the national dignity of our country; something which showed a great lack of consideration for the colonial government. These feelings went far beyond the frontiers of the independence movement. There has been a lot of support for the defendants, especially from the independence movement which has united behind this case in all its sectors. But support even goes beyond this to liberal sectors of the colonial parties in Puerto Rico and the workers who are still in those parties. This is because the labor movement as a whole has come out strongly in favor of independence and that has had an important influence on workers.

The United States government ordered a poll which was put in the biggest newspaper in Puerto Rico asking what people thought about the Macheteros. And even with this climate of repression, forty-four percent of the people came out in favor of the Macheteros in certain matters or another. Four percent of the people who answered the poll—and you have to appreciate the climate existing at this time—four percent said they totally and unconditionally supported the Macheteros. Forty-one percent said that they felt that the Macheteros was a patriotic organization with legitimate goals although their methods were extreme.

Political analysts in Puerto Rico are saying that the Macheteros is one of the most prestigious organizations in our country right now. And I think this has to do with the response of people to the events of August 30th.

FM: You never hear about this in the *New York Times*. What about the response here in the United States among the Puerto Rican national minority?
Farinacci: I have been in Boston, New York and Hartford and I can tell you that the response of Puerto Ricans in the United States is very, very favorable. We have a lot of support from the Puerto Rican community that has been demonstrated in various activities: in the funds collected, the signatures in favor of giving bail to the defendants and the transfer of the case to Puerto Rico, and in daily acts of solidarity, like just saying "We are with you."

But that is not the situation with the North American Left. The main problem is that the North American Left is not really aware of what is happening in Puerto Rico. For some reason, what we think of as one of the most important aspects of the international politics of the United States—namely colonialism—has not been given the importance that it should by the North American Left. There is a lack of knowledge. We have been working hard to overcome this and we have had, in general, a good reception when we have explained what is happening in Puerto Rico. But we have not been able to get a mass response from the Left. We know that it will take time and that it will probably require things developing more rapidly in Puerto Rico for us to get that kind of response. But we think that is going to be necessary. We think the U.S. Left has a big

responsibility towards Puerto Rico because Puerto Rico is an internal problem of the United States. It is a problem of colonialism, not just a foreign policy problem.

FM: I understand there is going to be a march in Hartford.
Farinacci: Yes. On the 30th of August. We are going to have a simultaneous activity in Puerto Rico that day in which we expect a lot of people to participate. In Hartford, we expect to have at least two thousand people go to the march, mainly from the Puerto Rican communities. There are some sectors of the North American Left which are going to participate and some sectors of the Black movement, but it will still be a very small minority. The bulk of the organizations are going to be from the Puerto Rican communities in Hartford, New Haven, New York and Boston.

FM: I would like to turn to some more general questions now. Information about the independence movement here on the mainland is very, very sporadic. What exactly is the situation among the various conscious independence forces on the island? In particular, I was thinking about the Puerto Rican Independence Party (PIP), the Puerto Rican Socialist Party (PSP), the Liga Socialista and another group whose status I am not sure about, the Movimiento Socialista Popular.
Farinacci: I think you can divide the independence movement today into two big sectors: the Puerto Rican Independence Party (PIP) and the rest. The PIP is the electoral party of the independence movement. They have social democratic politics and they are members of the Socialist International. Ruben Berrias is president and he is vice-president of the Socialist International movement. They go to the polls. That is the only independence party that goes to the polls right now. In 1984 they got 70,000 votes for governor of Puerto Rico and they brought out 250,000 votes for the legislature. They got a very good response in terms of the legislative candidates—fourteen percent of the total vote. The senator for the PIP and the representative to the House of Chambers from the PIP got the most votes in the elections. This is mainly because they campaigned as representatives of the people, speaking out on several issues that were very popular and saying they were going to defend the rights of the people in the Puerto Rican legislature.

Right now, the rest of the Left is made up of several small parties: the Puerto Rican Socialist Party (PSP), Movimiento Socialista Trabajadores (MST), and the Macheteros. I would say that those are the biggest three. PSP went through a long crisis which they seem to be coming out of now. Their newspaper, *Claridad* is in a very good position. It is well regarded and with an ample circulation. They do not have the same strength that they had in 1976, but they are regaining it. The MST is the fusion of the MSP (which you mentioned) and the PSR. Although they are relatively small, they are a growing influence within the Left of Puerto Rico and specifically within the labor movement. The Macheteros, which is the political organization which has been responsible for several important acts of armed struggle in Puerto Rico, has at

least two hundred cadres. This figure is based on information that the F.B.I. gathered and that we, in turn, have gotten from the Hartford case. And they have close to 2,000 active supporters. They are able to get propaganda into factories, schools, etc. It is very difficult to measure their organizational capacity from the outside. But they do have support among the people as reflected in the poll I spoke of before. And at every march the independence movement has, you will hear people immediately start chanting slogans in favor of the Macheteros. The Liga Socialista is a very small organization which vocally supports the Macheteros. They have been very active in supporting revolutionary clandestine organization and have played an important role in that regard.

FM: Over the last couple of years, there has been more and more talk about statehood, at least here in the United States. What do you see as the current chances that statehood will come into existence? And if it does, what do you think would be the ramifications for the independence movement?
Farinacci: We cannot discount the possibility of statehood for Puerto Rico. There are several important forces within Puerto Rico and in the United States that favor and push for statehood. But the forces for statehood have not grown since 1975. On the contrary, they have been little by little weakening themselves. They have been the spokesmen for dependence—for food stamps, for aid—for total dependency on the United States. And those politics are in a shambles in Puerto Rico. The statehood forces might win the next election, but they are not going to get a bigger percentage of the vote than they have now. I think the possibilities for them to grow more are small. There is strong opposition to statehood and that opposition has become more ideological and better grasped by the Puerto Rican masses. They would have to impose statehood which I don't think is the policy of the United States right now.

FM: Is there essentially a de facto alliance between the independence forces and the forces that support the status quo of the free associated Commonwealth?
Farinacci: Against statehood? Yes, definitely, because the forces that represent the colonial status of Puerto Rico are vocally autonomous and nationalist, and they are strongly opposed to statehood. Obviously, within their party there are many pro-American sectors which would define themselves as pro-statehood. But the main thrust of that party is nationalist—vocally and culturally nationalist—although they are pro-imperialist in all economic aspects of their policies. This helps them to maintain their ties to the Puerto Rican people who are nationalists but see that party as the wall against statehood. I'm talking to you about twenty to twenty-five percent of the whole electorate.

FM: We have touched on the issue of elections at several points in our discussion. Here in the U.S. Left, the issue of electoral politics and whether or not to participate has been a constant debate. During the 1984 campaign of Jesse Jackson for president, a lot of forces which previously had never

taken part in electoral work got involved. I know that there has been a long-standing debate in Puerto Rico about the utility of electoral politics. I had heard, for example, that the crisis within the PSP was at least in part brought on by the failure of their electoral orientation in the 1970s. Could you comment on what kind of debate is going on in Puerto Rico about electoral work?
Farinacci: First of all, I think that the failure of the PSP in the 1976 elections was a failure of their expectations. I think that they overestimated their own forces. But if you were looking from the outside, you would say that they did very well in the elections. This was, after all, the first time that a communist party participated in elections in Puerto Rico. They got 11,000 votes plus 60,000 votes for the legislative candidates which we think was a very impressive showing. The problem was that they were a strong party—a strong cadre party—with a lot of presence in many areas of Puerto Rico. They really thought that they were going to have a much better showing than that.

I think their showing in the 1976 elections was the principle catalyst in raising many differences within the organization, many of which didn't have anything to do with the electoral process but with other political issues like: what kind of organization they should be building; where to focus their work; the role of armed struggle; the organizing of the workers; the national question vs. the working class. I think the electoral process was the main catalyst, but I don't think it was the main aspect of the divisions within the PSP.

At this moment the Puerto Rican Left is not participating in the elections for many reasons. I think that those sectors which would refuse to participate as a matter of principle are a fringe within the Left. I would say there are three main reasons why the Left is not going-to elections right now. First of all, I think there is a tacit consensus that this is the arena of the PIP and that those who are part of, or sympathetic to, the independence movement should vote for PIP rather than divide the vote. The second reason these organizations have not participated in elections is the Left's weakness. The Left as a whole has some strengths and has some national influence in Puerto Rico. But the organizations are weak as organizations and that is a problem. The third factor is that the main priority of the Left at this moment is the organization—structuring and strengthening of the political organization of the Left—to gain unity within those organizations, and to try to recruit that very large sector of independence sympathizers in Puerto Rico who are not allied to any party in particular. I think that these three things make it very difficult at this moment to say, "Let's go to elections." So I don't forsee participation in the elections in 1988 by the Left.

FM: When you say that the Left would tacitly support the PIP, does that mean that people would work for the PIP or would they just not say anything?
Farinacci: Well, for example, several important leaders of the PSP said that they were going to vote for the PIP. *Pensamiento Critico* in its editorial says, if you are going to vote, vote for PIP. There was not an active boycott of the electoral process by the Left.

FM: A couple of other questions. Have you seen evidence of any effect which the Central American revolutionary movements—in Nicaragua, El Salvador and Guatemala—are having on the Puerto Rican people?
Farinacci: There has definitely been a lot of influence. There are a lot of people from Puerto Rico who go back and forth to Nicaragua. The labor movement in Puerto Rico right now is very involved in a campaign of solidarity with Nicaragua. At this moment there are at least fifty people from the labor movement in Puerto Rico who are in Nicaragua as volunteers and that type of thing has been going on for a lot of years. When these people come back, what is happening in Nicaragua becomes very well-known among the conscious sectors of our country. There are solidarity groups in Puerto Rico which are very active. We have had activities of 20,000 people in support of Nicaragua and the Salvadoran rebels. I would say that the majority of people in our country support the Nicaraguan people. Even legislators from the Popular Democratic Party are not only against the Contras, but have supported the right of the Nicaraguan people to follow the Sandinistas.

FM: Do you think that the majority of the people in Puerto Rico see the onslaught of repressive activity by the United States government as related to the whole Caribbean Basin initiative?
Farinacci: Basically only a minority. National consciousness is very high in terms of knowing the difference between being Puerto Rican and North American. And consciousness of the conflict between worker and employer is very high. But in terms of understanding the scope of U.S. politics in Central America and the Caribbean, and the imperialist nature of that policy . . . that is still a small minority at this moment. But the objective contradictions are there and people are reacting to them within their own limitations. For example, the workers in the factories and the people in the communities are fighting against the poisoning of our environment by U.S. companies in Puerto Rico. This is a big problem and we see people struggling against the United States in this arena. They see that as a classic colonial problem.

FM: A final question. In retrospect it seems that 1974 was the height of the Puerto Rican solidarity movement here in the United States. Thousands of people showed up for a Madison Square Garden rally and the Puerto Rican Solidarity Committee was formed. What observations do you, and those around *Pensamiento Critico*, **have of the solidarity movement and developments since 1974? And what do you think people in the United States should be doing now to assist the pro-independence movement?**
Farinacci: The rally that you mention is very important because there is a direct link between the strengths of the solidarity movement in the United States and the strengths of the PSP. The PSP was in its most brilliant moment in 1974-1975. I think they were mainly responsible for organizing and being able to propagandize the situation in Puerto Rico so effectively that they were able to gather that kind of mass support. The weakening

of the Left, and the weakening of the PSP in those years was, I think, the main factor in dismembering the solidarity movement.

Since 1979, we, specifically *Pensamiento Critico*, have been trying to establish and maintain relations with the Puerto Rican Solidarity Committee (PRSC) and we think we have made some progress. The PRSC is still alive, though a very small organization. We have sponsored trips with people from different sectors of the Puerto Rican Left to come here to the United States—mainly to New York and Chicago—to have dialogues and encounters with representatives of different organizations of the progressive movement in the U.S. We are trying to develop a solidarity movement and consciousness of the political problem in Puerto Rico. We are approaching it differently than was done back in the 1970s. Then we had a more subjective, idealistic approach. We were trying to make people believe that Puerto Rico was in a revolutionary situation, which we now think is not the case. Now we are trying to bring knowledge to the people of the United States—to the progressive sectors first—and show the face of colonialism in Puerto Rico; the effect of national oppression on the people of Puerto Rico. It is very important for the U.S. people to really know what is happening in Puerto Rico. We need to focus on opening up channels of communication and discussion. I think that is going to be a slow process but we have many people dedicated to that task.

Bill: Thank you.

Lift Every Voice

The "Drug War": Implications for the Black Left

by Bill Fletcher, Jr.

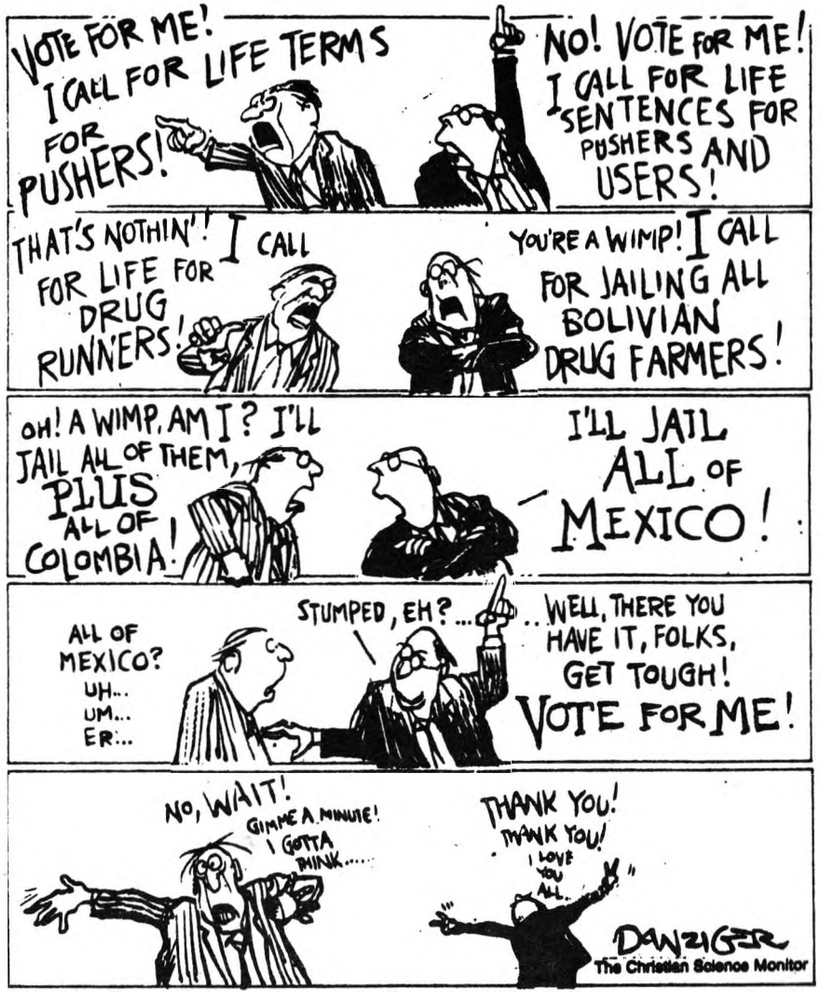
The last number of months have seen a dramatic rise in the Reagan Administration's rhetoric about drugs. This apparent concern, which is shared by the majority of the people in the US, almost appears to have come out of nowhere. Reagan's noble willingness to submit to a drug test further illustrated the importance of symbolism for the Administration in this so-called "war."

In addition to Reagan's rhetoric, the House of Representatives passed a $4 billion package to fight drugs, including the increase in money to the Coast Guard; the creation of new jails; mandatory life sentences for drug dealers convicted twice of selling to minors; and the use of the US military in the war on drugs. Additionally, the US media is full of implicitly or explicitly chauvinist references to Colombians as being the main source of the drug trade.

It has almost become a cliche to say that there was ". . . no drug problem. . ." until drugs started infecting white America, but this is the popular white perception nevertheless. The catastrophic spread in the drug trade and drug use from "just" oppressed nationality communities to white America has led to a loud outcry of desperation and despair, and certainly to a demand for action. The level of fear of drugs has become such a political issue that the Reagan Administration was forced to carry out its pathetic TV-oriented military campaign against alleged cocaine producers in Bolivia, a campaign which netted the destruction of one cocaine factory and the capture of one teen-ager who apparently got caught by mistake. If this was not so serious it would almost appear to be a sequence out of "Saturday Night Live."

Unfortunately the Left has not paid enough attention to the drug issue. Where we do make statements, they are themselves largely rhetorical, but the seriousness of this situation makes such posturing irrelevant at best. That the Reagan Administration is conducting a propaganda campaign around the drug issue should not lead us to conclude that we can ignore the problem, nor that we can treat it as a manifestation of the Right-wing's desire to increase repression.

The Black Community in particular, is being destroyed by drugs. That destruction is taking many forms, including the plague of street crime which leads to an atmosphere of constant mistrust, to the breakdown of family relationships, to the insane murders



of one another for the purpose of profit or due to being on a drug-induced "high." It is not overly dramatic to say that Afro-America faces a situation not altogether unlike that faced by the people of China prior to the 1949 victory of the Revolution. Drugs have been forced on our community; they have become a part of the economy; and they are creating all forms of anti-social behavior.

The Black Left is faced with a momentous task. As my wife says all the time, ". . . we are living in Babylon, witnessing its decay and rot. . ." It is all too apparent to Black youth, that group which is very susceptible to the influence of drugs, that something

is all wrong with U.S. society. But as put so well by William Strickland in an article in *Essence* magazine some months back, the generation coming up is the first generation of Black youth to not experience direct, legal segregation. The more slippery, but no less real, job discrimination and segregation; the erosion of the public school system as whites move to the suburbs or enter their children in private schools; the growing elimination of oppressed nationality students from higher education; and the lack of a believeable future all point to a fundamental problem. The apparent opportunities to make "goo-gobs" of money in the drug trade, however, are leading too many of our youth to believe that that is the way out.

The Black Left must speak out loudly on the drug issue, but it must do so in two very different ways. First, the Black Left must speak out loudly against crime and drug use *within* Afro-America. While the principal *source* of the crime is not our people, we have to be blind and naive to not acknowledge the participation in our own oppression of a sector of our people who use drugs to escape or make a fast dash to the good-life, or both. Attacking crime also means organizing Black youth. This is not a project for any one organization, agency or whatever. It is a *united front* task which must involve revolutionary Marxists, nationalists, and progressive activists alike. Black Marxists must reaffirm the words of former Black Panther leader Michael Tabor (member of the New York Panther 21) who wrote that ". . . capitalism + dope = genocide. . . ." There is no other way to look at it, and somehow, Black youth must be convinced of this equation.

Second, it must condemn the increased talk of wide-spread drug testing. Scientists are repeatedly showing the inaccuracies of such testing, and worse, that many such tests have a tendency to misrepresent the drug use of Black people due to the melanin in our systems. The increase in drug tests is in fact becoming a method of intimidation, and a virtual verdict of guilt before trial. Drug tests will invariably be used disproportionately against oppressed nationalities due to the racist, public image of who are the drug users and drug pushers. Such tests will also be used against malcontents, since how better a way to explain rebellion than to allege drugs as the source.

A broad-based campaign against drugs is no easy task. It means activists putting their lives on the line in an internal war against enemies of our people. For such a campaign to succeed, we must win the battle of public opinion. For us this means that drug dealers cannot be treated as members of the Community, that is, they are not people to be protected in any way, shape or form. It also means that we of the Black Left must instill in Black youth particularly, and in Afro-America generally a vision of the future which is optimistic and attractive, though clearly involves struggle. Breaking with despair means being clear that national oppression still exists; that the "problem" is not us, but is the system; and that struggle against the system is, and I can't find any other way to put it, worth it.

Letters

Responses to "The Movement and Harold Washington"

FM Editors:

One of the problems facing the Afro-American Liberation Movement is and has been its inability to define and see its entire history in a progressive manner with an heroic and revolutionary praxis evolving to higher and higher levels. Nowhere is this more evident than with the expression of views by Abdul Alkalimat. SNCC only seemed revolutionary, the Washington candidacy was a product of middle class interests and therefore bankrupt. The struggle for democracy is not a revolutionary struggle but a reform movement. With these kind of perspectives what kind of analysis of Afro-American history are we left with?

Alkalimat has a cramped perspective on the heroic struggle of the bonded existence. Only taking up the hatchet to ole massa and burning down the plantation is revolutionary and progressive. By narrowly understanding the question of the epic quality of the bonded existence, he comes down to the present denying that we will take two by fours to assault the White House but his interpretation of the motion of Marxist-Leninists condemns us to just that reality because of a constricted understanding of what leftism means.

Perhaps Alkalimat is led into this dilemma because of his impoverished understanding of Afro-American history. That Afro-American history can best be understood through its stages is indeed true but those stages are bondage, Reconstruction, the Age of Booker T. Washington, the transition period and the modern period. In each of these stages, it is necessary to grasp the revolutionary content of each period. As an example, it was revolutionary, progressive and heroic for the varied tribal groupings to form family units, the first flowering of the Afro-American family. No way could they have survived without this development. The struggle to survive, to adapt themselves to the reality of their lives was heroic and revolutionary. If one adequately presents the 250 years of bondage as a progressive and forward moving process, then the question of maintaining a consistent orientation towards the long range perspective for revolutionary goals and objectives is not a problem. If the period of Booker T. Washington's ascendancy is defined as the Age of Economic Advance whereby the Afro-American peasantry acquired its vast landholdings rather than as The Age of Accommodation, then Afro-American youth begin to see themselves as part of an epic and heroic tradition rather than as the flotsam and jetsam of capitalist economic development. If the Civil Rights Movement is not seen as a revolutionary struggle because the democratic struggles are not revolutionary, then what revolutionary and progressive tradition are Afro-Americans

left with? Only some mythical struggle for socialism since the Civil War? It is not until the thirties and forties that a proletarian reality confronts the majority of Afro-Americans. Does this mean that over 300 years of the Afro-American Movement is just one of marking time until we became proletarians? What is our interpretation of that 325 year period? It is not just on the basis of a frontal assault upon the system of oppression that struggle becomes revolutionary but on the overall perspective of advance.

Only the "Left" can afford to be as nonchalant about democracy as is Alkalimat. Only the "Left" can be as disdainful of the role of the national bourgeoisie as is Alkalimat. Is there nothing called the United Front with objective alliances with all progressive forces? It is not just the question of uniting with the liberation theologians but of Marxist-Leninists' ability to define and interpret the Christian doctrine in a dialectical materialist manner, making the church a force for social advance. Because of the tendency of the bourgeois democratic state towards fascism, the question of democracy (and a progressive role for the petty bourgeoisie) is always a fundamental question all the way to socialism and beyond. Where in the capitalist or socialist world is democracy a settled question?

The "Left's" problem is that it wants to be distinctive, wants to stand out, wants to *talk* about socialism. In American society, there are only two arenas where the expression of such views as expressed by Alkalimat can hold currency and that is among the "Left" and in the academy. Anywhere else the concrete, material world *beats* such notions out of one's head, particularly if one is really serious about organizing and building a socialist society. The academy and the "Left" community provide insular worlds where ideas alone contend and it is possible to debate *ad infinitum* how to be "Left" and distinctive.

Marxist-Leninists in this country have yet to come to terms with a historical materialist analysis of the Afro-American Liberation movement from its inception to the present. Alkalimat's views are representative of what usually issues forth on the question. Too bad Slim Coleman is condemned to the "honkie movement." He is much closer to the money. But then he's dealing in the real world; trying to effect the day-to-day existence of the masses, the real responsibility of leftists.

There is no more profound dialectical expression of the spiraling continuum of Afro-American history than is found in the lyrics of the old Afro-American plantation melody:

We are climbing Jacob's ladder,
Every round goes higher and higher.

Donald P. Stone

FM Editors:

I agree with Abdul Alkalimat on the need to have a systemic critique of the U.S. system. Such a systemic critique must see the goals of reconstruction from the standpoint of the most oppressed sector—the majority of the nationally oppressed Black people—the Black working class. The main goals of Reconstruction were to achieve the fundamental preconditions at that time for realizing self-determination—that is, land, governmental power, and the national democratic right to decide their destiny as an oppressed nation in the Black Belt South.

I therefore think it is historically and politically wrong to talk about democracy for Black people in the absence of the demand for Black political power. The Black middle class has had the opportunity to advance relative to the opportunities of the vast majority of Black people under capitalism. Democracy without power becomes objectively a middle class demand. Legislative democracy, such as affirmative action, while very important, has little material effect on the majority of Black people unless the masses of Black people are organized to have power to pressure for the implementation and enforcment of legislative reforms.

Having a long-term perspective on the struggle, as pointed out by Abdul, is very important. Such a perspective must necessarily define strategic objectives to be won aimed at altering the power relations between the system of U.S. imperialism and the developing zones of Black political power. Objectively speaking, the Black electoral movement has helped to identify the potential strategic zones of Black political power to be outlined in a Black national liberation perspective. For Black people, the question of a socialist alternative to capitalism must be understood within the context of the struggle for national Black liberation.

Socialist values must evolve, be shaped in a day-to-day struggle around economic, political and social power relations. For Black people, the question is mass Black political power, which includes electoral influence, but more importantly, having power in the places we work and live to directly impact on the nerve centers of production and consumption of U.S. imperial power. Mass Black political power expresses the historical will of the masses of Black people and it brings with it the beginnings of an understanding of how society must be organized under the rule of the masses. Mass Black political power includes proportional representation but it calls for the type of organization of the institutions of society, including the government, in a way that is directly accountable to the needs of Black people as well as other oppressed and working people.

The Black national liberation movement, while being a national liberation movement, is also part of the U.S. and international anti-imperialist movement. The struggle to win power, even strategic power, within the various spheres of international imperialism, is essential for tilting the balance of power in favor of anti-imperialist revolutions. Black political power is not only essential for winning democratic rights for Black and other oppressed and working people inside of the U.S., it can be a force championing the right of self-determination, national independence and workers' democracy for the other

international movements against imperialism.

Slim Coleman raises a very important point about class struggle within the movement for Black political power, which I categorize as class struggle within the context of national liberation struggle. Unfortunately, many of the so-called Left have written the Black national struggle off as a bourgeois struggle because of its nationalist character. The class struggle within the Black national struggle is often not acknowledged by many Left forces, for fear that they would be supporting nationalism. Often many so-called Left forces will claim not to be involved in the Black electoral movement because elections are not going to achieve revolution or liberation, when they really don't participate because of their fear of strengthening a nationalist movement which they believe deep down to be reactionary.

Slim Coleman raises a very important point under the section titled "Reaching White Workers." The question of alliances around the struggle for Black political power has to be looked at from the standpoint of what classes of Black people are aligning themselves with what classes of white people. Too often, the call for white allies fails to distinguish the real economic, and thus political interests of those white allies. In Philadelphia, during the Wilson Goode campaign, the white allies were the liberal establishment folks in the main. Several important issues affecting workers and the general grassroots Black community were not pushed for by Goode in his campaign for mayor, for fear of alienating his white liberal establishment backers.

I must point out here, that the fight against white supremacy, oftentimes makes it necessary to support candidates because they are Black, especially when they make promises which could be agitated around in the interests of the Black working class (whether the candidate intends to live up to them or not). The important question here is organizing the Black working class as a conscious force within the Black electoral political movement. The Black electoral political movement is a Black united front, a Black electoral united front.

Unfortunately, the Black working class has not understood real class as well as national interests within this united front. The Black Left in the Black electoral united front was not unified to be able to help develop a Black workers' trend within the electoral movement. A Black workers' trend within the electoral movement would have helped in organizing the consciousness of the Black working class as well as its sphere of political influence on the direction of the Jesse Jackson presidential campaign and no doubt within the Washington and Goode mayoral campaigns as well. A Black workers' trend would have been an important force within the trade union movement, challenging the top-down, anti-democratic endorsement of Mondale. The fight for democracy has been a rank-and-file movement within the trade unions. The Black workers' trend was in a position to advance the rank-and-file workers' struggle for democracy by raising the Jesse Jackson presidential endorsement issue as a struggle for democracy, creating the possibility for winning support among white workers, and possibly working class united fronts for Jesse Jackson with the same being true for Washington and Goode as well.

One of the key questions being raised at the conclusion of the forum was that of mass organization. I agree that that is key to determining the direction of the struggle for Black political power. The Black electoral movement is a mass movement, clearly involving the masses of Black people. The question then is what class base should be organized by the Black Left within this mass movement? Will it be simply a multi-class, multi-strata organization? Or will it be a Black workers' organization of the employed and unemployed as producers and consumers? Clearly a Left perspective requires an organized Black working class base and movement through which it impregnates the Black national liberation movement with a scientific socialist outlook about the tactical and strategic tasks and objectives and the relationship of class forces in the course of the struggle. More specifically, how can elections be used as an extension of the struggles directly impacting upon the economic and political structure of imperialism at the workplace, on the job, and in the international arena? How can the electoral tactic be used to maintain the political and ideological continuity of the struggle, while recognizing the strategic limitations of the political objectives to be won in the electoral arena of struggle—i.e., the election of Black officials? By strategic limitations, I mean that the election of Black officials alone will not bring about the conditions of power to achieve the right of self-determination.

Yet this struggle to weaken, divide and paralyze white ruling class power and key governmental centers of the U.S. imperialist state—with a concentrated or regional impact in the Black Belt South—places the Black national liberation movement at a new strategic political stage of impact on the power relations between the forces of U.S. imperialism and anti-imperialism. This in turn helps create the conditions where all anti-imperialist movements can go forward towards their respective liberation and revolutionary objectives. Black political power which talks about bringing about a revolutionary challenge against the U.S. imperialist state must have a significant regional base of influence over the means of production and consumption and the flow of finance capital. The Black Belt South must be that regional base for the larger Black national liberation movement. Within the electoral arena, the Black Belt South is moving towards the position, but with the need of greater organized Black working class leadership, of being able to lead a movement for a third party, independent of the Democratic and Republican parties, which are white ruling class, imperialist state parties.

The main contradiction showing itself in the Black electoral movement, and more specifically in the Jesse Jackson campaign for president, was the politics of brokerage. Utilizing the Black electoral movement to gain a position in the Democratic Party or in the federal government, whether by design or not. Black middle class leadership, such as Jesse Jackson, merely because of their class, should not have been the main focus of the criticism of the Black Left. The main target should have been the fight against political brokerage which helped prevent a breakaway movement from developing out of the rupture at the national Democratic convention around Jesse Jackson delegates and the rest. Over four years, a breakaway movement could have built up a sizeable base within the progressive movements, the movements of the oppressed nationalities

and the trade union movement to influence the outcome of key local and state elections and national elections coming out of the Black Belt South.

As we all know, much of the Left attacked Jesse Jackson as a reactionary sell-out because he belonged to the Black middle class, and also attacked Harold Washington and other Black mayoral candidates for the same reason. The class struggle for leadership over the Black national liberation movement in the arena of electoral politics and any place else, is not merely a name-calling event. It requires organization, positioning oneself in key communities and key workplaces, and taking advantage of opportunities to springboard the class and political influence forward of Black workers. However, there is a preoccupation with trying to be Marxist-Leninists and scientists instead of being revolutionaries who apply creatively Marxism-Leninism, and any thing else that works, to organize from the bottom up the revolutionary national and class direction of Black liberation.

In conclusion, I feel that it was a good interchange between Slim Coleman and Abdul Alkalimat and definitely a good beginning for such a discussion. I am concerned, however, that neither Coleman nor Alkalimat places the question of an independent, working class predominated with a strong Black leadership for progressive independent political power within their various perspectives. Keeping the position of an independent party before Black and other oppressed people and the general working class masses is definitely a necessary aspect of a Left perspective in a protracted struggle in a bourgeois democratic imperialist state.

I thank you for the opportunity to make these comments.

Saladin Muhammed.

Saladin Muhammed is a member of the Black Workers for Justice in North Carolina. His comments reflect his individual views and do not necessarily reflect those of BWFJ as an organization.

Response to "Big Changes: Reaganism and the Post War Economy"

FM Editors:

I'm glad to see *Forward Motion* renew the effort to make a current analysis of changing conditions in the U.S. Having been in the CPML, I think one of the major errors which led us in a wrong direction was an incorrect and shallow evaluation of concrete conditions.

"Big Changes" (the article by O'Neil, Ornati, and Zweig [see FM, Aug.-Sept., '86]) is a good summary of the general contours of change. I would just like to add a few points to some questions they raised.

They state we must do "some serious thinking about what's happening to the make-up, character, and consciousness of the American working class." In my pamphlet *The Changing Face of Labor*, I attempt to look at some of these changes. I agree the industrial proletariat is still strategic, but a smaller section of the working class. If we see the working class as an army, we just lost several hundred thousand of our best troops through lay-offs and shut-downs. Does that mean the working class is less strategic? Or that other sections will come forward to fill the gaping holes left by the effects of the industrial shake-out? In my pamphlet I suggested that public workers are becoming strategic forces in the engine of capitalism. Workers in the federal, state, and city levels of government run the capitalist State. The State has grown tremendously since Lenin's time, and since Keynes, the economic base and capitalist superstructure have interpenetrated to an extent not previously experienced. If the industrial workers are strategically located at the point of value, State workers are strategic in the superstructure. Politically, State workers are still growing in union membership, are highly multinational, in relatively progressive unions, and while subject to lay-offs, their "industry" won't shut-down or move to South Korea. We may also need to look at clerical workers in financial institutions (although these jobs are exportable). If financial services are becoming the "center of gravity" for U.S. imperialism, then we must conclude those workers are also of central importance.

The second point is to turn our attention to the most oppressed. As the article pointed out, there is growing poverty as the system frantically searches for renewed profitability. The structural crisis is pushing more people to the bottom, with less room in the middle. Having a smaller strategic stratum underlines the importance of other strata. In China the working class vanguard was extremely small compared to the peasant base. More than ever the American revolutionary left must base itself in the most oppressed sections of the people, minorities, women, the unemployed, and lower stratum of the working class. In this sense the capitalists are providing us with a growing potential base. A recent article on capitalism's sunbelt strategy by William Gallegos (in the journal *Forward*, printed by the League of Revolutionary Struggle) is an excellent

new look at this strategic question. The article articulates the sunbelt strategy of capitalism within the context of the structural crisis, drawing attention to the importance of the Black and Chicano national questions.

I think the above three articles ("Big Changes," "Changing Face of Labor," and "Sunbelt Strategy") are three good starts for a broader discussion among the revolutionary left. There is a good deal of similarity in the projected viewpoints, and also a recognition that we all have a long way to go to gain a firm and clear understanding of the whole picture. I also think that Sean Ahern's comments that racism, not individualism, is the main ideological centerpiece of the right are well taken. It also would be good if *Forward Motion* printed a list of sources and books on this topic. For example, *The Deindustrialization of America* by Bluestone and Harrison has an excellent chapter on the microchip/communications revolution so emphasized in the "Big Changes" article. Hope to hear more from you.

Jerry Harris

[Ed. note: Thanks for the suggestion that we print a list for further reading. We would like to print additional comments from FM readers on the Big Changes debate in a forthcoming issue. Along with that, perhaps we can put together such a list.

Jerry Harris' "The Changing Face of Labor" may be ordered through FM, P.O.Box 5597, Chicago, IL 60680.]

The table printed below was inadvertently omitted from "Big Changes: Reaganism and the Post War Economy" in the Aug.-Sept. 1986 issue of FM.

Percent of Total National Income From					Percent of All Employed Workers In				
1960	1970	1980	1983		1959	1969	1979	1984	1995 (projected)
30	26	24	22	MANUFACTURING	25	25	21	19	17
19	18	18	17	AGRICULTURE, MINING, CONSTRUCTION, TRANSPORTATION COMMUNICATION & UTILITIES	22	17	18	15	14
16	15	15	15	WHOLESALE & RETAIL TRADE	20	20	22	23	24
9	12	14	16	FINANCE, INSURANCE, & REAL ESTATE	4	5	5	6	6
9	13	14	15	SERVICES	14	16	19	22	25
13	16	14	15	GOVERNMENT	12	15	16	15	14

Review

Parallel Passions

The Good Mother, *by Sue Miller.*
New York: Harper and Row, 1986. $17.95.

by Lucy Marx

About halfway through the book *The Good Mother* there is a conversation between the narrator, Anna, and her lover, Leo. Leo is complaining about how Anna falls short of his ideal.

"I want a woman with parallel passions," he says, talking about her lack of real "work" to compliment his art.

Anna responds angrily: ". . . *your* judgement, *your* list, your game."

This exchange goes a long way towards telling us what *The Good Mother*—like a good deal of modern women's fiction—is really about. It is about breaking down and breaking through the judgements, the lists, the games in which women's lives have been confined for so long; it's about struggling to understand and appropriate what *could* be there (or is already there unrecognized) to replace or coexist with a male-defined world: a female-shaped set of judgements, passions, and priorities, a way of being and perceiving so unacknowledged that it often cannot even be expressed through the words we generally use to define what gives meaning and value to our lives.

Traditional Roots

This first novel by Sue Miller, a Boston-based writer, has some clear roots in tradition. Most obvious is its allusion to the great Russian novel, *Anna Karenina*. Not only is the narrator named Anna, but the plot follows a similar track. In both cases, a woman breaks out of a conventional marriage and falls dramatically in love with a man. In both cases she is torn by conflicting passions for her lover and for her child. And in both cases she is brutally punished by a society whose conventions are hypocritical, narrow-minded, and ultimately ruthless.

The historical context of the two novels, while very different in many ways, does help explain their topical similiarities. *Anna Karenina* and *The Good Mother* were each inspired by a period of change and upheaval in domestic relations. At the time Tolstoy wrote *Anna Karenina*, divorce had only recently been instituted as a possibility in Czar-

ist Russia, and the period of fixed marriages was coming to an end. As we now know, Tolstoy's concern with the issues raised by this reordering of domestic social relations would become an obsession, finally leading to his avowal of absolute celibacy. *The Good Mother*, in its turn, is also informed by the contemporary concern, both optimistic and anxious, that has followed in the wake of the "sexual revolution" and the women's movement of the 60's and 70's. Changing social mores concerning divorce, adolescent sexuality, abortion, daycare, women's work—these are the subjects on which *The Good Mother* focusses.

And Miller even shows some stylistic and philosophical allegiances to the Russian novelist . Tolstoy wrote once that the main obligation of a writer is "not to lie." And honesty is one of the things that gives Sue Miller's novel its power. Like Tolstoy, Miller is a realist in her interest in accurately describing the world of the senses. But her aim is deeper than realistic precision; her credo, much like Tolstoy's, seems to be that a writer's main work is to avoid being coy or evasive about the way people really think and feel; and so she has the courage to show for the reader her main character, Anna's, most vulnerable and uncensored responses to the people and situations she encounters. It is her commitment to this kind of psychological realism, of which Tolstoy was such a master, that gives the reader the satisfaction of accompanying Miller's Anna through the commonplace experiences of her every day world to those intense private episodes of emotional reckoning and struggle, that back-and-forth which makes up the real rhythm of our lives.

But in spite of these echoes, *The Good Mother* is better understood not mainly as rooted in, but more as a counterpoint to, Tolstoy and the tradition he represents. For, while Tolstoy's fiction is unusually compassionate, revealing, and sensitive, it is also controlled by the archetypically male all-knowing voice; the voice of *The Good Mother*, on the other hand, is quite clearly female, confessional and self-inquiring. Where Tolstoy creates a panorama of people and situations and then displays his virtuoso ability of entering the consciousness of every character he has created, Sue Miller writes from the point of view of a single narrator whose perceptions appear to be quite close to the author's own. She has no impulse towards the grand, panoramic vision that Tolstoy brought to the novel. In fact, her fiction follows closely in a much more immediate tradition, what I'd like to call the tradition of the modern woman's "bildungsroman," that rapid succession of women's novels that has accompanied and nourished the struggle for women's liberation since the first avid enthusiasm for Doris Lessing's *The Golden Notebook* in 1962.

The Modern Woman's Bildungsroman

Over the past twenty-five years or so since the publication of *The Golden Notebook* there have appeared a whole number of women's novels that share a great deal in the shape of their plot, in voice, in moral vision. To name a few of the most well-known: Marge Piercy's *Small Changes*, Erica DeJong's *Fear of Flying*, Margaret Atwood's

Surfacing, Marilyn French's *The Women's Room*. (This does not include a whole list of black women writers' parallel but somewhat autonomous novelistic contributions up to the present huge popularity of Alice Walker's *The Color Purple*.) I don't think it is exagerrating to say that each one of these novels has given thousands of women some part of the insight they craved to recognize their own dissatisfaction with a stifling and unhappy situation, or bolstered their determination to find some alternative, or confirmed the adventurous but often somewhat haphazard routes on which they had already started out. Taken together, these novels have served as a vital part of the validation and discovery of an autonomous women's struggle for identity, and it is in this way in which they remind me of the earlier tradition of the bildungsroman.

The original bildungsroman was a class of novel popular beginning in the late 18th century in Europe, during the period of the rise of the bourgeois class and the new social and economic freedoms that that class pushed through. In English, Dickens is undoubtedly the best-known practitioner of this genre whose plot consistently revolved around a representative young man in his "formative" years who, in the words of Encyclopedia Britannica, "[went] out into the world seeking adventure and learn[ed] wisdom the hard way." It generally ended "on a positive note" with the arrival of the young man at "his estate" and a "responsible place in society," although the tone was also often "tempered by resignation and nostalgia."

What's interesting to me about this definition of the bildungsroman, is that if we make allowances for its obvious male bias, it provides a fine working definition for a good percentage of the most popular works of women's fiction recently written in English, (including all the books I've mentioned above). All of these stories are about a representative woman in her "formative" years, launching out on her own on a series of adventures. And almost all of them end on a positive note, but a positive note tempered with "resignation and nostalgia." These women have found their own difficult way to wisdom and their own precarious "estate" in society.

And if you think about it, it makes sense that this genre of novel would again become popular, but with a female audience. Just as in late 18th and 19th century Europe, the first generations of bourgeois men were struggling to find their way in a world that had opened up great opportunities but that must have seemed frought with hazards as well, so too have women in this period following the women's movements of the 60's and 70's felt thrown on their own devices in a similar way. And just as the authors of the 18th and 19th century bildungsroman spoke to a mass audience who must have identified intensely with their "representative" young man and found in these books some measure of the guidance they needed in a new world, so too have writers of "women's fiction" filled this role today.

But the "modern women's bildungsroman" is obviously not an exact remake of the earlier version; it has taken its own characteristic twists and turns, which are important to recognize, because they help us see the specific quality of women's struggle today and something as well about the specific quality of women's consciousness.

One thing that's particular about the modern women's novel is the heroine; while

all these novels can still be described as revolving around a representative woman in her "formative years," the modern heroine is also a definite late bloomer whose adventure and self-discovery are postponed by the traditional limitations society sets her and often by a stifling marriage.

A second characteristic feature of this new heroine is the way in which she (and her author as well) still tends to define herself in relation to men. It is an uneasy, strained identification, but it is there nonetheless. On the one hand, the symbol of these women's break from the past is almost always a broken marriage or affair; on the other hand, it is generally through a passionate relationship with a man that they find the capacity for adventure and self-discovery. The irony of this quest for independence that relies on an affair with a man is usually reflected in the ending as well which often has that typical bildungsroman bitter-sweet quality of both optimism and nostalgia: optimism because we are convinced the heroine will be able to survive on her own, but nostalgia because there is a kind of emptiness left, where the old illusions about marriage as the be-all and end-all of a woman's life used to be.

And this brings us to a final feature common to the women's bildungsroman: the peculiar quality of her "estate." The estate of the modern heroine is generally not measured in prosperity, in prestige, or even in accomplishment. It is much more internally defined than that, and much more precarious. What she has generally achieved is a new more independent self, a sense of her own worth, a feeling of control over her own life.

This, what I've called the modern women's bildungsroman, is a tradition that both fueled and grew out of the women's movement. It is a tradition bred of the desire of women not only to tell their own story in their own voice, but of a passion to discover a new way to live their lives. It is not a particularly aesthetic tradition, a tradition of great works, but can be viewed best, I think, as a kind of collective endeavour, a struggle to say something in whatever ungainly or partial way it takes to say it. It is this tradition, with its own new twists and turns, much more than the tradition of the Russian novel where Anna gets her name, that *The Good Mother* follows and pushes forward.

A New Phase in the Women's Movement

It is easy to see the ways in which Sue Miller's book follows quite predictably in the wake of other recent women's writing in the bildungsroman tradition: Like them, Miller gives us a late bloomer heroine escaping from an unfulfilling marriage; like them, she provides her heroine with a passionate love affair that is supposed to wake her up; like them, she writes with a somewhat ungainly, confessional zeal; like them, she ends on that note of optimism and nostalgia.

But what makes *The Good Mother* important—and it is important—is that it takes the struggle for a woman's voice a few steps further. *The Good Mother* clarifies the terrain of women's experience and the particularity of women's values in certain ways that have not been done before. It reflects what is both interesting and hazardous about

this new 80's phase in the struggle for women's liberation.

One of the new things about *The Good Mother* is that it asserts a certain level of confidence, an ease in responding to the traditional, mostly male-defined values we generally live by which some of the earlier books (since *The Golden Notebook*) did not have. Where most of these earlier books had a kind of pressured urgency about them, as first launches, as declarations of independence, *The Good Mother* takes its own time to go back and explore the past with the same kind of layered writing that *The Golden Notebook* used in 1962. While it does not take on the stylistic and philosophical complexity of Lessing's two-books-in-one, the pacing of Miller's novel does, in a less obvious way, correspond to a non-linear, more erratic, open-ended experience of time that is reflective of women's lives. And, through Anna, Miller does begin to explicitly assert some elements of an alternative set of values and way of life that derive from her experience and consciousness as a woman.

The clearest and most forceful place that Anna succeeds in breaking through the stranglehold of judgements that define her life is around the whole issue of success and accomplishment. She is a pianist who since childhood has been pushed forward to achieve something in her art, and yet who has come to realize that she will never probably be a great musician. Leo, her painter boy-friend, continues to goad her to push towards success. For Leo, the drive for success is what gives meaning to life, and success is equated with rivalry and competition. It is Anna's lack of careerist ambitions that most annoys Leo.

But Anna is quite firm in her refusal to succumb to Leo's values around this issue. She consistently argues that there is honor in facing one's limitations, for finding meaning and pleasure in music for its own sake and, even more so, in the rhythms of everyday life, or as she puts it so well "in the healing beauty of everything that is commonplace." This acknowledgement and even celebration of the value of the commonplace, this declaration of the honor of living a commonplace life honorably is something that Miller does particularly well here, something that I have not seen quite as clearly expressed before in women's fiction (although it has been done in poetry, as in Judith Grahn's *Common Woman* poems); and it is, I believe, something that women have, not uniquely but disproportionately, to offer as part of their vision of the world.

A second set of value judgements that Anna takes on surround the concept of "passion." And here, Anna, and I think Miller too, is much less clear, less confident about how to respond. Whereas Anna has made peace with her own limited accomplishments, and has created "another kind of life for (her)self" besides that of a great musician, she has not been able to get rid of the critical internal voice with which she measures herself inadequate in comparison to those people she terms "passionate." At least at the explicit level, Anna accepts the traditional mystified conception of what a "truly" passionate person is like. She envies her lover Leo as a kind of archetype of the passionate man, and feels beholden to him as the one who finally succeeds in awakening her own passions:

> "From the start, we fought, and then made love, both with a passionate intensity that I had

> thought as lost to me as the possibility of making great music. I felt I'd been traveling all my life to meet him, to be released by him. . ." (pg. 95)

It is this kind of writing, and in general the whole role Leo plays in the book, which I found least interesting and least convincing. Here, Anna and Miller both seem still caught in some false, mystified idea of passion.

And yet, submerged in the story are elements of another vision of sexuality and passion which I found much more compelling and true. When Anna talks about her earlier sexual experiences, when she talks about how humiliated she is made to feel about her lack of sexual feelings even in the "sisterly" atmosphere of a women's group, when she talks about masturbation, when she talks about the self-consciousness she feels the first night with Leo, all this follows Tolstoy's credo of "not lying" admirably, and so makes a valuable contribution to demystifying sexuality. But when Leo arrives in full force, Anna seems to develop an unfortunate and self-abnegating blindspot. And the real truth escapes her, for passion is not the same as being uninhibited in bed and in spite of everything Anna says, it is not Leo who finally comes off as the passionate one; it is Anna. And no matter how she sees it, it is not even Leo who awakens the most profound passion in Anna; it is her daughter, Molly.

Motherhood Is In

Which brings us to what is undoubtedly the most innovative, the most provocative, the most revealing aspect of Miller's book: the way it presents motherhood. The very fact that it *does* present a relationship between an adult and a young child as an integral part of a piece of fiction is startling. It has so rarely been done before.

Of course, novelists have acknowledged love for a child as a crucial emotion before. For instance, to Tolstoy's credit, in *Anna Karenina*, we are told that Anna's tragic dilemma is that she is torn between her love for her son and her passion for her lover. But in Tolstoy's novel, the strength and importance of Anna's relationship with her son is simply asserted and never substantiated. We never see mother and son together in any extended scenes. It is mainly through Dolly, Anna's sister-in-law, the dowdy, broken down, and sexually undesirable mother of seven that we get a somewhat demoralizing glimpse of what being a "good mother" is all about. And, ultimately, Tolstoy's Anna makes the choice to abandon her child in favor of her lover.

Significantly, in Miller's novel, Anna's choice between lover and child goes the other way. For, when push comes to shove, Anna discovers that her loyalties and emotional ties to her daughter Molly are far-and-away the most profound. But that isn't even the main thing. What Sue Miller does that is new is to introduce into fiction the actual texture and feel of life with a child, and give us a heroine whose main identity (at least for now and even if not entirely acknowledged) is as mother. In fact by far the most compelling scenes in the novel are always ones in which Molly and Anna are alone together or in which Anna is all by herself but preoccupied with her absent daughter. Miller's great strength is the way she depicts that constant concern, both tedious and compelling, that rearing a child demands. The ritualistic interactions, the unpredictable

train of a child's thought and conversation, the sensuality of the look and feel and smell of a child, all this Miller captures admirably. While Anna's love affair with Leo may seem predictable, while her friendships sometimes come across as tepid and a little unreal, what emerges as entirely convincing is her passionate engagement with her daughter.

When you think about it, it is really startling how rarely our fiction depicts the relationship between adult care-taker and child as it is lived, day-to-day. Given the awesome amount of time and energy and devotion involved in rearing each one of us even passably well, you would think this relationship would be an essential and fully integrated part of our fictional world. But it isn't.

Why not? An obvious reason is that the people who write fiction, and more generally create our cultural identity, are mainly male and rarely full-time participants in the rearing of children. It is a real dilemma: women don't write fiction because they are too drained by the enormously important but emotionally consuming task of rearing children; the story of that enormously important but emotionally consuming task of rearing children never gets told because women don't have the time and energy to tell it. And there is no simple clear-cut solution to this dilemma, because to the extent that women are freed from the burden of child-rearing in order to concentrate on something else like art or intellectual work, so too do they lose the intensity of their experience and knowledge of child-rearing, about which so much needs to be said.

And so there are partial solutions. Men, erratically and with a good deal of goading and encouragement, take up some of the tasks of childcare. Children get trundled off to day-care. Women juggle. They are tired lots of the time. And, incompletely, in bits and pieces, this story of women's experience as child-raiser starts to get told more fully. And part of the story turns out to be about this juggling itself—between the many demands of child and work and adult relationships and self, and about accepting the limitations that this juggling imposes.

I believe this is happening. If in the 1970's, a good deal of women's art was asserting we too can have our freedoms, our independence, our adventures like the best of the men, there is a new trend in the 1980's of women rediscovering and articulating valuable elements from within the traditional woman's role and consciousness. Women artists and intellectuals now are much more consistently taking up that strand of feminism that acknowledges and celebrates what is different in the way women generally perceive and live in the world. If in the 1970's the call was to "raise" women's consciousness, in the 1980's the call is more to embrace women's consciousness. And it is not coincidental that so many of the women who first came of age during the women's movement are now in the thick of the current baby boom, and so are trying to make sense and use of the rich material they have discovered in their own experience as mothers. Poets, like Sharon Olds, even rock stars like Laura Nyro and Chrissie Hynde, have written some of their tenderest love songs and poems, in the 80's, to their children. And I think there is a real and strongly felt need for books like *The Good Mother* which successfully convey the experience of mothering into fiction. This novel's immediate and widespread popularity testifies to this.

But just because we need more good fiction that deals with the experience of rearing children doesn't mean we'll get it right away. Sue Miller's own history exemplifies the problem. She is a single mother who, for five and a half years worked in a daycare center. It is clear that this very commonplace experience was indispensable for her, allowing her to know intimately the interactions, the language, the preoccupations of children and the feelings and responses of adults who live and take care of children without the help of nannies and well-paying jobs. It is also clear that this experience must have made her effort to write *The Good Mother* a difficult one.

And, also, just because we need good fiction that deals with the issue of mothering doesnt mean there aren't dangers associated with the '80s tendency of women to focus on this their "womanly role." There *is* the danger that we will participate in the right wing male supremacist effort to once again confine women exclusively to their traditional domestic role and release men from all domestic responsibilities; or that we will belittle the experience of women who choose to devote their energies more exclusively to things other than mothering. Some people have been very critical of *The Good Mother* for just these reasons. They found the heroine's way of dealing with the world too typically female, too passive. They felt that the message the novel conveyed was that a good mother is one who willingly abandons her own personal quests for achievement and sexual gratification, who always puts her child first. I don't think that this is an accurate reading of Sue Miller's book, but I do appreciate it as a more general danger.

But in the long run, I think that the experience of child-rearing demands to be told, in spite of the pit-falls that are associated with telling it. Partly because it is such a crucial part of all human experience. Even more because it is such an integral part of women's contributions and consciousness. If part of women's particular vision comes from their oppression, from, as Virginia Woolf puts it, being "shut *out*," part of it also must come from what they are "shut *into*," from the role most do and almost all are trained to follow.

If women appreciate the commonplace, in large measure I believe this is associated with mothering. For the fact that childbearing and childrearing are two of the most common of all human experiences does not make them any less arduous, less engrossing, less worthy of celebration. If women are less driven, less competitive, less covetous of their own exclusive time and space, aren't the interruptions and inescapable intimacies of children part of what taught them how to survive under more collective conditions? If women are more catholic in their affections, less exclusively sexual in their passions and more drawn to love across generational lines, isn't it obvious that mothering has helped teach them this? And if women can more easily transfer their concerns to a future in which their own role is diminished and finally non-existent, isn't this often based on their ability to transfer their hopes to the well-being of those they have mothered? Of course these are generalizations, but I believe they are generalizations that bear some weight.

All in all, I think *The Good Mother* would be a valuable book if only because it helped open up the effort of describing the experience of childrearing in fiction. Or even simply for what Miller does in conveying the emotional effect of children on the people

who love them. It was her skill at doing this that made me, for the first time in years, cry when I reached the end of the book and not resent it. Because the ending of *The Good Mother* is a genuinely moving one, its emotional weight honestly achieved.

"Ah yes" Anna says to herself as she watches her child move away from her down the hall, everything "familiar" and "also unknown" . . . "This is how it begins." And, while this moment gains specific intensity through Anna and Molly's own particular story, it also resonates with the whole experience of parenthood—of the continual process of letting go, of a parent's acceptance of her or his own diminishing role.

Which makes me think again of the comparison with *Anna Karenina. Anna Karenina* is a classic tragedy—the story of a woman caught in the tragic conflict between two passions, inescapably drawn towards her own destruction. But, although the cover blurb also speaks of Anna's situation in *The Good Mother* as a "tragic conflict," the ending belies this. Actually, Miller's ending has none of the flavor of a tragedy at all. What it does have is that note of endurance, of surviving with diminished expectations, of accepting loss and limitation, the traditional end note of the bildungsroman.

Which makes me think further that tragedy is perhaps not the most natural form for women's fiction to take. The tragic sensibility, its images of fatal flaws and falls from greatness is too absolute, too grandiose, too diametrically opposed to the celebration of what is commonplace and collective, what survives beyond oneself; too at odds with the sensibility derived from childrearing. For, as Anna can say, watching her child disappear down the hall:

"This is how it begins.'

Film Review
Horrors

by Tom Goodkind

People often ask, "Will there be horror movies under socialism?" The answer, it seems to me, is straightforward: just as some say "without democracy—no true socialism," so should we insist upon the ultimate dependence of proletarian power on horror. Many (including perhaps Lenin himself) have misunderstood this relationship. The historic misunderstanding can be traced back to the unfortunate translation of a single sentence in Engels' important article "On Authority." Engels published this oft-quoted article in 1874 in Italian (not his native language), and it was very quickly translated into God knows how many tongues. The partial sentence in question is commonly understood to say the following: ". . . and if the victorious party does not want to have fought in vain, it must maintain this rule by means of the *terror* which its arms inspire in the reactionaries" (found on p. 103 in *Anarchism & Anarcho-Syndicalism: Selected Writings by Marx, Engels & Lenin*, New World Paperbacks; emphasis added).

Engels' notes for this article, recently published in the original German, demonstrate what some have long suspected. Nowhere does the word "terror" appear; instead, we find the following unequivocal phrase: ". . . victorious party must maintain its rule by means of horror." It seems a subtle distinction, but when "horror" is substituted for "terror" in the final sentence, the difference is obvious and significant. This clarification further casts doubt on the true meaning of the word "arms" in Engels' context, as viewers of both Schwarzenegger and the popular "slice and dice" films will attest. But this has already taken me far afield.

Now and then we'll see an article in *Pravda* or some similar publication arguing that horror movies are symptoms of bourgeois decadence reflecting the masses' understandable obsession with the general insecurities and horrors of life under capitalism. There is some obvious truth to this: the threat of nuclear war and the skyrocketing rate of violent crime—especially against women—have inspired countless horror movies. Even the farm crisis sponsored by agribusiness has found its reflection on the screen ("The Attack of the Killer Tomatoes").

But it would be folly to argue that horror literature and film will disappear under socialism. You might as well argue that bad dreams will vanish, too. Fear of death and (still more horrifying) fear of causing others' deaths will disappear with death itself.

This is not to suggest that reaction, sexism and general cultural disintegration are not the dominant trend in horror movies today; I'm sure they are. Certainly the reactionary slashers I've seen (only two or three—so there) confirm this. Their main contribution

to the genre has been to place the camera behind the psychopath's eyes, thereby placing the viewer in his mind and body, making him or her (usually him) a participant in the carnage, encouraging the audience to identify with the murderer, and eliminating sympathy for the victim (often female). Of course, this is what makes such movies terrifying. Hollywood has discovered a truth of the unconscious: identification with the killer is even scarier than identification with the victim. What's scary is often fascinating, too, and that's where the destructive sexist effects of these movies come in. A generation of adolescent males fascinated with the torment of Jason from the "Halloween" series is not a pleasant prospect.

Whatever their effects on pubescent psyches, horror movies (and books) are scarier today than ever before. Some film critics, like Walter Goodman of the *New York Times*, moan and groan about the good old days of "Frankenstein" and "Dracula": "The new ones are spectacular in a blow-you-out-of-your-shoes way, but the old ones gave us more to think about and dream about" (8/3/86, section 2, p.17). But horror movies are supposed to be *frightening*, and that's where all the modern improvements—the gore, the special effects, the shock scenes, the intensified suspense—really count. The classic fright films cited by Goodman (like "The Invisible Man" or "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde") are about as scary as Bazooka comics compared to the grueling terror of (admittedly raunchy) films like "The Evil Dead." And any sick ten-year-old will tell you so. "Dracula" has some scary stuff, but what's scariest for the *modern* viewer is the disintegration of Renfield's personality (you remember the guy with the weird laugh, who would walk a mile for a nice, juicy spider), not anything having to do with the pompous Count. And for depth of content, things "to think about and dream about," I'll put up the nightmares inspired by "Alien," "The Exorcist," "The Howling," "Night of the Living Dead" and even "Jaws" against anything dredged up by the classics. (This pretty much goes for modern horror fiction as well, although not as unequivocally. "The Monkey's Paw," by W.W. Jacobs, remains one of the scariest stories ever written. But Edgar Allan Poe, usually cited as the originator of the horror story, can't hold a candle to Stephen King at his best. Poe is a far greater artist and all that, but for pure gnawing terror, which are you going to read: *The Fall of the House of Usher*, or *Pet Sematary*?)

Some modern horror movies have a good deal of social content, certainly more than the Karloff, Lugosi or Vincent Price classics. This trend of social commentary can be traced back to the sci-fi and horror movies of the 'fifties and 'sixties, which spawned a slew of anti-communist propaganda films ("Invasion of the Body Snatchers") and monster movies about the effects of atomic radiation ("The Attack of the Fifty-Foot Woman"—not starring Sly Stallone as a bodyguard at a Swiss girls' school, which is what he was doing around 1967 when that film was made and Rambo's war was really getting underway), some pacifist films ("The Day the Earth Stood Still"), and at least one Freudian thriller (remember the "monsters from the Id" in "The Forbidden Planet"?). I shudder to contemplate the possible social content of the "Halloween" or "Friday the 13th" series. But there is better stuff out there. The great "Night of the Living Dead," for example, is an ironic commentary on U.S. race relations (and also one of the first

horror movies in which the hero gets killed). "The Howling" is a take-off on pop culture and particularly pop psychology. Or take Stanley Kubrick's version of "The Shining," which many horror fanatics pooh-pooed because it bore little relation to King's terrific novel, and especially because it wasn't as scary as the original. Kubrick took what is essentially a psycho-drama about the modern nuclear family and turned it into a deeply symbolic commentary on American history, with emphasis on the recurrent themes of genocide and bloody oppression. Every change Kubrick makes from the novel deepens the film's social content, from the opening landscape shot to the final close-up of an apparently insignificant photograph.

And then there is "Alien," and its blockbuster sequel "Aliens." You can read Walter Goodman of the *New York Times* or Pauline Kael of *The New Yorker* and find not a word of serious comment on the anti-corporate, anti-sexist themes of these films. Kael and Goodman are obsessed with the pros and cons of special effects, or with calculating whether "Aliens" should be reviewed as an "A" or a "B" movie. They never get beyond critiquing the basic building blocks of plot, dialogue and character development. But if you're willing to step beyond this pedantry and look at "Alien" and "Aliens" for what they are—horror/sci-fi, no doubt grade "B" movies—then you'll recognize that (1) they are very scary; (2) they help raise the usually low level of the genre as far as plot, character, dialogue, and cinematography are concerned; and (3) they have a progressive social content which is rare in Hollywood blockbusters.

There are three points worth noting about "Alien." First is its view of space. Now I don't read science fiction, but from the movies I've seen there seem to be several broad recurring views of space and its alien inhabitants. Very popular in the Reagan era is the "Star Wars"/Buck Rogers treatment, which turns space into an imperialist battlefield on which the underdog eventually overcomes the menacing Darth Vaders of Ronald's "evil empire." Luke Skywalker is basically a crusader for the American way. The aliens range from cute and helpful to ugly and mean, but mostly they exist for local color. Closely related to this view of space is that which pits evil aliens against the entire human race, usually through some sort of invasion. "The Thing From Another World," "Invasion of the Body-Snatchers," "War of the Worlds," "The Crawling Eye" (mainly notable for one of the earliest decapitation scenes) and many others fall into this category. These films are often clearly anti-communist; in "War of the Worlds," the foolish pacifist priest is the first to be slaughtered, and in "Body-Snatchers," we are warned that even our best friend might be one.

A quite different view of space is represented by films like "The Day the Earth Stood Still," "Close Encounters," "ET," "Starman," and "2001"/"2010." Here humankind finds a kind of salvation in space, and the aliens are fundamentally better—usually more intelligent—than earthlings. These are religious films: they simply substitute aliens for God and space for Heaven.

Finally there is the relatively rare view of space represented by "Alien," its sequel, and to some extent by "The Forbidden Planet." In this view space is essentially an extension of human society, with earthbound social and psychological conflicts carried out

on new terrain. Aliens are neither better nor worse than us; they are just like us—only uglier.

Coming out amid the "Star Wars" and "Close Encounters" craze, "Alien" slapped us in the face right at the start: instead of a battleship or an exploratory vehicle like "Star-Trek's" Enterprise, the ship at the center of the story (the Nostromo ["Our Man"], taken from the Joseph Conrad novel in which a valuable cargo of silver plays a pivotal role) is little more than a futuristic scow, picking up 20,000,000 tons of ore for refinery processing and owned by an apparently enormous, omnipotent and obviously capitalist "Company." Manning the ship are not heroes and heroines, but employees—just like back home. Captain Dallas is more a middle-level manager than the usual take-charge guy: indecisive at crucial moments, conflicted over his military and Company responsibilities, and one of the first to get gobbled up by the nasty alien. We are treated to Yaphet Kotto and Harry Dean Stanton as blue-collar maintenance workers who grumble about their pay and benefits just like real people. Everyone want to get home and get paid. There's work in space, there's class conflict, there are dirty jokes.

Most of all there are money and power, which bring us to the second significant point in "Alien": its anti-corporate politics. As most moviegoers know by now, the Nostromo's encounter with the alien is no accident. The ship has been secretly diverted by the Company, which wants the creature—whose "structural perfection is matched only by its hostility"—for its "Weapons Division." Both the main computer and Ash, the snooty android, have been programmed to carry out this mission at any cost; their instructions include the expendability of the entire crew. For a space flick, this stuff is highly realistic. Doubters should do a little research into the testing and development of nuclear, biological and chemical weapons.

The third point worth noting about "Alien" is its anti-sexist undercurrent. Unlike almost all Hollywood movies of every genre, there is no love interest in the film. What's more, the central character, hero and sole survivor is a woman. And she survives mainly by being smarter and more clear-headed than everyone else (she's also lucky). The significance for popular images of women can be seen simply by comparing Sigourney Weaver's Lt. Ripley to the helpless and mercilessly chauvinised female lead of "Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom."

Each of these points—the realistic and in some sense materialist view of space, the anti-corporate politics, and the anti-sexist theme—is further developed in the sequel, "Aliens."

At the start of "Aliens" Lt. Ripley and her cat have been floating through space in suspended animation for fifty-seven years. The Company has not been in deep freeze, however, and we are immediately informed that money still speaks across the galaxies: Ripley's capsule happens to be picked up by another Company scow, and when the workers realize the cargo is alive one remarks, "There goes our salvage." Space continues just like Earth, only more so.

Ripley is delivered to an icy Board of Directors, who naturally do not believe her tale of the Nostromo's destruction. Of course there is no record of any Company order

diverting the ill-fated ship, no record of any Weapons Division interest in the alien life form, and no possibility that the Company would ever act with such malicious intent towards its own employees. As a matter of fact, Company settlers have inhabited the alien-infested planet for some twenty years, with nary a sign of Ripley's nightmare creatures. These workers operate an enormous nuclear-powered plant, representing a considerable capital investment, whose function is to make the planet's atmosphere livable.

It soon turns out that the Company has lost contact with the settlers. Enter Burke, the young and cocky Company spokesman, who eventually convinces Ripley to participate in a rescue mission. Her protectors are a group of Marines who, in the first of several references to "Rambo," are portrayed mostly as swaggering fools out for a joyride.

Much of what occurs on the planet is predictable, but some is not; so if you haven't seen the film and intend to, you can stop here. The crew discovers a single survivor of the colony, a young girl ironically named "Newt" (the aliens have something in common with that part of the animal kingdom). They also encounter, as they must, a passel of aliens. There are a lot of jack-in-the-box effects, battle scenes, chases and rescues which are pretty suspenseful but also fairly routine. Most of the humans die, but the good guys win in the end.

What's important here—besides the film's continuing commitment to the view of space as simply one more frontier for capital (backed by military might) to subjugate—are the roles of Burke and Ripley. Burke, we learn, secretly directed the settlers to investigate the ancient spaceship in which he knew the aliens to be housed. After the first major skirmish, Ripley proposes to "blow up the fucking planet," but Burke refuses Company authorization, arguing that "this installation has a substantial dollar value attached to it" (to which Ripley replies, "So send me the bill!"). Burke's real aim is to bring back a few live samples for the Weapons Division, since "two specimens are worth millions." He tries but fails to impregnate Ripley and Newt with a couple of disgusting alien embryos, after which Ripley insists on his execution, saying "I don't know which species is worse—you don't see *them* fucking each other over for a goddamned percentage!" It's left to the aliens to eliminate Burke, however, which is a weakness in the film.

In "Alien," the arch villain and agent of the faceless Company was Ash, the android. But it's hard to blame an android for doing what it was programmed to do. The sequel reverses the role of the machine: Bishop, (his top half, that is) saves Newt when it really counts; he has been programmed never to harm a human. And evil is given not just a human face, but a face carefully chosen to represent the '80s: the face of the young, brash, wisecracking mover, the face of Burke, the face of *Yuppiedom*.

Having updated the anti-corporate politics of the original film, "Aliens" deepens its anti-sexist theme. Again, Ripley wears no make-up. Again, there is no love interest in the film. There is a hint of it when Corporal Hicks shows Ripley how to use the grenade launcher, and especially when he places the transmitter on her wrist to prevent losing her. But in a crucial move Ripley immediately transfers the transmitter to Newt, and the whiff of Hollywood romance (male hero throws protective net around female at risk) is instantly overwhelmed by the anxious mother/daughter relationship around which

the rest of the film coheres. As a matter of fact, it is Corporal Hicks who is saved by Ripley, and who returns to Earth in Hollywoood's favorite state of mind for women in distress: unconsciousness.

The anti-sexist theme is further strengthened by the other major female character, Private Vasquez, a Hispanic bodybuilder who turns out to have real guts. And then there are the quotes from "Rambo" and "Transformers." When Ripley straps on the weaponry in search of her stolen child, the reference to Stud Stallone escapes no one in the audience. But simply placing a woman in that role, especially in a somewhat anti-patriotic context (since the Company is all the country we have in that dark future), undercuts a major part of the Rambo myth. And Ripley's final victory over the alien Mother comes—thanks to her Class 2 license—through her transformation into what has become the central preoccupation of little boys all across America: a transformer. I don't claim to have seen all the transformer toys, and certainly not all the cartoons, but I've seen a few, and they've all been unmistakably male. The image of Sigourney Weaver entering the final showdown in this symbolic guise surely must disturb more than a few preconceptions. And the showdown itself (dubbed "the battle of the supermoms" by Pat Aufderheide of *In These Times*), while not exactly a paean to sisterhood, is a big improvement on the usual film fights between jealous gals over some lucky hunk.

I trust this brief discussion of "Alien" and its sequel demonstrates the inextricable link between horror and revolution. If not, tough. I'm off to see "The Fly". . . .