

Original articles, news clips, memos, press releases, reports, anecdotes—send them all to "In Short," c/o *In These Times*, 1509 N. Milwaukee Ave., Chicago, IL 60622. Please include your address and phone number.

boycotted the first elections to a similar body intended for them.

Botha's proposals do not mention the 20 million blacks at all. They—even the people who live permanently in urban areas—are supposed to continue to exercise their political rights in whichever of the 10 impoverished rural Bantustans they are assigned to. That policy, long repudiated by even conservative Western governments, has received an unexpected and surprising boost in recent months with the disclosure that Swaziland, an internationally recognized country that borders South Africa to the east, is prepared to collaborate with the regime.

In question are two ridiculously tiny, overcrowded strips of territory along the Swazi border. One is the so-called "homeland" for all ethnic Swazis who live in South Africa, while the other, a narrow corridor to the Indian Ocean, is part of the Bantustan set aside for Zulu-speaking blacks.

Pretoria is ready to cede the areas to Swaziland. Part of the deal is that 750,000 ethnic Swazis, two-thirds of whom do not live in the territories in question, will be forced to become citizens of Swaziland. This massive denationalization, which has occurred already in the first four Bantustans to be pushed to "independence," will be another step toward the regime's stated goal of stripping all blacks of South African citizenship—denying them any claim to political rights.

Reports leaked from Washington have hinted that the Reagan administration's nominee as the next ambassador to Swaziland has already endorsed the prospective land deal.

—James North

In Detroit, a steamroller

DETROIT Democratic Socialist Zolton Ferency, the relentless maverick of Michigan politics, rode his fifth gubernatorial bid long, hard and straight into the face of a steamroller August 10. Placing fourth in a field of seven, his campaign captured 86,000 ballots statewide on an uncompromising platform calling for the creation of a state bank, public ownership of major utilities, a massive economic development program, reproductive rights and anti-Reaganism.

The victor of the Michigan Democratic primary was James Blanchard, a virtually unknown four-term Congressman from north suburban Detroit, who benefitted from a horn-again black/labor machine manufactured with a UAW label. Blanchard's victory and Ferency's defeat raise serious questions about the relationship between the DSA and the UAW, particularly in the field of electoral politics.

According to Rep. John Conyers (D-Mich.), "Zolton Ferency was clearly the logical, rational candidate to be endorsed by the labor movement. Instead, Sam Fishman (director of the UAW's Michigan Community Action Program) found his neighbor and friend Jim Blanchard." The campaign was then built from scratch, featuring well-timed and orchestrated endorsements from

the UAW, AFSCME, AFL and Michigan Education Association along with cash contributions from Ford, General Motors, Consumers Power, Detroit Edison, Bendix and Rockwell. TV ads included testimonials from such luminaries as Chrysler board chairman Lee Iacocca and an officer of Standard Federal Savings and Loan (which has brought state consumers record high interest rates).

The contest was a sharp contrast to Ferency's 1978 campaign, when neither the UAW nor Detroit's Mayor Coleman Young made any official endorsement and Ferency ended up capturing second place with 150,000 votes.

This time around, he also suffered a split in his traditional constituency. One candidate, state Senator David Plawecki, won some of the white ethnic and rank-and-file votes. Another candidate, state Senator Ed Pierce from Ann Arbor, carried that city's liberal block along with some black votes as well.

Conyers, who actively supported Ferency four years ago but whose district came "close to all but giving the stamp of approval to Blanchard," despite Blanchard's consistent opposition to Black Congressional Cau-

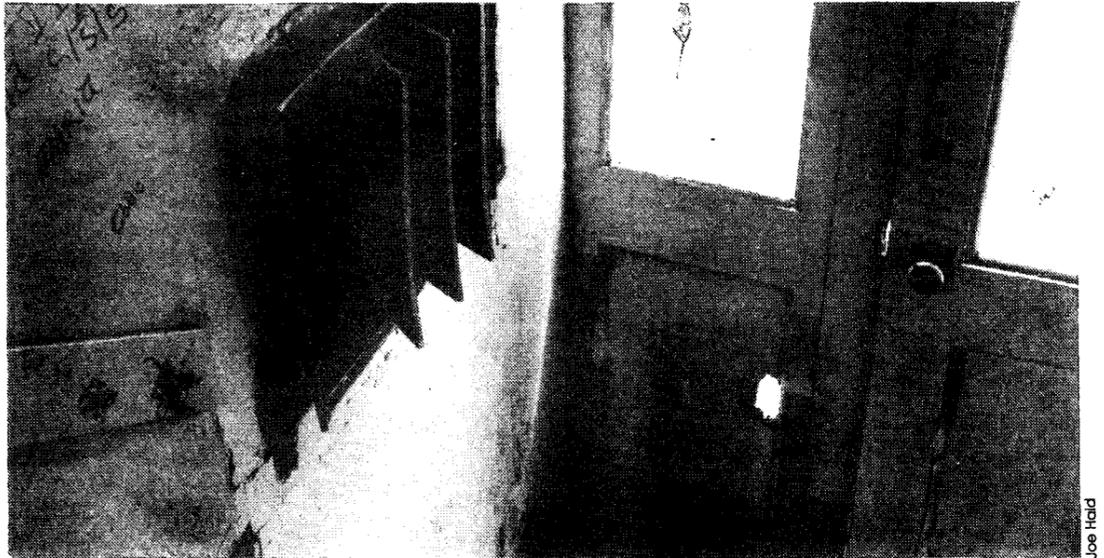
Socialist gubernatorial candidate Zolton Ferency



cus initiatives, said, "It wasn't what Blanchard did or didn't do, it's what Ferency didn't do—he didn't go into the black community. Ferency, who is probably the most astute political person in the state, assumed that I was going to split the black leadership, break up our fragile network of black leaders, without even a phone call."

But the most curious and perhaps most explosive development in the Ferency primary was the refusal of the large Detroit DSA local to endorse their own member's candidacy. Ferency told *In These Times*, "DSA either sensed or was told that I was going to split the black leadership, break up our fragile network of black leaders, without even a phone call." "It was not that we made a conscious decision not to cover it...we just don't cover that many campaigns," said Maxine Phillips, managing editor of the publication.

—Ron Williams



Joe Hold

Briefing: The squat goes on

For years squatting has been a way of life for tens of thousands in London, Amsterdam and West Berlin. But now in places like St. Louis, Dallas and even Tulsa, Okla., squatters, many of them organized by Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now (ACORN) are slowly making their mark in the fight for affordable housing. (See *In These Times*, July 28).

St. Louis: The squatting movement has focused on the black neighborhood of the otherwise integrated Central West End area. According to ACORN staff director Adam Blumenthal, the city wants to develop the area for "suburbanites and young professionals, as is the trend across the country." But ACORN believes that "the neighborhood should be preserved for the people who live there."

At issue are 1000 city-owned abandoned houses priced at roughly \$5,000 for individuals and \$80 to \$90 when bought in blocks by private developers. To stop block takeovers and re-entrenchment of the area, ACORN began squatting people last fall. Blumenthal claims that after ACORN moved in one family the city vandalized their house, making it impossible for them to live there. While other squatters were also harassed, two managed to strike a bargain with the Land Revitalization Authority (LRA), a state agency controlling the property, whereby the squatters would purchase the house for \$3,000 on a \$65-a-month lease.

He said ACORN considered this short of what it wanted: a concrete homestead program that would allow people to acquire houses if they promised to fix them up.

According to Blumenthal, in late April the mayor assured ACORN that a homesteading program would be put in motion. But two weeks later—in a move that stunned ACORN officials—the city arrested 23-year-old Lawrence Brady, a janitor who had been working on a squat for months. Originally, the city wanted to charge him with burglary until ACORN pointed out that Brady hadn't taken anything

out of the house but was in fact putting in things—such as plumbing. Brady was then charged with suspicion of criminal trespassing.

Brady's arrest caused such a public stir—including a sit-in at the mayor's office—that the city eventually dropped the charge. To further ease the pressure, the LRA decided to turn over 12 abandoned HUD houses it had previously refused to release.

While the Brady incident succeeded in providing some individuals with homes, ACORN leaders and two squatters were slapped with a \$610,000 suit by the LRA for punitive damages. The suit also calls for a permanent injunction that would prevent ACORN from "interfering in the normal conduct" of the agency's business. Blumenthal said that the injunction "would prevent us from criticizing basically anything it [the LRA] did. The injunction is very dangerous."

He added, "The fact that they're suing us hasn't changed our battle plans at all."

Dallas: The squatting movement here has turned into a battle with the Reagan administration's Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). According to Terry Andrews of ACORN, "HUD has always been bad, but it's a lot worse now."

In 1973, HUD set up the Section 810 homesteading program, whereby the city could acquire HUD-owned buildings valued under \$15,000 and then turn them over to people willing to homestead. From 1973 to 1978, 370 houses were allocated for homesteading. That number quickly decreased and in September 1981 the program fell apart completely. The Dallas housing crunch, combined with high inflation, pushed the value of HUD houses way above the \$15,000 limit. Despite ACORN requests for HUD to renegotiate the original \$15,000 figure, the department decided to let the homesteading program die.

In June, ACORN squatted Thelma Jones in a HUD building. She was soon forced out of the building and arrested on the charge of suspicion of criminal trespassing. During the arrest,

her property was thrown out into the street and she is now suing HUD for damages.

The Jones incident and the larger question of HUD's failure to maintain the Section 810 homesteading program were discussed with the secretary of HUD at the ACORN demonstration in Washington, D.C. As a result, HUD agreed to hold a meeting on July 28 with ACORN in Dallas to review the homesteading program and to negotiate a reassessment of the \$15,000 limit. According to Andrews, nothing was accomplished at the July 28 meeting. "Basically, Dick Eudaly [the HUD regional director] told us that HUD is not interested in providing abandoned houses for homesteading. They're interested in making money. And the only way they would turn over those houses is if they find that they can't sell them quick enough. So far that hasn't happened." Andrews added, "The meeting lasted two-and-a-half minutes."

But on the local level, ACORN did score a victory when Dallas decided to establish a non-profit housing corporation, Common Ground, to purchase privately owned abandoned houses. ACORN will sit on the board of directors.

While Common Ground has already received \$565,000, it is not yet clear whether the corporation can act as a viable source for people who need housing. According to Andrews, the city has only selected nine houses for the program.

When squatters in Tulsa tried "to work within the system," said Jeff Murray of ACORN, "the mayor sold us down the river." Ignoring the recommendations of a city appointed citizens action group on housing, the mayor sold 40 abandoned houses to private developers. ACORN, along with the residents of the community, wanted the homes turned over to squatters.

As it stands now, the buildings are boarded up and the developer has 45 days to fix them. ACORN will wait for that deadline to pass before deciding their future plans. But according to Murray, the alliance forged between the squatters—many of them Cuban—and the community's black residents before the homes were sold, is just as strong if not stronger now. Residents have said that they will continue to support ACORN's efforts and that they will not tolerate another slumlord.

—Nina Berman

IN THE NATION

LABOR

By Richard Moore

NEW YORK

A GENUINE WORKING-CLASS movement has emerged in New York City's Chinatown following the most crucial labor struggle in the nation's garment manufacturing industry since the '30s.

The battle—a classic labor conflict featuring everything from wildcat strikes to lockouts to mass demonstrations—focuses on the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union's (ILGWU) efforts since March to secure a new three-year contract with Chinatown's industry's bargaining representative, the Greater Blouse, Skirt and Undergarment Association (GBSUA). During the course of negotiations, the GBSUA twice rejected ILGWU Local 23-25's proposed contract—one virtually identical to those already ratified by other northeastern apparel manufacturers—and stood firm behind 15 counter-demands that union leaders termed "intolerable."

What followed this impasse, punctuating and defining daily life in this immigrant community for months, was a wrenching and sometimes unprincipled battle for worker support and allegiance. Ultimately, the union prevailed: Over 500 garment shopowners signed individual agreements with Local 23-25 and the GBSUA is expected to ratify a general agreement soon.

From the beginning, there was surprising and unprecedented support for the ILGWU. For example, immediately following the GBSUA's initial rejection of the pact on June 10, 5,000 workers joined an ad hoc "Committee to Defend the Union Contract." Hundreds of others, most of them women, became union activists literally overnight, making phone calls, cramming Chinatown's narrow streets with leaflets and organizing their co-workers for what union leader Jay Mazur promised would be a crucial strike. On one occasion, 50 workers stormed a pro-management radio sta-



Workers rock Chinatown

tion demanding equal time for the union's position, and they got it.

Management's massive media campaign, based primarily on racial appeals for Chinese unity against the "lofan" union, failed to stop 15,000 workers—80 percent of Chinatown's garment workforce—from walking off their jobs in the early morning of June 24 to attend a union rally in Columbus Park.

The mounting threat of a crippling

strike quickly forged a substantial split among the contractors. But at this point, those who opposed an early settlement retained their dominant position within the GBSUA. For one thing, some shopowners were convinced the union would not actually strike. In addition, many other owners stood united in an ideological stand against alleged discriminatory practices by uptown manufacturers. These manufacturers, the contractors argued, would not pay for the increased costs of the new pact, as they promised nor would they guarantee Chinatown an adequate supply of work. So on July 1, this time disregarding the unanimous advice of their own negotiation committee, management again voted down the union's offer.

Rather than strike, however, the union continued its rather tepid strategy of signing individual shops to "interim" agreements. But many members quickly saw through the union's vacillation, and on July 5 employees at Daytime Sportswear, a shop of about 50 workers, staged a wildcat strike, while other, equally restive members, clamored for a union response.

The growing militancy of the rank-and-file, coupled with a four-day lockout staged by garment shopowners, convinced the union to take the offensive. On July 15, the union struck 30 shops. More than 10,000 workers, picket signs held high, marched defiantly through the streets of Chinatown declaring their willingness "to strike for a year to win ratification of the contract."

Victory came quickly for the union. Such a strong showing of support for Local 23-25 after weeks of stalled negotiations, after weeks of wavering by union leaders, indicated that the ILGWU could withstand a long strike. For the contractors, such a strike would mean bankruptcy for a significant number of businesspeople. And so the owners, who could no longer count on workers yielding to ethnic pressure, gave in. By 3 p.m. on July 15, more than 500 shops had signed the union agreement.

As the battle winds down, it is clear that Chinatown will never again be the same. For the Chinese community, an

old way of life—industrial bondage based on blood relations and loyalty—is being buried in the frenzy of Chinese workers challenging Chinese employers and, for the first time, challenging them through an American trade union structure.

The end of an alliance.

What prompted this phenomenon in a community that before had seemed so cohesive?

The emerging divisions here represent the culmination of radical changes throughout New York's garment industry, changes heralding the end of a historic alliance between New York's garment contractors, Seventh Avenue manufacturers and the ILGWU itself. Thus, Chinatown's transformation hinges on a profound point of industrial transition. On one side, a new ascending group of foreign businesspeople, exploiting the cheap labor of a dynamic immigrant community, seeks to free itself from past bargaining precedents and to test its independent strength in the garment marketplace. On the other side, an old guard fights to preserve a cozy, cooperative labor-management relationship that has stabilized the marketplace for decades.

Indeed, that relationship governed labor relations in the industry for at least the past 50 years. From the turn of the century through the dreary years of the Depression, New York's garment scene was a pageant of cut-throat competition, fierce price-cutting wars between contractors, and intense organizing battles between management and the ILGWU.

But by the end of the '30s, survival had dictated a tenuous balance of power between the parties. Contractors began cooperating in setting prices, placing floors on workbids to Seventh Avenue jobbers and manufacturers. Moreover, the ILG significantly enhanced the curb on competition by limiting workforce demands on employers and by keeping the entire industry organized. Whatever the long-term implications of union-management cooperation, the resulting labor peace, and growing wage and price stability, protected ILG wages and industry

Continued on page 10



New York in the Sixties