Rainbows & Pseudos

Harvard & Its Hands

The Tortured Trail of the New Alliance Party

Very Tired

Very Tired

Western' Civ. & African Roots

Reviewing Black Athena

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Introduction

Over the years, new political groups have come and gone—with newspapers, leadership, and positions that did not always make sense to us. But, compared to the rest of American politics, and within a climate of chronically fierce anti-communism, it always seemed best for RA to leave aside heavy criticisms of other left tendencies, and simply put forth a political analysis that embodied our perspectives. We have generally tried to avoid negative sectarian politics, and instead have attempted to support and offer insights to a wide range of activists.

But, after much discussion, we have become convinced that the New Alliance Party (NAP) and its many affiliate groupings—such as the Rainbow Alliance, the Institute for Social Therapy, and the Lenora Fulani Committee for Fair Elections, to name only a few—are not just other legitimate groups with whom we must co-exist. Instead, we are convinced by Chip Berlet (journalist with the Jackson Advocate), Dennis Serrette (black activist), and RA editor Leigh Peake, that NAP merits serious scrutiny.

Despite its initial appeal as a multi-racial political group that links race, class, gay and women’s issues, the closer look at the New Alliance Party presented here raises troubling questions. As all our authors explain, NAP has origins in Lyndon LaRouche’s National
Caucus of Labor Committees. It has exhibited, since 1979, a set of shifting positions in regard to its political agenda and to electoral politics, while nevertheless retaining consistent organizing tactics: the manipulative use of psychological therapy for recruiting members, and “organizing” through attempted co-optation of and competition with other left groups. The stories presented by our authors range from Mississippi welfare rights groups to the New Jewish Agenda. NAP has used the issues, and even the literature, of the Rainbow Coalition and the AIDS action groups to build their own base at the expense of a broad coalition. The central role of founder Fred Newman in the group’s activities has even led many to label the group a “cult.”

And now there is a national election with the NAP candidate, Lenora Fulani, on the ballot in all fifty states, with federal matching money, and national media coverage, a feat not achieved by the Communist Party or other left, third-party challengers. We keep asking: where does the money come from, and how does it affect other leftists struggling to operate in some connection to the electoral process? Is the Left, and the hope of a racially mixed political alliance being used, set up and discredited? If so, whose ends are being served? The importance of these questions, and our fears about their answers, has led us to present the admittedly provocative articles reprinted here.

Even as we do so, however, we do not wish to discredit all individuals who are or have been attracted to NAP. We want to make clear that there is great sympathy on the board for third-party and independent left politics. It is, in fact, the point of our authors that NAP works in opposition to the flourishing of such politics within our society. If it were a legitimate, black-led, responsible political grouping that was consistently fighting homophobia, working for welfare and civil rights, linking personal change and political strategies and building multi-racial progressive political alliances—it would be great. Indeed, it is, in part, the failure of the real Left to take such leadership that has created a vacuum for NAP and Fred Newman to fill.

The New Alliance Party attracts folks who are rightly seeking something radical, something outside the utterly discredited mainstream, and who don’t find other progressive groups on their streetcorners or in their neighborhoods. Unfortunately, evidence is mounting that they are being offered not a new progressive movement but a trick—a flip-flopping, hierarchical party that has consistently undermined long-standing, proven activism in black, gay and poor communities. The essential fact remains that NAP has not worked constructively with any other progressive or grassroots group during its history. Its role has been to disrupt long-standing alliances and to discredit and harass people with long records of community struggle. This is not responsible politics.

Commitment to activism, and radical questioning of accepted norms, are always fragile in a society so destructive of the human imagination and so divisive of its most oppressed groups. If nothing else, the role of any legitimate left organization is to provide critical analysis and some base for effective political action with others who are “in the struggle.” The New Alliance Party fails this basic test. We urge our readers to talk with anyone who may be attracted to the NAP and to actively try to dissuade them from pursuing this course. Painful and unpleasant as it is, the time has come to expose the NAP before it discredits the Left—especially among blacks, gays and those exploring progressive politics for the first time. We can’t be liberal about this one, comrades, the evidence is too clear, and too dangerous in its implications.

Martin Bernal’s *Black Athena: the Afroasiasic Roots of Western Civilization*, is a provocative and important book that we believe is also a sign of the (intellectual and political) challenge to the foundations of Western civilization that is currently proceeding in many colleges and universities in this country. Like the domestic political movements of the sixties from which this challenge has in part grown, spontaneous, not often coordinated, initiatives by faculty and students, particularly Third World faculty and students, have been springing up everywhere to rethink the universal claims of “humanities” requirements that are in fact rooted in a Western, and white-
dominated experience. Headlined by such prestigious institutions as Stanford and Duke, the disruption and political significance of these initiatives is perhaps made most visible through the intense reaction against them, in the active campaigning of Reagan's Education Secretary, William Bennett, on behalf of the restoration of Western values and tradition.

In an extensive review, Frank Brodhead, a trained European historian, looks at the kind of rethinking of European history that Bernal's book provokes, in particular his exposure of and challenge to the racist and anti-Semitic historical memory of Europe. Fran White, an African and African-American historian, asks of Bernal, "What's new" that hasn't been part of longstanding discussion in the black world, and certainly prominent in nationalist current in African-American thinking. In fact, she argues, Bernal may fall into some of the traps that have already been raised as challenges to the nationalists: that they give support to the concepts of "progress" and "civilization" even as they challenge the exclusive boundaries by which black people have been historically kept outside of, "beneath" civilization. White also emphasizes the danger of forgetting the historical connection between the current challenges within the university and political/intellectual movements outside the university, particularly in the black world.

In recent years, the university has become the site of another kind of struggle for recognition: clerical and technical workers, traditionally an invisible and powerless group on most campuses, have been struggling to form unions at many universities across the country. Radical America has been interested in these struggles and in fact organized a forum on the significance of the Yale University clerical and technical strike a few years ago, which brought the issue of comparable worth to the fore. [See RA, Vol. 18 No. 5, "Women and Labor Activism."] This last Spring (1988), located as we are in Boston, we were swept up in the final act of the drama at Harvard's clerical and technical workers' struggle to unionize, an effort that has spanned nearly ten years. When Harvard's C&T's voted in favor of unionization last May 17th, the entire labor movement celebrated one of its biggest and most portentous victories in the arena of clerical organizing, an arena that we have argued is crucial to the future of the labor movement in this country. As we go to press (November 1988) the announcement has just been made that the NLRB has ruled against Harvard, calling its challenge of the election and the union's narrow margin of victory "frivolous."

We take special pride in printing an article in this issue by Martin Heggestad, a Harvard support staff member and a new RA editor, that describes the anti-union campaign waged by Haivard, and the—successful—tactics that activists in his workplace used to defeat it. Underlining the difficulty in confronting an anti-union campaign that relied so heavily on psychological tactics, he offers an insider's perspective that we hope will be helpful to others confronting such attacks and such campaigns.

As we go to press, early reports from nationwide municipal elections in South Africa seem to indicate gains by the right wing Conservative Party but continued dominance by the Nationalists of P. W. Botha. The white minority government sought to portray the elections as a significant change: the first time in the country's history that blacks, coloreds, and whites voted on the same day. The polling places, as with the choice of candidates offered voters however, remained segregated. Anti-apartheid forces and black activists ridiculed the sham as a blatant exercise in image-manipulation by the Nationalists that would allow them to project themselves as the moderate, centrist force of reason in South Africa before the eyes of a critical international community. The U.N. General Assembly, notwithstanding, voted 146 to 0 to condemn the elections, with the United States and Britain abstaining.

Within South Africa, the solidarity and resistance of blacks remained strong and an election day boycott was honored by pluralities ranging between 70 and 90 percent across the country, according to reports in the New York Times. The preoccupation with "image" and "public relations" displayed by the South African Nationalists, of course, mirrors a similar retreat from issues and a masking of
policy and ideology within the current US electoral campaign as well. Among the lost issues, significantly, has been the question of this nation’s relationship to the racist government of South Africa, and the consideration of policies to end Western support for apartheid.

In recent years, despite media blackouts by the South African government, some of the strongest transmissions of the horrors of apartheid and the strength of black rebellion in South Africa has come through the cultural arena: South African music, songs about black revolutionaries Steve Biko and Nelson Mandela, anti-apartheid concerts and record albums, and films such as “Cry Freedom” and “A World Apart” among others.

In this issue, Chris Nteta, a black South African currently living in the United States, focuses on the political legacy of Steve Biko. His critical and provocative framework for assessing the role and significance of Biko and the Black Consciousness Movement he inspired, draws on the work of Antonio Gramsci, linking Biko’s political approach to the work of the Italian Marxist.

Such critical consideration of Biko’s contributions to revolutionaries, and to the South African movement in particular, clash quite dramatically with the diluted, liberal portrait presented in Richard Attenborough’s critically acclaimed “Cry Freedom.” In that film, Biko’s radical character and politics were eclipsed by the white liberal persona of his real-life friend, the journalist Donald Woods. Today, a racist government that advocates gradual political reform under white leadership poses itself as the moderator between black liberation forces and the ultra-Right. Nteta’s critique is as much a response to that development, as it is a polemic directed to South African revolutionaries, black and white, to take up the consideration of culture and the subjective experience of racism as forums for liberation. Nteta shows that Gramsci’s concept of the “ensemble of relations” and its impact on the experience of oppression is carried forth in the politics of Biko, and in both the culture of resistance he nurtured and the movement-building he encouraged.

The legacy of Biko remains important today; in its break from orthodox Marxism and Leninism, it points to the ideological control of culture and symbol that has become such a staple of Western political life as well. Entering the final week of a US presidential election in which the American flag and the face of a black prison inmate have nearly supplanted all other images, Biko’s unmasking of the cultural hegemony of a racist South African regime resonates in an odd and unsettling way.

Frustrated by the failure of AIDS service organizations to raise some of the fundamental challenges to the state response to AIDS, activist groups have sprung up across the country to confront the insurance industry, the FDA and the drug companies, medical and research institutions, the epidemiological models, the press, and the fear and hatred generated against the marginal groups most closely identified with AIDS. In fact, from reports around the country, a genuine political AIDS movement is at hand.

In this issue we are publishing the second part of an interview with the Multicultural Concerns Committee (MCC) of AIDS Action in Boston (Part One was published in Vol. 21, No. 2-3). The interview poses the obstacles faced by members of MCC in working both with the AIDS service organizations and in communities of color. We think the growing AIDS activist movement is one place these criticisms may be seriously taken up. Despite the existence of political tensions resulting from the diversity of people drawn to the movement, its goals remain broad and its challenge is deep to both mainstream institutions and the popular perceptions of AIDS.

One indication of the growing success of the AIDS activist movement was the appearance in Washington, D.C., over the weekend of October 7-11, of thousands of gay men and lesbians, and others demonstrating loudly about governmental inaction on AIDS. A rally at the federal Department of Health and Human Services put Reagan and Bush on trial for malicious intent in the deaths of 43,000. The boisterous crowd pronounced them guilty after “testimony” from a number of activists representing various constituencies including prostitutes, prisoners, i.e. needle users, people with immune system disorders and organized
PWA’s. The following day, over 1500 demonstrators closed down the Food and Drug Administration, using tactics more reminiscent of the sixties than the eighties, to protest that agency’s failure to speed testing and release of experimental drugs useful in treating symptoms related to AIDS.

These two actions reflect a movement that is attempting to respond to a broad range of constituencies. Demands that drug trials include women, children and i.v. drug users have, in fact, resulted in some expanded clinical trials. In San Francisco, city workers have proposed that sick leave be pooled to assist workers struck by catastrophic illness. PWA groups have been key in revitalizing the challenges to the doctor/patient relationship began by the feminist health care movement and activists in communities of color. These kinds of challenges actually change the meaning of AIDS and in so doing, contribute to a context for the recognition of groups like MCC as central to shaping an AIDS agenda.

**CORRECTION**

Due to an error in layout, two pages of Salim Tamari’s “Palestinian Uprising (Intifada): Challenging Colonial Rule” in our last issue (Vol. 21, No. 4) were reversed. Pages 62 and 63 should be read in reverse order. We apologize for any confusion. The Editors

**Correction:** In “Informing ‘The Cruelty’: The Monitoring of Respectability in Philadelphia’s Working-Class Neighborhoods in the Late Nineteenth Century,” by Sherri Broder, the author implies that the Children’s Aid Society of New York was founded in the 1870s. For further reference the author wishes to correct that impression as the Children’s Aid Society was founded in 1853.
Fiction, and the New Alliance Party

Chip Berlet

It sounds too good to be true. A dynamic black woman runs for President on a progressive platform that calls for peace, social justice, multiracial harmony, and an end to discrimination against gay men and lesbians.

It is, sadly, too good to be true. Dr. Lenora Fulani deserves tremendous credit for apparently gaining ballot status in a majority of states; and the issues she and the New Alliance Party (NAP) raise deserve more attention in the American progressive movement where too often the reality fails to match the ideal when it comes to issues of gender, race, class, handicaps, and sexual identity.

However, the core of NAP has evolved into a totalitarian organization that mirrors the early stages of the European national socialist movement in the 1930's. Not totalitarianism as defined by cynical philosophical revisionists such as Jeane Kirkpatrick and Henry Kissinger, but totalitarianism in the original definition as an organizational form characterized by centralized control by an autocratic leader or hierarchy. Under totalitarianism there is strict control of all aspects of an individual's life through the use of coercive measures.

This is a serious charge, and it is made seriously.

There are two interlocking control mechanisms inside the core of NAP: a secret cadre

This article is drawn from a report published by Political Research Associates (PRA) of Cambridge, MA. PRA spent its first six years in Chicago under the name of Midwest Research where it gained a national reputation as a resource on the political right wing in the US.
organization that enforces a distorted form of
democratic centralism, and a manipulative type
of psychological therapy in which all members
of the core NAP hierarchy must participate. At
the apex of the NAP hierarchy sits Dr. Fred
Newman, chief theoretician, campaign
manager for Dr. Lenora Fulani, playwright,
scholar, activist, and the person who invented
the form of therapy practiced by those who
have come to be known as the "Newmanites."

Wherever NAP has a major organizing effort
underway, there is a related "therapy" group
reaching out to persons with progressive poli-
tics. The therapy groups use a technique
they call "Social Therapy" or "Crisis Normal-
ization"—the invention of Dr.
Newman—designed to provide immediate help
for the everyday crisis situations that happen to
everyone." Both the political organization and
the therapy institutes make a point to involve
persons of color, gay men and lesbians, and
political radicals.

Fred Newman and the Historical Roots of NAP

The history of NAP starts with a history of
its primary theoretician, Dr. Fred Newman. In
1968 Newman and several followers formed
"IF....THEN", a political collective in New
York City. "IF....THEN" prided itself on its
 anarchistic and confrontational approach to
organizing and consciousness-raising. During
the early 1970s Newman and his followers
established a group called Centers for Change
(CFC) in New York City. CFC was charac-
terized by a more introspective approach to political
organizing. CFC described itself as:
... a collective of liberation centers including; a
school for children, ages 3 to 7; a community
oriented therapeutic and dental clinic located in
the Bronx; and a press (CFC Press) operating out
of the CFC offices... Also, the Community
Media Project; (an) information service for peo-
ple of the upper west side....

While involved with CFC, Newman and
others in his circle began developing a unique
perspective within the evolving theory of
radical psychology. This movement attracted
attention and debate in progressive circles;
Newman, however, branched off from the
mainstream of the radical psychology move-
ment and eventually developed a theory of
"social therapy". By 1973 CFC was offering
therapy and counseling at its drop-in center. At
the same time, another New York political
organizer, Lyndon H. LaRouche, Jr., was also
espousing controversial psychological theories,
and Newman began to examine LaRouche's
writings on psychology and economics which
were appearing in published collections of
Marxist analyses.

Lyndon LaRouche in 1973 was the leader of
the National Caucus of Labor Committees
(NCLC), a Marxist political organization based
in New York City. LaRouche, using the name
Lyn Marcus, has led the Labor Caucus of the
Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) until
SDS voted to expel LaRouche and his followers
in 1969. The controversy inside SDS arose when
the SDS Labor Caucus under LaRouche called
for support of striking members of New York
City's teacher's union. A key union issue was
opposition to community control of the schools
in New York City—a demand of community
leaders that had the support of many black
parents. The union's opposition to community
control of schools was widely perceived in the
progressive political community as having
racist overtones. After being expelled from
SDS, LaRouche created the NCLC, which in
1973 had at least 1,000 members nationwide.

Newman says he first made contact with
LaRouche's forces within the NCLC in Oc-
organization, CFC, published a newsletter
Right On Time, that called for the organization
of leftist political cadres and relied heavily on
psychoanalytic terminology. LaRouche's
theories were in many ways similar to those
espoused by Newman, and in June of 1974,
Newman led almost 40 CFC members into an
official political alliance with LaRouche and
the National Caucus of Labor Committees.

Newman's Alliance with LaRouche

Even NAP supporters concede that Newman
and some of his followers worked for a time
under the political leadership of LaRouche.
What keeps the controversy alive is what critics
feel are misrepresentations regarding the
character of this relationship and the nature of
the LaRouche organization at the time of the alliance. NAP’s position is stated in a letter named “The Committee to Set the Record Straight.”

Five years prior to NAP’s founding, a handful of activists, five of whom now sit on NAP’s 40-member national Executive Board, joined the National Caucus of Labor Committees, then a Left organization founded by organic progressive leaders from the welfare, trade union, and electoral arenas. Dr. Newman was one of those who joined. He and his colleagues’ membership in the NCLC lasted approximately two months.

Following their departure in the summer of 1974, they began an extensive political and methodological critique of LaRouche and the NCLC and by 1975 became among the first on the Left to explicitly identify LaRouche as a neo-fascist. 2

This characterization of the Newman/LaRouche relationship is at best self-serving and at worst largely fictional.

With some 10 percent of the current NAP executive board comprised of persons who at one time chose to put themselves under the political leadership of Lyndon LaRouche, it becomes crucial to examine the relationship carefully.

In 1974 NCLC was not attracting “organic progressive leaders” from the welfare rights movement, as claimed by the Newmanites. In fact, it was having trouble attracting significant black support at all, since it was leading a successful attempt to destroy the black-led National Welfare Rights Organization and defame its popular leader, the late George Wiley.

During the same period, LaRouche also propounded ideas that were widely perceived to represent outright racism. LaRouche, for instance, offended the Hispanic community in a November, 1973 essay (published in both English and Spanish) titled “The Male Impotence of the Puerto-Rican Socialist Party.” An internal memo by LaRouche asked “Can we imagine anything more visciously sadistic than the Black Ghetto mother?” He described the majority of the Chinese people as “approximating the lower animal species” by manifesting a “paranoid personality...a parallel general form of fundamental distinction from actual human personalities.” Homophobia and sexism became central themes of the organization’s theories.

LaRouche once announced that women’s feelings of degradation in modern society could be traced to the physical placement of sexual organs near the anus which caused them to confuse sex with excretion.

During most of 1974, the NCLC under LaRouche was primarily attracting middle-class and upper-class white intellectual students from prestigious eastern and mid-western college campuses—hardly a core of trade unionists and welfare recipients as characterized by Newman’s supporters. A former member of LaRouche’s NCLC remembers the arrival in 1974 of what were called the “Newmanites.”

“They put themselves under the actual political leadership of LaRouche for a few months, and we came to believe that what Newman really wanted during that period was to act as an understudy to LaRouche—to learn his methods and techniques of controlling persons in an organization.”

The individuals in Newman’s group seemed to lack clarity and political focus and were obsessed with psychology and sexuality. Newman was clearly the leader and it was obvious that LaRouche’s ego and Newman’s ego were too big to allow them to work together in the same organization for long. 3

While actual membership by NAP executive board members in LaRouche’s NCLC may have lasted only a few months, the working alliance between groups led by LaRouche, Newman, and a third New York political leader named Gino Parente lasted for longer. Some activists from New York remember the three groups working in a loose alliance around issues such as welfare reform, farm labor, and organizing the working class for a period as long as one year. One internal NCLC discussion of the Newmanites describes “ten months of serious political discussion” before several months of actual membership. “Joint forums” between the Newmanites and the LaRoucheites were held in November and December, 1973, and the Newmanite split took place in late August, 1974.

After officially leaving NCLC in August, 1974, Newman and his followers continued to debate and criticize LaRouche and the NCLC over issues of shared political ideology as if that ideology represented legitimate leftist theory
long after the rest of the American Left had denounced NCLC as either proto-Nazi Brownshirts, a sick political cult, or outright police agents.

Fred Newman insists his group was not as sophisticated about the American Left when it joined with LaRouche, yet when the Newmanites split from NCLC, they announced the formation of a “vanguard” Marxist-Leninist political party. In the resignation letter signed by Newman and 38 of his followers, there is a significant use of Marxist-Leninist terminology which suggests a far greater degree of political sophistication than admitted. Announcing that Newman’s International Workers Party (IWP) had “now become the vanguard party of the working class,” the letter went on to say:

The organization of the vanguard party is, as Marx makes clear, the organization of the class. The formation of the IWP has grown from our attempt to organize the [NCLC] from within that it might move from a position of left hegemony to a position of leadership of the class.4

When joining the NCLC, Newman announced he was putting himself and his followers under the political “hegemony” of LaRouche. After leading his followers out of the NCLC, Newman continued to struggle with LaRouche over theory. None of this indicates a casual, naive, or short-lived relationship.

The Intellectual Vanguard

The early theoretical writings of LaRouche and the early and current theoretical writings of Newman reflect a derivative (and heretical) form of Trotskyist Marxism that is both unusual and virtually unique on the American Left. This shared theory is best described as an aberrant “Messianic” form of Trotskyism with an ego-centric view of the importance of the individual leader in shaping history, coupled with a patronizing “noblese oblige” approach to organizing the working-class and people of color that reflects a political colonialist mentality.

The Newmanites are clear as to the role of the vanguard leader in this passage from an internal organizational discussion:

The leadership serves the cadre, exactly as the revolutionary party serves the people. It serves the cadre by clearly defining reality, via discussions, which demand of the cadre the fullest expression of their creative potential as revolutionary organizers. What is demanded of cadre is no mere passive acceptance of leadership and their decisions... What is demanded is the fully creative act of internalizing those decisions as fully correct (i.e. as literally defining reality), as well as creative, enthusiastic implementation of those decisions.5

Peer pressure to conform is a different complaint than being told that one’s emotional health depends on doing specific political work inside a specific political organization. In NAP, this therapy link is especially effective as a control mechanism when coupled with Newman’s cadre organization, the International Workers Party (IWP).

There is a long tradition on the American Left of cadre organizations working alongside and within popular and mass organizations. The criticism of the IWP’s role in the People’s Party and now NAP is that the process is unprincipled and manipulative. The Newmanites still claim the IWP does not exist, a claim tarnished by the many former NAP members who say they were also inducted into the secretive
IWP as recently as a few years ago.

Still, political parties, no matter what their ideological hue, have an absolute right to work in mass organizations toward common goals. Political parties, study groups, and collectives frequently engage in mass work inside democratic popular organizations. When their suggestions are openly debated the results frequently move the organization forward in ways that would have been difficult without serious study by a handful of disciplined members. In some cases individuals choose not to discuss their personal political affiliations with other members of the mass organization, but as long as all ideas are presented and debated openly, the democratic nature of the organization is preserved.

A political party is not the same as a popular or mass democratic organization. A totally secret political cadre that controls a public political party creates a manipulative and anti-democratic situation, distorting debate and subverting the synthesis of a party platform and agenda that flows from the popular will of the majority. It most certainly abuses the trust of members of the larger political party who accept what is a form of party discipline regarding candidates and platform without having had real input into the decision-making process.

Furthermore, even in classic Marxist-Leninist ideology, there is a necessity for a cadre organization to link theory and practice in a self-correcting and open manner by responding to criticisms raised in the practical application of a theoretical understanding. This is impossible if there is no locus at which criticism can be directed. How can one criticize and debate a political organization one is unaware of?

Journalist Dennis King has studied numerous internal documents from the Newmanites and concluded that in terms of their political theory of organizing, they make a crucial distinction between the core cadre (primarily white intellectuals) and the “organic” members (primarily people of color.) According to King, the primarily-white intellectual vanguard trained by Newman through “therapy” is in the process of using “therapy” to raise the consciousness of the primarily black and Latino recruits so that some day in the future they will have the wherewithal to actually lead the organization...but not yet. King has described this as “paternalistic racism.”

Depth of Black Leadership

NAP does engage in activities that support black candidates, as the following excerpt from a letter by NAP supporters points out:

In 1984, after campaigning for Reverend Jesse Jackson and witnessing his public rejection at the Democratic National Convention in San Francisco, NAP moved ahead with its independent Presidential campaign for the Afro-American candidate Dennis L. Serrette in a record-breaking 33 states where the party had managed to secure access to the ballot.4

What the letter fails to mention is that Serrette left NAP after unsuccessfully struggling for a meaningful leadership role for black NAP officials who he felt had organizational titles but no real influence or control. At first, Serrette, as a point of personal and political principle, refused to openly criticize NAP, but when it became obvious NAP leaders were characterizing his reasons for leaving as primarily personal, implying that Serrette continued to support NAP, Serrette went public with his charges in Mississippi’s Jackson Advocate newspaper.
"I left the party because it continued to claim it was black-led—I knew better," Serrette is quoted as saying in the Jackson Advocate. "I mean no harm to these powerful black women, Emily Carter, Lenora Fulani, and Barbara Taylor, when I say Newman—he was leading them—that's why I left....I don't feel they can use 'black-led' continuously without falling on their faces—falsehoods just won't hold up under close scrutiny."

According to Serrette, NAP had no real commitment to black-led independent politics. "I had to think about my reputation then—of people who continue to believe in me." After raising his criticisms internally, Serrette said he was cut off from the flow of information within the party. "It got so I didn't know when they were holding meetings or anything," said Serrette.

In the course of the lawsuit by Emily Carter against the Jackson Advocate, Dennis Serrette was called by Carter's attorney to answer questions in a deposition. Serrette thoroughly denounced Newman and his followers as running a racist, sexist, "therapy cult" that put people of color in public leadership positions merely as window dressing.

Serrette said he came to believe the promise that the organization would eventually be turned over to black people was a lie, and he challenged Newman on the point:

"And I stated to him, "turned over" means, you know, resources, it means making policy, it means running personnel...that's black control to me. I don't understand it as just having a black face in a high place. That's nothing more than racism and nothing more than window dressing."

"It's no different from the system we seem to fight in this case. So I raised those questions to Fred and we had...a very heated meeting. It was a meeting in which many of the black leadership was there."

"It was very intense. We had Lenora [Fulani] making criticisms...Emily [Carter] making criticisms, there was a lot of folks making criticisms of some of racism that they heretofore hadn't mentioned to Fred, but had told me and told other blacks in a whisper type of kind of way, the times that we were together...and they came forward."

Shortly after that meeting, according to Serrette, his stature and treatment by other NAP leaders changed dramatically. Serrette said he was not opposed to therapy on principle since he believed many people are helped by other forms of therapy. But therapy played a different role inside NAP according to Serrette:

"...therapy was a way of getting people to not only operate in an organizational way, but also a way of controlling every aspect of their lives...you certainly couldn't straighten anybody out. But it was certainly effective in terms of controlling a lot of people to do the kinds of things that were asked of them...they would do anything, just about, that he would ask them to do."

"I wouldn't even be surprised if they'd turn from a so-called left organization to a right-wing organization with a blink of an eye. I think that the ideological question that is supposedly the thrust of who they call themselves, International Workers' Party, there's nothing more than a front itself."

"I certainly believe that [of] the New Alliance Party, and when I say "front," I just mean it's the cover to cover, possibly the ego of Fred Newman and the control of so many individuals in terms of power."

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And see YOUR name in the Alliance next week.
Serrette also said the therapy was not voluntary and that one Newman associate made this clear:

“She said that it was an order that if you wanted to be part of the organization, you will have to take therapy because it is the backbone of our tendency...she says that comes as an order...from the governing body.”

**Opportunism**

One example of what critics call the political opportunism of the Newmanites and the NAP is their longstanding effort to imply a connection with Rev. Jesse Jackson and the Rainbow Coalition. For instance, the Newmanites have established in Washington, D.C. the “Rainbow Lobby” billed as “The Lobbying Office of the Rainbow Alliance.” The Rainbow Lobby has offices at 236 Massachusetts Avenue, N.E., and lists Nancy Ross as Executive Director and Tamara Weinstein as Assistant Director.

The Rainbow Lobby office has been frequently mistaken for the Washington office of Jesse Jackson’s Rainbow Coalition, a mistake that in the past, NAP leadership did not seek to clarify. Newspaper articles have appeared about NAP’s Rainbow Lobby in which throughout the reporter assumes the Rainbow Lobby represents Jackson and the Rainbow Coalition—a circumstance NAP leadership could have easily avoided by explaining upfront that the two groups are unrelated. Now there are small notices at the bottom of some Rainbow Lobby material stating there is no connection between the Rainbow Lobby and Rainbow Coalition, but some people still assume the notice is merely a legal technicality for tax purposes and that a connection does indeed exist.

Jackson has had to publicly distance himself and the Rainbow Coalition from NAP and its Rainbow Alliance and Rainbow Lobby on several occasions. Jackson once told Chicago Sun-Times Basil Talbot that “we have no relationship at all,” and that is the current position taken by spokespersons for Jackson and the Rainbow Coalition.

In the June 21, 1985 issue of the National Alliance, an article on the Rainbow Alliance shows how artfully the question of a relationship has been dodged in the past:

Hostile critics and curious allies are forever saying to Nancy Ross, ‘Does Jesse Jackson support what you’re doing?’

Ross, who heads the Washington office of the Rainbow Alliance Confederation’s lobbying arm, has learned how to respond to such inquiries.

‘The point is not whether Jesse Jackson supports me, but whether I support Jesse Jackson,’ says Ross, a founder of the six-year-old independent New Alliance party, and candidate for Jackson delegate in Harlem in 1984. ‘And I support Jesse completely because of the social vision he has articulated on behalf of the Rainbow movement. Yes, I have real differences with Jesse—he thinks independent politics is ‘prophetic’ whereas I believe its time has come right now—but I won’t allow anyone to sever the historic ties between Jesse and myself, because I am committed to see that his vision of a just society be brought about today.’

While admittedly clever, the above explanation is essentially a dishonest misrepresentation of the facts, designed to confuse the issue and suggest a connection where none exists. The confusion over support from Jesse Jackson and the Rainbow Coalition is exacerbated by how the New Alliance Party describes itself. The February 13, 1987 edition of the National Alliance newspaper contained a centerfold...
spread with the multi-color slogan “The Real Rainbow” spanning the two pages. A letter on New Alliance Party stationery to gay activists on the west coast had the slogan “The Party of the Rainbow.” A petition calling for an independent Black Presidential campaign was titled “An Open Letter To Reverend Jesse Jackson.”

Ironically, in a 1983 issue of the Newmanite theoretical journal Practice, Newman attacked Jesse Jackson and Jackson’s progressive supporters in strong terms:

The U.S. ultra-Left has traditionally suffered very badly from a mental disorder perhaps best identified as premature vanguardulation. There has, over the past few years, been a positive attempt by some to rectify this problem (called by some friendly left critics ‘wreckification’) which, however, has dealt mainly with the symptoms of the disease by essentially helping the ‘client’ to feel more comfortable masturbating. Hence, some of the rectified ultra-left—for example supporters of ‘Jesse Jackson, Democrat’—are smilingly convincing themselves these days that it is alright to unite with Jackson’s ‘progressive aspects’. Many have raised questions as to which part of Jackson’s political anatomy embodies his ‘progressive aspects’.11

A disclaimer separating NAP from the Rainbow Coalition began appearing during the same period that NAP launched the campaign of Lenora Fulani for President. During 1987 the NAP began to publicly attack the Rainbow Coalition and in the National Alliance Lenora Fulani was quoted as saying “With all due respect to Brother Jesse Jackson, almost everyone knows he hasn’t built a real Rainbow. He might have incorporated something called the National Rainbow Coalition, Inc., but he hasn’t built a Rainbow. We’ve built a real Rainbow.”

However, despite the criticisms and disclaimers, there is still much public confusion concerning the relationship of NAP to the Rainbow Coalition, and Jackson’s presidential candidacy. This confusion is not alleviated by NAP public statements.12

Institutes for Social Therapy

Dr. Fred Newman’s doctorate is not in a health-related field, but in the philosophy of science and foundations of mathematics. For several years psychologists and groups concerned about cults have questioned the ethics of the process used by the Institutes for Social Therapy. These criticisms are crystallized in the following statement by an east coast Latina activist working in the area of support for Central Americans:

Before or after the therapy session, they would say ‘why not sell the newspaper’, or ‘maybe you could do us a favor and hand out these leaflets.’ The therapy offices are full of their political propaganda. In the group therapy sometimes we discussed politics and their political party. They want people to get involved in their political activities, but they don’t really give any treatment. This was something I didn’t like.

Some people get involved because they think the political work will help them get better emotionally...

They got angry with me when I asked for individual therapy. ‘You need group therapy not individual therapy’, I was told, so I left. Then they started sending me literature about their political organizations.

“…In the (NAP) literature and in the therapy sessions they try to destroy any other left organization by saying bad things about it. They also destroy a progressive organization by recruiting...
away its members.

They call themselves leftists but they use the dialectic method just to recruit people. When you get involved there is no dialectic, it is static, they don't progress beyond the criticism of the other group. They have no real problem, they just say 'if you are not with NAP you are the enemy'...

They don't like it if you pay a low fee and don't work for them politically, such as doing propaganda work for the New Alliance Party. If you pay more, you get a better work position in the organization. If you can afford a lot, you can get individual therapy. Everything is money or power.

Some people are fooled, especially the uneducated or emotionally ill, they use them. It is disgusting. They don't care about people—they want numbers; more money, more people, more power. The social therapy is just an excuse to recruit members. It is just like their many other activities, concerts, rallies, they are active in many areas, but they accomplish nothing.4

Certainly it is legitimate as part of psychological counseling to recommend that a person become involved directly in the community—even to the extent of becoming part of a political movement. But to inform the client, as part of the therapeutic process, that the therapist is involved in a particular political movement is to consciously or unconsciously steer the patient, who may be in a dependent and fragile relationship with the therapist, toward the political movement. This error is compounded by the fact that according to several Therapy Institute staff members, a portion of the fees for the therapy support NAP.

Conclusions

The refusal of the Newmanites to deal candidly with, and accept criticism for, the LaRouche period—no matter how shortlived—will continue to be a valid issue to raise publicly concerning the NAP until that group's leadership accepts responsibility for the actions of its founders and current colleagues.

The issue of the apparent opportunistic use of the "Rainbow" slogan is important to confront. This is especially true in Chicago where political consultant Dan Rose, hardly a political neophyte, thought a Rainbow Lobby fundraiser that came to his home was representing Jesse Jackson until he spotted a name he recognized as being involved with the Newmanites on the literature. This continued confusion can only serve to weaken Jackson's credibility among potential constituents whose first crucial introduction to the Rainbow may well be through the distorted prism of the Newmanites and the NAP.

The connection between the leadership of the NAP and the Newmanite Social Therapy centers is manipulative and unethical. So long as there is such a relationship, the NAP must be judged in the context of being a political movement that lacks clarity concerning basic moral issues involving personal and political exploitation. How can a group aspire to moral and political leadership when with one hand it reaches out to those in need of emotional help, and with the other hand points to their related political organization as a cure?

Finally, the political Left in the US must confront the issues of cultism, personality worship and gurism, totalitarianism, paranoid conspiracy mongering, and bigoted scapegoating along with the other, more obvious, destructive tendencies that can afflict any political tendency such as sexism, racism, homophobia, ageism, and insensitivity to the rights of the handicapped. If the movement for social justice is to succeed, we must confront issues not only on individual, institutional and political levels, but also on structural and stylistic levels.

Chip Berlet, on the staff of Political Research Associates, is also an investigative journalist who has written numerous articles on the LaRouche organization, government intelligence abuse, right-wing spy networks, and white supremacist groups. As a paralegal investigator, Berlet has worked on several lawsuits defending political rights against illegal government surveillance and disruption. He is currently secretary of the National Lawyers Guild Civil Liberties Committee and on the editorial board of Police Misconduct and Civil Rights Law Report.
FOOTNOTES
1. "CFC, a collective of liberation centers". New York, undated, circa 1973
3. Interview with a former member of NCLC, New York, November, 1987
6. "The Committee to Set the Record Straight", ibid.
9. Deposition of Dennis Serrette, ibid., pages 155-157, 170
13. An example of this in the November 20, 1987 issue of the National Alliance, William Pleasant attacks the Rainbow Coalition as "the Democratic Party's phony left wing", but then writes that "Fulani, under her 'Two Roads Are Better Than One' plan, backs Reverend Jesse Jackson in the Democratic Party primaries. But she has done everything possible to ensure that the progressive Rainbow agenda will be carried through to the general election in November..." William Pleasant, "Desperately Seeking Unity!". The National Alliance, New York, pages 12-14.
14. Interview with a former member of NCLC, East coast, November, 1987
Inside the New Alliance Party
aka Rainbow Alliance aka Rainbow Lobby aka the Organization aka

Dennis L. Serrette

I write after much thought and some distance from the New Alliance Party (NAP). When I broke ties with NAP after my 1984 presidential race, I felt I needed some time to evaluate the hodgepodge of contradictions, racism, sexism, and cultism that so revealed itself during the course of my campaign.

I knew when I joined NAP that it was not black-led, and I knew when I left it was not black-led. It took longer to understand that NAP was not even a progressive organization as it also pretends.

Be that as it may, I probably still would not take the time to write about the organization. However, as a long-time activist who made the mistake of joining NAP, and who served on the organization’s “Central Committee,” I believe I have a responsibility to reveal the intense psychological control and millions of dollars Fred Newman employs to get well-meaning individuals in our communities (they target the black community), to viciously attack black leaders, black institutions, and progressive organizations for purposes of building Newman’s power base.

What follows is a relatively brief narrative on Fred Newman’s operations, NAP being but one front. I have interchangeably used the names NAP, the organization, the International
Workers Party (IWP), etc., for they are all run by, and consist of the same people. NAP is Newman’s public electoral tactic, so it has many “members” (mostly people who have been stopped on the street who paid a dollar for a paper, or some other come-on, who rarely actively participate, and often don’t even know they joined (who are not a part of “the organization/IWP,” i.e., Newman’s followers.

At the outset, I want to answer the frequently asked question: “Is Newman associated with LaRouche?” I simply do not know. I understand that Newman originally completely denied having joined with LaRouche, claiming, instead, that it was his followers who had, but that he was forced to retract the denial in the face of overwhelming evidence. The story told to all organization members who were not with Newman at the time was that Newman and his followers were with LaRouche when he was “a leftist,” “a split from SDS,” pre-Operation Mop-up. I have since learned that this was a lie, that they joined after LaRouche had made a decisive right shift, and participated in the campaign to destroy the Left. I did not see any direct evidence of a LaRouche connection while I was in NAP. But, I was never privy to what was going on, at the top—Newman’s household. Newman often bragged about how much he learned from LaRouche, and, as noted below, the reported organizational operations of LaRouche’s group are frighteningly similar to those of Newman’s group.

Like LaRouche’s National Caucus of Labor Committees, Newman runs a very tightly controlled organization. Like LaRouche, Newman has created numerous organizations (most only paper) with divergent names; some to attract particular individuals, some solely to make money, many with names so similar to true left organizations that unknowing individuals are often fooled (e.g., Rainbow Alliance and Rainbow Lobby, which have no connection to Jesse Jackson’s Rainbow Coalition; the Unemployed and Welfare Council, which attacked the National Welfare Rights Organization, etc.).

Newman controlled all the resources, personnel, and policies of the organizations. When I left in 1984, he was living with three “wives.” One was in charge of all the organization’s finances, which Newman boasted well-

surpassed $1 million; another controlled all personnel/members; and the third was in charge of “national operations.”

The organization has set up its own internal caste system. Rank and file members worked 14-plus hours a day, often out on street corners raising money. Newman, on the other hand, spent most mornings reading in his large upper Westside apartment and jogging in Riverside Park. His workday began with his afternoon therapy sessions in his luxury Westside offices.

Newman and his chosen lieutenants often met and relaxed at his seaside mansion. The mansion was supported by a mandatory tax placed on members of the organization. Rank and file members were always taken along on trips to the mansion for the “honor” of cooking for and cleaning up after Newman and his chosen ones.

Newman’s/NAP’s political positions vary according to what he believes he can best capitalize on at the time. I personally witnessed this opportunism on a number of occasions. Quite notably, before it became obvious that Jesse Jackson’s campaign would move grassroots folks nationwide, Newman harshly attacked Jackson. When it seemed as though Newman could exploit Jackson’s movement, he used Jesse’s name endlessly, in literature and elsewhere, and created the “Rainbow Alliance” and “Rainbow Lobby.” Similarly, Newman strongly maintained that Louis Farrakhan was
an insignificant right-winger. When it looked as though he could opportunistically from Minister Farrakhan’s popularity in the black community, Newman’s line took a 180-degree turn.

When progressive newspapers and individuals fail to support Newman, they become legitimate targets for destruction, even those he previously acclaimed. In my particular case, when I was promoting NAP, both the public and internal presentation of me was that of the leading black progressive. When I raised issues of Newman’s racism and exploitation of blacks, I was labelled a nationalist (i.e., not a leftist). When I spoke honestly about NAP to persons outside the organization, articles began to appear in the National Alliance that would have made J. Edgar Hoover proud. I even received calls from friends that NAP was calling up women friends of mine from years past to see if they could contribute “sexual” dirt to a paper about me. When they couldn’t find the dirt, Lenora Fulani authored the article under the auspices of the “Women’s Caucus,” another paper committee. Theodore (Ted) Taylor, who NAP vociferously praised as a leading black trade unionist when he associated with NAP, was attacked as a rank opportunist when he joined with SEIU. Gerena Valentine was lauded as New York’s premier progressive elected official when he ran with a NAP affiliation, and harshly criticized when he broke with NAP.

Newman has brought a million-dollar-plus law suit against The Jackson Advocate, Jackson, Mississippi’s only black newspaper, and its black activist editor, Charles Tisdale. Why? When Newman saw the broad support Jesse Jackson received in the South, he decided to target some resources there. He assigned several New Yorkers to Mississippi. Tisdale, having knowledge about the Alliance, didn’t support NAP’s claim on his community. Knowing the time and resources required to publish a newspaper, and the time and resources required to defend a law suit, Newman had his lawyer slap a major law suit on Tisdale. It does not matter if NAP loses the case. NAP almost always loses. The suit serves its purpose of inflicting injury.

NAP had the audacity to ask me to testify against Tisdale. I told them that their request was outrageous. Next thing I knew, I too was in court, and receiving calls threatening to have the Sheriff come to my home at night to arrest me. (The Court dismissed their action against me.)

The Main Enemy

In short, Newman operates in total opposition to the movement. Both “the Left” and “the movement” are considered enemies by Newman. Newman has labelled his suit against Tisdale a suit against the Left, as though attacks on progressive institutions are a good thing. In fact, a review of the National Alliance will reveal far more venomous assaults on progressives than on reactionaries.

Newman uses left rhetoric well, and organizes with a left front. He appeals to what is good and progressive in people, and uses that to build his base. He will as quickly embrace as he will attack a movement, a progressive, an organization, a principle—based on how he can best opportunist from it. His membership, almost all of whom have absolutely no history
in the movement, have few other ways to see the issues.

Most members join "the organization" via politics or therapy. Once an individual has been drawn close, s/he is met by two lieutenants and told that there is a secret underground organization, the International Working Party (IWP), allegedly a left party organization. Membership in the organization requires that you reveal all your resources, and that you turn over everything to the organization. (Even personal relationships are said to belong to the organization, so it is common for a member to report on his/her partner.) Mandatory bi-monthly dues are assessed, and anything may be demanded at any time.

The IWP has been chaired by Newman since its inception. As far as I know, no one else has ever been considered as an alternative. The Central Committee members are all chosen by Newman. During the entire 2½ years I sat on the Central Committee, there was never a single policy debate by the CC once Newman made his position known.

There is an enormous amount of secret ritual surrounding the IWP which, like most ritual, entices the members. Unlike most left organizations where the party is public and the membership is underground, Newman has created the reverse, and has used it as one of many isolating factors that maintain the membership.

Social therapy, Newman's creation, is considered the "backbone of the tendency." Every member is required to attend at least one social therapy (i.e., psychotherapy) session weekly, led by Newman's hand-picked, hand-trained therapists. (In most cases, Newman's top therapists are also his top spokespersons.) Although the therapy is mandatory, members must still pay for the sessions.

What is Therapy

Therapy, NAP style, is a method for recruiting innocent, vulnerable people, exploiting their vulnerabilities, and controlling their behavior.

As noted earlier, all members were required to attend therapy at least once a week. Some attend twice a week or, at times, even daily. Particular "patients" were targeted in sessions. The entire group then generally converged on the victim who generally broke down in tears. They are then forgiven, accepted, and praised. Topics range from the most personal aspects of one's life to the failure to give enough of oneself to the organization.

According to the tenets of "social therapy," private time, private thoughts, "critical faculties" are all bourgeois. One can only be cured of their bourgeois ideology in social therapy. If you disagree at all with one of Newman's black lieutenants, the entire therapy group attacks you for being racist. If you disagree with a woman therapist, the entire group attacks you for being sexist. If you question the opinions of the therapist, you are resorting to your bourgeois critical faculties.

Members are kept busy from sun-up, way past sun-down. Members no longer have time to call family, to visit, even to attend funerals, holidays, or other special events. When members do visit their families, more often
than not another IWP member accompanies them. (Generally, members have alienated themselves from all their other friends and all their close relationships are with fellow IWPers.) Members generally share apartments, living communally, and often invite new recruits to move in with them. Members and potential members were often encouraged to quit their pre-IWP job, unless their job position could be exploited.

Any problems that arose from this extreme regimentation were dealt with in therapy. Bourgeois thinking, problems with “giving it all for the revolution” were dealt with by the group that had become the member’s entire world; that knew their every vulnerability; that shaped their thinking and understanding of people, events, history.

Conclusion

These few pages offer but an overview of a complex, and, in my opinion, dangerous organization. Dangerous, not only to the innocent, well-intentioned people who are caught in its grasp, but to the many it will try to exploit. Dangerous, because it uses a very progressive line, and untold millions of dollars, to prey on black communities, to attack black leaders and institutions, and to assault progressive organizations at whim. Dangerous because it can lie outright—lie about being black-led when blacks do not sit on the top, do not control the resources, do not control personnel; lie to its members about its participation with LaRouche; lie about Charles Tisdale; lie about me; lie about whatever serves Newman’s interests, and put forth spokespersons who come to believe these lies. Dangerous because many members will do whatever they are told to do without ever evaluating what they have been told.

In conclusion, while I believe it is important that NAP be exposed for what it truly is, it is our job not to dwell on the organization, which craves controversy, but to concentrate our energies in our communities and organize, organize, organize. It is a vacuum that has been left open that allows NAP and other oppressive organizations to abuse our communities. We must fill that vacuum with genuinely progressive, community-controlled organizations.

Footnotes

1. Others include New York Institute of Social Therapy and Research, Rainbow Alliance, East Side Center for Short Term Therapy, the Harlem Institute, Association of Better Communities, the New York City Unemployed and Welfare Council, George Jackson-Rosa Luxemberg Cultural Center, the National Alliance Newspaper, the New Black Alliance, Coalition of Grass Roots Women, the International Workers Party, and more. All are created and put to rest by Newman, according to the group or person he is targeting (e.g., when they decide to go after me, they created the New Black Alliance (NBA)). Once I agreed to be the presidential candidate, the NBA was disbanded. Similarly, Newman created the New York City Unemployed and Welfare Council to pull in some welfare activists and attack the National Welfare Rights Organization. When Newman decided to switch the focus to electoral politics, he disbanded the New York City Unemployed and Welfare Council, deeply disappointing many of the “leaders” who had no say in the matter. James Scott, Alma Brooks, and Neter Brooks, whose names Newman continues to use, all left the organization. Newman creates the organization, chooses who among the inner circle will “lead” it, how it will run, what it will do, and when it is no longer needed.

2. It is relatively common for Newman’s people to attack black newspapers wherever they go if NAP isn’t given extensive coverage.

Dennis Serrette is an ex-member of NAP and, in 1984, was their presidential candidate. He is now a black activist working and writing in Maryland.
NAP: RULE OR RUIN

Ken Lawrence

Ken Lawrence is a long-time Radical America Associate Editor. He has worked for many years as activist and writer in Jackson, Mississippi. He was an early opponent, and target, of Lyndon LaRouche. Through his research into LaRouche’s activities in the mid-seventies, Lawrence encountered Fred Newman and began to follow his political career. So, when the New Alliance Party (NAP) began work in Mississippi, Lawrence joined with others to explain its origins and methods in the pages of The Jackson Advocate, a weekly progressive black newspaper.

The New Alliance Party brought a libel suit against the newspaper and Ken Lawrence as a result of these articles. In April of 1988 a Mississippi court dismissed NAP’s suit, without even requiring the defense to present any evidence. Charges against Lawrence were dismissed as frivolous, and the NAP was ordered to pay his legal expenses. About NAP’s reactions to the trials, Lawrence remarks, "True to form, the headline in the April 21 issue of NAP’s weekly newspaper, The National Alliance, read: ‘Jackson Advocate Libel Case Ends: NAP Wins.’"

Here we present Ken Lawrence’s observations about the New Alliance Party and its tactics, most of which were printed in the October 19, 1988 Guardian.

NAP calls itself a left party, but many leftists are deeply suspicious, if not openly antagonistic, to it. They say that NAP’s politics are contradictory and opportunistic, that its practices are unprincipled and that it is a front for a New York City-based psychotherapy cult.

NAP, in turn, accuses its left-wing opponents of being sellouts to the Democratic Party, who are opposed to the stated objective of Fulani’s campaign, “to teach the Democrats a lesson,” by defeating Dukakis.

NAP exhibited what has been called its “rule or ruin” tactics in California on August 13, when Fulani supporters crashed the Peace and Freedom Party convention, even though the Peace and Freedom delegates would not have backed Dukakis. When the Fulani partisans, many of whom were unknown to longtime Peace and Freedom activists, found themselves in the minority, they walked out en masse, gathered at a pre-arranged location, declared themselves to be the “true” Peace and Freedom Party and nominated Fulani.

When the results of both “conventions” were reported to California election officials, they refused to rule on the legitimacy of each

DISORGANIZING GRASSROOTS GROUPS IN MISSISSIPPI

Since the New Alliance Party’s recent entry into Mississippi’s grassroots politics, several questions have been raised about the organization’s goals in the state, about its claims to being a “black-led” party, and about its organizing tactics—which are said to closely resemble those of Lyndon LaRouche, a one-time associate of New Alliance Party bigwig Fred Newman.

Local organizers blame New Alliance Party manipulative tactics for the recent split in the Welfare Rights Organization. Welfare rights organizations have been the target of LaRouche front groups before. The organization that LaRouche and Newman co-sponsored, the National Unemployed and Welfare Rights Organization (NUWRO), has been called “an unsubtle attempt to take over or bust up the National Welfare Organization headed by the late George Wiley,” by the Village Voice.

"I’ll work with anybody," says Lili Mae Irwin, the well-respected leader of the Welfare Rights Organization. "That’s what I’m about—trying to help somebody. Ida Newton [a member of the NAP cadre in Mississippi] came to our meetings several times and tried to get us to agree to merge into one organization. I told her she could come in with us—I wasn’t about to jump on just anybody’s bandwagon. I didn’t know anything about it."

After she refused to merge the Welfare Rights Organization with the New Alliance Party, things began to fall apart, Irwin contends. "Our treasurer, Mary Ann Lofton, and our secretary, Lyna Barnes, got to missing too many meetings." Irwin said she found out that
group's claim and declined to put any Peace and Freedom candidates on the ballot.
But NAP had prepared for not winning the Peace and Freedom Party's ballot line by gathering signatures to put Fulani on the ballot as an independent. Even before the Peace and Freedom fiasco, NAP had obtained more than a third of the necessary 129,000 signatures.

Tom Condit, a Berkeley activist, says NAP has been trying to take over Peace and Freedom for the past five years. "They bused fifty peo-

the two were scheduling meetings with the New Alliance Party at the same time the Welfare Rights Organization was holding its monthly conferences. "Yes siree, they were trying to hold meetings at the same time we were; they were trying to mess us up."

Irwin says some Welfare Rights Organization members became excited by the prospect of travelling to far-off places, like New York City. "We couldn't afford to send them anywhere and the New Alliance Party could. She added, "A Lot of the old members say they're coming back to our organization. We didn't ask nobody to leave and I'm not going to beg anybody to come back."

Gay rights activist Eddie Sandifer heads another indigenous organization feeling pressure from the New Alliance Party. "I'm very suspicious of them," Sandifer said. "I'm worried about what they're doing in Mississippi. I also wonder about their source of income."

Sandifer isn't the only one wondering about NAP's source of funds. The party's newspaper, the National Alliance, printed in New York and distributed nationally to NAP cadres, has few advertisers other than NAP front groups and most papers locally are given away rather than sold. The New Alliance habit of subtly claiming to be the heirs of Jesse Jackson's Rainbow Coalition is disturbing to many, as is the group's insistence on claiming to be "black led."

Charles W. Tisdale

This is excerpted from the Jackson Advocate, Jackson, Mississippi, May 23-29, 1988.
Fulani’s employer, the New York Institute for Social Therapy and Research, is affiliated with a network of organizations—New Alliance Party, Rainbow Alliance, Rainbow Lobby, New Black Alliance and Centers for Crisis Normalization— with overlapping leadership, membership, telephone numbers and programs.

Yet despite the choice of names, in 1983 Fred Newman denounced Jesse Jackson, saying, “The left (ultra, centrist, social democratic and populist) are almost all pandering to Jesse Jackson’s dream. Who cares if Jesse’s dream, unlike King’s to which it bears scant resemblance, is almost certainly a working-class nightmare?”

He added, “Jackson doesn’t have progressive aspects—whatever that’s supposed to mean.” But a year later, Newman and his followers set up the Rainbow Alliance, then the Rainbow Lobby, to fool the unwary into believing that NAP people were Jackson’s representatives, another trick learned from Lyndon LaRouche.

For a group of people who sometimes call themselves Marxists, socialists, leftists, anti-imperialists, progressives, and liberals (while at other times scornfully rejecting one or more of these labels), these are odd tactics. But in reality, NAP and its affiliated organizations are something quite different. Simply put, all these are fronts for a cult, headed by Dr. Fred Newman, that has existed in various forms—sometimes open, sometimes secret—since 1969. Like his early ally Lyndon LaRouche, Newman has built a political organization based on the condemnation of an extraordinary array of groups and individuals as “fascists,” including Franklin D. Roosevelt, Ramsey Clark, Walter Mondale, William Kunstler, the AFL-CIO, Black and Puerto Rican nationalism, feminism, gay pride, and struggles for affirmative action hiring of minority workers. The “terrorist” Palestine Liberation Organization and its leader, Yasir Arafat, were denounced as Rockefeller puppets.

Eventually these tactics failed abysmally at gaining a wide audience. LaRouche’s response was to emerge openly as a neo-Nazi with ties to Western intelligence agencies. Newman’s was to remove his organization (then the International Workers Party) from public view, and to attempt to find a different niche on the left. Both transformations exemplify cults, and differentiate them from legitimate political movements, because the reversals of political lines are dictated from the top and implemented by the memberships without any political process or explanation.

For fifteen years, these qualities have kept the Newman cult going, periodically emerging as a thorn in the left’s side. But now there’s a new factor, a large infusion of money from unknown sources, which for the first time has won national standing for Newman’s New Alliance Party, at least for the duration of Lenora Fulani’s presidential campaign.

Even though Fred Newman’s line has changed 180 degrees on many occasions, some things don’t change. One is the ever-present social therapy, the system that exploits individuals’ psychological vulnerabilities as a vehicle to recruit and discipline members. Another is that no matter what the line is at any moment, the enemies are the same, the organizations of the political left in North America.
A QUEER ALLIANCE

This article is an edited version of one which appeared in Gay Community News (Vol 16, No 13, October 9-15, 1988).

Alongside the chaos and festivity of the 1987 National March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights and of Gay Pride marches from San Francisco to Boston, one image stands in stark contrast to other memories. It is an image of a multi-racial corps, clad in identical berets, marching in strict formation with raised fists, shouting in unison “Gay power is Rainbow power!” It is an image which is simultaneously compelling in its force and unity, and suspicious in its militarism and conformity. For many lesbians and gay men this is their first introduction to the New Alliance Party (NAP) though probably not their last. In the past several years NAP has actively courted the gay and lesbian community, seeking its financial and political support. The result has been an intensified search by the community into the history, structure and politics of NAP in order to clarify its relationship to the gay and lesbian political agenda.

The obvious and simple appeal of both the Fulani presidential campaign and of NAP’s progressive, pro-gay platform, is the challenge to an electoral system which has been, on the whole, inhospitable to the gay and lesbian community. These campaigns seem to be an opportunity for the gay and lesbian community to share a voice within the system. For many in the community the platform put forward by NAP candidates is compelling because it addresses many issues of concern to gay activists. But while compelled by its message, many gay men and lesbians have become suspicious about NAP and its relation to the community. An examination of NAP’s history and structure reinforces that suspicion, as do accounts by activists and former NAP members of their experiences with the party.

Questions concerning the history and internal structure of NAP have been raised repeatedly by its critics, and will not be repeated here. However, of particular concern has been the history of an alliance between Newman and Lyndon LaRouche’s Caucus of Labor Committees (see Berlet, this issue). Given LaRouche’s psychosexual theories of organizing, this alliance leads to serious doubts about the Institute for Social Therapy and Research (ISTR) and the role of psychology in NAP’s broader strategy.

While labelling NAP a “cult” with Newman as its “guru” has become common fare for critics of NAP, the tactics behind the labels deserve serious consideration. The “therapy connection” dates back to the early seventies and the establishment of the New York Institute for Social Therapy and Research, which writer Joe Conason calls “NAP’s theoretical, training, and therapeutic center.” The theoretical grounding for the Institute is Newman’s own publication, Power and Authority (Centers for Change, 1974), which describes a kind of fusion between psychotherapy and political recruitment for “revolution.” Newman argues in Power and Authority that “…the left movement and so on are nothing more than the fascist conceived brainwashing programs designed to destroy the minds of the working woman and the working man and thereby blind the working class to the grim reality of cannibalization and encroaching fascism…What are some of the underlying principles of this massive brainwashing? One underlying principle is to have the working class totally divided into groupings which fight each other and and in doing so hide the reality of the fascist takeover. Black nationalism, community control, feminism, the petty bourgeois movement, gay pride, worker participation programs, trade union parochialism, and so on, are concepts devised by the fascists to locate a group’s identity in something other than the working class” (emphasis mine).

While many on the left might agree that one important strategy for social change is organizing a unified working class movement, or indeed that divisions between communities are a critical obstacle, Newman here completely denies both the necessary diversity within such a movement and the complexity of individual identity, as well as the potential for powerful grassroots movements grounded in any one of these communities.

In constructing a psychological theory of organizing, Newman argues the function of ISTR should be “treating the society by curing
the individual.” However, the “cure” for the individual is involvement in “revolutionary acts,” and NAP is the medium for this cure.

Some people who have been involved with NAP have described this process of political therapy as one in which an individual or group is criticized or humiliated to a point of emotional vulnerability, only to be “built back up” by the source of criticism, creating an emotional dependency. This same source is also the source of political direction and authority.

Dennis Serette told this author in a recent interview, “Anytime they organize anywhere to do anything, they always lead off putting together a therapy clinic. I sat through a number of these therapy situations—some of them that Lenora Fulani [was in]. And I personally witnessed Fred Newman and others bringing Fulani to tears, as they did others in different sessions. After tearing them down they’d turn around and build them back up again and tell them how great they were.”

Sheila McCue, a long-time labor activist in New York, said she first heard about NAP through her therapist at the ISTR. “I was surprised I hadn’t heard of them before since I had been around the New York activist community for a while. Against the advice of other progressives, McCue joined NAP and after a year was asked to join the “underground” International Workers Party (the IWP, formed in 1974, went “underground” with the formation of NAP in 1979).

McCue said “she soon found out that my therapist, Fred Newman, was the head of it.” McCue said she gradually became disconnected from family and non-NAP friends, and, after five years of working closely with Fred Newman and the NAP Central Committee, felt completely frustrated and exploited and decided to leave NAP. “They certainly exploited me. Five years of my life were gone, my financial security was gone—I had given everything to the party. What they say they’re doing is building a multi-racial, independent party—which sounded, and still sounds, like a good idea—but that’s not what they’re doing. What they’re building is a cult.

“I think it’s really important for people to understand that not only is it outrageous—what they’re doing—but it’s dangerous...I think people need to know that and not let them into their communities.”

This manipulation of emotion also occurs on a larger scale. Masha Gessen, editor of Next magazine, (see also Next, Vol. 1, No. 37; Aug 31-Sept 6, 1988) who attended NAP’s national convention in August 1988, describes marathon sessions from 8 a.m. to midnight where speakers would build the members up to an emotional climax and, “like automatons,” the audience would rise and fall, applaud and be silent in unison. Gessen said gay and lesbian member/speakers would rise to give testimony to the benefits they derive from NAP, and then go on to present difficult questions they had encountered in campaigning for the party. After several speakers, Ernie Chambers (NAP candidate for U.S. Senate from Nebraska) rose saying “you think you’re so sophisticated” and proceeded to denigrate the speakers with homophobic comments and accusations of stupidity. According to Gessen, other member/speakers throughout the day had been the object of similar ridicule when they expressed concerns over how to deal with critics of NAP. All were counseled with explicit rhetoric with which to respond to different criticisms.

Many gay men and lesbians—whether approached by NAP in bars or on the streets—are asking why our community and why now? A look at NAP’s relationship to several other political communities suggests a history of political opportunism and misrepresentation which has only recently targeted the gay and lesbian community.

Ken Lawrence’s piece in this issue presents several stark examples of this opportunism. The Rainbow Coalition has been amongst the hardest hit by these tactics. Because of its two “spin-off” organizations—the Rainbow Alliance and the Rainbow Lobby—NAP has often been confused with the Rainbow Coalition. One example of this is the confusion that arose during the 1986 Boston race for state representative between incumbent John E. McDonough and NAP candidate Cathy Stewart.

Ros Everdell at the Boston headquarters of the Rainbow Coalition claims that the problems actually began before the Stewart campaign but were accentuated when Stewart and NAP, in their door-to-door campaigning, identified themselves as members of “the Rainbow” with
no further clarification. Similarly, one of Stewart's campaign leaflets was titled "Women and the Rainbow." The result, says Everdell, was that many people confused these canvassers as being connected with the Rainbow Coalition. "Some called the Rainbow Coalition office to say 'I gave money' or 'I was going to give money but then became suspicious'" says Everdell. When challenged, canvassers denied there was any connection between NAP and the Rainbow Lobby/Alliance, despite overwhelming evidence to the contrary in their own National Alliance newspaper.

Mary Fridley—NAP’s New England Regional Coordinator and U.S. Senate candidate in Massachusetts—in a recent interview countered, "Actually the Rainbow Coalition wasn't the first 'Rainbow' it was Fred Hampton of the Black Panthers.... Our point is we never knew that 'the Rainbow' was owned by anybody.... I'm not arguing over the Rainbow name. We chose the Rainbow name because the Rainbow happens to describe the movement we're building. We happen to be the independent wing of the movement. There are some serious political disagreements between the independent wing of that movement and the Rainbow Coalition which by and large has settled in as the left wing of the Democratic Party.... The Rainbow Lobby has made clear that they are not the Rainbow Coalition.... I think what [the Rainbow Coalition] won't say is that they're being out-organized in many cases and they can't stand it."

One of the first indications that the gay and lesbian community might experience similar difficulty with NAP is reported by Sue Hyde of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (NGLTF) in Washington D.C. In a May 1988 letter to editors of the gay and lesbian press, Hyde described a 1985 incident when she was falsely led into participation on a panel, purportedly about hate crimes, but which turned out to be "nothing more than a recruitment meeting for the party.... I was lied to several times in this whole process." In addition, amongst the panelists was a Nation of Islam minister who "launched into a very...offensive anti-Semitic, anti-gay diatribe."

In a recent interview with this author, Hyde updated her impressions of NAP and its operation in the gay and lesbian community. "Since April I have talked to no fewer than fifteen different gay and lesbian activists who have called to express, minimally, puzzlement and some to express their total frustration and outright anger at the tactics being used by NAP. It is clear, as people around the country come in contact with NAP, that there is a proportional increase in anger and alienation from that organization as a trustworthy partner in social change." As Hyde concludes in her May letter, "Taken all together, the [Berlet] report and comments from community activists paint a picture of NAP's political opportunism and willingness to sacrifice principles for the sake of building itself as an institution."

All of these stories indicate the need for the gay and lesbian community to seriously question its ability to work productively with or within NAP. The community must also take a hard look at what this history of opportunism indicates about NAP's motives for pursuing the gay and lesbian support and participation. NAP has always claimed to be pro-gay. With the onset of the presidential race and the Fulani campaign, efforts to recruit gay men and lesbians have been stepped up. Can it possibly be a coincidence that at this same time the gay and lesbian community was one of the few vocal harsh critics of Dukakis? Probably not. With the Dukakis nomination secured and Bush an unacceptable alternative, the gay community asked itself "Now what?" NAP was ready with an answer: "Fulani." NAP appeared at some of the first Boston ACT-OUT meetings in 1987 to advocate NAP as the best vehicle for our abundant energy and anger. Again in 1988, at a lesbian/gay political forum where activists sought a strategy of response to the presidential race, NAP was there to promote Fulani.

Both local and national gay and progressive activists say in their experience with the group, NAP has not sought to contribute constructively to a strategic dialogue within the gay community, nor to an independent lesbian and gay movement. Instead, NAP has sought to co-opt both dialogue and movement into a NAP framework. Indeed, many groups—including the People's Party in 1978 and continuing through the Mississippi Welfare Rights Organization and the Mississippi Gay Alliance—have reported NAP's repeated attempts to disrupt their political activity. In each
case, according to Berlet, "the group [penetrates] a progressive organization and [seeks] to take it over or recruit away its membership."

NAP's platform is appealing. It is one toward which much of the Left has always been working. The virtue of the ideals is not disputed. Neither is there dispute that this platform has drawn the support of many activists committed to a broad movement for social change. Neither, finally, is there dispute that the electoral accomplishments of Lenora Fulani are worthy of recognition. However, there is great dispute over NAP's ability—given a centralized, authoritarian structure centered around Fred Newman and social therapeutic strategies for organizing—to form links with other communities in order to create a broad alliance. In fact, NAP's history indicates a willingness to subvert other organizations and to associate with people like LaRouche and Farrakhan whose ideologies oppose those of so many on the left. To quote Sue Hyde of NGTLF, "Whether they intend it or not, I think the National Alliance Party could subvert an autonomous, grassroots lesbian and gay movement."

FOOTNOTES
1. Village Voice, 6/1/82.

Leigh Peake is a lesbian activist and member of the Radical America editorial collective.
THE AFRICAN ORIGINS OF "WESTERN CIV"

Frank Brodhead

The controversy over academic core curricula in the humanities—"Western Civilization" and the like—has underscored the ideological nature of these courses. One critical assumption highlighted by this debate is that our western culture is rooted in the genius of ancient Greece, and has no significant history before that. This assumption is the point of departure for Martin Bernal's fascinating three-volume study, Black Athena: The Afroasiatic Roots of Classical Civilization. If Bernal's insights and arguments are sustained, "Western Civ" will never be the same. The "Greece" that is taught in schools will be seen to be a fabrication, its origins heavily influenced by racism and anti-Semitism, the result sustained by more than a century of European chauvinism masquerading as scholarship.

Black Athena argues that the ancient civilization we now call "classical" had its roots in an Egyptian-centered, eastern Mediterranean world. Around 1700 B.C., at a time when the land now called Greece was occupied by relatively backward people, Egyptian and Phoenician colonies were founded there. Colonization and continued contact between Greece and Egypt, and between Greece and the West Semitic cultures, especially Phoenicia, gradually brought Greece within the civilization of the eastern Mediterranean. From these more advanced peoples of Africa and the eastern Mediterranean, the Greeks derived their alphabet...
and much of their language, religion, philosophy, and science. At that time the prestige of Egyptian culture towered above the Mediterranean, and students or scholars journeyed there to learn, just as young intellectuals in our own century might go to New York or Paris. Bernal argues that almost all of the great thinkers of classical Greece were strongly influenced by Egypt, and that much of what is now commonly regarded as the contribution of classical Greece to the founding of Western Civilization should be viewed as the transformation and transmission of the wisdom of Egypt.

Bernal calls this picture of the origins of Greek civilization the "Ancient Model," because the Greeks themselves had no doubt that their civilization was derived from Egypt and Phoenicia, first from colonies and then from continued contact. This view, which dominates the Histories of Herodotus, was maintained by educated people for more than 2000 years. There was, for example, general unanimity among the early Christian Fathers that the Greeks had learned their philosophy from Egypt. The Renaissance revival of interest in Greece valued Greek philosophy in part because it preserved and transmitted some of the ancient wisdom of Egypt. Indeed, until the decline in the belief in magic at the end of the seventeenth century, the extant writings and traditions of Egypt were highly valued. In the eighteenth century this tradition of esoteric wisdom provided the philosophical foundations of Freemasonry, which, as Bernal points out, "included almost every significant figure in the Enlightenment." Finally, we need only recall Napoleon's expedition to Egypt in 1798, accompanied by 165 "savants" and scholars, to be reminded of the high value placed on Egyptian wisdom and culture by the modernizing elites of revolutionary Europe. Indeed, given the high reputation of ancient Egypt, it would not have occurred to anyone that ascribing the origins of classical Greece to Egyptian colonization and continued contact was in any way belittling.

In the half century bracketing the French Revolution, this Ancient Model suddenly collapsed. The foundation of ancient Greece was now ascribed to invasions or migrations by "Aryan" peoples from the north. Contact with

Egyptian or West Semitic peoples was played down, and was denied altogether by the end of the nineteenth century. In place of the Ancient Model, scholars constructed what Bernal calls the "Aryan Model." It is this model, with its invasion of Indo-European-speaking peoples from the north, and its omission of any significant contact of the proto-Greeks with African or West Semitic peoples, that grammar school students still learn today. As for the ancient

Above right: the Mercator projection, first devised in 1569, despite Europe's surface area of 9.7 million km and Africa's surface area of 30 million km. Above left: Arno Peter's 1974 map, designed to give a more accurate view.

Greeks, their belief that they derived much of their civilization from Phoenicia and especially Egypt was simply a mistake. As Bernal wryly observes, "the more the nineteenth century admired the Greeks, the less it respected their writing of their own history."

Why did the Aryan Model replace the Ancient Model? Bernal argues that there were no significant developments in archeology, linguistics, or classical studies from the mid-eighteenth century to the mid-nineteenth century that would have justified the overthrow of the Ancient Model. Moreover, there were no
legends among the ancient Greeks concerning Aryan invasions from the north, except for some migrations that were far too late to have had any role in founding Greek civilization. Rather, the reasons for the paradigm shift were entirely external to the bodies of relevant evidence, and the reinterpretation of this evidence in favor of the Aryan Model reflected European ideological concerns, not advances in scholarship. The mechanics of this paradigm shift—the “Fabrication of Ancient Greece”—form the core of the first volume of Black Athena.

For the sake of convenience we can divide the elements of the paradigm shift, as does Bernal, into those factors that weakened the reputation of Egypt, and those factors that strengthened the reputation of Greece, among scholars and intellectuals in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. These factors were closely interrelated.

Several ideological trends were responsible for the decline of Egypt’s reputation. One was the anchoring of post–Napoleonic counterrevolutionary ideology in conservative Christianity. While the Egyptian texts peacefully co-existed with Christianity for nearly sixteen centuries, by the time of the Renaissance the detente was a fragile one. This is illustrated by the persecution and judicial murder of the great scientist Giordano Bruno in 1600, essentially on the grounds that he regarded Egyptian lore and not Christianity as the true religion. This “natural religion,” which required no external “God” to animate Nature, was strongly associated with what Margaret Jacob calls the “Radical Enlightenment”: the secularists, republicans, and pantheists who believed that the English Revolution of 1688 had not gone far enough, and who were determined to overthrow the continental autocracies. The prominent role played by Freemasons in the eighteenth century revolutions—both in Europe and America—indicates the continuing vitality of non-Christian philosophies ultimately derived from Egypt. By 1815, however, with the final defeat of the French Revolution, the cultural climate created throughout Europe by the counterrevolutionary victors was hostile to all views carrying even a hint of subversion, and the cause of Egypt shared the Revolution’s defeat.

Another reason for the fall of the Ancient Model was the rise of the cult of “Progress” in the eighteenth century. For the first time, the idea that History marches forward, rather than simply moving cyclically, dominated secular thought. This had negative consequences for the reputation of Egypt, whose very stability had once been among its strongest points: along with Rome and China, Egypt’s civilization was valued precisely because of its longevity and resistance to change. Now the same evidence was more frequently interpreted to denote stagnation, and the fact that Greece came after Egypt made it in some way better. Increasingly, too, European economic and industrial development fostered a self-conception that Europe was more “advanced” than other continents; and European Greece, even ancient Greece, benefited from its association with “Progress,” while the reputation of a decadent and “Oriental” Egypt correspondingly suffered. This dichotomy was only increased as European (primarily French and English) imperialism in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries turned Asia and Africa into colonies, and out of these experiences of contact evolved the ideology of “Orientalism” that has been analyzed by Edward Said.

But the two most important reasons for the replacement of the Ancient Model by the Aryan Model in the eighteenth century were the closely related and mutually reinforcing ideologies of racism and Romanticism. Travellers in ancient times, and scholars for centuries afterwards, had reported that the ancient Egyptians included people of different colors, and that some of Egypt’s most powerful leaders were black. Until the end of the Renaissance, this claim was accepted as a matter of fact by Europeans. But by the eighteenth century the rise of modern, “scientific” racism—roughly paralleling the rise of the trade in African slaves—made the question, “What color were the ancient Egyptians?” an urgent one for the European intelligentsia. As Bernal notes:

If it had been scientifically “proved” that Blacks were biologically incapable of civilization, how could one explain Ancient Egypt—which was inconveniently placed on the African continent? There were two, or rather, three solutions. The first was to deny that the Ancient Egyptians were black; the second was
to deny that the Ancient Egyptians had created a “true” civilization; the third was to make doubly sure by denying both. The last has been preferred by most 19th- and 20th-century historians.

Despite some attempts to redefine the ancient Egyptians as “white,” this was contradicted by both centuries of interpretative tradition and by the polemics of the more extreme racists. By the beginning of the nineteenth century, ancient Egypt had lost the honorific status of “white.”

If racism was the decisive blow against Egypt and the Ancient Model, Romanticism gave birth to the new Aryan Model. Almost all of the European intelligentsia was deeply affected by Romanticism, not least the historians. Romanticism put particular emphasis on the local and specific qualities of national history, as opposed to the general and universal characteristics of “Mankind” that preoccupied thinkers of the Enlightenment. Because Romantic historians likened national history to biography, their understanding of the “Greek question” became entwined with the simultaneous Romantic interest in childhood as a distinct stage of life. Thus romanticism inevitably led historians and others back to the issue of race. As Bernal puts it, “It became increasingly intolerable that Greece—which was seen by the Romantics not merely as the epitome of Europe but also as its pure childhood—could be the result of the mixture of native Europeans and colonizing Africans and Semites.”

This dilemma was eventually resolved by the new science of linguistics, a product of the Romantic movement. Academic Romantics were especially interested in language, and in the linguistic origins of national character. They believed that the development of language was rooted in the physical geography of place. The discovery of an Indo-European language family around the turn of the eighteenth century quickly gave birth to the idea of an Aryan race that developed its superior linguistic qualities in the cold and austere forests of some mysterious European heartland, and then descended on the backward cultures of ancient India and Greece. “Naturally,” notes Bernal, “the purer and more northern Hellenes were the conquerors, as befitted a master race. The Pre-Hellenic Aegean populations, for their part, were sometimes seen as marginally European, and always as Caucasian; in this way, even the natives were untainted by African and Semitic ‘blood.’”

Thus the model established by the Aryan invasions of India, and the links between Greek and Sanskrit established through the discovery of the Indo-European language family, facilitated an uncritical acceptance of a model positing similar “Aryan” invasions of the Greek peninsula in ancient times.

Bernal argues that the radical changes taking place in the European university system in the early nineteenth century made it the primary vehicle for reshaping the history of the West to accommodate the demands of racism and Romanticism. Within the reformed system, especially in Prussia and Great Britain, Classics dominated the curriculum. In the case of Prussia, reform took place as part of the progres-
sive, nation-building reaction that swept the intelligentsia and middle classes following Prussia's defeat by Napoleon in 1806. The author of the reforms, Wilhelm von Humboldt, put the study of Antiquity at the center of his curriculum. "Our study of Greek history," he wrote, "is...a matter quite different from our other historical studies."

For us the Greeks step out of the circle of history. Even if their destinies belong to the general chain of events, yet in this respect they matter least to us. We fail entirely to recognize our relationship to them if we dare to apply the standards to them which we apply to the rest of world history. Knowledge of the Greeks is not merely pleasant, useful, or necessary to us—no, in the Greeks alone we find the ideal of that which we should like to be and produce. If every part of history enriched us with its human wisdom and human experience, then from the Greeks we take something more than earthly—almost godlike.  

If the ancient Greeks were semi-divine, and to be measured with yardsticks not of human scale, they could obviously have no dependent relation to black Africans, even in the remotest past.

What Bernal calls "Hellenomania" swept Europe in the early nineteenth century, reaching a peak during the Greek revolution against the Ottoman Empire in 1821. Greek, and more especially Classics, soon came to dominate the curriculum of secondary and higher education in Great Britain, where it was valued especially for its character-forming functions, particularly at the new public (i.e., private) schools. In both Britain and Germany, the study of Classics was seen as an antidote to the revolutionary excesses that had culminated the Enlightenment.

The early nineteenth century is celebrated in the study of historiography as the period when
modern research methods were developed, and History separated itself from mere tale-telling. Yet the new scholarship adapted itself unhesitatingly to the Aryan Model. For example, growing sophistication in the approach to historical sources led to a total rejection of the large number of ancient references to Egyptian and Phoenician colonization and later cultural borrowings on the grounds that they were “late,” or “unreliable,” or that they were found in documents that contradicted each other or displayed credulity toward fantastic legends. More generally, an impossibly high level of “proof” was required of claims supporting the Ancient Model, such as the links between Eastern mythology and Greek mythology. Similarly, throughout his analysis Bernal notes the disastrous consequences of the modern conception that only the history of objects, i.e. archaeology, is “objective” history, and that literary, linguistic, mythological, or other evidence can be safely discarded. Surveying some of the major scholarship that built the Aryan Model in the nineteenth century, Bernal concludes:

The most striking feature of [this] work is that it was based entirely on traditional material that had always been available to scholars. None of the 19th-century extensions of knowledge was involved.... All this means that the destruction of the old model took place entirely for what historians of science call “externalist” reasons. The Ancient Model fell not because of any new developments in the field but because it did not fit the prevailing worldview. To be precise, it was incompatible with the paradigms of race and progress of the early 19th century.

*Black Athena* is an antidote to any misconceptions that advances in the techniques of historical research necessarily advance our historical understanding.

The transformation of higher education had another important consequence for the new, ideological History. Throughout Europe, the advance of “professional” scholarship in the early nineteenth century meant a decline in the relative importance of nonacademic scholarship, centralizing the maintenance of the historical record in the hands of a few. Proponents of the Aryan Model gained control of academic departments and scholarly institutions, and rigorously excluded dissenters from the party line. Once again, the “professionalization” of historical research, writing, and teaching served to diminish, rather than advance, the understanding of the foundation of Greek civilization.

We have noted that the Ancient Model attributed the origins of Greek civilization not only to Egypt but to the West Semitic cultures of the eastern Mediterranean, especially Phoenicia. The reputation of Phoenicia was only indirectly affected by the elimination of any Egyptian role in the formation of ancient Greece. Bernal calls this intermediate phase in the paradigm shift the “Broad Aryan Model.” While denying any Egyptian role in the formation of ancient Greece, the Broad Aryan Model credited the Phoenicians with colonization and continued contact with early Greece, and especially with contributing an alphabet that formed the basis of our modern alphabet. Through much of the nineteenth century, the British even maintained a certain national identification with Phoenicia,
the nation of traders, and especially with their colony at Carthage. Moreover, some of the century’s major archeological discoveries, such as that of Schliemann at Mycenae in the 1870s, initially appeared to reconfirm the presence of Phoenician settlements and trade.

The rise of racial anti-Semitism in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, however, established strong biases within academic scholarship against Semitic influence in ancient Greece, and established what Bernal calls the “Extreme Aryan Model.” At first, a growing portion of what were obviously Semitic influences were attributed to Babylonia and Assyria; and contact between east and west was said to have been by overland routes, through the Anatolian peninsula, and not by sea and the Phoenicians. Next came the discovery of the archeological remains of Mesopotamia, the home of the non-Semitic-speaking Sumerians. This provided an alternative, non-Semitic source to which clearly eastern influences in Greece could be ascribed. Finally, discoveries by Arthur Evans on Crete, for which he coined the phrase “Minoan” civilization, soon led to the hypothesis that a “Pre-Hellenic” people, not at all Semitic or Egyptian, occupied the islands of the Aegean and transmitted their culture to the Aryan invaders. The many aspects of ancient Greek civilization that could not be linked to Indo-European-speaking peoples could now be conveniently attributed to the Pre-Hellenics. By the 1920s, what Bernal characterizes as “crude racism” permeated the field of classics. Not only had both Egypt and Phoenicia been eliminated as possible sources of influence on early Greek civilization, but any suggestion that this might have been the case led instantly to professional marginalization.

Although Bernal has reserved most of his discussion of the inadequacies of the scholarly basis of the Aryan Model to the second and third volumes of Black Athena, in The Fabrication of Ancient Greece he has persuasively argued that the displacement of the Ancient Model was due to external factors, not to evidence produced and interpreted by new scholarship. But he also observes that the excesses of racism and anti-Semitism, most notably in association with Hitler’s Germany and the brutalities of modern colonialism, have themselves become “external” factors discrediting scholarship based on racist and anti-Semitic biases. Citing a number of scholarly straws in the wind, Bernal states that the days of the Aryan Model are numbered, and speculates that the explanatory model he favors, a Revised Ancient Model, will become the hegemonic paradigm early in the twentieth century.

Is this wishful thinking? In many ways it appears that the Aryan Model was a response to a European self-conception that it stood so far above the other civilizations of the world that it could not possibly be in any cultural debt to them. Conversely, the world today is popularly seen as far more interdependent, and the dominance of Europeans in the world is no longer self-evident. Nevertheless, it is evident that the power of racism and anti-Semitism remains strong, and generations of academic scholarship have created within the field of Classics a powerful vested interest favoring the continuation of the Aryan Model.

An interesting example of this conflict concerns the fate of Michael Astour’s fascinating Hellenosemitica, which argues that “the entire Mycenaean civilization was essentially a peripheral culture of the Ancient East, its westernmost extension.” Bernal relates the poignant story of Astour’s life, which included study in Paris in the 1930s, detention in Soviet prison camps from 1939 to 1950, six months in Siberia (where he continued his research on Greek-Semitic relations), and emigration to the West in 1956, where he soon gained a teaching position at Brandeis. Having not only survived but continued fundamental research on east Mediterranean history, Astour published Hellenosemitica in 1967. Despite his overwhelming evidence to the contrary, critics referred to his “absurdities,” and refused to acknowledge that there was West Semitic presence in the Mediterranean until four centuries after the Trojan War. Although the book sold well and had to be quickly reprinted, the attack on it was so strong that Astour has given up work on this subject. Bernal believes, however, that Astour and a handful of other scholars have laid the groundwork for an overthrow of the Extreme Aryan Model.

What about Egypt? On several occasions Bernal makes some brief observations about
the “African” nature of Pharaonic Egypt, but he does not pursue the implications of this. Several African historians, however, most notably the Senegalese historian Cheikh Anta Diop, have forcefully argued that Egyptian civilization came from Black Africa, that the major Pharaohs of Egypt had black skins, and that Egyptian culture was a Black culture. Indeed, Basil Davidson, the British historian of Africa, faults Bernal for not noting that African historians have already achieved a comparable overthrow of their own Aryan Model paradigm, and the formative role of Black Africans in their own culture is now conceded by modern scholarship. It would appear, therefore, that a return to any kind of Revised Ancient Model for the origins of Greek civilization, which Bernal believes is supported by compelling evidence, entails the simple but unqualified acknowledgement that our “Western Civilization” has its roots in Black Africa. I think it is hard to overstate the mental revolution that white America would have to undergo to make this simple act of consciousness.

**FOOTNOTES**

1. This essay reviews Black Athena: The Afroasiatic Roots of Classical Civilization. Vol. 1, The Fabrication of Ancient Greece, 1785–1985 (Rutgers Univ. Press, 1987). The second volume of Black Athena, to be published next year, is Greece European or Levantine? The third volume, scheduled for publication in 1991, will be called Solving the Riddle of the Sphinx. There is an extensive summary of both volumes in the Introduction to The Fabrication of Ancient Greece.

2. One of the fruits of this invasion was the discovery of the Rosetta Stone and the eventual deciphering of hieroglyphics. Napoleon’s Institute of Egypt, founded shortly after he landed in Alexandria, eventually published 23 volumes of drawings and descriptions of Egyptian ancient and modern. Some appreciation of this effort can be found in Egypt Revealed: Scenes From Napoleon’s Description De L’Egypte, Robert Anderson and Ibrahim Fawzy, eds. (Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 1987).

3. This view persists. The 15th edition of the Encyclopedia Britannica, for example, states that “in classical times these early Egyptians were also credited by the Greeks with great knowledge and wisdom; but the evidence provided by Egyptian writings does not support this Greek opinion. It is probable that Greek travellers in Egypt, impressed by the grandeur and antiquity of the monuments of the land and misled by the accounts of past ages given to them by their priestly guides, grossly misinterpreted the evidence and
jumped to unwarranted conclusions” (Entry on “Egypt”).
4. Margaret C. Jacob, The Radical Enlightenment: Panthe¬
isism, Freemasons and Republicans (London: Allen & Un¬
7. Bernal, p. 29.
8. Bernal makes it clear that the Ancient Model was over¬
thrown before knowledge of Indo-European became wide¬
spread; but the rise of the Aryan Model was closely related
to the new linguistic discoveries.
11. Philhellenism was also a common ingredient of radical
thought, both because of the enthusiasm aroused by the
Greek Revolution of 1821, and because of the relatively
democratic character of ancient Greece in comparison to
ancient Egypt, Rome, or China. The Left Hegelians, for
example, remained passionate enthusiasts for classical
Greece, and Marx attacked as nonsense the lingering claim
that Egyptian mythology might have had a hand in Greek
art. Yet at no point did the radical and democratic enthusi¬
asts for Greece, ancient or modern, reflect on the racial
dimensions underlying the overthrow of the Ancient Model
and the rise of the Aryan Model.
12. Illustrating the bias of Classics scholarship, the deci¬
phering of Egyptian hieroglyphics, which was theoretically
possible following the discovery of the Rosetta Stone dur¬
ing Napoleon’s expedition to Egypt, went largely ignored
for decades when some of the earliest efforts gave support
to the precedence of Egypt over Greece, and even the
heretical conclusion that Egyptian civilization preceded
that of the Bible stories. “This absence of any serious con¬
deration of Egyptology between 1831 and 1860,” notes Bernal,
was precisely the period during which “the Egyptian-based
Ancient Model was destroyed and the Indian-based Aryan
Model erected” (253).
13. Bernal, p. 218. Bernal acknowledges that to dismiss
documents credulous of wild legends appears plausible. But
in an interesting aside he adds: “It should be remembered
that every period has general beliefs which in later times are
considered absurd. I maintain that in this case, what we
now believe to be the mistaken beliefs in centaurs and other
mythical creatures are less misleading—on the issues with
which we are concerned—than the 19th-century myths on
race, unchanging national characteristics, the productive¬
ness of purity and the deleterious effects of racial mixture—
and, above all, the semi-divine status of the Greeks, which
made them transcend the laws of history and language” (328).
15. Michael C. Astour, Hellenosemitica: An Ethnic and
Cultural Study in West Semitic Impact on Mycenaean
16. For an English-language compilation of Dion’s major
writings on this question, see The African Origin of Civil¬
ization: Myth or Reality, trans. Mercer Cook (Westport,

Frank Brodhead is a former editor of Radical
America.
Civilization Denied:
Questions On *Black Athena*

E. Frances White

Martin Bernal’s book, *Black Athena*, attacks the racist notion that European “civilization” begins in Greece and has no relation to any Egyptian past. My interest here in commenting on *Black Athena* is twofold. First, I want to emphasize the black contribution to establishing that European history has an African past and second, I suggest that there are limits to a conceptual framework that exposes “Western civilization” as an ideological and racist construction and yet remains committed to notions of “civilization.”

*Black Athena* traces the displacement of the “Ancient Model” of European development (in which intellectuals accepted the notion that Greece borrowed extensively from Egypt and the eastern Mediterranean) by the “Aryan Model” that exercises this African past. Bernal connects this transformation to a growing racism that could not accept any African contributions to European history. Many progressives have welcomed this unraveling of the “Aryan Model” that structures what conservative educators (and most liberals) think students should learn about Western “civilization.”

On the face of it, Bernal has made a valuable contribution to the ideological battles over the meaning of Africa in Western “civilization.” Yet, in part, Bernal sets out to undermine a discourse on civilization that already has been attacked by African and African-American thinkers since, at least, the nineteenth century. Black intellectuals have always held to a different view of Egypt’s place in European history, but Bernal barely acknowledges this contribution. He does mention that he has read the work of Yosef Ben Jochannan, George G. James and Cheikh Anta Diop; yet he hastens to tell us where he differs from these authors rather than emphasizing how much he shares with them as he dismantles the “Aryan Model.” It is not until page 436 of 450 pages of text that he acknowledges the following:

Thus, at the end of the 1980s, I see continued struggle among black scholars on the question of the ‘racial’ nature of the Ancient Egyptians. On the other hand, there is no serious division among them on the question of the high quality of Egyptian civilization and of its central role in the formation of Greece.

Simply because this debate has taken place outside of mainstream academia does not mean that it does not deserve attention. Within Africa and its diaspora, this debate has been at the core of the oppositional discourse against racism. Bernal has repeated the dynamic set up by a white-dominated academy in which white intellectual discourse is given more weight than black intellectual discourse.

Having grown up in a black world that does not question the importance of Egypt, I know the debt owed to these passionate writers. Like many other African-American intellectuals I am able to survive psychologically in a racist intellectual environment in part because I have been provided with a certain kind or armor that assures me that Africans can build complex societies despite what we are taught in school and what Reagan’s conservative Secretary of Education, William Bennett believe. Black nationalists have taught us that we did it before and we can do it again. As I think back on this oppositional tradition, I can only wonder if Bernal has fallen prey to the same shortcoming that he exposes for the architects of the Aryan Model; like the latter, he cannot fully acknowledge the authority of African intellectuals and place his work in the context of the black scholars who preceded him.

Ironically, perhaps because he does not seriously engage the work of Diop and others; he falls into at least two of the same traps as the black nationalists. First, although he feels that he is attacking nineteenth and twentieth century notions of Western progress, he fails to do so.
adequately. The belief that successful civilizations move from the simple to the complex, following natural laws, is not challenged by adding Egypt to the chain of successive civilizations that culminates in Western capitalist societies. It appears that such constructions generate a view that civilizations naturally build off of the preceding ones. Both Bernal and the black nationalists are so interested in proving the Egyptian contribution to European intellectual development that they, along with the racists they attack, assume a straight forward connection between the Greek past and European nation states.

In fact, constructing the Ancient Model of Europe's classical development depended on new information brought by Muslim scholars to people whom Arabs and North Africans felt were shockingly unsophisticated. Indeed for quite some time, European intellectuals knew very little of Greece. Arab and North African intellectuals translated and reintroduced many of the Greek philosophers to Europeans during the Middle Ages.

Although the current of direct transmission was never totally interrupted, it is certain that the heritage of ancient thought was really discovered, appreciated and understood by the Christian Middle Ages only through the Muslim Arab philosophers, among whom those of Andalusia and the Maghrib hold a very honorable place.¹

Second, like the black nationalists and the racist architects of the Aryan Model, Bernal accepts notions of advanced and backward societies. It is easy to overlook the problems inherent in describing Egypt as advanced and Greece as backward as we try to undermine racist presuppositions that Europeans were always superior to Africans. But how do we speak of Egypt in relation to the rest of Africa? Are we to accept once again old, racist notions of sub-Saharan Africa as backwards? The problem is best illustrated by Chancellor Williams' The Destruction of Black Civilization, an influential black nationalist history text by a distinguished professor from Howard University. Accepting Egypt as the pinnacle of African history, Williams, sees savages, primitives and cannibals in much of the rest of Africa. When I first read Destruction, I thought I had been exposed to the mind of a white racist; it was hard to believe that all the work has gone into undermining images of Africans as uncivilized savages had not reached an influential black nationalist. Now I recognize that part of his problem stems from an overemphasis on Egypt in African history.

Of course, Bernal does not speak of Africans as primitive or barbarian. In fact, he seems to have no interest in Africans outside of Egypt, including those from whom Egyptians borrowed to build their complex society. But the implication of his work, accepting as it does Egypt as advanced and Europe as backward, is to place sub-Saharan Africa back into the backward, uncivilized mode.

I have for some time rejected the notion of civilization altogether and grown increasingly uncomfortable with the black nationalist search for African civilizations that can prove that we are just as sophisticated as Europeans. As I suggest above, this search does have the value of exposing the lie that Africans could not build complex societies. At the same time, unfor-
Fortunately, it relegates too much of African history to an irrelevant and embarrassing past. The stunning accomplishments of "stateless" societies go overlooked for a focus on kingdoms and "civilizations." Yet as Graham Connah suggests:

The term 'civilization' has been quietly abandoned by many writers, it is too vague a concept and too subjective to be useful. It also has unpleasant connotations that are at best ethnocentric and at worst egocentric. It implies an 'us' and 'them' situation: we are 'civilized', they are primitive. Instead, there has been an increasing tendency to investigate what is often called the rise of complex society'....

Civilization is by necessity defined by reference to the uncivilized—whether Greek or sub-Saharan African. Since Bernal has abstracted Egyptian "civilization" from its African milieu, this problem can easily go unnoticed. In fact, Bernal seems to be mired in the debate of the 1950s over what constitutes civilization (see p. 12). Assuming that South-West Asia was the cradle of civilization, the scholars in this debate defined the term by identifying the elements of that region's complex societies, such as cities, agricultural irrigation, metalworking, stone architecture, wheels, and most importantly, writing. By such a definition, the complex societies of sub-Saharan Africa and those that existed in what has become known as North and South America remained civilized until contact with Europeans. Needless to say at the very least, we need to problematize the term, 'civilization'. Otherwise it will remain too easy for the Reagan/Bush conservatives to hurl the epithet, uncivilized, at the Libyans or for the Western news media to bring us confused reports from Burundi the next time a 'tribe' goes on an 'uncivilized' rampage. For white Americans to accept the African contributions to Greek "civilization", some very basic concepts will have to be overturned. I wonder if Bernal is truly ready for this step.

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State of the Art: Defeating Harvard’s Anti-Union Campaign

Martin Heggestad

The recent drive to organize clerical and technical workers at Harvard University featured not only innovative and remarkably effective organizing tactics, but also a relatively new style of employer opposition. In dealing with a union drive among white-collar employees, a university with a reputation as an enlightened employer is today less likely to resort to traditional tactics such as firing pro-union employees, restricting organizers’ access to workplaces, and similar forms of harassment and intimidation. Universities and other service-sector employers are gradually replacing such crude and blatantly illegal methods with more subtle attempts to undermine workers’ self-confidence, to create workplace tension and distrust, and to exploit fears and stereotypes about unions.

Such tactics are often effective, but can be overcome. During the Harvard drive, the university administration mounted a slick, state-of-the-art anti-union campaign which many observers in the labor movement believed would be unbeatable. These skeptics were proved wrong when a slim majority of support staff members voted in favor of unionization. In this article I will explore the anti-union campaign and the union supporters’ response. I will draw in particular on my own experience as a member of the organizing committee at Widener Library, where I have worked as a library assistant since October 1986.
Getting Organized

The election this past May was the culmination of a fifteen-year history of white-collar organizing at Harvard which began in 1973 in the Medical Area in Boston. After two unsuccessful elections in 1977 and 1981, the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) ruled that the proposed bargaining unit must be expanded to include all support staff at the entire university, a total of more than 3500 workers. In 1984, a group of former Medical Area employees headed by Kristine Rondeau, a former lab worker, began organizing both the Cambridge and Boston campuses with the backing of the United Auto Workers. In 1985, the Harvard Union of Clerical and Technical Workers (HUCTW), as the organizing committee called itself, broke with the UAW over issues of local autonomy and philosophical differences in organizing. In January 1987, after eighteen difficult months without regular financial support, HUCTW signed an affiliation agreement with the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), which pledged to underwrite the drive without interfering in local decisions. Over the next sixteen months, twenty-five full- and part-time organizers worked with dozens of employee activists to build an organization capable of withstanding an anti-union campaign.

HUCTW faced a number of obstacles which led many observers to see the drive as a long shot. Traditional (male) union leaders generally view women, who make up 83 percent of the Harvard bargaining unit, as difficult to organize. White-collar workers also are generally believed to be reluctant to consider unionization. The HUCTW organizers were frequently frustrated by the logistical problems of dealing with a large, diverse, and geographically scattered workforce. Harvard’s high turnover rate was another constant challenge. On top of all this, HUCTW faced a powerful and prestigious employer determined to resist unionization.

At Widener Library, despite the presence of all these obstacles, the drive has been particularly successful. We estimate that about 65-70 percent of support staff at Widener voted for union, as opposed to 51 percent for the university as a whole. There are probably several reasons for this difference, one of which is the obvious pay equity problem resulting from poor funding for libraries compared to other areas such as the Business School and the university administration. Another factor is that supervisors at Widener, primarily professional librarians, are also underpaid and poorly treated. In part because they may also benefit from improved salaries and benefits, many of them either openly or privately support the union, and only a few supervisors have actively spoken out against the drive. An additional advantage is that Widener is a large building in which contact and communication among employees is relatively easy. We find that the more workers know about the union and the more they feel part of a larger group, the more likely they are to be supporters.

One-on-one

Another crucial factor in the success of the drive at Widener has been the presence of an active employee organizing committee. During the months leading up to the election, about nine employee activists and several HUCTW staff organizers met once a week during lunchtime to discuss the details of organizing the more than 150 eligible support staff members at Widener. We often had lengthy discussions to determine the best way to approach each individual worker. Every few weeks we also met in the evening for a “rating,” in which we assigned each worker a number between one and four depending on his or her level of support or opposition to the union. In this way we
could keep track of our overall progress and be aware of the level of polarization.

This individualized, "one-on-one" approach to organizing enabled us to build a structure of trusting relationships which was crucial in responding to the anti-union campaign. According to Kris Rondeau, "Every 'yes' vote was someone we knew well—if we didn't have that personal relationship, the anti-union campaign got that person."

**Beating It Early**

Rondeau also emphasized another key principle in defeating an anti-union campaign: "Beat it early—don't wait until it comes." An all-day activists' meeting was held in October 1987, seven months before the May 1988 election, to begin preparing activists for the administration's strategy. We knew that management would not begin its campaign until six to eight weeks before election day, in order to confuse workers and give them little time to sort out the issues. Rondeau warned us that at that time we would begin receiving large numbers of letters and other literature from various administrators, and that management would hold numerous meetings throughout the campus.

To show us what to expect, Jim Braude, a labor lawyer, posed as a Harvard administrator and conducted a simulated anti-union meeting in which he used almost all the arguments and techniques which we would ultimately confront in our workplaces. This meeting, which was videotaped and shown several times over the following months, was our first example of "inoculation" against the anti-union campaign. According to HUCTW organizer Stephanie Tournus, "When you can predict Harvard's strategy you demystify it."

**Harvard's Strategy: "It's like an ad campaign."**

Management's campaign developed much as predicted. It soon became clear that administrators' real goals had little in common with their stated purpose: to fairly and accurately inform employees about the pros and cons of unionization, and to promote open discussion. If that had been their real intention, they would have begun talking to employees months before the election, rather than waiting until the last few weeks. We also noticed that administrators never once mentioned the real reason that employers oppose unions: they do not want to lost their right to make unilateral decisions about salaries and benefits and other issues that affect their employees' lives.

Rondeau described the main goal of the anti-union campaign: "They want to raise the tension level so high that people will vote no just to make the tension go away. They do this by creating nagging self-doubt in individuals." The "information" presented is strictly secondary to the emotional effect an anti-union campaign has on people. Managers base their strategy on the principle that confused and frightened people will vote no. The unending stream of letters, booklets, and meetings during the final weeks of the drive resulted in a constant barrage of confusing, contradictory messages. Many different kinds of arguments are used, "sending out one hundred arrows in the hope that twenty will hit," as Rondeau described it.

Fear played an important role. Administrators constantly implied that employees were being misled, that AFSCME was using them to promote its own agenda rather than workers' interests. Managers always referred to the union as "AFSCME/HUCTW" and never mentioned that all of the staff organizers had previously worked as Harvard support staff members. HUCTW was portrayed as a third party which would interfere in Harvard's peaceful, productive relationship with its employees. Administrators claimed that workers could lose wages, benefits, or "flexibility" by voting for the union, and frequently men-
tioned the possibility of a strike. According to Rondeau, “One of their messages is that the devil you know is better. An anti-union campaign preys on people’s fears about the future.”

Kate Levine, an HUCTW organizer who worked at Widener for over four years, described the approach as follows: “Harvard was capitalizing on its reputation as the ‘authoritative voice’ on any number of issues. It’s a very patriarchal sort of thing—most workers are women who are accustomed to devaluing their own opinions and deferring to authority. In fact, it’s not at all an intellectual approach, nor is it a ‘business’ approach, as they claimed. It’s very psychological, like an ad campaign.” All of the administration’s letters and booklets featured Harvard’s coat of arms, a shield emblazoned with the word “VERITAS.” For many workers it requires courage to stand up to an institution which claims to represent the very concept of truth.

Administrators’ arguments achieved the desired effect of creating more tension even when they clearly contradicted workers’ own experiences. Rondeau explained, “When Harvard lies, people get very nervous because it disturbs their view of the world.”

According to Rondeau, it is the emotional aspect of the administration’s strategy which made the anti-union campaign a “moral outrage”: “It’s one thing to fight a good fight, but it’s another matter when you attack people’s self-confidence.” Rondeau also pointed to a larger message about the world implicit in the administration’s position, a message that “becoming part of a group means giving up individual power.” Ultimately, the union and the employer present conflicting visions of what it means to live a satisfying and successful life, and in the end workers will respond to the vision they find most appealing.

Truth At Harvard

The administration’s main spokesperson on union issues is a labor lawyer named Anne Taylor. In the two months preceding the May 17 election, she conducted dozens of “information meetings” around the campus, produced voluminous amounts of literature and letters, and presented the administration’s case to the media. A polished, articulate woman, Taylor calls herself a liberal and previously worked for the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination.

Like Harvard President Derek Bok, who in the past has praised the accomplishments of the labor movement, Taylor has repeatedly claimed that she is not “anti-union” on principle, but merely believes that collective bargaining is “a poor fit” for the needs of Harvard and its clerical and technical workers. Taylor’s “progressive” image may have been intended to neutralize criticism of Harvard as a patriarchal institution standing in the way of women’s progress.
But many union supporters found themselves wondering if Taylor is perhaps just another woman worker who does the dirty work and serves as the scapegoat for her better-paid male bosses.

Rather than attempting to survey the totality of Taylor’s output, I will give a few examples of her tactics. In late March 1988, after HUCTW filed a petition for a union election, the NLRB held hearings to determine the exact composition of the bargaining unit. The administration was uncooperative, hoping perhaps to delay the election until summer when turnover is high and student and faculty supporters would be away. Among other tactics, the administration refused to turn over a list of non-exempt support staff, claiming that no such list existed. AFSCME lawyers had to issue a subpoena, which contained an exact description of the document in question. Taylor responded with a letter to all support staff which contained the following:

While AFSCME’s local representatives are falsely telling you and the media that Harvard will delay the election, AFSCME’s Washington lawyers have taken steps which could in fact slow the process… The lengthy subpoenas demand…that Harvard give AFSCME an extraordinary range of personal data about every staff member. Information is demanded about your taxes, pay, past pay raises, nationality, social security number, and marital status, for example. In our view, this information is none of AFSCME’s business, and disclosing it would invade your privacy.

Of course, the “personal information” was irrelevant to the hearings and could have been blacked out when the administration turned over the list. But Taylor was able, by taking the language of the subpoena out of context and distorting it, to present her message that the union is an untrustworthy and invasive outside force. She also knew that any attempts by the union to straighten out the situation would seem like childish bickering to anyone who was not carefully following the rather complex proceedings. Had the union responded with a letter of its own, Taylor could have simply sent out another letter denying everything the union said. Such tactics may wind up making both sides look bad, but insofar as they increase the overall level of tension and confusion, they ultimately serve the administration’s interests:

when people become cynical or confused about the unionization process, they tend to vote no.

Taylor showed a similar regard for the truth in the literature her office produced. Every support staff member received four booklets under the rubric “Consider the Facts,” covering salaries, benefits, child care, and a question and answer booklet. In addition, Taylor’s office published a 103-page “Briefing Book” for managers and supervisors, which presented, in a highly selective manner, information on a wide variety of topics.

Like the “Briefing Book,” the booklets directed at staff featured a mixture of misleadingly presented information and various types of scare tactics. An example of the “facts” as presented by Taylor is a graph from the booklet “Money Matters” which is reproduced here. The graph purports to compare salary increases for union vs. non-union staff. Notice that the years at the bottom of the graph are in reverse order, making it look at first glance as if raises were increasing over time, when in fact percentage increases have declined for both categories of employees. In addition, the graph would have looked much less convincing had it compared actual average salaries for the two groups. The unionized employees, primarily male, were being paid relatively decently a dec-

![Harvard Non-Union vs. Union Staff Salary Increases 1980-1987](image)

*From Taylor’s booklet Consider the Facts: Money Matters. Note backward progression of years.*
ade ago, whereas salaries for predominantly female clerical and technical workers were abysmally low. The larger percentage increases reflect a catching-up process in response to a changing labor market, not higher pay for support staff.

Even more insidious was the attempt to undermine workers’ self-confidence and trust in the union. The following is from the question and answer booklet:

**Wouldn’t I get a voice through the union?**

Maybe, maybe not. Unions typically give priority to the demands of the majority of the bargaining unit, and of interest groups with the loudest voice. Also, the union’s national and district offices are likely to express their views on issues and strategy. The union’s demands may or may not reflect a staff member’s wishes.

The patronizing, we-know-what’s-best-for-you tone may have backfired in many cases, but plenty of workers are all too used to distrusting their own perceptions and to letting others think for them.

**The Union Responds**

In late March, when the administration began its anti-union campaign in earnest, union supporters in Widener reacted in various ways. Not only were we outraged at the deceptiveness we were encountering, but most people also felt at some point shaken and demoralized. Karen Hettlinger, a Widener activist, talked of her reaction: "I thought, ‘oh my God they’ve started, they have so much money and power.’ I felt afraid they could do anything they wanted.”

We had been warned that even the most dedicated supporters would probably experience some sort of crisis during the anti-union campaign, and we were careful to keep lines of communication open so that everyone, no matter how active or inactive in the drive, would be able to talk about how they felt about the letters and booklets Taylor’s office was sending out.

Activists made a point of talking to everyone we organized as often as possible; we found it particularly important to pay attention to the very different ways different people would respond to the administration’s campaign. Some would be frightened, others angry. Some would suddenly ask a lot of questions. The atmosphere in Widener never became as tense and polarized as we feared, and we found that we were even able to continue organizing undecided people right up to the day of the election. Some people actually became more approachable after the anti-union campaign began, as if they were reluctant to consider the union until they saw that the administration also took the issue seriously.

When I first went to one of Taylor’s “information” meetings for college library staff, I was so nervous I felt sick to my stomach. I was relieved to find that about ten of the approximately fifteen workers there were union supporters, wearing HUCTW buttons. Taylor began by attempting to seem balanced and reasonable. She acknowledged that the Yale administration had been unresponsive to workers’ concerns before unionization, and she claimed that she might well have voted for the union had she been a Yale support staff member. After this mild beginning, she went on to praise Harvard’s virtues as an employer, and to make ever wilder insinuations about the “dangers” of unionization.

The meetings were clearly intended to provoke confrontation. The union organizers had advised us, however, to resist the temptation to get into heated arguments with administrators,
since doing so would merely increase confusion and tension. Widener activist Susan Radovsky described her approach: “They would throw out ‘firebombs’ which we would answer calmly and logically. It was important to be polite but firm at all times, and to stress that we’re not rebelling, but attempting to make things better for everyone.” Rather than letting administrators control the agenda, we asked hard questions about benefits, turnover, and so on. Keeping a sense of humor was also helpful—there’s nothing like cracking a joke to relieve tension.

Mobilizing Community Support

Anti-union campaigns are most effective when they are kept out of public view. Workers feel much less isolated and afraid during an anti-union campaign if they have the feeling that there are people outside of their workplace who care about and actively support their desire to unionize. In order to mobilize community support, HUCTW organized a campaign to dissuade the administration from actively opposing the union. Many Harvard faculty and alumni called, wrote letters to, and met with Derek Bok and other administrators. Twenty-seven faculty members, including prominent scholars such as Alan Dershowitz, Laurence Tribe, and Stephen Jay Gould, issued a letter to support staff in which, while remaining neutral themselves, they strongly criticized the administration’s conduct. In an unusual break with university policy, three members of the powerful Harvard Board of Overseers added their signatures to an open letter entitled “We’re with you, HUCTW” made public just before the election. A student support group collected several thousand student signatures for a petition urging neutrality. Organizers also collected endorsements from many labor leaders and politicians, including Lieutenant Governor Evelyn Murphy, U.S. Representatives Barney Frank and Joseph Kennedy, and the Boston and Cambridge City Councils.

We never expected the administration to alter its behavior because of the neutrality campaign. Instead, the campaign was intended to encourage workers to think critically about what administrators were doing and saying. Some organizers said that the neutrality effort, along with the extensive media attention the drive attracted, did force the administration to tone down some of its more aggressive tactics.

“If you don’t use literature, it drives the employer nuts.”

Traditional union drives rely heavily on literature, but Rondeau chose to use this organizing tool sparingly. Avoiding literature, she said, is “a million times better for individual leadership development. Literature gets in the way of building strong relationships, stunts growth and perception, and prevents activists from developing skills.” She also asserted that organizers should avoid offering a concrete vision, urging union leaders to “paint with a broad brush. Don’t say, this is the way we do it.

Rather than telling people how to think, let them come up with their own solutions.”

From a strategic point of view, union literature gives management its anti-union campaign. If organizers publish any factual information about the employer, management will assert that the information is inaccurate or incomplete, implying that the union is misleading or deceiving workers. Attempts by organizers to set the record straight will result in further denials by management. In the end, nothing is resolved and workers wind up feeling confused or cynical.

According to Rondeau, “If you don’t use literature, it drives the employer nuts.” It is

Nicole Hollander cartoon to promote a pre-election rally.
much harder for managers to put together an anti-union campaign if they have nothing concrete to attack or deny. In the absence of union literature, Harvard administrators insinuated that HUCTW organizers were untrustworthy because they did not present a comprehensive platform. Supporters responded by repeatedly pointing out that we stand for democracy and self-representation, which means that as union members we will ultimately decide for ourselves on the program we wish to pursue.

The literature that the union did use was designed to avoid the problems described above. Throughout the drive, organizers distributed copies of many articles about HUCTW from a variety of newspapers and magazines. Since these articles were not written by organizers, they did not present an easy target for administrators to criticize. Towards the end of the drive, the union issued a four-page letter signed by about fifty support staff members which emphasized cooperation and workplace democracy, avoiding confrontational or strongly critical language. In response to the anti-union booklets and the “Briefing Book,” the union issued a single one-page flier which encouraged workers to read management literature critically and gave a few examples of Taylor’s misleading use of statistics. Organizers also distributed copies of endorsements and letters of support, but generally attempted to avoid flooding workers with excessive amounts of paper, especially in the final weeks of the drive.

Harvard Fails

Ultimately a number of factors contributed to the failure of the anti-union campaign. One crucial disadvantage for the administrators was that they did not have the direct access to employees that union supporters had. Relatively few undecided workers attended anti-union meetings, and many people threw away Taylor’s letters and booklets without reading...
them. In most cases management failed to win the hearts and minds of supervisors, who are a crucial link in any anti-union campaign. Because administrators lacked a network of personal relationships, they were not able, as we were, to respond to workers as individuals with greatly varying interests and points of view.

In contrast to the administration’s relatively poor level of information about the union, HUCTW always had excellent “intelligence” about management strategy. Since support staff play such a crucial role in communications, organizers were generally able to obtain copies of Taylor’s letters and booklets before they were generally distributed.

Another significant factor was that, in spite of their decision to wait until the last few weeks of the drive to present their case, the administration’s campaign began to wear thin as election day approached. Many workers were put off by Taylor’s “negative” tone, which contrasted with the union’s upbeat, non-confrontational approach. The substance of the campaign also began to appear dubious to many. As activist Hettlinger described Taylor’s approach, “She was good on the surface, but had no cohesive arguments. She was ultimately a defensive player—anything that came her way, she’d play with.”

Perhaps most important of all, the administration was not able to present itself as credible and trustworthy. Union supporters, on the other hand, made a strong effort to be honest and straightforward. Myra McCoy, a Widener staff assistant who has worked at Harvard for twenty-four years, described her approach when talking to co-workers about workplace issues: “You have to tell it like it is, as you and others have experienced it. Truth and integrity are important human values which people will respect.”

By the final days before the election, the anti-union campaign had begun to seem ludicrous and rather desperate to many workers. Union supporters had had the opportunity to have all their questions answered, and had learned to think critically about the administration’s arguments. Very few Widener workers changed their minds as a result of the anti-union campaign. The atmosphere in the building became overwhelmingly pro-union, and a
number of people who were previously undecided voted yes in the end, in part because they were so disgusted by the administration's conduct.

In most other areas of the university that, like Widener, had been strongly pro-union before the anti-union campaign began, support for the union did not significantly decrease. In fact, in some areas, the administration's strategy backfired. The areas which were most affected by the anti-union campaign were those where support had been shaky to start with. Workers in those areas tended to be more isolated and, in some cases, better paid than employees in other parts of the university. Because of these and other factors, large numbers of people who had assured organizers that they were pro-union decided to vote no on election day. The margin of victory was only forty-four votes.

In the end we won because the structure of personal relationships we had built was strong enough to allow people to confront and overcome the fear and self-doubt which an anti-union campaign inevitably generates. The most important aspect of our response was that we stuck to our own agenda, emphasizing issues of democracy and self-worth, rather than allowing the administration to define the terms of the conflict. In this way we avoided the tense, fearful, and polarized atmosphere which would have interfered with the right of workers to make a free choice about unionization.

Martin Heggestad works as a library assistant at Harvard University. He has recently joined Radical America's editorial board.

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THE DOORS OF CULTURE SHALL BE OPEN
Commenting on Steve Biko’s contribution to the theory of revolution in the South African liberation struggle, Lou Turner and John Allan observed: “What is powerful and new about Biko’s ideas is that he always centers the possibility for change within the subject of the oppressed, and not simply within the South African economy or the hierarchy of the system . . . [Biko’s legacy brings forth the] rediscovery of self-consciousness as an objective force within the process of liberation.” These two fundamental observations lead us to consider Antonio Gramsci’s elaborations of a revised Marxist theory of revolution, which, I believe, are crucial to an understanding of Biko’s contributions as well as provide a context within which we can situate the Black Consciousness Movement. Gramsci, like Biko, sought to restore the subjective dimension to socialist movements, and to place human actors at the center of history. They both saw human beings, not brute economic facts, as the supreme factors in history. According to Gramsci scholar Carl Boggs, “[For] Gramsci, the primary focus was not the objective determinants of crisis but rather the subjective responses to it; not simply a structural analysis of political economy but comprehension of the dynamics of mass consciousness; not the institutional engineering required for the conquest and management of state power; but the ideological-cultural
preparation for a new type of society."
Gramsci and Biko attach great importance to issues such as philosophy, ideology, culture and consciousness; they both take seriously the power of human subjective intervention to prevail over structural barriers. Biko’s faith in purposive human beings seizing hold of their own historical opportunities gave birth to a movement that released the energies of black struggling masses. Exerting their own efforts, they strove to liberate themselves from political and industrial servitude through the autonomous organization of grassroots structures.

The Gramscian Theory of Revolution

"Marx was not a messiah who left a file of parables pregnant with categorical imperatives of absolute, indispensable norms independent of time and space."

Gramsci Recognizing the multidimensional nature of class rule and its attendant multiple structures of domination, Gramsci stressed the centrality of the ideological and cultural domain in the overall contestation of power. He insisted that every sphere of community life, not just the economic realm or the political arena, but the whole range of human activity, including culture, popular consciousness, and authority relations, was vital for the success of the revolutionary enterprise. This view finds its clearest expression in his concept of the “ensemble of relations,” which covers a broad terrain of struggle, spanning the gamut from politics, economics, to philosophy, culture, psychology, and ideology. Gramsci’s basic position stems from his understanding of ideological hegemony and cultural domination, and their power to shape popular consciousness. Thus, while the ideological cooptation of the masses is achieved through physical coercion or the threat of it by the state apparatus, ideological hegemony achieves results that the military and police machinery could never carry out, in that it mystifies power relations, public issues, and historical events. “[N]o social order could sustain itself over the long run primarily on the foundation of organized state power; on the contrary, the inclination of a ruling class to rely on repression and violence is a sign of weakness rather than strength. What contributes to real political durability is the scope of popular support or ideological consent.”

Ideological cooptation results in the oppressed strata acquiescing in or consenting to their own daily exploitation and misery. Through internalization of the dominant ideological and cultural values, the masses come to accept their lot. Control of education, the mass media, the legal system, and culture allows the ruling elites to manipulate popular consciousness and achieve the desired consensual legitimacy.

In his conceptual formulation of the “war of position,” that is, a counter-hegemonic movement, Gramsci articulated a situation where the dominated class would create new belief systems, cultural values, and egalitarian social relations. For Gramsci, the cultural sphere or the ideological dimension was too critical to be relegated to a secondary or peripheral position. In this way the legitimacy of the ruling elites would be called into question and effectively challenged, and ideological cooptation would be preempted. Gramsci was faithful to Marx’s dictum that human beings develop consciousness and become political actors in the ideological sphere. As he himself so eloquently stated it,
[Humans are] above all else mind, consciousness -- that is, he [sic] is a product of history, not nature. There is no other way of explaining why socialism has not come into existence already, although there have been exploiters and exploited, creators of wealth and selfish consumers of wealth. Man has only been able to acquire a sense of his worth bit by bit, in one sector of society after another.... And such awareness was not generated out of brute physiological needs, but out of intelligent reasoning, first of all by a few and later, by entire social classes who perceived the causes of certain social facts and understand that there might be ways of converting the structure of repression into one of rebellion and reconstruction. This means that every revolution has been preceded by intense labor of social criticism, of cultural penetration and diffusion.

However, Gramsci's position is diametrically opposed to those who fetishized the sphere of production, material forces, and the economic base. According to Boggs, Gramsci felt that this classical Marxist paradigm had "reduced Marx's doctrine to an internal scheme or a natural law that inexorably takes place outside of human will, outside of active human associations and the social forces developed by this activity which itself becomes the determinant of progress: the necessary cause of new forms of production." The critical-revolutionary Marxist position Gramsci postulates led him to reject the fatalistic reliance upon objective forces and rigorous laws; he dismissed faith in the power of industrial and technological changes leading to a cataclysmic economic crisis that would usher in human emancipation. Instead he contended that socialist transformation will occur through the conscious activity of purposive human action occurring in a variety of settings. He believed that material forces acquire meaning only through human definition and engagement and that, ultimately, there is a dialectical process involved.

Boggs gives a clear summary of two currents in Marxism: "[The] scientific side emphasizes the primacy of material forces, the base-superstructural model, structural determinancy, laws of capitalist development; in the sphere of economics it places strong faith in technological progress and industrial growth, whereas in politics it looks to large-scale organizations (parties, party-states, unions) as the prime movers of change. Against this, the critical side focuses upon the role of subjective agents, social totality, the power of human will over institutions, and the openness of history; in economics it stresses human over material forces, while in politics it is oriented toward collective voluntarism and popular self-activity." Gramsci staked a position that takes issue with a philosophy that dogmatically asserts the historical and political expression of immutable laws of social and economic capitalist development which will inexorably create the conditions for socialist transformation. In fact, it is this view that has degenerated, in present-day Soviet-style Marxism, to a "scientism" that legitimizes a bureaucratic-centralist system of rule. Gramsci subscribed to a theory of self-emancipation. He believed in a consensual, democratic process in which the great mass of people actively participate in overturning the multiple structures of domination. This theory leads to a rejection of hierarchical social and authority relations, and to a commitment to a non-bureaucratic, non-elitist, and anti-vanguardist position. Gramsci saw the prospects for revolutionary change occurring through the creation of popular, autonomous centers of proletarian self-activity, the locus of historical initiative.

* Ed. note: To avoid disruption of this and other source quotes in this article, we are simply noting once the incorrect exclusivity implied in the archaic use of male pronouns.
The Legacy of Steve Biko

"The study of the Black Consciousness Movement, as a counter ideology of resistance to white supremacy is essential to an understanding of contemporary South Africa."

Fatton

The decade-long hiatus in active political struggle in the post-Sharpeville massacre period precipitated by the outlawing of the African National Congress and the PanAfricanist Congress in 1960, created a situation in South Africa and blacks had become apathetic, demoralized and submissive to the status imposed upon them by the regime. It seemed to Biko and the founders of the Black Consciousness Movement that total ideological submission had prevailed; white racism had distorted and disfigured the spirit and personality of blacks. Many blacks were wallowing in the morass of self-pity and confusion, inhibited by frustration and weighted by despondency, hopelessness, and self-doubt. Confronted with this, Biko asserted, "[A]ll in all the black has become a shell, a shadow of a man, completely defeated, drowning in his own misery, a slave and an ox bearing the yoke of oppression with sheepish humility." Biko sees fear as a major determinant of this behavior. "[I]t is this fear that erodes the soul of black people in South Africa. . . . It is fear so basic in the considered actions of black people as to make it impossible for them to behave like people—let alone free people. . . . How can people be prepared to put up a resistance against their overall oppression if in their individual situations they cannot insist on the observance of their manhood?"

Blacks, according to him, had become political schizophrenics, "[who] smile at the enemy and swear at him in the sanctity of their toilets...once again, the concept of fear is at the heart of this two-faced behavior on the parts of the conquered Blacks." 19

Like Gramsci, Biko maintained that while police security visits, banning orders and house arrests, in other words, the use of force and the threat of it, are responsible for this situation, it is mental enslavement that is ultimately decisive in fostering ideological cooptation of the masses and acquiescence in their own subjugation. "[A]t the heart of this kind of thinking is the realization by blacks that the most potent weapon in the hands of the oppressors is the mind of the oppressed. . . . If one is free at heart, no man-made chains can bind one to servitude, but if one’s mind is so manipulated and controlled by the oppressor as to make the oppressed believe that he is a liability to the white men, then there will be nothing the oppressed can do to scare the powerful masters."

The objective reality of this situation led Biko to conclude that, as Fatton so aptly saw it, "[A]s long as the ideological terrain . . . remains the uncontested territory of the racial myth, few, if any, structural transformations can be expected." 11 This convinced Biko that the first phase of the revolutionary liberation of blacks indispensably was the countering of the ideological hegemony of the white regime.

Biko felt that it is imperative to begin with the "anthropomorphic dimension of social change and revolution," because he was con-
vinced that "[It] is not only capitalism that is involved; it is also the whole gamut of white value systems which has been adopted as standard by South Africans, both whites and blacks, so far...So your problems are not solved completely when you alter the economic pattern to a socialist pattern. You still don’t become what you ought to be." Gramsci made the same point when he analyzed the Italian factory defeats of 1920: "the workers themselves—however militant and sacrificing—had not been ideologically prepared to carry out a socialist revolution; the bourgeoisie in fact was still ‘waiting in ambush’ within the minds of thousands of individual proletarians." It should be noted that Biko did not view the ideological sphere as mutually exclusive of material conditions, but rather that while each has an autonomous sphere, they are interdependent and mutually reinforce each other. The interlocking relationship of these two spheres is noted by Marx and Engels: "[The] ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas, the class which has the means of material production at its disposal, has control at the same time over the means of mental production, ...it is self-evident that they do this in their whole range, hence among other things, rule also as thinkers, as producers of ideas and regulate the production and distribution of the ideas of their age: thus their ideas are the ruling ideas of the epoch." This perspective, as observed earlier, is contrary to deterministic Marxism that views culture, psychology, and ideology as falling outside of the revolutionary gambit. I agree with Fatton’s assessment, therefore, that “[In] brief, the remorseless, mechanistic materialism of deterministic Marxism has, when applied to South Africa, the unintended effect of making racism and capitalism unmovable and unshakable structures of exploitation.”

The challenge confronting Biko and his comrades was seen broadly as mounting a counter ideology against the reigning apartheid ideology. They set out to launch “[a] profound cultural transformation which changes the masses’ conception of life, politics and economics.” Realizing that the white power structure used its monopoly to manipulate cultural symbols and to inculcate attitudes of
subservience and inferiority, the Black Consciousness Movement aimed to eradicate this by changing blacks’ perceptions of themselves and their situation; to reverse the denigration, degradation and dehumanization they had passively succumbed to, “We have to examine and question old concepts, values and systems,” exclaimed Biko. In espousing Black Theology, for instance, Biko felt that white missionaries had been the agents that had assaulted and had sought to destroy traditional values and beliefs. “[Their] arrogance and their monopoly on truth, beauty, and moral judgment taught them to despise native customs and traditions and to seek to infuse their own new values into those societies.” Given that truth and meaning are embodied in the traditions and symbols of a group, Biko believed it imperative that, “[We] must seek to restore the black man the great importance we used to give to human relations, the high regard for people and their property and for life in general; to reduce the triumph of technology over man and the materialistic element that is slowly creeping into our society.” The Black Consciousness Movement aimed to demystify power relations so that blacks would come to view their status as neither natural, inevitable nor part of the eternal social order, as preordained by the Dutch Calvinists. Declaring that there is a “need to cast off his [Blacks’] complexes of dependence and deference towards whites,” black activists implanted a new self-image, an aggressively positive image of self-reliance, self-identity and self-definition, while promoting pride and group cohesion. The Financial Mail, no apologist for the black cause, was reluctantly compelled to editorialize, “[A] new generation has now grown up. Unlike many of their parents, who have developed an attitude of fatalistic resignation to second-class citizenship, these younger men and women are impatient, radical, militant, brave and proud.” The Black Consciousness Movement’s adoption of non-collaboration with apartheid’s “dummy institutions,” like Bantustans, Bantu Education, Urban Bantu Councils and Community Councils was erected on this foundation of cultural and psychological liberation. It was the new, defiant, and revolutionary mood spawned by the Black Consciousness Move-
ment that enabled the departure from "comfortable politics," the politics of reformism and conciliation. This represented a quantum leap in the South African struggle. The Black Consciousness Movement created conditions that have irreversibly transfigured South Africa's political landscape. Through the formation of organs of people's power involving poets, playwrights, journalists, clergymen, women's groups and welfare organizations, the movement created a grassroots that has led to widespread discontent and mass insurgency. This emphasis on self-emancipation upholds the ideal of participatory democracy where "liberation has been the business of each and all and the leader has no special merit." The Black Consciousness Movement has seen this and set in motion new forms of mass participation and democratization not imposed from above or initiated, led, and dominated by a select elite, but emerging from within the very heart of black society.

Footnotes
5. Boggs, op. cit., page 139.
8. S. Biko, op. cit., page 76.
9. ibid., page 78.
10. ibid., page 98.
12. Quoted in Fatton, op. cit., page 79.
15. Fatton, op. cit., page 42.
19. ibid., page 96.

Chris J. Nteta is president of the Organization of South Africans for Liberation Education. He is also a member of the Azanian Liberation Support Committee. He is an associate editor of Radical America.

This article is a revised version of a speech delivered at a February 1988 forum at Northeastern University on the legacy of Steve Biko cosponsored by Forward Motion journal and Radical America.
MULTI-CULTURAL CONCERNS AND AIDS ACTION: Creating an Alternative Voice

Part Two

This is the second of a two part interview conducted last March by members of the Radical America board with members of the Multicultural Concerns Committee (MCC) of the AIDS Action Committee, the primary service organization in the greater Boston area. Many of the issues discussed have since unfolded to be central issues for both AIDS service organizations and the AIDS activist movement. We regret the time lapse between the appearance of Part I and Part II precisely because we believe this interview has much to contribute to those discussions.

Immediately subsequent to the interview, the three members of MCC all commented to us that the Radical America interview provided a rare opportunity to engage in political discussions on a variety of issues: clean needle exchange programs, the difficulty of influencing policy within established, primarily white AIDS organizations, the lack of services in communities of color and the necessity for those communities to have a voice in the elaboration of educational strategies, the allocation of resources and the formulation of demands by the AIDS movement. To us this suggested an enormous need to provide contexts for those discussions to happen as their absence may underlie some of the difficulties and tensions currently facing AIDS activism.
Eight years into the epidemic, the only actions taken by the state are increased surveillance and regulation of the populations considered to be most at risk. Lack of funds and services has placed the responsibility for the AIDS crisis squarely on the shoulders of the communities most burdened by the presence of the disease. Gay men have historically had access to many of the services that communities of color lack, but in the course of the AIDS epidemic, those services have often been denied. This has necessitated the development of an alternative, “private” sector devoted to AIDS, largely reliant on the volunteers and resources of the gay community. The emergence of these service organizations, while necessary, has also partially masked the failure of health care delivery related to AIDS, while the nonexistent or inadequate status of health care delivery in communities of color remains a fact of life. How will AIDS groups address those differences?

Activist groups have attempted to make broader demands—national health care, wider access to treatments and community control over education and services—in recognition of past and current inequalities. For the most part, service organizations remain cautious and refuse to challenge existing structures for fear of losing their share of the scarce funding.

In fact, the reality of limited resources threatens to force disempowered, marginal communities into a position of competition with one another. The white-dominated gay male community and heterosexual-dominated communities of color confront each other across chasms of ignorance about history, daily life experiences and relationship to political power. In the worst case scenario, these groups are pitted against each other in a contest for respectability that neither can ultimately win.

In San Francisco, New York, Miami, Newark, Washington, D.C., Los Angeles, Philadelphia or even away from the large urban areas, the composition of the epidemic shapes the priorities of service provision, education and political organizing. The tensions that arise between groups, may well be rooted in vastly different experiences of the epidemic and legitimate fears that one group will be disregarded. This interview is presented in the spirit of making those experiences more known to each other.

In Part I, [RA vol. 21;2-3] Doralba Munoz, José Pares-Avila and Paula Johnson discussed their growing awareness of AIDS within communities of color, the formation of the Multicultural Concerns Committee (MCC) and their struggles within AIDS Action and their own communities. They particularly spoke to the assumption that all communities have the same resources, and therefore can adopt the same strategies of response. One example was the issue of volunteerism. In the absence of federal support, many AIDS organizations have become almost completely reliant on volunteers. The expectation that MCC would be able to recruit volunteers from among their communities reflects a failure to recognize the vast differences between the culture and resources of the white gay community and communities of color.

They also discussed the on-going difficulties in getting their message across to the Black and Latino communities, despite the disproportionate numbers of people with AIDS in those communities. The stigma of AIDS in communities of color results in reluctance or even failure to recognize the disease within the community, among one’s friends, family or loved ones. The educational approach of MCC necessarily began with strategies for overcoming the fears and silences that surround the epidemic.

Statistics refute the stereotype that all Black or Latino PWAs are either I.V. drug users, their female partners or children. MCC spoke to the need within the varied communities they represent to recognize gay sexuality as a primary means of transmission and grapple with the stigmatized meaning of gayness in a way that enlarges the sense of community. Likewise, predominantly white AIDS organizations must realize that the gay community includes large numbers of gay men and lesbians of color, that identity is not a simple question and that AIDS requires a broad strategy to reach and serve all who are affected.

In Part II, printed here, Munoz, Johnson and Pares-Avila take their analysis one step further, arguing that MCC cannot be seen as “just another subcommittee” in the eyes of AIDS Action. In order for AAC to consider themselves a truly multicultural organization,
RA: What do you think it takes to make places like AAC and other AIDS service organizations accessible to people of color?

Paula: They’ve got to educate themselves. There’s been resistance within AAC to our efforts to educate them. We don’t like to be spending all of our time telling people at AAC how they should respond to people of color. But, we don’t want people of color to go there and be treated badly. So AIDS service organizations must become informed, and they have to change their ways and their focus.

RA: How has the AAC utilized your group within its organization?

Paula: As I said earlier, they didn’t know what to do with us, what our function would be. It’s as though they wanted to put us in a chair, and push us up to the table to eat. But we decided we wanted to cook and do a lot of other things too. We wanted input on policy as well as educating our communities. I think they had the idea that they would have a core group of people, and whenever some person or group of people of color wanted somebody to speak, one of us would go along. But this issue was much larger to us. And since AAC was, and probably still is, the group that was getting most of the funding, we wanted to make sure that our communities got an equitable share of those resources. So that’s what we were about.

Doralba: AAC was setting the agenda at a state level and to some extent at the national level, not only in terms of funding but in terms of policy making, of deciding on programs, taking the front line. And it was up to us to remind them that first of all, the needs of our communities must be addressed. Our role was to say, “You are representing us, you are speaking for us.”

I can appreciate a little bit of resentment or a lot of resentment from some of the organized gay AIDS agencies where the attitude is “You didn’t care for us when it was most of us who were dying, and now you care.” So I can see a little bit of resentment about the fact that when AIDS hit primarily white gay men, people of color did not respond.

Paula: Which makes it real difficult for those of us who identify ourselves as being gay and being people of color, coming from a place where all of those things are part of who we are. In our own community we’re asked to deny one aspect of who we are, and we enter gay organizations where there is resentment because those communities never assisted them, while gay men were dying, dying, dying. And now they want a whole lot of say? I got a sense of that kind of response to us in the beginning, and it was understandable. At the same time, there are those of us who did want information, who did want to do something, and to bring all those facets of ourselves to bear on all of our communities.

From Testing the Limits: New York, a video made by the Testing the Limits collective, reprinted from October, 43.
The Position Paper

Doralba: So we put together a twenty page paper that addressed the issue, the history, the present, and the problems. We discussed problems and we made recommendations, not just in relation to AAC, but to the state and the city. One of the recommendations we made was to have membership on the board be representative of the incidence of AIDS in communities of color. Another was to increase the number of staff at AAC from communities of color. Right now, there are five. And we take credit for that.

Jose: In terms of the funding allocation component, one of the problems was that there was only one person with the title of minority outreach educator, and as a result of the position paper, there are not two coordinators for the minority communities, a black man and a Latino man.

Paula: Our recommendations just asked for accountability, for the most part. The AAC wanted us to do everything, without knowing what the everything was that they wanted. So we put it down on paper. And we surprised them again!

Jose: We wanted to eat at the table and we told them how to cook the food for us!

Doralba: That's exactly what we did. When we presented our paper they couldn't believe it. Members of the board came back to us and said that it was amazing. I mean they asked for it and they got it. People were just generally impressed that we had pulled this information together and really identified the issues, and then went a step beyond to recommend how to address them. So, I think we did the group a service, and now they have a chance to work on the issues we raised.

RA: Has the response from institutions like the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) toward people of color been different than that of local groups?

Jose: It's quite interesting, I went to the CDC conference on Minorities and AIDS last August (1987). I saw a similar dynamic at that conference to the one Paula was describing earlier between us and AAC. This group of people got together and the CDC said, 'Well, we're going to put this conference together for them so they can talk to each other. This is going to be fine.' But people were angry and frustrated and they began making demands. The CDC wanted to get everything done in a day and a half. The first day ran from eight in the morning until nine at night. Then the Black and Latino caucuses met on until one thirty in the morning. And we generated a list of demands which we presented to them, which they haven't done anything about and the second conference is coming up. What we see here in Boston is just a microcosm of what is happening at a national level.

Clean Needles

RA: Given your relationship to AAC, how does your group deal with controversial questions, for example, i.v. drug use and the proposal to provide addicts with clean needles? Do you take positions independent of the AAC?

Doralba: We are a subcommittee of AAC, we are not independent. That's difficult at times because we disagree with some things from AAC. On many issues we're not asked what our opinion is, and we may have something to report on the issue. So when we are in opposition, we do it as individuals. But otherwise we are a volunteer entity within AAC, and AAC speaks. It has been hard at times because, for example, with the clean needle issue, we found out about AAC's position from the newspaper reports, not from AAC.

Paula: The organization takes a stance. In public we don't usually disagree with it. I don't ever have a problem saying that personally I feel this way. So with an issue like clean needles, I'll address the pros and cons as I see them and talk about my personal feelings as well as what the agency says.

Doralba: But aren't you saying that in some decisions, like the clean needle issue -- you
haven't been asked as co-chair of the MCC what your feelings are about it?

Paula: Not in a big way, no.

RA: The AAC did not actively solicit your opinion?

Paula: Not as they should.

Doralba: Whatever position they have taken, they did not solicit our opinion with relation to the clean needle proposal. I don’t know whether they spoke to the other subcommittees like mental health, or pastoral concerns. We are just another subcommittee in the eyes of AAC and that’s a problem, because like Jose said, we who work on the MCC, we talk about policy, we talk about programs, we don’t just volunteer. That’s where a lot of the friction has come from.

RA: Could you take this opportunity to discuss your thoughts about the clean needle issue?

Jose: When the clean needle issue began, I didn’t feel comfortable taking a position because I didn’t know enough about drug use issues and drug treatment or the treatment of addictions, and it’s a very complex issue. When I read Larry Kessler’s (chair of the AAC) position on the issue, it bothered me because he didn’t come to the MCC to get an opinion, and if I don’t feel comfortable as a member of a community of color taking a position, why should he take a position on something that concerns communities of color more than anybody else?

In Los Angeles, at the Latinos and AIDS symposium, the group as a whole took a position against the distribution of clean needles. The feeling that came up a lot was that this approach was about doing ‘patchwork’ with our communities again. Clean needle programs here in the United States can’t be compared with those in European cities. The majority of drug users here are not in treatment, if they want to be in treatment they can’t get in treatment right away. The groups at the Latinos and AIDS symposium took the position that our top priority should be to get more treat-
ment programs rather than more patchwork. I think this whole clean needle issue brings out into the open the attitude of the federal government toward communities of color with respect to healthcare which has been mostly about doing 'patchwork.' The issue of national healthcare is going to become a big issue in the years to come because of AIDS.

Paula: I tend to think the distribution of clean needles is not a totally bad idea, but for the reasons that Jose brought up, it's probably not the thing that should be advocated in full force at this moment. Given that there isn't a lot of money for treatment centers right now, that has to be a focus. My idea of the clean needle program isn't that people just go to a counter and get a clean needle, or buy a clean needle. They also should get some sort of information about AIDS there too.

There needs to be primary emphasis on follow through. Because I tend to think that providing clean needles isn't going to increase drug use, even in the United States, since buying hypodermic needles is not illegal in every state. The one thing that might happen is that drug users will not be sharing paraphernalia. Most importantly, addicts need to have alternatives for getting AIDS information even if they are not in a position to stop their habit. Right now, even if they make the decision to get treatment, treatment is not available. So, yeah, in one sense clean needle exchange programs are saying give them a needle and nothing else. And that's a cop out.

Jose: It's true what you say about other states; in Puerto Rico, for instance, you can go to the drug store and get a needle for twenty cents. But despite the availability of clean needles, Puerto Rico has one of the highest incidence of AIDS from needle sharing.

What this shows is that even if you provide clean needles, part of the drug culture is to share needles in a shooting gallery. So what is really needed is to have outreach educators go into these galleries and teach people how to clean their needles, and tell them that using dirty needles is not okay.

When this issue started, people were after me to give them an opinion, so I spoke to drug counselors about what they felt and what their clients felt, because how many people have gone to drug users and asked them how they feel? A lot of drug users and counselors feel the clean needle idea sabotages their treatment. Some think that it gives a mixed message for those who are trying to beat their addiction.

Doralba: I haven't been able to come out one way or the other because I don't have all the information. And none of the people who speak about it have presented a comprehensive alternative. They see black and white. There are no gray areas.

Jose: That's the whole point. This issue is being presented as an either/or issue, especially by the mainstream press. When they come after you to get an opinion, they want you to take a position that's white or black with no explanations about your position. This is the first time I have had the opportunity to look at both sides of the issue and say where I'm at, which is sort of in the middle.

Paula: I think the idea has to be investigated. Because on the one hand it's true, you can't say what will happen in Britain or The Netherlands will be effective here. On the other hand, are people really that different in a drug culture? Aren't there some things that might work? Isn't there something about what has happened in Europe that's valuable to our experience? And if there is, we should take a look at it along with other things.

What's the alternative? Are we just going to look at methadone? Because what I'm hearing also are a lot of people who oppose clean needles advocating methadone. Maybe methadone will work for some people, but from my discussions with drug counselors, it may not be the best way for people to kick their habit, and it does damage their health. So how useful is it compared to other things?

I personally have a lot of problems advocating methadone. I see it as putting people in a holding pattern so to speak: putting another drug into them, until they can 'get into treatment,' only getting into treatment never happens.

There are a lot of underlying things going on with people who are addicted to drugs, alcohol,
or whatever. I try to bring up the social implications when people ask me about it.

**Jose:** I use the same approach in that I bring up the fact that all along, programs in communities of color have been addressed from the perspective of individual pathology, like mental health programs, drug treatment, or whatever.

**Doralba:** My background is public health. I am the manager of a public health group, and I don’t know what the best way is to think about this. I don’t have all the information. I will not play God on this. And it bothers me when I see people who don’t have the information behave as if they know what’s right.

**Safe Sex Education**

**RA:** Moving on to another issue, how do you confront the AAC about the safer sex model? Especially since sexual practices are different for different communities and within different communities. Specifically can you discuss how the model works for black and Latino gay men or black and Latino men who are having sex with men no matter what they decide to call themselves?

**Jose:** I’m glad you asked that question because we just did a little experiment recently. I don’t know if you are familiar with safety net parties. Safety net parties are part of a program that AAC uses where two facilitators visit the home of a host who invites a group of friends over and they go through a curriculum on safe sex. It’s like a Tupperware party kind of thing, the other name for it is “Rubberware” parties. The Latino coordinator at AAC and I decided to get a group of Latino gay men together at my home and run them through this curriculum to see what would happen. We mailed out about forty invitations and even though there was a snow storm on the evening of the party we got a group of about fifteen people. There were
about twelve or thirteen Latino men, two black men, two white men, and the two facilitators were white. We used the same curriculum that AAC uses.

It was interesting to see how we need to work on the curriculum to make it more culturally specific. In terms of the way we, Latino men, talk about sex, we found the curriculum to be very Anglo and middle class. But because the curriculum encourages people to bring up the issues it did generate a lot of role playing and discussion.

Doralba: The issue is how do you explain safe sex to Latino men? They have a completely different language. How do you take this curriculum and make it appropriate for them? And then make them take responsibility for changing.

In our experience in talking to Latino women about safer sex, we find just having the conversation is really breaking a lot of rules, because we tell Latino women that they need to talk to their partners about sexual responsibility and using condoms. And though you read in books about Latino women having power, say in running their households, it’s still a macho culture. To these women for the first time having to say to the men “Listen honey forget it, do it this way or nothing!” raises a lot of issues. The dynamic with these women though is fabulous because we challenge the meaning of sex. For heterosexual Latino couples there is this expectation that you have sex only for procreation therefore our discussions are putting an element in there that questions that belief. We are recognizing that people have sex for other reasons and that is empowering the women.

Leadership in Communities of Color

RA: Where is the leadership coming from in communities of color with respect to AIDS?

Paula: Community leaders like ministers are an important force in the black community, they have a history of being in the forefront in dealing with people’s civil rights and other issues that affect the community. My question is when are they going to take a stand on AIDS? This is a terminal illness. They have to decide to treat this as a life and death health issue rather than taking the narrow view and judging people as good or bad. If they can’t talk about sex, then we’ll send someone else to do it. They don’t have to be able to do everything. But we can’t have anyone being judgmental in the process.

Doralba: I remember talking to two ministers one time and they were really getting on my nerves. I said, “It’s your right to be very confused about this, but it isn’t your right to withhold information. You can read and write, you have people who sit in front of you for guidance, at least once a week. And I think it is immoral that you are withholding information. Take your time on the moral issue, think about it, philosophize about it, do whatever you want. Light a candle about it but you can’t withhold information. It isn’t right.”

Divisions Multiply

Doralba: One thing that I’m sensing now and one concern that I have is that there could be a split between the Latino and the black community.

RA: In what ways?

Doralba: We have very black-identified agencies and very Latino-identified agencies and I don’t see them getting together, talking about resources, sharing information and being supportive to their communities.

RA: Do you see people beginning to express some sense that either the level of i.v. drug use, or positions on clean needle programs or homosexuality are different in the two communities and is that why agencies are vying for funds?

Paula: I actually think that the black and Latino communities experience a lot of the same things, they’re just not getting together. The Latino community has a lot of hesitations about the clean needle program, and certainly a lot of black voices have been heard against that kind of program, but they haven’t come together and said “our two communities are raising questions about this program.” In-
stead, they're doing it apart from each other.

**Doralba:** There is another danger when white politicians call on leaders of one or the other community, but these leaders don't necessarily strategize together. AIDS has not brought them together, there is still a Latino agenda and a black agenda and it depends on who gets tapped first as to who gets attention. They do not respond as a coalition. There are black agencies, Latino agencies, and Haitian agencies but not a coalition of people of color except for MCC. Funding goes to different groups but it doesn't cross the boundaries. This is the first year that the Department of Public Health's federal money for AIDS went through a competitive process. Before, it all went to the AAC. But many of the agencies from communities of color are at a disadvantage because they don't have the track records that established gay organizations now have with respect to AIDS.

So the MCC pushes AAC to support programs in other agencies, to be accountable to other communities.

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**Postscript**

This postscript is an effort to follow up the interview that was conducted last March, to find out where things stand now, not only with AIDS Action but with the second CDC conference and the fears that MCC had about splits developing between the black and Latino communities locally.

The Multicultural Concerns Committee remains an active component of the AIDS Action Committee, although many of its members, like the three we interviewed, are turning their attention outward, attempting to use what they learned at AIDS Action for the benefit of community agencies now trying to establish their own AIDS programs. In particular, members of MCC bring a sensitive eye to educational materials. From the experience of working directly and speaking frequently with groups in communities of color, members have developed a sense of what will work and what won't. Jose Pares-Avila, among others, has become very active in creating models of safe sex education for Latino men.

The sharp conflicts over the place of race, class and sexuality that emerged in the MCC's confrontation with AAC raised a number of questions that MCC members felt were ultimately valuable to confront. Dealing with an organization that holds gay people in a place of respect but often disregards race, class or ethnicity contrasts with communities where sexuality is, too often, off the agenda. Doralba Munoz describes the struggle of MCC as one of "keeping a foot in the door," a task not made easy by the constant pressure from both sides. In that process, despite the frustration, MCC members have gained a great deal of technical information and practical experience in challenging the system and their own communities.

For its part, AIDS Action, despite current expansion and internal structural changes, has resisted implementing the deeper more transformative recommendations from the MCC. This, in part, explains the withdrawal of MCC members from internally focused educational work. Even as AIDS programs are growing in the black or Latino community, questions remain about how gay people of color will be served, and by whom. The MCC presence within AIDS Action, minimally, ensures that the needs of gay people of color will be recognized.

AAC is also an extremely powerful voice in setting the AIDS policy agenda and commands a large portion of currently allocated resources for AIDS education and services. This has tremendous implications for the distribution of those resources; AAC is still the agency with the "track record" on AIDS services. As funding becomes increasingly competitive, it remains unclear what role AAC will play in supporting the decentralization of services. By retaining a voice in the agency, MCC hopes to build a base from which to influence policy directions and to provide a bridge between AIDS Action and other community groups. Because of the difficulties on the part of both sides in dealing with one another, MCC provides a route of access to the resources that are undeniably present and important.

The failure on the part of white dominated AIDS service organizations to recognize minority concerns repeats the government's failure. At the second Center for Disease Control (CDC) conference, on AIDS in the minority community, held in August 1988, none of the resolutions that had been hammered out, against great odds, and passed by the previous year's conference, had been acted on. A walkout of over 500 participants, called by the Latino caucus, demanded accountability for the failure and a meeting with CDC. In the meeting, CDC officials agreed to monthly meetings with representatives of communities of color to monitor implementation of the resolutions. Conference participants thought this might create some leverage for action, but acknowledged that the future is unpredictable since changes are expected in the CDC regardless of which party wins the election.
Here in Boston, the splits between minority identified community agencies have not intensified as MCC members originally feared. What has happened, however, is indicative of the power of resources in this epidemic. The Department of Public Health is funding an initiative, incorporating black, Latino and Haitian representatives, to develop an inclusive program, not tied to AAC or any particular agency but rather adaptable to a number of settings. The clustering around resources, evident from the participation in this project, indicate both the possibilities of cooperation that exist and the enormous constraints created by limited resources. -Ed.

Doralba Munoz is a manager for the Refugee Assistance Program in the state of Massachusetts. In addition, she works with issues affecting people of color and low-income women and children, especially in regard to access to services. She has been involved with AIDS-related issues since 1986. She is a former co-chair of the MCC and remains actively involved with that group.

Jose Parcs-Avila was born in San Juan, Puerto Rico. He has lived in Boston for over three years and is a PhD candidate in Clinical Community Psychology at Boston University. Since the interview, he has become involved with an international program developing prevention models and is working with the Latino Health Network in Boston to create safe sex models for Latino men.

Paula Johnson is an attorney and has been involved in AIDS education for the last three years, including as co-chair of the MCC, with an emphasis on the needs of communities of color and women. She has also given AIDS education trainings to attorneys, health care workers, employee groups and other professional and community organizations. She has since left the Boston area for Washington, D.C., where she is teaching law at Georgetown University.
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