

## REPORT ON FRS CONFERENCE

I participated as an I.S. observer at a national conference of the Federation of Revolutionary Socialists (formerly CPML) on September 16-18, near Boston. The conference drew about 40 people, including observers from PUL, RWHq, WP, LRS and the West German Communist League. The rest were former CPMLers, most (but not all) of whom loosely consider themselves members of the new FRS. Most of these people are experienced rank and file activists and read the labor paper. About five were Black. They came mostly from the East Coast, with a few from the West, and a few from Chicago.

The conference sessions included union work, state of the labor movement, peace and electoral movements, and theory of women's liberation, gay liberation and Black national liberation. The topics and speakers were evidently determined by whoever volunteered, and the real purpose of the conference was to provide the first opportunity for political discussion among survivors of CPML dissolution, and to get the new group off the ground.

In the discussions which were efficient and animated, several speakers commented that the concreteness of the presented analyses would have been unheard of a few years ago. (E.g., an interest in the changing workforce, new technology and reindustrialization schemes) Some sessions constituted an explicit rejection of Stalinist theory: the group agreed on the importance of the feminist critique of capitalist society (though not on whether women were a "strategic ally" of the working class), that gay exclusion was bigotry (with the exception of one diehard) and that an understanding of Black national liberation should be based on reality and not Stalin's dogma.

There was quite a range of opinion on many issues (reflecting, it seemed to me, the group's new start) but quite clearly their new-found realism has led them rightward into eclecticism. There was discussion on how, not whether, to support campaigns like Washington's and Jesse Jackson's, with some even eager for a struggle within the DP. Everyone criticized social democracy and eurocommunism, but most felt we could fight for some aspects of reindustrialization and "worker-oriented" reform programs (without knowing which) and someone proposed following the European (Swe dish?) model.

Much of the conference was characterized by a modesty and openness in approaching difficult questions, though the group has a sense of pride in its common experience, which was heightened by having successfully taken this first step to a new incarnation. They selected a Continuations Committee which will publish a bulletin and possibly a journal.

No explicit reference was made in the conference sessions to relations to other groups, though observers participated freely and some were among the speakers. But there was a generally friendly attitude to the guests (with small pockets of suspicion) and the conference organizers were friendly and open to IS and WP, the newcomers in their sphere. Privately we were told that the continuations committee will consider using publications as arenas for inter-group discussions.

--Mel.B.

PC MEETING 9/17/83 Dave F. absent

The following motions were passed to guide the PC for the next few months. They are not a "new perspective" to lead the group in some qualitatively different way and shouldn't be seen as an attempt to do so. Rather, they are short-term perspectives for some aspects of our work, particularly in light of the major concerns expressed to us in the period before, as well as during, the summer school.

MOTION: That the PC prepare a discussion on Marxism and Feminism which will be carried into the branches.

We see this as a 6-8 months project, which we'll first review our own literature on this matter and then move to explore the new literature.

The PC plans to start with Laurie Landy's document written in 1969 on "Capitalism and Oppression". You oldtimers might pull that out and read it if you keep files back that far. We undoubtedly will be re-printing some of these papers in order to update our position.

MOTION: That we report on Solidarity - Socialist Feminist Network's Conference which was held the same weekend as the summer school.

MOTION: That the Trade Union Committee be reconstituted to help develop perspectives for the labor paper and that we encourage IS members and others close to us politically to attempt to get meaningful trade union jobs in this slight recovery period.

MOTION: That we prepare a discussion on the Jesse Jackson campaign and lead a discussion in the organization on our attitude toward the campaign.

We encourage branches to invite speakers from Detroit on the following subjects in order to have periodic educationals for your members and friends:

Industrial Policy - Kim  
Marxism and Feminism - Elissa  
Cuba - Dave F. just returned from Cuba  
Quality of Work Life - Mike P.  
The Democratic Party in 1984: Tracing Patterns in Race, Class, Sex - Mark L.  
Concessions - Jane S.  
Israel & Palestine - Marty R. just returned from Nazareth Camp

\* Some of these topics may be more appropriate for a labor paper grouping rather than a branch meeting.

NOTICE

The PC would like to thank Dan L. for the time he spent on staff exploring our regroupment perspectives and building for the summer school. Dan is no longer on staff, but is willing to travel to branches to give presentations. Contact Dan in Chicago.

## REPORT ON NAZARETH WORK CAMP

In late August I attended the Nazareth Voluntary Work Camp in Israel. The camp is set up by the municipality of Nazareth, the largest Palestinian city and the center for Palestinian cultural and political life within Israel. The camp was attended by almost 9,000 people including 175 foreign delegates from 17 countries. The Nazareth municipal administration is controlled by the Israeli Communist Party (Rakah), which is the largest political organization among Palestinian Arabs inside Israel.

The work camp itself was interesting and exciting since we worked side by side with people from all over Israel and the occupied territories. We did actually accomplish a lot of work repairing and building roads, painting fences, etc. But the main purpose for our being there was to see first hand the discrimination and the constant harassment that the Palestinians experience. Although I have read a lot of reports recently preparing to go and have read the newspapers coming out of Israel reporting on the political conditions, it did not prepare me for what we actually saw.

The Israel policy is very clear. After being there for only a few days, there was a pattern you could see in the way that the Israelis dealt with the Palestinians. In any way they can, from murder and arrests on the West Bank to constant little annoyances like ID checks at Roadblocks, from land confiscation to different color license plates for Arabs, the Israeli government and the military authorities are trying to do everything they can to force Palestinians to leave, either physically throwing them off their land or by making life so unpleasant it's best to go. Also, by the rigid restriction of Palestinian cultural, social, and political life, they are trying to eliminate whatever aspects of Palestinian society they can to in a sense "de-Palestinize" the Palestinians.

Although explaining this pattern in this initial report is difficult, I will explain the examples that stick out most in my mind. I will be writing a longer report in the Nov/Dec Changes.

Land confiscation is a constant problem. It is also the first thing we saw. Surrounding the village of Nazareth is a modern city called "Upper Nazareth", a Jewish city built on lands that were confiscated from the farmers of Nazareth. Before 1950 Nazareth was an agricultural city. Their land was confiscated with little compensation given to the people whose land was stolen. Most of the families we met had land taken from them.

One of the workers we talked to used to own 5,000 dunums (about 4 acres per dunum) which his family used to grow food to eat and to sell. His family's land was confiscated to build the Dodge Assembly Plant. His family was paid 4,000 lira and given one acre "Lower Nazareth". The land had been in his for over 300 years. If his land had not been confiscated he would have lived relatively comfortably off his land. He is now an assembly line worker in the Dodge Plant working in the paint department, which uses ill-fitting respirators instead of adequate ventilation. He expects to die of cancer in ten to twenty years since many of his friends already have cancer.

Land confiscated did not end in the 50's (not even counting Lebanon and the West Bank and the Gaza, etc. etc.) Land confiscation is still common. The "Koenig Plan" for the Judeazation of the Galilee is being implemented today. The plan is to build settlements both near and surrounding the Arab villages to eventually push them out. Many of the settlements that have already been

Report on Nazareth Work Camp contd.

built have very low occupancy rates and many both in the West Bank and in Israel stand nearly vacant. But they continue to build new ones just to take the land away from the Arabs. As we drove through the Gaililee (and the area known as the Triangle), we could see the settlements being built and lookout points where future settlements soon will be. There are 62 settlements planned in the Triangle area with 70,000 Jews hoped to move into the area. When the mayor of Nazareth's youngest child was born he sent a telegram to Koenig saying "how unfortunate for you that another Palestinian child has been born".

In addition to getting the land itself, the Israelis create a wage labor force forced to work for low wages since their livelihood has been taken from them.

In Ashkelon in the Gaza strip the Palestine Red Crescent Society has been trying to build a hospital. They have raised all the money, They have the land they need and commissioned for detailed architectural plans to build it. But when they went to the authorities to get permission to build, the military authorities of the Gaza told them that if they build the hospital they will never be allowed to open it. Currently all Palestinians in Gaza must go to Israeli hospitals. The director of Red Crescent said "Why would any sane people deny a hospital? It only makes sense if you look at it in the context of their overall political strategy, imposing curfews, demolishing houses, harassing educational institutions. In the occupied territories they treat us as foreigners, and they wait for us to move. Often they deport us. But we would rather die here on the land than give up."

Strangely, with all we saw, talking to people who had been imprisoned and tortured, talking with families whose relatives had been deported, talking with Arab shopkeepers who had been fined hundreds of dollars because their children had thrown rocks at a jeep, etc., it is the little things that stood out most in the minds of many of the people on the trip. In fact we had a discussion on whether or not to emphasize the little things when we talked or wrote about the trip. But I think they show the depth of the system and how they go to great lengths not to miss a trick.

For example, if you are Jewish and live on the West Bank, you have the same color license plates as the rest of Israel, yellow. But if you are a Palestinian, you have a blue license plate. Not only that but it also has the first letter of the Hebrew name of your village. If you are from Gaza, you have white plates. Also, the drivers licenses are different. Not blatantly like having a red star on it, but subtly. All Palestinians regardless of when they register have the 15th of the month as the date of registration; Jews have any date, very subtle but effective. Any police officer stopping a car can tell before he stops it if the occupants are from the West Bank or Gaza, and can always tell if the occupants are Palestinian. The logical comparison is to the yellow Jewish stars that the Nazis forced the Jews to wear. One of our hosts said, "The Jews have suffered under the Nazis, but they also have become their students."

At the same time that I was angered and upset by the political conditions there the spirit of the people is very strong and the level of political awareness is intense from the youngest children to the grandparents we met. Any struggle that is felt that strongly among the youngest children is tough to contend with. (Except for swimming in the Mediteranean that was the only good thing about the trip.)

We were in a demonstration with several thousand Palestinians singing Palestinian songs and shouting slogans. The energy level was very high and the police were nowhere near.



Report on Nazareth Camp contd.

Obviously, this is a 3-second view. I will be writing a longer piece for the next Changes. I am, also, putting together a slideshow and willing to travel with it (and maybe Dave F.) to branches which are interested. I am moving to Boston in mid-October and I am willing to travel from there.

Marty R.

REPORT ON SOLIDARITY - SOCIALIST-FEMINIST NETWORK CONFERENCE

Although no IS members attended the conference of Solidarity: A Socialist-Feminist Network (SSFN) which was held the same weekend in August as the summer school, from discussion with SSFN members and their mailing, we can quickly summarize what took place.

The Network's experience over the past year is that "we have not grown; we have not found an opportunity for left regroupment that a majority of us found attractive; many of our members were not willing to pay as high dues as they were with the results they were seeing. So, we have lowered our dues, tabled the issue of regroupment and will do without staff or outreach literature" (from Peter Drucker's report in recent SSFN mailing).

The report goes on to stress, "But we have not dissolved. We honestly said, after searching self-examination, that we will pay our dues, show up for regionals and write for the discussionbulletin". In short the SSFN is committed to carrying on the work its members are involved in -- specific responsibilities have been farmed out to different branches -- but without a functional "center".

The conference debate on regroupment was stalmated, in the sense that there was no majority. A group led by Eric Chester was for orientation toward the Socialist arty; others were for Workers Power, a few for dissolving the group, etc. (According to Eric, WP itself no longer has a national structure although attempts are being made to reorganize it.)

The discussion on electoral politics included a debate over whether to "support Black progressive Democrats and form left caucuses in their campaigns", specifically in regard to the examples of Harold Washington and Wilson Goode. The majority were against this. In Boston Solidarity members are supporting the independent candidacy of Mel King.

Dave F. 9/20/83

MEETING WITH THE FEDERATION OF REVOLUTIONARY SOCIALISTS (FRS), Boston

Elissa spoke to a meeting of members of the Federation of Revolutionary Socialists, the Proletarian Unity League, and the Revolutionary Workers Headquarters in Boston on August 31. The talk was on socialist-feminist theory. About 12 people attended. The FRS in Boston has only two women members; others have drifted away both because they became more interested in feminism, and because of the other reasons that women have left other left groups. The two remaining women members are involved in a study group on feminism with members of PUL and KWHq, and others. They are beginning a long and painful process of reevaluating Maoist theory on feminism and on gay and lesbian oppression. Privately, they described to me a great deal of resistance from the men in their group, who accused them of unresolved conflicts with men, etc. However, changes are coming. The meeting I spoke at was about half women, half men. Several former women members of the FRS came. Discussion was not really about socialist-feminist theory, as most did not have the background to discuss that with much depth, but it was a very serious and useful discussion. There was none of the resistance that had been described to me earlier. Herb, who is the theoretical leader in Boston, said that socialist-feminists have to be able to describe what socialism will do about women's oppression. Just saying that socialism creates the pre-conditions for women's liberation is not appealing enough, he said. These were good questions, I thought.

--Elissa

CHANGES TRASHES ALL HEROES

In the past few months, Changes has stepped up its campaign to make revolutionary socialism a mass popular movement.

Our July-August issue featured a head-on denunciation of the only thing the UAW leadership has recently done -- protectionism -- which has generated real enthusiasm among the ranks.

In the October Changes we denounced Harold Washington and Fidel Castro, thus carving out a unique niche for ourselves on the left.

Picking up steam, our November-December issue will debunk workers' control and the fashionable fad of ecological decentralization.

That's nothing. Coming soon will be our big piece explaining why we're not supporting Jesse Jackson for President.

And our special Spring 1984 issue will be a blockbuster. That's where we expose the truth about Santa Claus, the Easter Bunny, and the Tooth Fairy. Don't miss it!

(Note: One's ability to laugh at oneself is very important. Dave F. has provided us with a little release in this very difficult period)

# ELECTIONS Black radical in strong bid for Boston mayoralty

By JOHN BERG  
Guardian Bureau

BOSTON—When Mel King first ran for mayor of Boston four years ago, the city's central news media dismissed him as the candidate of an insignificant leftist fringe and intimated David Finnegan, brother of a powerful state legislator, as the best candidate to dump incumbent Kevin White. King upped Finnegan, however, finishing third in the first round of the election behind White and State Sen. Joseph Timilty. White then went on to beat Timilty in the runoff.

This year, with neither White nor Timilty in the race, King, a Black former state representative, is one of the front runners. Nine candidates will appear on the first-round ballot Oct. 11, but only three have enough support to be serious contenders for the member run-off: King, Finnegan and Raymond Flynn, a city councillor who rose to prominence in the anti-"busing," anti-abortion, and anti-Equal Rights Amendment movements. Flynn does, however, take progressive positions on economic issues such as it control.

## POLLS SHOW CLOSE VOTE

In the most recent poll of registered voters, King said they were planning to vote for Finnegan, 18% for King and 14% for Flynn. In the other six candidates ranging from 1% to 7%, and with 25% undecided. Since only the top two finishers on Oct. 11 are eligible to compete in the November runoff, this would leave King running against Finnegan, the mayorality. But another poll taken in September showed Finnegan getting 20%, Flynn second with 17%, and King third with 15%. Given the margin of statistical error in such surveys, this means that King or Flynn are probably running neck-and-neck for a spot on the final ballot.

King's actual vote Oct. 11 would be much higher because of new voter registration. His supporters have led a campaign which has en-



Boston mayoral candidate Mel King.

rolled 40,000 new voters this year, most of them from the city's Black and Latino communities. Voter turnout in first-round mayoral balloting has usually been about 50% of registered voters, but King is hoping to increase that. And since pre-election polls have surveyed all registered voters—not just those considered likely to vote—changes in turnout rates can make a crucial difference in the actual results.

King has gained this strong position without toning down his radical politics. He continues to speak out strongly against racism, sexism and gay oppression, while supporting strong rent control, job creation initiatives and community control of city services. Last week King condemned as "murder" the recent police killing of Elijah Paic, a young unarmed Black man whom they were arresting for car theft. (The police claimed Paic had been driving a car at them, but medical reports showed he was shot while running.) In a televised debate Sept. 14, King con-

cluded his remarks by saying, "People have called me a radical. Well, I'll take that label if it continues to result in Boston jobs for Boston people. I'll take that label if it continues to mean district representation so that we'll have a government in the city that is accessible for all the people. I'll take that label if it means that I'm going to be able to bring Boston together for good, for the good of us all."

Ironically, although he is the strongest leftist candidate in Boston in a long, long time, King does not have the united support of the left. A significant minority of leftist organizations and individuals, mainly those whose programs downplay opposition to racism and sexism, are supporting Ray Flynn. "These forces maintain that King is not electable because... Boston is not ready for a Black mayor."

But most of the left does support King, including the Communist Party, most Marxist-Leninist groups and individuals, almost all of the Black community, the city's progressive religious leaders, and most individuals in the anti-apartheid and women's movements, (whose organizations are often legally barred

from formal endorsements). When the National Organization for Women held a candidate forum recently, Flynn was repeatedly drowned out by hostile audience response. ACORN, a major community organization, has also endorsed King.

Flynn has meanwhile been endorsed by the Massachusetts Tenants Organization, by Michael Ansara, director of Massachusetts Fair Share (a public interest group which does not make organizational endorsements), and by Judy Meredith, a prominent lobbyist for left-wing causes. The Boston chapter of Democratic Socialists of America is badly divided: in July, after a long debate on an endorsement—which King wanted and Flynn did not—the chapter voted by a narrow margin not to endorse anyone.

Boston's lesbian and gay community is also divided. While there is strong support for King, the Gay Political Task Force has endorsed Lawrence DiCara, a former city councillor with a strong position on gay rights but an economic moderate. Polls show DiCara in fifth place with 4% of the vote, indicating that he is not being backed by most gays and lesbians. Flynn enjoys very little homosexual support—not surprising since in the last election he endorsed city council candidate David Scodras and then put out a press release stating that he had not known Scodras was gay when he endorsed him.

Finally, the Socialist Workers Party is, as usual, running its own candidate, Eloise Linger, who has 1% support in polls. Linger's platform is virtually identical to King's, and she has yet to explain adequately why she is willing to take votes away from King.

The campaign is now moving into a new phase since Sept. 21 was the last day for voter registration. King's camp is thus shifting its focus to winning over the uncommitted, and is mobilizing his supporters to turn out on Oct. 11. The race will be close—Flynn and King are essentially tied, and even Finnegan is not far enough ahead to be assured of a top-two finish. It may well be that a strongly progressive Black candidate will be vying for the mayoralty here in November.