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# ***FORWARD MOTION***

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Nineteen eighty-three has been a year of surprises. It has not been a year of unexpected turns in the struggle, but we have seen dramatic intensification of conflict in some areas. And this was a surprise after the dull, aching plateau Reagan administration politics reached in its second year, 1982.

Most of all, the Black electoral movement showed surprising staying power in 1983 -- there were primary victories where earlier campaigns had only been able to stake a future claim, and some final election victories where Black power had seemed safely subordinate. This issue of FM features a report on the election followed by an in-depth interview with activists in the Mel King mayoral campaign in Boston. Though unsuccessful, the King campaign showed surprising strength. And though our friends call things as they saw them, in some cases criticizing significant deficiencies, they view the campaign as a

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breakthrough and as part of a continuing process we can learn from. A Chicago correspondent takes a similar approach in her update on the new Washington administration there. Of course, the emphasis has been local and it will have to remain so for some time to come. But many people who have been involved in these efforts look to the Jesse Jackson presidential campaign as a way to reinforce this local momentum or bargain with it for a new measure of national influence or both. An editorial in this issue explores the stakes of the Jackson candidacy for the Black movement and the Left generally.

Another 1983 surprise has to be Reagan's tremendous staying power. A weak and short-term economic recovery and continuing affronts to poor and working people have not undercut his strong chances at reelection. Nor has Reagan's foreign policies, which are miring this country down in greater aggression around the world. The U.S.' unswerving pro-Israeli policies have helped destroy Lebanon. The nuclear arms race is hotter than in decades. In Central America, Reagan's boldness in extending the Carter commitments to the Right has been the surprise of 1983, and the biggest surprise of all has been this fall's full-scale invasion of the small island nation of Grenada. This FM includes comments on the Grenada invasion, including a reprint of an interesting and prophetic speech by Maurice Bishop from 1981 on "Why the U.S. Fears Grenada," plus a review of "Under Fire," Hollywood's look behind the scenes at the liberation struggle in Nicaragua.

A third surprise of 1983 has been labor's continuing slippage. Though the wage concessions fanfare has ebbed a bit, union-busting negotiating stances are gaining greater acceptance than at any time in a generation. Deregulated transportation industries (the airlines, trucking, and now Greyhound) have been the main attraction, but a court case against three UAW stewards shows another side of the new anti-labor struggle. We report on it here. Four poems about work and working offer a more hopeful end of the year outlook.

Finally, rounding out this issue is a second installment on our Socialism and Democracy study guide, which we hope you will find useful in thinking about how we are eventually going to lift ourselves out of this mess, once and for all!

Seasons greetings from Forward Motion and PUL.

--FM staff

## EDITORIAL

# JACKSON FOR PRESIDENT

After months of speculation, Rev. Jesse Jackson finally made it official: he is a candidate for the Democratic Presidential nomination. Jackson is not the first Black to seek this nomination; curiously, Shirley Chisholm's 1972 candidacy has been quickly forgotten by most commentators. But Jesse Jackson's effort comes at a time of new, widely-based electoral momentum in the Black movement. And set against the feeble challenges to Reaganism mounted by the other candidates, Jackson's campaign has the capability of bringing life as well as color into the presidential campaign.

Even before Jackson made it public, however, news commentators and various political leaders, such as Atlanta Mayor Andrew Young, voiced pessimism if not outright opposition to a Black candidate for the country's highest office this year. The reasoning has generally been the same: an Afro-American cannot win, and any attempt would take away from the white liberal candidacy of former Vice President Walter Mondale.



This difference of opinion also carries over to the Left, where the argument is heard that a Jackson candidacy will take away from our main task in 1984, building the anti-Reagan front. In addition, some groups and individuals rule out support for a Jackson candidacy because he would be running for a Democratic Party nomination, rather than running as an independent.

We favor Jackson's candidacy, recognizing several issues at stake.

For one, the issue is not Rev. Jackson's personality or personal ambition. His elitism and showmanship

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are evident (though no more so than the egotism and ambitiousness of the white candidates). We also have serious differences with Jackson's approach to the Afro-American liberation struggle: he has consistently argued over the years that a revolutionary solution is not required to end national oppression in the United States. Yet the political orientation voiced by Jackson at this time is most significant.

## Pro-Equality Populism

Jesse Jackson today espouses something of a pro-equality populism unique in this campaign. The "Rainbow Coalition" theme -- also used by Boston Black mayoral candidate Mel King this fall (and interestingly enough originally promoted by the Black Panther Party, the Young Lords, and some early Students for a Democratic Society organizers in the early 1970s) -- calls for a multi-national alliance of progressive segments of the population. Rainbow Coalition politics is the politics of peace, redistribution of wealth, and equality and political power for women and oppressed nationalities. Rev. Jackson has the credibility and the stature to press for this politics on a national level in a way that any of the possible independent candidates would find extremely difficult.

Jackson's pro-equal rights populism can directly tie into third party objectives. The AFL-CIO has delivered itself body and soul to Mondale headquarters, and this will virtually rule out an independent role or democratic political action by most union locals. Nonetheless, many of the other sections of the "Rainbow Coalition" -- the politically excluded -- continue to be overlooked by the Democratic candidates. For the most part, the other existing candidates do not offer anything new or of value to the politically ignored other than verbal anti-Reaganism. We hear opposition to Reaganomics, but often in the name of new, bite-the-bullet approaches which Democratic leaders have nurtured from their Carter era beginnings. We may hear support for a nuclear freeze but no break from the murderous foreign policies the US has pursued in the Mideast and Central America since the mid-'70s.

The Jackson candidacy offers progressives an opportunity to have a pro-people agenda addressed seriously and on a national level. And it offers a mechanism for continuing to bring new segments of the population into the electorate and into progressive electoral motion.

Jackson's candidacy can also be viewed as part of the current Black electoral upsurge. Years of intensive voter registration, local candidacies and other electoral initiatives (such as redistricting campaigns in a number of cities) laid the groundwork for Harold Washington's successful candidacy and other recent campaigns. This electoral upsurge sets its sights on greater Black political power.

Along with the new Black electoral momentum has been some smaller and generally underpublicized motion among Latinos toward political representation and power. The successful Pena mayoral campaign in Denver is the most

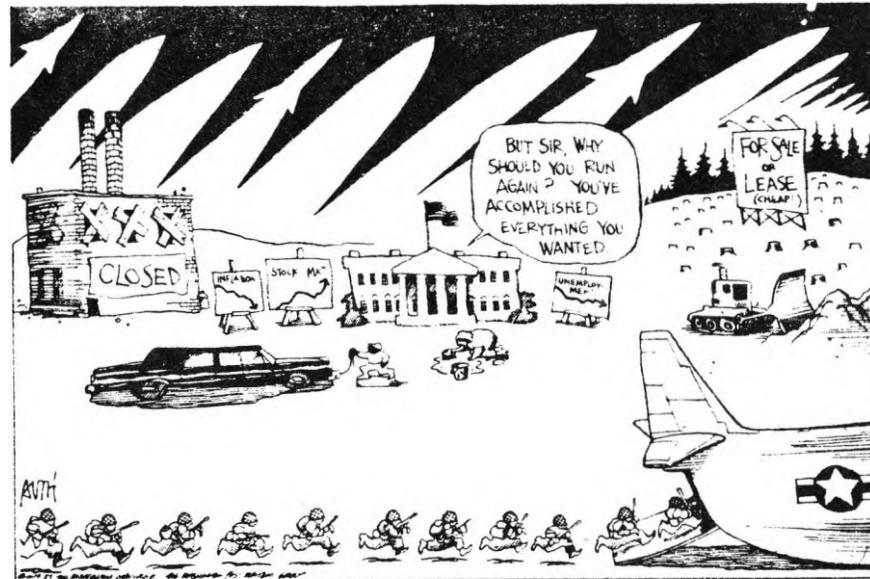
publicized example of what appears to be a continuing process.

Jackson himself may have only the limited goal of renegotiating the terms of Afro-American participation in the Democratic Party. But for the reasons we have discussed here, progressives in the national movements can use the candidacy to press demands for greater power at all levels of government. And it is a way for all progressives to bring sharp definition to the major issues facing this country.

While it is unfortunate that the process of choosing of a candidate to promote a national "Rainbow Coalition" was no more democratic than organized labor's endorsement process, the Left can ill afford to stand on the side-lines and bemoan the situation. The collective intervention and active participation of the Left can help make the difference between absorption of the new electoral activism into the Democratic Party and a more independent political direction in the mid- and late-1980s.

--Executive Committee, PUL  
November 1983

Note: this draft position is circulating for discussion, comment, approval or disapproval.



## THE BOSTON MAYORAL RACE

The 1983 Boston mayoral race is history now, with white populist Ray Flynn polling 65% of the vote to Black progressive Mel King's 35%.

When King and Flynn topped the field of nine candidates running in the October preliminary election, many political observers contrasted the occasion with the Boston of the mid-1970's. At that time our city was the scene of intense racial turmoil, brought out into the open in 1974 with the partial desegregation of Boston's public school system.

Boston has changed. Both King and Flynn ran strong grassroots campaigns, neither had the favor of "corporate Boston," both talked of uniting the city, of giving access to the disenfranchised, and a Black made it into the final election.

Both candidates had a fair amount in common, but what they offered was by no means identical. Ray Flynn has grown politically, developing progressive positions on some issues. And many can appreciate Flynn's stand against racial violence, particularly since he is from South Boston, the center of racial hostility during the busing crisis.

But Flynn simply has not been consistent in his opposition to discrimination and inequality. Flynn went out of his way to avoid talking about issues of discrimination against people of color, preferring to condemn "economic discrimination" against all working people, black and white. He was bolder about discrimination against women, though that too was mainly "economic discrimination" and not a question of rights.

By contrast, King has been staunchly dedicated to fighting inequality, in all its forms.

That was the bottom line, and Mel King was the clear choice. Boston's Black, Latino and Asian communities understood that very well. The King candidacy had an unprecedented unifying and mobilizing effect of Boston's minority communities, placing a Black in the election runoff for the first

time in Boston's history. The King campaign also became a rallying point for much of Boston's gay and lesbian community, and Boston now has its first gay public official, David Scondras, who gained a district seat on the City Council.

Not sharing this enthusiasm was most of organized labor in Boston, most of Boston's white voters, and most significantly, a large portion of the city's progressive community. Flynn's program, if carried out, will make Boston more accessible to the disenfranchised and may help move Boston's politics forward and Boston's people closer together. But given that many of Flynn's votes were not votes for his program but rather white votes for a white man against a Black opponent, Flynn's progressive supporters ought to be cautioned against overstating the "people's victory" this fall.

## Conservatives Gain

A look at the final tally in the City Council and school committee contests should end any lingering doubts about a white backlash in this election. The record-breaking high conservative white turnout for Flynn sent other white candidates' tallies sky-rocketing.

If not for Boston's new district representation, the City Council would be once again all-white. All four at-large councillors are white, and of the thirteen total, only two are Black, only one is a woman, and no Latinos won.

Similarly, moderate at-large Black School Committee incumbent John O'Bryant had topped the ticket in 1981, but this year finished fourth and last. Meanwhile Kevin McClusky, who finished last in 1981 narrowly gaining a school seat, this year ran first. Rita Walsh-Tomasini, who placed second to last in 1981, took second place this year. Both are white. One positive note in the School Committee elections was that Boston gains its first Latino official as a district rep.

In District Two, encompassing South Boston, Chinatown, and the South End (a racially mixed community; Mel King's own neighborhood), Jim Kelly of South Boston, a key leader of the anti-busing movement long associated with racial terror, narrowly won his district's City Council seat. In defeating Mike Taylor, a white moderate with a history of community service also from South Boston, Kelly owed much to the large white turnout. This was not the only factor, however. It was reported that some 2000 voters "blanked" the district council race in the South End, a community generally acknowledged to be unfavorable to Kelly. Kelly's victory margin was just over 200 votes. Flynn, who was in a good position to build support for Taylor, stayed neutral. As a result, the Boston City Council is saddled with one of the main instigators of racial conflict over the last decade. Also, another ultra-conservative, Joe Casper, took the district's School Committee seat.

Boston remains a divided city. Though the ugly mob scenes we saw on TV

during the Chicago mayoral race were absent here, and to his credit Ray Flynn did not make racial appeals for votes, racial hostility or racial fear motivated many whites to join the Flynn campaign. This was pretty evident in many white communities. (We would be curious to know how progressives in the Flynn campaign dealt with that in their work.)

Even so, Boston did not take a step backwards as a result of the 1983 mayoral race. The Flynn and King campaigns set a populist, pro-neighborhood, anti-downtown tone to the mayoral debate throughout for the first time since Mayor Curley's era. But above all, the strength and consistency of the King campaign means that Boston's Black and minority communities will not be taken for granted again. This shift in Boston politics will be a factor throughout the Flynn administration and on into the future.

--Seamus Flaherty  
December 1983

## INTERVIEW

# ASSESSING THE MEL KING CAMPAIGN

Note: PUL members, friends, and associates were among the literally thousands of Mel King campaign volunteers. Shortly after the election, several PUL members very active in the campaign sat down to talk about the results, the campaign strategy, and what comes next. Two of the participants, Nina C. and M.M. helped organize the Mel King campaign in Boston's Black community, two worked in Dorchester (a part white and part integrated section of the city) and on union support for King (Seamus F. and Zeke C.), and Sarah L. did both central support and neighborhood work. FM's Susan Cummings conducted the interview.

Forward Motion: Mel King got a tremendous vote in the Black community; much bigger than his 1979 campaign. Why? What effect do you think it will have? Will it carry over politically? What kind of longlasting effects will it have?

Nina C.: That was one of the biggest ups of the campaign for me. Just the tremendous voter registration and participation of young people in this whole process, 18-22. And just the turn-out and the mobilization of the Black community. For me it made all the work worth while despite complaints I have about the campaign and how it was run.

Some of that I think was just the atmosphere in the country. There is this movement for Black political power in the electoral arena that's somewhat different from what happened ten, fifteen years ago in a number of different cities. And I think that motion caught people and made them feel that a King victory was a possibility and maybe it was worthwhile getting registered and getting out to vote.

I really, really hope this carries over into other areas. If there's one thing that we can do around this, I think it is to keep the spirit going; just letting people know why it is so important to be registered to vote and to get out around a lot of different things. I think that's one thing we need to continue to emphasize and not assume that everybody knows that.

Seamus Flaherty: The Black community -- or the minority communities --

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went from being a fifth of the electorate to being a third. Even though we got trounced in the final, when you think about it, 70,000...almost 70,000 people voted for Mel. That's a lot of people to be able to organize among in the future. And if nothing else, if we can maintain that voting level it's a victory in itself.

## Black Political Power

FM: Do you think that his campaign fostered any kind of change in terms of a more progressive, activist spirit in the Black community? Do you think that because of Mel being on the more radical end of things that this strengthens the hand of a progressive, like Yancey, who won as opposed to a more traditional or conservative Black? [Ed note: A Black progressive in his second try for public office, Charles Yancey this year became Roxbury's district representative to the new city council.]

MM: I think it laid a basis for making it easier for people with a more progressive point of view to be viewed as insiders as opposed to outsiders. I think the larger feeling in the Black community was the need for unity. That everyone is included. And it wasn't exactly a mandate for any particular politics within the range of center or left because I do think the center politicians are still extremely strong. Several of the center people won in fairly big ways against people who were a little more progressive than they. But my feeling through the work I was doing which was mostly with center people was that people wanted the Black community to become a force. And generally agreeing with Mel's program -- not his socialist program -- but with his democratic rights program: the issues of access, poor people's issues generally, better housing, better city services. Everyone was in total agreement with that and was willing to let him have his own views on different socialist politics. And people were definitely up in arms at others trying to use that against him, around the whole Castro thing. Not just that particular statement about choosing Castro over Reagan; the more reactionary talk show hosts had been pulling this whole thing about King's trips to Cuba and the Tregor Bill -- being in Cuba when the Tregor Bill came up. And people defended him up and down on all that stuff; more from the basis of "How dare you try to bait us." Not bait him, but bait us. "You're using that to prevent Black political power," rather than saying "I really support socialism."

The fact also that quite a few known socialists and communists in the Black community played leading roles and were consciously put there and more or less did a good job, you know, has also gained some legitimacy for those individuals, not necessarily for their organizations.

FM: Do you think people -- not so much people on the inside of the campaign, but other people -- came away from the campaign feeling good about it?

Sarah L.: Yeah, I think people feel good about it. But one thing that's

really coming home to me is that it wasn't just the issues. There was a person that embodied those issues that people could rally around. That there was a leader. That people could say, "I'm for Mel."

I was in Ward 17 [a ward with a high percentage of Black voters] on election day and it was incredible how many people were turning out. Just to work at the polls. Like people really had a stake in it. They really wanted to be there; they wanted to know what they were doing; they wanted to be able to talk to people at the polls; they wanted to get trained. There was this sort of eagerness on the part of people that haven't been eager before, and people were taking initiative to get involved. We weren't just trying to pull people out of the woodwork. And I found that to be really exciting.

FM: Throughout the campaign some people stressed the similarities between King and Flynn on the issues while others emphasized the differences. What would King bring to the city of Boston that was distinctive from Flynn and how was this projected in his campaign?

A-M: The reason why we entered the campaign really -- was the whole question of Black political power. Just representing that if nothing else. I'm not sure that the Rainbow Coalition stood for that, but I think in itself, the existence of a Black mayor -- in this city which has such a long history of racist struggles -- would be significant and a very mobilizing force for people of color. [Ed note: The Rainbow Coalition became the major King campaign slogan, referring to all people of color and to politically excluded groups generally.]

FM: So that's despite the fact that the Rainbow Coalition sort of muted that political fact -- on purpose?

A-M: To some extent on purpose. To some extent accidentally on purpose. I think a lot of the white, petit-bourgeois people in the campaign were not conscious of their difficulties around the issue of race and the issue of Black political power and power for people of color in this city. Maybe in their hearts they might support it. But they were so used to reacting in one sort of way that that kind of came through and dominated the campaign.

SL: I think there was a conflict really in terms of understanding the central issue of equality and how that related to the Rainbow Coalition. The Rainbow Coalition was about the politics of inclusion. Everyone has their own issue; and everyone's issue is important; and every contradiction is of equal significance; and we're all in this together; and if we all just bring all of our own impressions together and deal with them together everything will work out. It was a good tactic in terms of including people. But in terms of taking it farther and really having people grasp the central importance of the fight for equality, I don't think it really did that. So, you know, in the end I just feel there were some real drawbacks to that whole strategy.

MM: Yeah, it's clear that Flynn consciously avoided the issue of race and consistently, consciously avoided the issue of race. And many times when asked questions about that by the press, would say, 'I don't want to discuss anything that is divisive.' So just the issue itself was branded as divisive

as an excuse for not dealing with it.

Objectively, for Mel to win he needed a strong victory in the Black community. And in order to have a strong victory he needed a unified Black community. And having a unified Black community puts the issues and concerns of the Black community on the agenda of city politics -- city services, equality in the city. And so I think that was a difference.

## Avoiding A Backlash

But once having got that agenda out there, the fear in the King campaign was that there would be a white backlash. That made them anticipate the white backlash in such a way as to try to constantly play down a Black presence. Refusing to use the word "Black" in describing the community it was organizing in; never putting out literature specifically to the Black community even though literature was put out specifically to the women's community -- as though to say white women's community; or to the gay community -- as though to say white gay community. But not putting out literature to the Black community because for someone to see something addressed to the Black community would make them think the Black community was getting too much power. So it was like a double-edged sword: on the one hand the campaign had to go to the Black community; on the other hand, in part out of fear of a white backlash, not giving full play to what the strength of that community could do.

Seamus: In spite of all that I hate to see the distinctions get lost. There were some similarities on issues of economic justice. When it came to purely economic, bread and butter issues the two candidates were very, very similar. The problem with Flynn was that he didn't want to touch the issue of race because he felt it was divisive. At one forum I was at, he said he didn't want to say things to offend people. That gave you a little more insight even though I knew it all along. Basically Flynn's view was that if you organized around issues that all different kinds of groups have in common -- no matter what the differences-- that was enough to unite people. And what King was saying was that that's all well and good to do those things, you need to do those things like rent control and a decent wage and all that stuff. But [it's no good] if you don't tackle those difficult issues that are already divisive -- that's the key thing I think -- people are already divided and need to be brought together and couldn't be brought together unless people dealt with discrimination and equality -- I think that was the key difference.

A-M: I think King felt that but it wasn't projected. He may have started out strongly pointing that out but once the tone was set that race was the divisive issue, he tailed that, you know, and walked a wide circle around the issue of race. And I think that just reflected his own uncertainty. I think it reflected two things.

One, he wanted to win. And it wasn't exactly at all costs, but at times he would move in that direction. Second, he felt: 'people already know how I

am so I don't really have to put it out there because people know that I take good stands on things.' So I'm thinking that that's how it was rationalized. I just wish we had come out more strongly.

FM: How about towards the end of the campaign. There was a certain point when he started going after Flynn and it was sort of noticeable. And he went after him. Some of his friends in the press were saying, this isn't going to do him any good; they were saying basically what you were saying which is that Black people already know...Black people are already with him so what's the point of fighting Flynn on this issue; fight him on something else.

MM: At the campaign sum-up meeting he said that in fact it was his analysis that he couldn't win pointing out the differences. And that every time he tried to do that -- particularly within the press-- that it got turned against him. He felt it was a mistake to continue. That Flynn could always neutralize anything he said by saying it too; or the press would then go to Flynn, afterwards, and give him a chance to make a statement to clear it up. Like after having made some point at a meeting about Flynn's behavior during the busing crisis -- which in some ways got a few points -- the press went up to Flynn after the forum was over when the people weren't there and asked "Mr. Flynn, if you had to do this over again, would you do the same thing?" And he said, "Oh, no." And that also had the effect in the write up in the press of neutralizing what Mel said. So, I mean, he feels, and he said he still stands by it, despite a lot of people disagreeing in the campaign, that he couldn't win by pointing out the differences himself.

Now, whether he as a candidate could do that -- and how much the campaign itself got organized to point those things out -- to me is somewhat of a different question. It could mean that you would have to have a somewhat different media strategy given the sense of powerlessness over controlling what they print versus what you could do in your one-to-one work. And really pushing people to do this kind of person-to-person discussion and drawing out differences and challenging opinions that reflect ideas that are not positive. That wasn't done enough. And I don't know who is to blame for that weakness.

## Dealing With White Racism

Zeke C.: I don't think anyone should take any blame. Because I think the underlying thing of why he lost was because he was Black and Flynn is white. And it's that simple. The underlying campaign in the white community was racism. They didn't want a Black mayor and they were going to organize against it. As soon as the Finnegan people lost there was no question in my mind who they were going to vote for.

FM: Would people say it wasn't a priority...or it was a priority but it wasn't carried through...to reach white working class communities?

SL: I think it was in principle. I don't think people knew how.

ZC: There's no relationship between the white leftists and the white working class.

A-M: They didn't get any leadership on how to reach the white working class either. Nothing.

SL: That's right. It's not like the campaign didn't have some people in and around it who could have done a better job in those communities either. But I don't even think the investigation went on, or looking for people, or drawing on resources or analyzing the situation. The leadership of the campaign did not have that kind of political savvy.

A-M: They didn't know Boston. Some had only been in Boston since January.

Seamus: Look at the results: the white communities turned out -- en masse. They really did. It doesn't just show up in the mayor's results. Look at the School Committee race. When you find a nobody like McCluskey, who barely got through last time, is at the top -- by virtue of being white he was propelled to the top of the ticket.

SL: A lot of those people didn't come out to vote for Flynn per se; they came out to vote against Mel. And that also promoted a higher turnout.

A-M: Mel had been thinking about running for mayor for a long time obviously. I don't know what kind of groundwork he laid. But it seems as though he underestimated or just didn't think it was important...didn't think the white working class communities were important at the time he was thinking about running. My sense was he hadn't taken the last four years to develop contacts who were indigenous to those communities; who really know those communities. That he felt safe within a circle of white leftists, you know, and then his other people, and that's where he stayed. And he kind of felt like these people, well they can do it all. So we're kind of sitting here blaming ourselves, saying well maybe if we had more contacts here, more contacts there...we had some. We had some contacts. But if he did not have those contacts there; and he did not himself bother to seek out those contacts until May of '83, that reflects a problem in his own perspective. And that would be an area in which I would disagree with him as far as...

ZC: I don't think the people are there. I think he had that perspective and... I don't think you should knock Mel for that.

MM: I think that Mel had, on the other hand, a very simplistic analysis of what it takes to defeat racism in this city. Despite his insight on a lot of things, he put more emphasis on his own personal appeal. The idea that you, the individual, can show the people that "I expect the best from you"; that automatically people will respond to that. And he said that on occasions and objectively that was his approach in the campaign. He didn't really organize campaign workers to work in South Boston, East Boston in any significant way. But he himself would go and walk the streets on the basis that, you know, if I show myself friendly, people will respond to that. And I think if he had put as much energy into working on finding people in those communities to do that -- who could go further than he could -- and with some specific guidelines on

exactly what it is about this racism that we are trying to break down and the approach to doing it, we would have gotten much better mileage than a kind of Flower Child type approach. But a lot of that was happening in the campaign.



FM: So you didn't have a real intermediary organization in a lot of the communities to interpret his good intentions into the language of that community?

MM: Yeah, it made it seem like racism was such a weak thing that really all it takes is just a smile to break it down as opposed to that it's something that has been institutionalized and built through many years of struggle and it's going to take a big struggle to bring it down...a collective struggle.

ZC: If you take away Mel's color -- if he was white -- I think the second reason he lost was his stand on Castro and socialism and communism. People were deadly against that. Too radical. I think he lost on that ground too. Forget his color. If he was a white man and he did exactly what he's done over the years and said exactly what he said I think he would have lost on that ground too.

SL: See that raises a whole other issue. His whole approach on international issues. And whether or not tactically he should have touched

them during the campaign.

ZC: Yeah, he should have. In the same way he probably should have touched more on Black power. Somebody has got to be saying it. If he has socialist thoughts he should say them.

SL: See I don't agree with that. I think it was a real mistake for him to talk about international issues during the campaign. Because I think it was overestimating the electorate and how they would deal with it. And I think what he should have been about was getting in office. And getting in a position where he could not only say those things but do something about them. And I think he partially blew it. I mean I don't think that's why he lost. I'm not saying that. I just think that Mel tended to be too honest and too direct on some issues. I think the thing about Arafat and I think the thing about Castro needed not to have been said. Flynn was much better at handling questions from the press. When he didn't want to answer something he came back with a different answer and he turned it around. [Ed note: At a Jewish Community Center forum, King refused to back away from his long-standing position acknowledging the PLO's Yasir Arafat as a legitimate world leader. In the other incident, an interviewer asked King whether he would prefer Ronald Reagan or Fidel Castro as a leader, and King picked Castro. During the primary campaign, much of the media seemed riveted on marginal parts of King's background, largely ignoring his campaign's positions and press statements. Trapping him on having travelled to Cuba and his support for Palestinian rights were part of the game.]

ZC: Yeah but Flynn's been chasing the press for years and years and years and years. And that's his bag. And in another two years he'll be hiding under the covers.

## Taking A Stand On Principle

MM: I feel that Mel should be different from the other candidate; he should be putting out the more progressive line. That's different than having no control over the press. Personally I think he made a mistake with the Cardinal statement just because he didn't have good stuff to back it up. If you're going to say that, you have to be able to give a really good example that everybody's heard of. But all he actually came up with was, "Well, his statements had the effect of making it easier for other people to make anti-semitic statements," and that wouldn't cut it. [Ed. Note: Later at that same Jewish Community Center forum, King tried to regain ground when he described as anti-semitic the anti-abortion interventions of recently-deceased Cardinal Medeiros in Congressman Barney Frank's election campaign.]

But on the stuff around Cuba...It wasn't the stuff he said in the campaign. People were going after his practice in the past. And he can't deny his past. He can't deny he went to Cuba. He can't deny he supports a lot of things that happen in Cuba. And that, of course, as leftists, really is where

we should have been able to get good mileage. We often say we aren't in a position to raise socialism in a popular way because we don't have the entree. He gave us the entree. But then we didn't know what to do with it. We let it...we said, "Oh, no. Mel made a mistake."

ZC: Yeah, right. When people said that to me I said I agree with him about Castro. I don't like Ronald Reagan.

SL: It depends if you want to win or not.

ZC: Well I got people to agree with me. That, yeah, Ronald Reagan is no good and Castro has helped the Cuban people. They don't like his ties with Russia and that sort of stuff but you can discuss those kinds of things.

Seamus: On the Castro thing I was against it. I have to say where I stood. Someone asked Mel to choose between Reagan and Castro and he chose Castro. I think he let himself get trapped. What I would have done is say, "Neither of them." It's ...I mean when you have Cuba as the example of socialism...I guy who's handed Cuba's independence over to the Soviet Union, it's just really hard to explain that to people.

He did the Grenada thing too. I think that was OK. I guess I would have judged it on a case-by-case basis. It is a political decision of whether you are going to take a public stand or not on the issue of principle; whether you are knowingly going to stand for something even if it is going to hurt you. Like on the race questions you have to do that. Otherwise why bother to run? You may be able to make those arguments about Castro too, but...I mean one of Mel's problems is that he is not a diplomat. Some of it is the way you say it, not what you say.

FM: Let's try to talk about organization. Not being that active in the campaign myself, I was under the impression it was a pretty democratically run campaign. How did it differ from a traditional campaign. Some of you have probably been active in more traditional campaigns; what were the shortcomings?

MM: I think in some ways we were more critical because our expectations were higher. It definitely wasn't a traditional campaign. It had many of the structures of democracy. From the beginning it tried to have a place for people to have their say; even if their say was more that you could have a say over things below you; but you couldn't necessarily have a say over things above you. And that's more democracy than most people get. Most people in a traditional campaign do tasks: you stuff envelopes; you make telephone calls using a script; those kinds of things. Whereas in this campaign people were more often than not told, "Oh, you think the church needs to be involved? Great. Organize it." And however you figured out to do it, you did it. And we had a lot of control over what we did because we did it. But in terms of being able to have control over things that happened above us that made it easier or harder for us to accomplish the tasks we had set, that was really hard to affect.

Stepping back a bit, people who are progressive and left generally are

going to experience the difficulty that this arena is very new for us. Jitu Weusi, from the National Black United Front was saying, this is an era of the merger of the professional electoral organizers and the leftists. He was referring to the Black left. This is the first time we've really worked together. They often have the expertise; we often have the correct line. How are we going to put these things together in a way that makes life better for the community?

And that's in fact what was happening in Boston. People who had been part of Mayor White's machine had a lot of skills and had been asked to come in to the campaign and show us how to do things. And their way of doing things was definitely anti-democratic; was definitely aimed at results and not aimed at educating people. And there was this tug of war. And also Mel had made a decision -- he had to -- that in fact those were the people he needed at the top. Because he didn't quite know what to do. And therefore he pulled in people who had politics very far from his and then underneath that he had people whose politics may have been close to his, with whom we sometimes disagreed as well.

A-M: The campaign is talking about maybe reconstituting a BPO type organization. [Ed Note: BPO refers to the Boston People's Organization, a progressive organization created out of King's 1979 campaign organization.] While people spontaneously want some kind of organization I don't know what the basis of that is going to be unless "it's let's try it again in four years." I'm not quite sure.

MM: There are many kinds of proposals on the floor now and some people feel -- and I think I'm one of them -- that it's good to have a citywide coalition if it has clear objectives. But a coalition is different from an organization and it allows for organizations to work within it. And to have that kind of coalition it has to be something that allows for organizational leadership and not just handpicked people or people who just get leadership by default. Within that, a lot of people feel that people who are not organized but represent different constituencies also have to be organized to have a significant role in things. Like the Black community, as a community, really has to be consolidated in some form to have a voice in the coalition; otherwise it's not a real coalition. And currently, coming out of the campaign with the dismantlement of what Black organization there had been in the campaign there's really no basis for an organized voice in any kind of new thing being made.

SL: One of the positive things was that the King campaign pushed the issues to the left; we forced Flynn to say things that he would never have said before. And now that he has said them and now that he is in office, how are we going to hold him accountable? What role are we going to play? And also we need to address the question of district representation and how we want to make use of the gains we made in the district races to pressure the mayor. And how we want to use these gains to organize on a community level?

ZC: Mel came out right at the end of the election and said he was going to monitor Flynn and keep his eye on him and, more or less, stay at the base. But I think he's being more or less set up by the press to go national,

suggesting he is going to go up and at 'em and he's going to leave Boston. This was tied in with his statement in support of Jesse Jackson. And I think that's a mistake. Not a mistake going for Jesse Jackson, but a mistake to let the press set him up by saying he is going for bigger and better things.

FM: In other words, implying he's irrelevant to Boston. They are going to write him off.

ZC: Yeah, that he's worth better than Boston. And I think that's a mistake.

## SUPPORT MELROD, DREW, AND OHNSTAD!

A trial with grave implications for the American labor movement just concluded in Racine, Wisconsin. Three members of UAW Local 72 were found guilty of libeling foremen at the Kenosha American Motors plant where they work. Despite the guilty verdict, the case was a mixed victory for the three union activists, and should give second thoughts to any other corporate strategists thinking about similar adventures in union-busting.

Jon Melrod, John Drew and Todd Ohnstad, two chief stewards and one a department steward at the American Motors plant in Kenosha were sued for 4.2 millions dollars. The nominal plaintiffs were four foremen, a former foreman and the son of a supervisor who claim that they were libelled in articles in Fighting Times, a rank and file newsletter the three put out. The suit was wholly financed by the company. The threat to union militants including revolutionary socialists doing trade union work, and even to regular union publications with a bit of gumption is obvious.

Of the group originally filing complaints, one dropped out before the trial opened. Another was thrown off the case for refusing to answer questions about his drug use -- which had been one of the supposedly libelous charges printed in the newspaper. Then a third plaintiff, who had originated the case, dropped out after considerable character testimony backing up the stewards' charges of sexual and racial harassment of workers. A full acquittal by the jury seemed likely, but the judge in the case, hostile from the start, entered directed verdicts of guilty on two counts. The jury found them innocent on the third, remaining charge and awarded no damages in any of the charges. The failure of the plaintiffs to convince the jury and the damaging testimony against American Motors will send the three back to work vindicated and encouraged.

All three have been thorns in American Motors' side since the early '70's. Melrod was canned twice, only to have the NLRB overturn American Motors. This particular battle began in 1979, when American Motors was on a roll and had brought in hundreds of new hires, mainly young, many of them women, Blacks and immigrants. To break them in and crank up production,

American Motors gave its line management a free hand. One superintendent told a foreman's meeting, "These people on the line are your enemies, they are out to take the food out of your families' mouths."

In response, Fighting Times began a scab of the month column. One foreman who earned the honor was Steve Freeman, who called Black workers "nigger" and "blackbird" and verbally and physically harassed women employees. The column had a galvanic effect -- workers began to step forward and speak out and to organize resistance. Freeman's whole department signed a petition demanding his removal, testified to union investigators and threatened a sitdown. He was removed and the company apologized.

The company filed NLRB charges that Fighting Times had circumvented the grievance procedure and instigated work stoppages to influence the company's choice of supervisory personnel. The Labor Board ruled that Fighting Times was not an official UAW publication, and even if it had been, its contents were protected. Thus was the lawsuit born. Melrod, Drew, and Ohnstad were charged with twenty-seven counts of conspiring to wage a "campaign of harassment, intimidation, ridicule and vilification" as a result of which, to cite one specific, "Plaintiff Putchik underwent severe psychological strain, including an inability to sleep, causing him to consume excessive amounts of alcohol while he was not on the job, and causing him to be withdrawn and morose." Awww.

## American Motors Involvement

After two and a half years of preliminaries, a Local 72 benefit rep found evidence that American Motors was bankrolling the lawsuit. At subsequent meetings, a company official told Local 72 that this was true. In fact, George Maddox said, American Motors would look like heroes for doing so. Maddox, who had had run-ins with Melrod going back to 1973 said the three "are against everything America stands for."

Yet American Motors is not pursuing the case against the three out of some abstract desire to be of service to the Republic. In some ways they have more at stake now than they did in 1979. Today's auto industry is extremely competitive, and faces the prospect of unlimited Japanese imports after the next model year. Squeezing the maximum productivity and quality from workers is the name of the game. American Motors is pushing the theme of cooperation vigorously with a Partners in Progress program.

Perhaps the biggest obstacle they face is the long tradition of militance at the firm, which has become institutionalized in contract language more favorable to the workforce than that in the UAW's pacts with the Big Three -- a ratio of one steward to thirty workers (elsewhere it's one committeeman to over 100 workers), more liberal right to strike over local issues clauses, etc. American Motors realizes that leadership from activists like these three stewards is a crucial part of keeping those institutions alive and expanding the tradition of militance. And they know that even if the suit is unlikely to

force the three out of the plant, it makes them more cautious and eats up their time and energy.

After the company's role became clear, the NLRB ruled on April 27, 1983 that the suit was an unfair labor practice. Region 30 of the NLRB stated, "The ten year history of American Motors's repeated and continuing efforts to squelch Melrod's protected activities, and to exact retribution against those employees supporting Melrod, evince a continuing campaign of harassment and discrimination culminating in this lawsuit."

That sounded like the end of it, except for a 1937 U.S. Supreme Court decision in the case known as Bill Johnson's Restaurants. This unanimous vote overturned a lower court which upheld a similar decision in favor of a waitress who had leafleted a beanery which she was trying to unionize. The justices said that it was a shame that such lawsuits could be used to coerce or retaliate against workers who have no resources to defend themselves with, but bosses have the right to access to the courts too. In an article in the October Progressive, Nat Hentoff, the civil liberties writer who seems most concerned about the case, says the villain is not the Supreme Court, but libel law itself.

Practically, what this meant was the the three had to establish that all their charges were true in court. They went into the case confident they had enough witnesses lined up, but \$4.2 million is a lot of money, so they also hired the law firm of Edward Bennett Williams, the top libel lawyer in the country, to handle the case in court.

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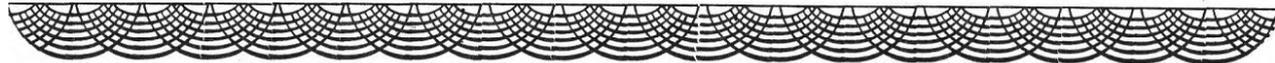
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## More Support Needed

Although the trial has attracted some attention, more in the mainstream media than on the left, active support for Melrod, Drew and Ohnstad has been spotty and only started to grow in the last month before the trial. Fortunately, this is least true in the plant itself -- coworkers, who have repeatedly reelected the three and sent Melrod and Drew to this year's UAW convention as delegates, have also contributed very generously to their defense fund. Support has come from a significant number who have never been Fighting Times supporters, but who are pissed off by the American Motors suit. The UAW International has not been as helpful, to say the least. The rank and file movement at American Motors fills them with about as much enthusiasm as it does the company. In particular, at this convention, the whole Local 72 delegation was active, leading the main challenge to the union hierarchy: a resolution to have direct election of international officers instead of voting at conventions. Melrod was the main speaker against an International-sponsored change in the constitution which would have concentrated more power in the hands of the Board.

The three have won union support from another and unusual quarter. American Motors is 46% owned by Renault, which put the company back on the automotive map with the successful Alliance. Late in 1981, Melrod and Ohnstad



attended a World Conference of Renault Workers in France which was boycotted by the UAW because one of the French unions participating was the CGT, which is tied to the French Communist Party. Delegates from thirteen countries were there. Melrod was elected to the steering committee. Now the French unions are demanding that the Mitterand government, which calls itself a workers' government, explain and control the action of Renault, which is a state-run company. They are planning to send an investigative delegation to Kenosha to study the case and increase the pressure on the government.

A number of American union locals, especially in Wisconsin, have started to come to the aid of the defendants with resolutions and desperately needed contributions. Benefits have been held in Milwaukee, Madison, New York and Chicago, where over \$2500 was raised at an event featuring Aaron Freeman, a comic whose Council Wars commentary on local politics in the Washington area is extremely popular. Members of the Progressive Student Network who work on the Cardinal, the campus newspaper in Madison, got the paper to contribute \$500.

On the whole, however, the case underlines how damaging the erosion of organization among revolutionary activists has been. Without it, the kind of campaign of publicity, education and fundraising and support which were both possible and so badly needed has not taken place, and the various gains which could have been made in the course of such a campaign remain in the realm of good ideas. Still there are things which can and must be done, even without much organization. Please send letters of support and send money. Free speech, as we all know, isn't free and court expenses so far are already over \$40,000! Beyond the individual level, every effort should be made to get resolutions, and again contributions, from union locals. It is easy to demonstrate that this case threatens the entire labor movement and is a general outrage -- foremen suing workers for slander is as outrageous as you can get. Also, articles in the local trade union press will help.

Letters and checks should go to Union Free Speech Defense Fund, c/o Al Ugent, 207 E. Michigan, Milwaukee, WI 53202.

Let the last word go to Jon Melrod. At a recent benefit, he told supporters, "Never once have the three of us regretted what we have done or what we have said. We will continue to speak out no matter what the price we are forced to pay."

--November 1983  
Dennis O'N.

[updated by FM, 12/83.]

## POETRY

# "OF BIRDS AND FLOWERS"

Note: the poems which follow are reprinted from Of Birds and Factories by permission of the author, Sue Doro. Published in 1975, this excellent collection is available through Peoples's Books and Crafts, 1818 N. Farwell Ave., Milwaukee, WI 53202. We are happy to introduce Sue Doro to FM readers who do not know of her work.

### OURS 1975

they can't take the sky away  
we know it's outside  
though eyes see only  
metal work pieces  
going round and round  
in the machines we run  
and daylight filters in  
through dark blue slits  
of wired windows

they can't take the wind away  
we know it's still there  
flying across the parking lot  
though the only breeze we feel  
is our own air blowing  
from lower lips  
onto sweaty faces  
as we work the line

they can't take the land away  
it waits for us here under the bricks  
of this factory building  
owned by sick old dinosaurs  
heaving their last stinking breaths

we are like the sky and the wind  
watching over our land  
making plans to bury the dinosaurs

we are this poem  
that cannot be taken away  
that cannot  
be taken  
away

### ARTICHOKE POEM 1979

take a hungry person  
who forgot to bring her lunch  
to work today

and then take an artichoke  
last night  
in the hands of Augie  
from Sicily

who cut it  
soaked it  
in lemon juice  
boiled it  
spiced it  
onions and egged it  
crumbed it  
mixed it and fried it

then created a sandwich  
that he offers  
to share with me  
this morning

put them all together  
and give thanks  
to artichokes  
and Augie  
the machinist helper  
who keeps the train wheels  
rolling down the tracks

## YOU CAN'T GO BACK TO WORK IN THE MIDDLE OF A CARDGAME 1979

playing poker  
for dimes  
at lunch time  
in the wheel shop

we are low key  
competition players  
coins changing hands  
as quick as a clock's tick

no cut-throat here  
we laugh  
yell  
swear  
slap cards on the table

and finish one last fast game  
right into the blast  
of the noon whistle

## CHANGE IS NOT SMOOTH AND STEADY

roots of grass  
buried deep in the earth  
survive fire  
and will sprout  
again

## "WHY THE U.S. FEARS GRENADA"

Introduction: The small island of Grenada was ruled by the dictator Eric Gairy until the New Jewel Movement (NJM) came to power on March 13, 1979 with much popular support. Under the leadership of Prime Minister Maurice Bishop, Grenada underwent many positive reforms. Unemployment decreased from 49% to 12%. Free trade unions were supported and grew. For the first time, Grenada established free secondary school education, free medical care, and guaranteed three months maternity leave for all working mothers. And a badly needed international airport neared completion. These changes came about with broad participation from the Grenadian people.

While there continued to be agreement within the NJM on instituting reforms to improve the quality of life of the Grenadian people, disagreements arose on how quickly the Grenadian revolution could move and maintain the support and involvement of the poor and middle class. These differences led to a split in the ruling party which became public with the house arrest of Maurice Bishop by other members of the NJM on October 14. On October 19, a crowd of 3000 supporters gained Bishop's release, but he was later killed along with several other government leaders under still unclear circumstances. The political turmoil gave the Reagan administration the pretext and the weakened condition US officials had long sought to invade the island and bring back a government more supportive of US business and political interests. Over sixty-five Grenadians have reportedly been killed by US troops since October 25 for resisting the invasion, and supporters of Maurice Bishop and other NJM leaders have been jailed.

The following are extracts from a speech by Prime Minister Maurice Bishop on August 23, 1981, following military exercises by US Marines. Those exercises included a mock invasion of the "make believe" Caribbean island of Amber, and the objective of this war game was to topple the "left wing government of Amber." (As we can see in the gradually expanding "Big Pine" exercises in Honduras near Nicaragua's border, this kind of war game is a favored and quite flexible tactic in the US's arsenal.) Bishop's speech and political insight help us see why the US held back from invading Grenada before his untimely death. (Source: The New Jewel, Vol 3, No. 28, August 27, 1981.)

\* \* \* \*

Why have they singled out our poor, small country? Why do we stimulate so much fear in the minds of Reagan and his warlords? We have no great industries, no great banks, no gold, no oil, no diamonds, few natural resources. There is one distinguishing feature: we in the small, tiny but free Grenada led the first socialist revolution in the English-speaking Caribbean. Our revolution has challenged the carefully built-up myth that we are too small, too weak and cowardly to stand up to dictatorship. The Revolution smashed this illusion.

This Revolution is also a big threat being in a black country because the US holds captive millions of black people in racist bondage. They are afraid that black Americans may find out and be inspired by the Grenada Revolution.

## Revolution's Historic Task

This is a revolution that has set itself a historic task; to build a new society for a new people. The end result is the construction of a new civilization in the Caribbean and a new alternative development model. The imperialists understand that the new democratic institutions and people's participation will inspire the masses in other islands to ask: How come little Grenada can create programs to benefit workers, farmers, youth, women? Such is a dangerous question for imperialism. They understand the significance of us joining and playing a key role in the Non-Aligned Nations Movement. They understand that this Revolution is using the little resources we have for our people's benefit and not for the loupgaroux transnational corporations.

## Why The U.S. Is Committed To Invasion

The recession, the economic crisis in the U.S. is forcing them to step up the arms race, hoping that making bombs and armaments will increase industrial profits and restore their super-profits.

That our country is in a "strategic" location in terms of the oil routes the US depends on is used as a justification for direct intervention.

The US administration is getting more frantic and desperate every day that passes because every day our Revolution brings more consolidation, more unity, more organization, more preparation of our people. Every attempt at counterrevolution inside Grenada has failed miserably. Even on the external

front they are failing. Propaganda has limited success, the economic squeeze and the mercenary threats have not intimidated our people. Reactionary leaders are getting less. We are realizing more and more that these attacks are being responded to by our friends, the masses in our sister islands.

The Americans have come to the conclusion that the Revolution is so popular and strong that only an armed invasion can turn it back.

## Why The Militia?

The defense of this homeland of ours can only come from us no matter how many friends we have. In the final analysis it is our responsibility to defend.

We are a small, poor country, and our economy cannot afford to pay soldiers to join our army...When you are dealing with an armed people, it is hard for them to divide and exploit the weak and faint-hearted. The militia, as a part-time army that works during the day, is a very important advantage in our situation.

Soldiers who invade do not make distinctions between men or women, young or old. Chile has shown us this and El Salvador, and on June 19th it was women who suffered the most. [Ed. Note: On June 19, 1980 a bomb explosion at a public rally killed several women in an attempted assassination of Maurice Bishop.] Seventy out of the ninety-six injured were women; thirty out of the thirty-five hospitalized. While these invaders will try first to identify army camps for attack, with the militia, the people are prepared to defend themselves in every village.

It is the duty and the responsibility of all patriots to learn to use weapons, to defend this island of ours. Those who don't use the gun in the militia have other valuable functions to fulfill: security, medics, communications, drivers, cooks, messengers, etc.

## Factors To Remember

We know that other peoples have travelled the same road as we are today.

Size is not the key factor -- the quality of a people's determination, unity, organization, and vigilance are.

Imperialism is not invincible. It has been defeated before. If They have forgotten the lessons of Viet Nam, Angola and Mozambique, we must remember. We in Grenada will teach them again.

We must keep our eyes and ears open for spy flights, war-ships in the

region, counter-revolutionaries in the communities. We must be on the look-out for any country in the region who comes up with pretexts.

World public opinion is a very powerful factor these days. Internally we must unite our friends and families, work hard at building the economy and the mass organizations. Working daily, hourly for the Revolution is a key task. All must be involved in Heros of the Homeland Maneuvers.

To our friends from the Caribbean, we recognize that we are not an insular revolution. We will always stand firm and principled in our policies and practices.



## ON GRENADA

The recent US invasion of Grenada has shocked and angered progressive people in the US and around the world. Reagan's disregard for the charters of both the Organization of American States and United Nations shows the criminality of this invasion. Reagan's unprecedented restriction of media access during the invasion shows its arrogance.

Following on the heels of a coup still not clearly understood, the US invasion has also been disheartening for many progressives, especially in the Black Left. The National Black United Front, one of the recent Black Left organizations, developed an early and close relationship with the People's Revolutionary Government soon after the 1979 uprising against the former neo-colonialist regime. Through a range of tours and trips, many progressives learned first hand about the Grenadian experience and expressed their solidarity with it.

Despite several articles in the US press about events leading up to the coup (see, for example, Jo Thomas, "From a Grenadian Diplomat: How Party Wrangle Led to Premier's Death," *NYT*, 10/30/83; Paul McIsaac, "Revolutionary Suicide," *Village Voice*, 11/22/83), many uncertainties remain about the situation leading up to the split in the leadership of the New Jewel Movement and the People's Revolutionary Government. Many outside observers were completely unaware of any impending split in the leadership and therefore assumed that some sort of outside provocateur (CIA or KGB) must have incited the schism. Non-Grenadians may never actually know the truth, but if any of the reports are accurate, those committed to national liberation and socialism need to review this situation.

A basic problem or contradiction over the direction of the Grenadian revolution was apparently decided by house arrest and later a coup. A basic weakness must be acknowledged by all Grenada's supporters in the process of resolving real and important differences there. If the press reports are in any way true, important parts of the revolutionary leadership did not believe that the contradictions it faced could or should be broadly discussed and democratically resolved. This problem duplicates the way that the Left,

especially we communists, often have approached problems: resolve contradictions at the top, out of sight of the masses, and then report our decisions.

It is the manner in which these apparent contradictions were handled that can possibly help explain press reports of Grenadian support for the invasion. At a recent Boston forum on Grenada, sponsored by several local Black supporters of the PRG, a Grenadian woman just back from her homeland described the people's shock at the coup and the murders. She compared the atmosphere to the aftermath of a hurricane. Many people, she noted, were supporting the US invasion out of shock and dismay at the removal and murder of their chief leaders. Rumors were spreading wildly and no one seemed to understand what could have happened that would have necessitated the killing of Maurice Bishop. If accounts are true, the lack of awareness among the people of their leader's differences and the military methods used to resolve them could have been both used by some outside provocateur to sidetrack the revolution as well as give the Reagan administration its long-sought opportunity to destroy the revolution.

## What We Can Do

The invasion is a fact and the New Jewel Movement and the People's Revolutionary Government have been defeated. But there are still important things U.S. progressives can do. Work is needed to further understand the development of the Grenadian Revolution leading up to the coup the weekend of October 15-16th. The lessons are crucial for any movement for national liberation and socialism. We in the revolutionary Left have a lot to learn about principled ways of resolving conflicts among the people.

Second, all progressive and fair-minded people ought to demand the complete withdrawal of US troops and personnel from Grenada. Though limited withdrawals are already beginning, the longer US and its Caribbean puppet forces remain on Grenada, the greater the opportunity for forces from the old, neo-colonial society to resurface and regain control. The invasion was not a small mission to rescue some American medical students, as it was first described. (The military units selected were not ones with training in such raids nor did they land near or approach the medical school in the early stages.) Instead we have a full-scale and open crusade to reestablish neo-colonialism and terrorize the progressives out of existence. Full self-determination is not possible so long as US and other puppet troops and personnel are calling the shots. In this regard, United Nations assistance, especially with the involvement of non-aligned Third World nations, could be one means to help re-stabilize Grenada democratically.

Finally, demands against US involvement in Grenada and continued condemnations of the invasion are one means to discourage further US adventures in our hemisphere, such as aerial bombing or even a ground invasion of Nicaragua. While many have spoken out against that prospect, this

opposition will have to become stronger if it is to actually stay Reagan's hand.

For many on the Left, especially those of us in the Black Left, the crushing of the Grenadian Revolution has been demoralizing. Grenada's attempt to break the strangle-hold of US imperialism over the Caribbean was courageous. As a predominantly Black nation, the New Jewel experience was a source of progressive inspiration. Many of us found we could agree and disagree with features of the People's Revolutionary Government's domestic and foreign policies yet retain our basic respect for and solidarity with the Grenadian attempt at a people's democracy and national independence.

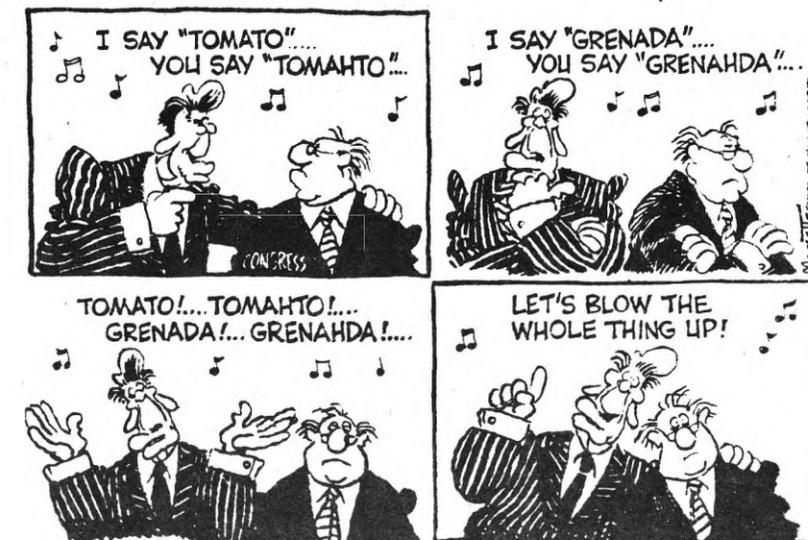
One hundred and twelve years ago, Karl Marx closed his extraordinary and moving pamphlet on the rise and defeat (by reactionaries) of the Paris Commune with the following words, words appropriate to our most recent set-back:

Working men's Paris, with its Commune, will be for ever celebrated as the glorious harbinger of a new society. Its martyrs are enshrined in the great heart of the working class. Its exterminators history has already nailed to that eternal pillory from which all the prayers of their priests will not avail to redeem them.

Grenada's revolution has been set back, but its inspiration remains in the hearts of the world's progressives, especially those of African descent. Let us all learn from its experiences and mistakes in order to insure future victories in the struggles against imperialism and hegemonism.

--December 1, 1983

R. T. Simms



Other comments on: suppression of freedom of the press during the invasion of Grenada...and U.S. Central America policy.

WHO SAID? "THE FREEDOM OF THE AMERICAN PRESS WORKS AGAINST US A GREAT DEAL... BUT THERE'S NO ALTERNATIVE"  
(Nov. 10, 1983 TTT-1)



A) Yuri Andropov B) Moammar Khadaffy C) Genghis Khan D) Charles Z. Wick, USA

### Central America Quiz

A POLL SHOWS MOST AMERICANS DON'T KNOW WHO WE'RE SUPPORTING. TEST YOUR OWN KNOWLEDGE.

FILL IN THE MAP OF CENTRAL AMERICA WITH THE CORRECT NAMES.



- MEXICO
- EL SALVADOR
- SOVIET UNION
- HONDURAS
- NORTH VIETNAM
- NICARAGUA
- FALKLAND ISLANDS

THE PRINCIPAL OBJECTIVE OF THE EL SALVADOR GOVERNMENT IS TO:



- A. HOLD ELECTIONS.
- B. STOP MURDERING CIVILIANS.
- C. GET OFF THE U.S. DOLE AND GET A REAL JOB.

THE KISSINGER COMMISSION SOLUTION WILL BE:



- A. SELECTED COUPS
- B. SECRET PAYMENTS TO THE NOBEL PRIZE COMMITTEE
- C. BOMBING CONGRESS TO THE NEGOTIATING TABLE

PLACE AN X ON EACH EYE OF THOSE WORKING AGAINST U.S. INTERESTS.



- REBEL
- OFFICIAL
- CIVILIAN
- SANDINISTA
- CONTRA
- COMMISSION CHAIRMAN

U.S. SHIPS ARE STATIONED OFF THE COAST OF NICARAGUA TO:



- A. SCARE NICARAGUA
- B. BLOCKADE NICARAGUA
- C. SCARE THE U.S. PUBLIC
- D. SELL NICARAGUA SOME U.S. GRAIN

FILL IN THE MAP OF CENTRAL AMERICA THE WAY THE U.S. WOULD LIKE IT.



- N. DAKOTA
- DISNEYLAND
- OKLAHOMA
- NEVER-NEVER LAND
- MONTANA
- OZ
- HOLLYWOOD

MOST WRONG ANSWERS: WANTS A FULL UNIFORM & TRIP TO THE REGION

## REVIEW

# "UNDER FIRE"

About half-way through the movie "Under Fire," a Nicaraguan patriot-priest asks the American photo-journalist, Russell Price (played by Nick Nolte) which side he is on -- the side of the Sandinista revolutionaries or the side of the CIA-backed Somoza regime. Price answers: "I don't take sides; I take pictures." It is this attitude -- I'm above politics, I'm a "professional," an "artist" -- that the director, Roger Spottiswoode, is putting under fire along with everything else in this movie set in the last days of the rule of General Anastasia Somoza, a puppet of the U.S. government.

Price, the American photographer, is the central character of the movie. Right away we realize that taking pictures is the way he relates to the world. He goes from one scene of crisis to another and snaps the shutter, freezing what he sees in a photograph. And while he is obviously a very talented photographer, there is something disturbing about a person who can only experience the world through the mechanical, distancing eye of a camera lens.

The movie starts with a fast-action prologue (very much like the one in "Raiders of the Lost Ark") set far off from the main action in Nicaragua, in another "trouble spot" -- Chad. A guerilla pokes his head up above the brush, beckons to his comrades, and they make their way across an open field, some on foot, a few on elephant. A helicopter appears in the sky and suddenly they are under fire. The whole time Price is furiously shooting pictures, and we keep getting bits of the action in stop-time, like in his photographs, the color drained to black and white. The symbolic image is perfect: the first world helicopter rains fire down on the third world man on the elephant, who in turns shoots upward at the belly of this monstrous, hi-tech beast. It makes a great photograph, so good in fact that it ends up on the cover of Time magazine. But it also makes us begin to question Russell Price, the ambitious North American adventurer who owes his allegiance to the world of slick magazines back home, who hangs out -- when he's not photographing people under fire -- with the jet-set journalists downing martinis at the local Hilton hotels.

In this first scene we are introduced to another character who will also

reappear in Nicaragua, almost like Price's shadow. He is a U.S. mercenary named Oates (played by Ed Harris, who plays John Glenn in "The Right Stuff"). Like Price, he goes from one world hot-spot to another, only his job is not shooting pictures, it's shooting people. Oates greets Price as a fellow traveller, a buddy, a colleague, and the comparison remains uncomfortably in our minds of these two men -- the killing machine and the picture-taking machine -- reappearing side-by-side wherever the United States is focussing its fire power on the third world.

The movie progresses through the experience of Russell Price, the alienated photographer, as he breaks out of that alienation, stops being a picture-taking machine, begins to make moral choices, begins to respond to what is going on around him. At all the crucial moments he is faced with a conflict between his camera and a more immediate response to the world.

The first big moment is when Price and his fellow reporter Claire (played by Joanna Cassidy) are travelling with the Sandinistas. The omnipresent Oates emerges out of the rubble. Price is the only one who sees him and so he has to choose whether to tell the Sandinistas where Oates is or keep silent. He chooses to keep silent, and when Oates guns down one of the Sandinistas, for the first time Price is unable to respond by taking a picture. His obvious complicity in this murder numbs his own trigger-finger on the camera, pushes him out from behind the lens. Price is on his way to being "humanized."

## Journalism's Integrity

By the end, Price has learned to distrust the supposed purity of non-committal, of simply taking pictures to document the world. He has learned that his own "neutral" photographs can be used in the real world as a means for killing people. And so, by the end, he refuses to take a picture that he knows will be used for the wrong purpose, even though it would be a great "scoop." This last scene reinforces (perhaps unnecessarily) a point already made in the climactic episode of the movie when Price decides to actually doctor, distort a picture, in order to aid what he now sees as the legitimate cause of the Nicaraguan revolutionaries.

This episode enraged a lot of people. In particular, a lot of journalists were furious at the idea that such a lapse in journalistic integrity (doctoring a photograph) could ever be justified by any greater good. But the point the movie is trying to make is incontrovertible: there is little virtue in telling the truth to mass murderers. In what a Guatemalan poet-revolutionary called the "shadow of the total lie" that covers much of Latin America, Readers Digest type moralisms like "honesty is the best policy" cannot apply.

Still the way Spottiswoode creates his fictional case has limitations. The climactic decision in the movie is based on two assumptions: (1) that the life or death of a single revolutionary leader -- the Che Guevara-like "Raphael" -- could determine the fate of the entire Nicaraguan revolution and

(2) the magic trick of an American photographer is essential to stopping a disastrous blood bath. It is a somewhat forced, contrived situation. It doesn't correspond much to the reality of the Sandinista revolution which rigorously avoided cult-figure leaders. And the resolution of the movie relies too heavily on the big blonde North American, god-out-of-the-sky style, for my taste. I even found the doctored photograph an unfortunate fictional device. It was too reminiscent, at least for me, of the Soviet Communist Party's grotesque practice of air-brushing purge victims out of official photos.

"Under Fire" has other limitations as well. I am willing to admit that the humanizing of Price is somewhat heavy-handed (why do we need his uninspiring love affair with Claire to prove the point?). I'll even admit that the two main characters are pretty one dimensional. (Gene Hackman in the supporting role of a burned out journalist is more interesting.) "Under Fire" is in most respects a traditional Hollywood movie -- an adventure story with good guys and bad guys. It is first and foremost entertainment, and so it follows the conventions of Hollywood entertainment: the cat and mouse chase scenes through the rubble of Managua, the handsome North American hero and the beautiful North American heroine and their obligatory love story. People who don't like that Hollywood tradition won't like this.

But when people complain about the movie's "propagandizing," about its moral stance, this is when I begin to wonder. I wonder about the blindspot some people have to movies with similar plots, but which present a more acceptable, familiar world view. It is not that these other movies lack an ideology, a point of view. But people are expected to view these movies as just "good old fashioned fun" or "more poetical than political."

## Hollywood's New Look At The Third World

As it happens, there have been quite a few movies recently which follow a similar plot-line to that of "Under Fire." An Anglo adventurer (journalist, anthropologist, militaryman) travels into the third world and the movie chronicles his adventures. Think of "Apocalypse Now," "Raiders of the Lost Ark," "Missing," "The Year of Living Dangerously."

"Raiders of the Lost Ark" is a great example of the good old-fashioned fun type approach. It provides us with a nostalgic escape back to the "way things used to be" when glamorous North American heroes could go swashbuckling through the third world with impunity, plundering treasures (how else can we describe the raiding of the lost Ark?) and conquering the sabre-rattling natives. In movies like this, the image of the third world is nothing more than a romantic backdrop for the hero and his high escapades, his fling with the winsome white heroine.

Then there are some other movies, like "Apocalypse Now" and the recent Australian film, "The Year of Living Dangerously," which take a more "profound" approach. They are poetic movies in which the third world exemplifies something dark and foreboding, a kind of mystical other-world

luring the Anglo adventurer, threatening to envelop him. But isn't this the resurrection of another Imperial theme, the theme of the third world as the "heart of darkness"? Again, the people of the third world remain only an exotic backdrop for the Anglo invader.

But there have been a few movies, like "Missing" and "Under Fire," which while still focussing on the adventures of white North Americans, grapple with the experience of the third world head on, confront directly the limitations of an entirely North-American centered vision of the world. In these movies, the hero (and heroine) arrive in the third world not to demonstrate how plundering and conquering can still be good, clean fun, not to delve into the mysteries of their own soul, but to confront the real experiences of the people of the third world.

Now sometimes "Under Fire" tends to create an overidealized vision of the Nicaraguan people (the gorgeous guerilla woman, the guerilla headquarters that seems like a perfect utopia), but it also presents Nicaraguan characters as real people. One of the best supporting characters is a Nicaraguan kid with a great pitching arm who lobs grenades for the guerillas and dreams of someday going to see his hero Dennis Martinez of the Baltimore Orioles.

We are constantly confronted with the two sides. On the one side is Somoza (played by Rene Enriquez of "Hill Street Blues"), a vacuous little man in the shadow of his strong-arm father's memory, kept afloat on the pomp and ceremony of his unearned puppet position by all the sleazy parasites surrounding him (the French spy "Jazy," the devastatingly well-portrayed American PR man, and of course, Oates, the mercenary). On the other side, and in stark contrast, are the Nicaraguan people and the revolutionaries who move in and out among them like fish in water, equally at home in the barrios and the villages and the gorgeous countryside. In one scene Price and Claire emerge in an alley where heavy fighting has been going on and meet a band of young guerillas. They ask the guerillas if they are in control of the next street over.

"No se" one of them responds, "don't know." A moment of dialogue that suddenly makes the battle seem real -- the way it really would be.

Near the end of the movie Claire is wandering through a refugee camp when she hears the announcement that a fellow journalist, a close friend, has been gunned down by the National Guard. She is pained, angered, aggrieved, and as she stands there weeping, a Nicaraguan woman looks up at her. "Perhaps," the Nicaraguan says, "we should have killed a North American sooner. Maybe then you would have understood." It is a strong, perhaps harsh statement, but it is also exactly appropriate to the situation. Having witnessed the murder and torture and imprisonment of countless Nicaraguans, it is not so hard for the audience to agree. This woman's statement, spoken out of her own country's grief, is the challenge to our U.S.-centered vision of the world that the movie asks us to acknowledge.

--Nadine M.  
December 1983

## LETTER FROM CHICAGO

Dear friends,

Keeping up with Chicago politics is pretty challenging even for old Chicago hands, let alone someone like this writer who rolled into town right around the time of the new Mayor's inauguration. So please keep the author's inexperience firmly in mind in reading this account. Still, being a new kid in town has a few advantages when it comes to explaining the Chicago scene to the rest of the world.

To begin with, my impression is that the national press on recent Chicago developments has been terrible. Progressives are concerned that the city is stalemated between Mayor Washington and conservative Democrats on the City Council, that the new mayor has been prevented from governing or making major changes in what has been business as usual, and that perhaps his base is eroding or he will have to make compromises of principle in order to get anything done.

While of course there are no guarantees that these things will not come to pass, so far they haven't. In fact, Washington is gaining support among white voters, many of whom feel that the opposition Aldermen should shut up for a while and give the fellow a chance to do the job he was elected to do. And he maintains a secure base and tremendous respect, affection, and loyalty among those who elected him. Without some sense of the complexities of local political life, it is almost impossible for outside observers, however sympathetic, to gauge the success of Washington and the reform movement he leads.

First, city government has been intertwined with local Democratic Party politics over the last fifty years or more to a degree rarely seen in the rest of the United States. Progressive Era municipal reform, bringing city jobs under Civil Service jurisdiction to one degree or another, hardly made a dent here. Patronage and the influence of the Regular Democratic Organization are still everywhere in evidence in Chicago.

Several factors contribute to the strength of the machine in Chicago, and

thus to the wide-ranging effects of Washington's election. First, there is the relative stability of the Regular Democratic Organization even where the city's neighborhoods have changed. The Party apparatus has passed jobs like precinct captain and Party committee man down through the generations. It has maintained an intimate knowledge of the conditions and lives of people living in the neighborhoods and retained its influence. In this sense, the Party organization's role has become comparable to that of the churches.

The old Bohemian neighborhood of Little Village, which has become overwhelmingly Latino, provides one example of the machine's reaction to sizable turnaround in social composition. There the Regular Organization maintained its hold in part by seeing that new residents remained disenfranchised. Frank Stembart is still Ward Committeeman and Alderman in an area which is probably 80% Latino -- mainly Mexican and Chicano. Other neighborhoods fought to retain their white identity by excluding Blacks. Even in places like Marquette Park, with its reputation for racist exclusionism, Latinos have begun to make up a growing portion of the population. But it is going to be a long time before that Latino community makes much headway into political life there.

Second, governmental functions have become horribly confused with Party functions. This follows from several generations of one-party government and Democratic Party control over allocation of jobs. For example, if you wish to get rid of a large and nasty piece of trash -- maybe an old sofa or something -- you wouldn't call your Alderman's office, much less the Sanitation Department. In Chicago, likely as not you would call the Regular Democratic Party office in your ward and let them arrange a special trash pick-up. Or say you have been called for jury duty and you find it inconvenient to do your civic duty, often your precinct captain or Party office will be the best one to arrange your exemption. It works out this way because the precinct captain reports to the Party Committeeman, and very often the Party Committeeman is also the Alderman, if not the Alderman's brother, father, campaign manager or business partner. Other cities may have a taste of this in one or two historically influential neighborhoods, but rarely on the scale or with the effectiveness of the Chicago machine.

Further, in Chicago's traditionally influential neighborhoods, particularly in the "white ethnic" parts of the city such as Mayor Daley's old Bridgeport or Marquette Park, virtually every family has members working for the city as cops or sanitation workers or elevator operators. And all these jobs came from the Regular Democratic Organization, even though they are city jobs. Chicago has possibly the highest proportion of city employees to residents of any major US city, and it has become a habit among white Chicagoans to think of a city job as an entitlement. This results in swollen budgets and strong Regular Democratic loyalties. It is interesting that Washington's election threatens patronage so hard at a time when the economy dictates municipal cutbacks somewhere.

Third, the city is carved up into spheres of influence not just geographically. For example, Cook County Hospital is run by its own governing commission, as is the School District and Park District. The Park District is a notorious patronage stronghold whose director controls roughly 4500 jobs and

is Democratic Party Committeeman for a heavily "white ethnic" ward which went about 12% for Washington in the general election. (The School District is a whole separate undertaking, which I will try to talk about in a future letter.) Then there is the Cook County Board, whose President, Georgey Dunne, has been one of Mayor Washington's white supporters after having been torpedoed a while back by former Mayor Byrne. Each has its own policies and internal politics, but each overlaps considerably with the political life of the city itself.

## Unions Largely Shut Out

While Cook County hospital employees and school board employees are unionized (as are bus drivers and other transit employees), most city workers are not. The main partial exception here has been the city's on-going arrangement with the building trades unions. There is no collective bargaining agreement. In effect, the skilled trades function as a hiring hall for the city, which agrees to pay the trades workers the prevailing wage. In addition, most workers hired under this arrangement do not have to contend with the seasonal layoffs of private employment, even though the expectation of seasonal unemployment is one factor in determining the prevailing wage.

So you could have a city workplace with several hundred employees and one union member, maybe a plumber or electrician. This arrangement is one reason why the building trades unions have never pushed very hard for laws permitting collective bargaining for Illinois municipal employees. Only in 1983 was such a law passed.

Mayor Washington caused a big uproar here when he refused to continue the previous administration's policy of a handshake agreement with the construction trades. The press duly wondered whether some element of "reverse racism" was involved, given that the construction trades are still largely white and were not big Washington boosters following the primary. But Washington supported the collective



bargaining legislation which could dramatically alter public employment in the city.

For now, though, the huge municipal workforce does not work under collective bargaining agreements, and does not have seniority or recall rights or other union protection. It is ironic that Washington was elected as a reformer at almost the same time as a major court decision came down protecting all but 700 city job-holders from losing their jobs for political reasons. Washington supports the decision (called the Shakman decision) in principle, but is now stuck with a patronage-ridden workforce of nominal Democrats, many of whom worked for his Republican opponent in the general election.

Factor in such policies as the Dept. of Streets and Sanitation rule of four-man crews with one man detailed to walk ahead of the truck in the traditional job of pulling the lids off trash cans. (Detroit has one-man crews, not that we advocate this.) Given work rules like this, the issue of municipal layoffs has to be treated as more complex here than in cities where layoffs are substantially more connected to union-busting or eroding city residents' standards of living or both.

In the months to come, I hope to add to this quick picture of patronage in the political reality of Chicago. But my intention has been to indicate some of the reasons why Chicago residents seem more patient with their new Mayor than the national media has been. On the whole, Washington has proven to be an extremely astute and dedicated reformer. His election and subsequent struggle to consolidate a measure of political power has raised issues of expanded democracy through electoral action as well as underscored the difficulty of consolidating electoral gains. Difficult issues remain ahead to be solved.

## Organizing Issues For Progressives

For example, Chicago progressives are trying to work out a strategy for work in the Democratic Party. Elections for Democratic Committee slots will be coming up next spring. (Committee elections are staggered biannually with Aldermanic elections.) On the one hand, it would seem that progressives should favor breaking down the identity between the Democratic Party and local government. On the other hand, the fight for control of the County Democratic Central Committee is extremely important to efforts to consolidate Washington's mayoral victory and to reform and expand oppressed nationality political rights. How do we work to diminish the importance of the Committeeman's office while still managing to run credible campaigns against machine politicians? This issue underlay to a very great extent the pulling and tugging over whether the County Democratic Party Committee would vote to endorse Mondale recently. The white anti-reformers prevailed, and this gave Mondale a somewhat embarrassing endorsement.

Another example: what will it take to win Latino influence in the city's political process commensurate with the size of the Latino population in Chicago? There is only one Latino member of the City Council, and he votes with the Vdrolyak majority. Yet Latinos are at least one-fourth of the city population. And again, what is the relationship between a strategy for work within the Democratic party in Chicago and winning greater political power for Latinos?

The problem of democratizing Chicago municipal government is a long way from solved. We have to look for solutions to problems of electoral strategy, the fight against white supremacy in Chicago, and a general strategy for the left if we are going to make further progress. But Washington's victory provides us a context for continuing the discussion of these problems and the work to solve them.

--Peggy Baker  
November 1983



# STUDY GUIDE: PART II

## SOCIALISM & DEMOCRACY

Note: The following is the second part of PUL's ongoing study of socialism and democracy. (The first, introductory study was in the July FM.) Manning Marable is an influential writer both in the Black movement and on the Left generally. His latest book, How Capitalism Underdeveloped Black America, (Boston: South End Press, 1982), deserves to be read in its entirety for Marable's historical review of the Black movement and his assessment of current prospects. In this study, we focus on the book's last chapter, "Toward a Socialist America."

1) Marable says that "a majority of Americans, Black, Latino and white, must endorse socialism." He qualifies this by saying that it "should not be interpreted narrowly by social democrats to mean a constitutional majority within the electoral apparatus as it now exists," and he rules out the possibility of a Marxist President of the United States.

Do you agree that a majority must endorse socialism in the U.S. before a revolution happens?

If yes, do you mean that a successful revolution could possibly take place without a majority endorsing it, but that would be a bad thing and undemocratic, and we should therefore oppose it?

Or do you mean that it is not possible for a revolution to happen in the U.S. where the majority has not endorsed socialism, and therefore we will never face the option?

2) Let's say that in a largely peasant country major riots break out in the cities. The workers storm the prisons, release the political prisoners, seize the radio station, and break into the central armory. The central government is discredited. There is some armed resistance by the propertied classes and the National Guard, but it not yet well-organized. The army is paralyzed, because the soldiers have not been paid for months, are ill-fed and disgusted with the government. They are mainly recruited from the peasantry, and part of the officer corps is sympathetic to vaguely socialist ideas. Power is lying in the streets.

You are sitting in an emergency central committee session of the communist party. You know the peasant majority doesn't like the government but

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also doesn't endorse socialism. Events are moving fast. Some of the central committee members think it would be crazy to try to seize power and form a government. What do you do?

3) You belong to one of the Left parties that govern a parliamentary democratic country. International imperialism has imposed an economic blockade since the day you won the election. Capital has fled the country and a "capital strike" has left many industries idle. Inflation has soared. In an election campaign marred by increasing right-wing violence and significant voter intimidation, your coalition loses in a close vote. Fascist orators call for the extermination of the Marxist virus.

Some members of the left coalition say that the Left should annul the elections, outlaw several of the reactionary opposition parties, declare a national emergency, and cling to power. "Better we fight now than the day after" is their slogan; they fear a bloodbath that will weaken the Left for two generations.

Others say that the Left cannot betray its democratic convictions. Despite the uncertainty of life in opposition, they say the Left must show its commitment to democracy. "We rise or fall on democracy," they say.

Where do you stand?

4) If the endorsement Marable talks about is not a constitutional majority within the electoral apparatus as it now exists, how is that majority endorsement to be expressed? Who interprets the expression and decides a majority has endorsed socialism? Is 51% O.K. but 49% too little?

5) Marable says that "any socialist strategy which deliberately provokes the repressive powers of the capitalist/racist state against working and poor people cannot win in the U.S." What does "deliberately provoke" mean? Who will decide what has been provocative to whom? Is it deliberately provocative to say, as Marable does, that "Socialists must come to the conclusion at the outset that there will be no peaceful culmination in the achievement of state power"? Doesn't this prejudice negatively a process that has not gotten under way yet? Isn't it provocative to say that the left is going to fight violently for state power because it will have to in order ever to get it?

6) What are "non-reformist reforms"? What makes the ERA or abortion rights or affirmative action non-reformist? Do you agree that the achievement of these reforms would be the immediate and preliminary goal of the "historic bloc"?

7) Marable sees the alternative before Black people as "socialism or some selective form of genocide" and the alternative before the U.S. working class as "workers' democracy or some form of authoritarianism or fascism."

The U.S. Left has often lost credibility through simplistic analyses of the "final crisis" or "socialism or barbarism" predictions. It has often cried (fascist) wolf. Do you consider these alternatives inevitable one day? In the short-term, the medium-term, or long-term?