"AN ATTACK ON ONE WILL BE ANSWERED BY ALL"

RED SPORTS
LYNN VOICES
C. WRIGHT MILLS
BRITAIN TURNS RIGHT
Front Cover: poster by Workers Conference Against Briggs/ Proposition 6.  
Back Cover: painting of Lynn, Massachusetts by Arnold Trachtman (detail).

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INTRODUCTION

GAY POLITICS

Summer 1979 marks the tenth anniversary of the gay liberation movement. On June 28, 1969 a group of patrons — drag queens and lesbians — of the Stonewall Inn in Greenwich Village met a routine police raid with resistance. This spontaneous show of force acted as a catalyst for the gay movement.

The gay liberation movement grew up in the context of preceding social movements: Civil Rights, the New Left, Women’s Liberation. The Black Power movement and the women’s movements, for whom themes of identity and culture were central, provided a language with which gays, too, could explore and understand their experience. The women-centered milieu of the feminist movement, which opened up a space away from the institutions of marriage, family and male domination, allowed many women to recognize their own lesbianism. A positive assertion of lesbianism in turn added impetus to the entire feminist movement.

Particularly within feminist and other left groups, the new-found gay pride gave homosexual men and women the incentive and strength to break their silence and “come out.” The early gay movement drew on its context, talking of liberation, putting forth analyses of male-supremacy and sex roles. But lesbians found themselves caught between a gay movement that did not recognize their needs as women and a women’s movement that did not want to recognize their lesbianism. Many lesbians then began to form their own organizations. Today, lesbian-feminist groups are an important political presence within the women’s movement, often its most militant wing; male-dominated gay liberation groups also exist, although only some of them can be confidently considered pro-feminist and left.
Now, ten years after Stonewall, a Right-wing attack on homosexuality and gay communities has to some extent pushed lesbians and gay men back into alliance. The lead article in this issue describes the response of the large and diverse California gay communities when a religious fundamentalist and reactionary state senator, John Briggs, initiated a state-wide referendum against homosexuals. The “Briggs Initiative,” or Proposition #6, was designed to prohibit homosexuals from teaching in the California public school system. Proposition #6 was defeated, although narrowly.

The Briggs campaign also had another dimension — a civil liberties struggle. Briggs himself cautioned that any discussion of homosexuality could be construed as advocating it, that not only known homosexuals were open to dismissal from teaching jobs but also anyone who could be seen as an ally. Almost anyone could be vulnerable; particularly all unmarried adults could be suspect. Briggs’ tactics brought back to many people memories of witchhunts. In order to be saved from persecution, one had to be ready to inform on friends and family. Given the threat to basic rights that Proposition #6 represented, its defeat by a vote of 58% to 42% can be seen only as a slim victory. After all, two-and-a-half million people voted for it. (Furthermore, a second Briggs initiative, Proposition #7, restoring the death penalty, was carried.)

The extreme Right-wing nature of the Briggs initiative constrained the nature of the political opposition. Many fundamental questions raised by the gay and lesbian liberation movements were avoided — such as heterosexism, the oppressive nature of the conventional family, and male supremacy in general. Many liberals and radicals, gay and straight, wanted to fight the initiative on exclusively civil-libertarian grounds so as not to “complicate” the issue and to win as much support as possible from heterosexuals. Furthermore, the San Francisco gay business community — predominantly male, of course — also exerted great influence in the anti-Briggs campaign. Gay businessmen have achieved a measure of economic and political power in San Francisco; they had become accustomed to being accommodated by the system and felt their foothold threatened. They shared with the civil libertarians a disinclination to raise a fundamental critique of heterosexist society and preferred to confine political efforts to defending their position within existing society. These forces mobilized to campaign primarily through the media, putting forward a respectable image of gays, and warning of threats to the civil liberties of everyone. Gay people were cautioned against being too flamboyant in their style and asked to keep their “sexual preference” as private and unobtrusive as possible.

This approach was countered by Left gay groups. Out of choice, and because they had less access to the media, these groups did more grass roots work against Briggs. Lesbians, because of their position as women, tended to work a more radical form of gay consciousness; and, as the authors note, the backbone of the grassroots activity against Proposition #6 were lesbian-feminist and straight-feminist networks built up over the past decade of the women’s liberation movement.

Indeed, within the Left gay coalition there were many tensions between women and men. Gayness provides no automatic correction to sexism; nor does gayness mean necessarily relinquishing all the economic, social and political privileges of men. Lesbians, by contrast, share the problems of straight women — vulnerability to violence, the difficulty of surviving as “single” women outside the institutions of marriage and family, poverty due to educational and employment discrimination.

Furthermore, class and race divisions within
the gay community were also sharp. The extremely inflationary housing market in California, for example, means that the power of prosperous gays, again usually male, to establish pleasant and safe neighborhoods was pushing out Hispanic and lower income people, gay and straight.

Thus the Freeman and Ward analysis of the liberal-left split within the gay movement is inadequate, and needs to be combined with an analysis of how structural divisions — by sex, class and race — also affect gay politics.

Furthermore, the defeat of Proposition #6 by no means solved the problems of California gays. The article by Pam David and Lois Helmbold talks about the ongoing struggle in San Francisco between the Right-wing—especially the police—and gays. To grasp the San Francisco situation, it is important to recognize that the murders of Mayor George Moscone and gay Councilman Harvey Milk by Right-wing and ex-cop Dan White were political assassinations. The subsequent verdict of only "voluntary manslaughter" against White was seen by many as acquiescence to the murder of gays and progressives. The ensuing riot, however, was not just the product of the verdict, but also of escalated police violence against gays allowed by the assassination of the men who were the chief opponents of police power in the city. The article reports on the recent events and discusses the effects of the murders and the trial on gay political consciousness, and the challenge they have raised to the low-profile, respectable and anti-radical politics of the gay community business leadership. It also calls attention to the importance of the divisions among gays we mentioned above, divisions that stand in the way of a unified politics of gay liberation.

Early gay liberation embraced the perspective of "the personal is political" that had first been enunciated by the women's movement. Implicitly, gays were asserting that how we make love and whom we love are not separate from political analysis. But the covert lives led by most gays, necessary for many gays, and the gay subculture that allows them to survive, do not easily become integrated into one's work, mixed neighborhood, biological family or multi-issue political organization. "Coming out" is a beginning, but many gays themselves argue for a separation between private and public realms. As with the women's movement, the gay movement can be co-opted into the commercial world, sold back to people as a lifestyle, if it is cut off from the essential critique raised by homosexuality of our whole society. It is not only that capitalist institutions oppress gays materially, and through bigotry and persecution, but also that the fragmentation of different aspects of our lives represses our abilities to understand and recognize our needs and/or thwarts our capacities to express our needs. In this way the tyranny of heterosexism, through sexual repression and the oppression of women, hurts gays and straights both.

Yet the common ground for political action is difficult to establish. In addition to the sex, class and race divisions among gays, and the division between hetero- and homosexuals, much of the socialist tradition has been hostile to the exploration of these problems. Many socialist groups still rule out of their definition of what is "political" — questions of sex,
culture and private life. For all these reasons, the coalitions formed under the threat of Right-wing initiatives such as Briggs’ should be expected to be only temporary in this historical period. They are of course important, even urgent, nevertheless. But in addition we hope these articles contribute to the kinds of understanding and changes that will be the necessary conditions for more permanent alliances.

SPORTS AND THE CP

In his article on the Communist Party’s sports programs in the 1930s and 1940s, our Associate Editor Mark Naison helps raise some issues about the left’s relationship to popular culture and the American mass culture. During the decades surrounding the second world war, the party’s changing approach to sports reflected its intention to broaden its appeal to the “American working class.” The party’s attempts in the late 20’ and early 30s at organizing community-based sports leagues, based on European models, were rejected a few years later as “marginal” because the leagues attracted primarily foreign-born workers who were open to the explicitly socialist orientation. “Americans”, on the other hand, were to be found at the ballparks, listening to sports events on the radio, or reading the sports pages in the daily papers. The party hoped to recruit these native-born workers by taking on this aspect of our national culture — spectator sports. Thus, from 1936, the Daily Worker devoted 1/8 of its space to sports coverage, including on its Sports Page reports of big league games and boxing matches as well as attempts to raise the consciousness of its readers about the commercialism and racism of capitalist sports.

It is important to see the change in CP sports activity as one of many efforts to Americanize the party. However, rather than bringing the Mainstream into the party, it may have served to help integrate immigrants into the mainstream culture. Certainly many of the foreign-born socialist readers of the Daily Worker became aware of and informed about this central fact of American mass culture. They became familiar with the sports heroes and with the rules of the games played in American ballparks.

In looking at spectator sports, some on the left have argued that they are simply part of the “society of the spectacle” helping to induce passivity and diverting attention of working class people from acting on their own behalf. Others, like Naison, feel that spectator sports are popular because they meet real human needs and that for leftists to stay aloof from these cultural forms alienates them from a broad base. The article reminds us that we must address culture as part of our analysis and part of our practise. We need to go further in criticizing the structure of mass spectator sports and in analyzing their role in American culture. We must try to understand why they are important to so many people, the ways in which they affect people’s consciousness, and how they are experienced and interpreted by spectators.

In one way, watching professional sports can reinforce a spectator’s sense of powerlessness; a powerlessness experienced more profoundly at work, and in public and social life. As consumers of sports events, we watch others act out a ritualized battle — people who have risen from the ranks of the ordinary to become the sports elite. Watching sports heroes compete is a way of identifying with winners, while at the same time distancing oneself from the possibility of being a winner oneself. It becomes the “stuff” of our private fantasies and public myths.

But being a fan is not merely a passive activity. First of all, it can be emotionally
thrilling as an intense aesthetic experience as we witness displays of excellence, self-discipline, team work choreography, and skill. The transcendence of an aesthetic experience can energize and might just as well be a spur to action as an inhibition. It is the context within which we have this experience that determines our consciousness about it and how we use it. Secondly, as a critical judge, a fan can become an expert in analyzing and appreciating the subtleties of a team strategy or the beauty of an individual’s personal style. The statistical histories of teams and players are learned and become part of a whole form of communication and social interaction.

This language is, however, for the most part, an exclusive language that bonds men. It is part of boys’ socialization into male culture, becomes a prime form of interaction between fathers and sons, and remains the language of adult male friendships. Women may enter into this world on occasion, but usually as adjuncts. The place that women have as spectators of professional sports is not acknowledged nor understood. Football may be at the extreme end of this spectrum being at the same time the most brutal and the most cerebral of the male-dominated professional sports. Pat Nixon commented that wives should watch TV football and become familiar with its terminology so that if their husbands are called away to the phone they can fill them in on any crucial plays they may have missed.

Male domination puts men’s competitive sports at the top of our society’s commitment: both in terms of resources and emotional investment. This is true for participatory athletic programs in general as well as spectator sports. This allocation is now being questioned by feminists. Women are demanding that they be allowed to compete and they are beginning to question the definitions of athletic skill. The athletic skills most valued in our society are those most closely associated with the male body: characteristics defined by strength and power. Endurance and agility, which might give women the edge, are relegated to lower down on the hierarchy.

While the Communist Party’s programs in the ’30s and ’40s did not take many of these critiques into account, the party did, as the author notes, recognize the central role that sports have in our cultural — and political — identity. Our culture has kept socialist politics at the outer margins of American life and people are resistant to developing alternative forms of participation which challenge mass culture. The general historical weakness of left-organized and (except at times) trade union-organized sports programs in the U.S. does reflect the lack of a strongly self-conscious working class tradition. But there is danger in assuming the lower common denominator and accepting the cultural status quo. The Communist Party, in choosing to Americanize, let go of a socialist tradition among foreign-born workers rather than building on it, and in their subsequent sports activity in trade unions and sports coverage were often guilty of an uncritical celebration of American sports culture and its heroes. Their critique, practice and their vision were, therefore, limited.

LYNN, MASSACHUSETTS

This issue of Radical America features excerpts from Lynn Voices, a collection of poems and pictures about the city of Lynn, Mass., and its people. The poems are by Peter Bates and Bill Costley and the paintings are by Arnold Trachtman. Lynn Voices was conceived as an attempt to update Vincent Ferrini’s No Smoke (1941), a book of poems about Lynn people of that generation. We have appended to these excerpts an afterword by the labor historian Paul Faler, which sketches the history
of working class militance in Lynn.

Faler counterposes the living tradition of combative class struggle among Lynn's industrial workers to the outlook of Lynn Voices, which he interprets as a concentration on decay and decline. However, one can't see these poems as being particularly concerned with Lynn's declining state. The desperate and dying castaways, whose lives are contrasted with bureaucrats and bourgeoisie in these poems, are abundant in prosperous industrial cities as well as declining ones. Their condition condemns capitalist industrial civilization as a whole, not just its weak links.

Likewise, the mushrooming, billowing factory buildings in Trachtman's paintings can be read as expressions of the creative potential of industrialism, not just as ominous, depopulated relics. Or to put it another way, the coexistence of images of decline with sensations of growth and energy in these paintings reminds us that rise and fall are two aspects of the same process.

C. WRIGHT MILLS

E.P. Thompson's essay on C. Wright Mills is the second contribution to Radical America's new biography series. The editors hope to find biographies of leftists who combined critical intellectual work with activist political work. C. Wright's Mills was primarily a radical theorist and publicist rather than an activist, and it is as a "responsible craftsman" that Thompson asks us to remember him.

Mills worked at a time when the Marxist left in the U.S. had suffered serious defeats and had ceased to function as a political force. Western Marxist intellectuals split from communist parties in response to the Hungarian revolution and other political crises created by Stalinism. As a critic of Marxism, Mills suggested new forms of radical social analysis that strongly influenced the early New Left. Though isolated in the academic world and separated from a left movement, this iconoclastic sociologist left a rich legacy to the new left of the 1960's. His angry anti-establishment style appealed to irreverent young radicals and his unorthodox thinking not only challenged marxist determinism; it included insightful analyses of bureaucratic trade unionism, U.S. imperialism and Latin anti-imperialism, the emergence of a white collar service sector, the power of the corporate-military elite, and danger of nuclear war.

While Wright Mills left an important legacy to the new left, there were limitations to his approach. Unlike the radicals he inspired, Mills' work was not influenced by the civil rights movement. Indeed, he never wrote about race. His analysis focussed on elites, and therefore left women out. When he did write about women clericals and "salesgirls" in White Collar (1951), he did so without any consciousness of sexual oppression on the job. Finally, Mills' rejection of Marxism and his emphasis on labor bureaucracy led him to dismiss the working class as the agent of revolutionary change, and to claim that intellectuals would henceforth be the primary agent of social change, a view sometimes expressed in the student movement of the 1960's.

In the past ten years academic leftism has become relatively acceptable in some universities; indeed certain forms of academic Marxism are regarded as "respectable". C. Wright Mills, who taught at a time when civil liberties scarcely existed in higher education, would view today's radical academics with mixed feelings. For him, a Texas iconoclast at Columbia University, the standard of intellectual work was not its academic acceptability, let alone its respectability. Mills was an excellent researcher and writer, but he wanted his work to be judged primarily in terms of its critical edge and its
independence from academic and political orthodoxy.

Edward Thompson concludes by emphasizing Mills’ strong sense of craft. Unlike the academic expert whose work rationalizes the status quo, Mills was a rebel who believed the critical intellectual had a responsibility to help craft the new society. Unlike the social planner who aims to control the process of change, Mills was a democrat who believed that the agents of radical change needed intellectual tools. At a time when left intellectuals seem especially confused, C. Wright Mills’ work offers a model of politically motivated scholarship and dedicated craftsmanship.
Don't deny competent workers the right to work...

...because of fear and misinformation.

NO on 6
DEFENDING GAY RIGHTS
The Campaign Against the Briggs Amendment in California

Michael Ward & Mark Freeman

When John Briggs, conservative California state senator, placed Proposition 6 on the ballot there last year, he upped the national ante on the question of homosexual rights. Voters had rejected gay rights in consecutive local elections in Miami, Wichita, St. Paul and Eugene. Now Briggs proposed to deny all openly pro-gay teachers and other public school employees the right to a job.

Despite their large numbers and visibility in some California cities, gay people there had cause to fear. As late as summer of last year the prestigious Field Poll showed California voters prepared to vote against the gay minority by a two-to-one margin. But when the votes were tallied in November the Briggs Initiative was rejected by a 58% to 42% margin. What happened to change people?

The authors, socialists active within the San Francisco gay male community for the past 7 years, see this vote as an argument for a grass roots approach to organizing. Although the Right has recently scored a series of victories, overturning gay rights legislation and eroding a woman’s right to abortion, mass mobilizing from the Left can effectively take the wind out of this backlash. While the “no on 6” campaign eventually gained some degree of support from most progressive sectors of California, the mainstays of all organizing were the gay male and lesbian/women’s movements, whose strengths and weaknesses determined the course of the struggle. The gay liberation and feminist movements provided the context which enabled gay men and lesbians (despite the atmosphere of fear and intimidation) to reach out to neighbors, co-workers, and people on the street. And it was this personal
contact, as a strategy, that ultimately made the vote a victorious outcome.

Perhaps it was inevitable that a gay rights showdown would happen in California. At the far end of the continent, California has always been a land of extremes and extremists, where the future has often appeared first. It continues to maintain its reputation as the last frontier in a land of frontiers, a place for new starts free from the economic and social restrictions "back home".

During the 70's both San Francisco and Los Angeles gained reputations as gay "meccas." The vision of California as a "land of opportunity" continues more openly, and more safely, in its large but elusive "gay community." Most of these gay immigrants are cut off from family ties, have little money when they arrive and look for work in the service sector, in clerical, sales, hospital and restaurant work or in the non-unionized gay-owned businesses.

The corporations whose headquarters are in California find several bonuses in the new lifestyles. A mobile work force not tied to encumbrances of the traditional family fits the need of the vast service sector for non-union, low paid employees. Likewise, "singles" just happen to be the ideal consumers, replicating needs at an individual level that used to cover a whole family unit.

There is nothing new in the idea of California as a land of the singles lifestyle. Like many frontier societies, California was settled by single people, primarily men, attracted by the promises of plentiful work at relatively high wages. The gold rush initially brought an almost all male population that quickly outnumbered the Spanish speaking Californians by more than 25-1. The Asian Exclusion Acts made it illegal for Chinese, Japanese, and Filipino women and children to join their men working in the U.S. World War II turned the Los Angeles economy toward defense. Blacks were recruited from the south into industrial jobs for the first time here. They were joined by thousands of women workers of all races — Rosie the Riveters — who were required to meet war time production needs. This new employment ended for most Blacks and independent women when the troops returned home.

Gay people have always made up a significant percentage of the state's population and its workforce. Their particular history, long hidden as embarrassing or trivialized as lurid and scandalous, is now being uncovered by a group of gay historians. They have found a rich and colorful history, unearthing the lives of gay people, some who lived as upfront lesbians and drag queens and others who lived a work-a-day life unsuspected by fellow miners, clerks or waitresses.¹ For gay people there is a new sense of family that emerges as this history is rediscovered. For non-gays it can help place later developments into historical continuity. Beside the usual 10% gay population of any city or town, many more-homosexuals were attracted to the gay meccas of Hollywood and San Francisco from the 1920's on. There they found if not open tolerance, at least a lot of company and a chance to make it in a place free of unendurable restraints. Life was better in the Golden State but still had to be led mostly undercover.

By the fifties police repression of a growing gay constituency meant up to 500 arrests a month. Thousands of gays, men and women, were purged from the military, civil service and the notorious "boys of Boise" cases were prosecuted during this time.² The societal mandate of heterosexuality gave legitimacy to the lucrative arrests and fines which some California gays saw as a campaign of legalized extortion by local authorities. Although they had learned to live with repression as a way of life, lesbians and gay men have a long history of resistance. In the 50's, the resistance took organizational
form, but a specifically “gay politics” did not emerge nationally until the Gay Liberation Movement announced that homosexuals could and should be organized around a new found “gay pride.”

The Movement claimed to have been born out of the New York City Stonewall Riot of June 28, 1969. That night the patrons of the Stonewall Inn, street queens, turned the tables on NYPD cops who had come to make a routine raid. They locked them in the bar and took over the street.

In the euphoria of the early days activists moved to throw off the guilt and isolation as manifestations of gay oppression. In its spirit, militancy and confrontational tactics, the Movement clearly embodied much from its sister movements — the Civil Rights, Anti-War and women’s struggles. Gay Liberation Fronts, named after the National Liberation Front of the South Vietnamese, sprang up in cities all over the U.S., Europe and Latin America.

The lasting effect locally of these brassy, energetic days was to legitimize the presence of a gay community within urban centers. In Los Angeles a Gay Community Services Center was started to pass out funds and provide social services. In San Francisco in 1972, a police sweep of the largely gay Castro Street area resulted in a series of angry community meetings which let local politicians know that the gay community was a force to be reckoned with. A leading organizer of those meetings was Harvey Milk, the progressive founder of the Eureka Valley Merchants Association, who had once lost a stockbroker job after speaking out against the invasion of Cambodia. Although supported by many non-gays for his opposition to downtown business and real estate speculators, his eventual election to the Board of Supervisors signalled the rise of a “gay constituency” largely independent of the city’s Democratic Party machine and gay power brokers, who Harvey dubbed “Aunt Marys”.

After its initial flurry, the momentum of the gay liberation movement as a national phenomenon died down. The Movement failed to consolidate either an ideology or organizations. Radical mass gay organizations had brief and stormy histories. One reason was that there was a relative dearth of gay issues to organize around after “coming out”, aside from several custody cases involving lesbian mothers and fleeting protests against incidents of police brutality or media slander. Contention in these groups, such as Bay Area Gay Liberation or the Lavender and Red Union, tended to center on which issues to support at all, or on the relative importance of “gay” or “non-gay” (solidarity) issues. Much organizational energy was put into struggling with the homophobia of other Left or community groups. Individuals tended to focus on internal study, or to work on specific issues such as South Africa, health care or workplace organizing, or else to join predominantly non-gay groups.

At least in the large metropolitan areas, gay men and lesbians tended to work in separate organizations. Mass gay (male) groups gave ambiguous or token support to feminist issues. Lesbians, for their part, generally identified more with the womens’ community than the gay community and worked in feminist or mixed left groups.

Less radical energies were channeled into respectable affiliation with the National Gay Task Force’s educational efforts, or local backroom lobbying to influence politicians in favor of gay rights. Another trend was represented by David B. Goodstein, millionaire son of a steel mill owner. Goodstein entered gay politics by purchasing the Advocate, a gay male monthly newspaper. His explicit intention was to purge the movement of its “gay spoilers”, i.e. radical activists. Goodstein’s strategy is reminiscent of the Mattachine Society, the first homophile
organization with a national effect. Started in Los Angeles in 1951 by several ex-Communist Party members, the organization was set up to provide a source of strength to homosexuals under attack by McCarthyism and local police. By 1954, conservative sectors decimated the large mixed group by purging it of its leftist founders. (See vol. 11 #4 of Radical America.) It was a “politic of respectability” that came to dominate the gay organizations of the 50’s and it is this same politic that fills the pages of the Advocate. Goodstein is fighting for the day when corporations recognize and target his specifically gay market — gay liberation through purchasing power. His strategy has much in common with the Madison Avenue trend which glorified the single consumer.

The proliferation of small gay shops and hundreds of bars and restaurants in identified areas of major California cities embodies this same hope for small entrepreneurs on the local level. Indeed, much of the space opened up by the gay movement that drew new waves of gays to the meccas in LA or San Francisco was filled by the creation of these gay neighborhoods which offer a sense of belonging. While these business establishments do not answer the problems the new gay arrivals have with employment or housing, much less alienation, they do serve a function as centers of community life. They have also made the gay (male) population more visible than ever and impossible to ignore.

Enter John Briggs. A state senator from California’s notoriously conservative Orange County, he represented the interests of fellow insurance companies, financiers and his local country club. A self-made man who bragged of coming “from the bowels of the middle class.” Briggs fancied himself playing the roles of Anita Bryant and Howard Jarvis in a campaign to “bring morality back in style.” Briggs hoped to channel the dissatisfaction of Californians around the disruption of the sense of family and of community into advancing his political career.

A busy man in early 1978, Briggs was not only promoting his own candidacy for governor, but also the two petition drives he saw as sure-fire hits. In addition to Proposition 6 he sponsored Proposition 7, to expand the death penalty. Eventually spending over $1,000,000, he juggled money from one to another of his nine separate funds and ended up paying record wages to “volunteers”, whose organizing methods won them court convictions.

Even though he had no direct ties to the figures who head New Right organizations, Briggs capitalized on their impetus. But he was not nearly as polished as the Viguerie machine, Phyllis Schlafly, or Ronald Reagan’s Citizens for the Republic. In his enthusiasm he went far beyond past repeals of anti-discrimination legislation as in Miami. To the Education Code of California his Initiative would have added this pseudo-legalese: “One of the most fundamental interests of the State is the establishment and preservation of the family unit.” It set up a series of vague criteria whereby a school employee could be immediately removed if his or her words, in or out of the classroom, could be construed to “advocate homosexuality.” It was non-discriminatory, at least, since you did not have to be gay to be guilty.

Briggs began to build his base of support among fundamentalist and Mormon churches, law enforcement agencies and other traditionally anti-gay forces. Still, some big-time conservative politicians were slow to endorse the measure. But if his “modest proposal” passed in California, certainly every ambitious politician throughout the country could hop on the homophobia bandwagon.

When people began organizing a response to Briggs’ proposition, discussion centered on the way the pro-gay campaign had been run in
Dade County’s referendum to repeal a non-discrimination ordinance for gay people. Californians had more than just passing interest in the Miami fiasco since it was a small group of San Francisco politicians who were imported to help run the show for the Dade County Coalition for Human Rights. These men were referred to locally as the “power brokers” because of their access to money and their reputed ability to deliver a gay vote in high-level California politics.

The “professional” campaign run in Miami relied heavily on slick advertising based on Jimmy Carter’s slogan “Human rights are absolute.” The “hot” topics of child molesting and gay sexuality, featured prominently in the propaganda of Save Our Children, were absent from the pro-gay side’s leaflets and newspaper ads. Outreach to the large Cuban community was intentionally avoided on the grounds that a gay issue would only “inflame” them. Campaign leaders actually declined the aid of volunteers who wanted to walk precincts, figuring that the presence of homosexuals in the streets would create a backlash. Not until the final week of the campaign was any public leafletting done.

Despite its disastrous consequences in Miami, this “don’t rock the boat” strategy was brought home to California to combat Briggs. Adopting it were the Concerned Voters of California (CVC), founded in September, 1977. CVC commissioned a survey of California voters. Based on its discouraging results, David Goodstein, one of CVC’s founders, advised in his Advocate, “All gay people could help best by

Don’t be fooled by the MYTH of gays as child molesters!

Child molesting is 98% heterosexual, perpetrated mostly by adult males against young females, practically never by lesbians. Proposition 6 was not designed to protect children from sexual abuse. Laws are already on the books which remove teachers who commit such crimes. The purpose of this initiative is to divide workers, and untrue stereotypes about gays are being used as a tool to confuse voters. Don’t let Briggs use you in his campaign to chip away at the rights of California workers.
maintaining very low profiles. Constructively, we should assist in registering gay voters, stuffing envelopes in the headquarters and keeping out of sight of non-gay voters....” His conclusion, that defeat was almost certain and “could be even worse than necessary if gay activists or hedonists choose to be outrageously visible” did not go over well in most gay circles.

CVC eventually accommodated itself to the principle of gay visibility in the campaign and worked with some of the coalitions taking a more grassroots approach. In all, CVC raised over $800,000 (about half from non-gay donors) which paid salaries, office expenses and financed television and radio ads. One ad featured an elderly and presumably straight woman school-teacher who explained to viewers why Proposition 6 made her fear for her job. Especially in isolated or highly conservative communities where little other organizing can be done, these ads were the only voice against the Briggs Initiative. The professional campaign was also effective in obtaining endorsements from highly places politicians, editors and entertainment personalities.

Some organizations in smaller cities complained, however, that CVC interlopers were draining their own funding resources. Others resented CVC for soliciting funds nationwide by giving the false impression that it was the only umbrella organization for all activist groups. For by and large, it was the upper echelon of the gay community that was covered by CVC’s professional umbrella. CVC was not to become the campaign’s single center, nor did it represent gay politics.

Largely in reaction to CVC, early efforts to organize a response to Briggs placed heavy emphasis on the need for grassroots activism. The conference which founded the California Coalition against the Briggs Initiative (CACABI) in Los Angeles in December, 1977 passed a “winning strategy” resolution which emphasized the necessity of face-to-face contact on a massive scale. Its arguments were based on statistics which showed that most people who voted anti-gay claimed never to have met a gay person. Yet this strategy was not simply a call to “come out” or “take to the streets.” Conference were quick to point out that making it safe for non-gay and closeted supporters to work against Proposition 6 would be crucial in the campaign. Their main point was that victory depended on mobilizing as many as possible rather than relying strictly on a media-oriented blitz. Whether or not they later maintained close organizational ties to CACABI, most of those attending the Los Angeles conference continued to organize in the spirit of this “grassroots strategy.”

CACABI itself had a short and turbulent history. CACABI was meant to grow into the One Big Organization of the anti-Proposition 6 campaign. But its members, mostly activists from the women’s and gay men’s community with experience in local groups and issues, lacked both the resources and expertise needed for the huge job of creating a single, coordinated, statewide electoral machine. Such deficiencies left CACABI open to charges of “unprofessionalism,” notably from David Goodstein who urged his readers not to send their money to the “amateurs.”

Furthermore, leftist domination of the founding LA conference made moderates like those within the Democratic Party clubs reluctant to support CACABI because they doubted its ability to enlist participation from groups like trade unions and churches. For months CACABI debated whether to stand by its original resolutions declaring solidarity with a wide array of progressive struggles around the world or whether to invite participation around the single issue of opposition to Proposition 6. Eventually it became too difficult to keep together an organization with such a high level of
political friction, and CACABI dissolved itself in March, 1978.

At the same time that it became obvious One Big Organization was not possible, it grew evident that centralized control was not necessary. People were already organizing themselves against Proposition 6 "spontaneously" in virtually every community around the state. The impetus for mobilizing came not so much from strong coordinated Movement leadership, as activists had assumed it would, but from external pressures, from the very real dangers Proposition 6 posed, and the strength of gay and lesbian politics as shown by the 200,000 people who participated in Gay Freedom Day the summer before.

People were frankly scared. If Proposition 6 passed and homosexual hunting became fashionable, no gay person would be safe. Perhaps the situation was most precarious for those living quiet lives in small towns. There the fight against Proposition 6 was a fight to be able to remain living where they were, without being forced into the few "safe" spaces of gay ghettos in Los Angeles and San Francisco.

Proposition 6 posed a very personal dilemma, a dilemma based on the way gays can be invisible in our society. A gay person could decide to work publicly against it or risk suffering the effects of its passage. In many localities, displaying a "No on 6" button or bumperstickers was tantamount to a public confession. At the workplace or among neighbors it made your sexuality a public issue. Non-gay people had to choose whether or not to invite suspicion. During the course of the campaign some learned first-hand about the wrath of homophobia. The personal and political decisions thousands made added no small amount of drama to the Proposition 6 struggle.

A visit to the town of Ponoma in Orange County by a gay male and a lesbian activist provided some good examples. Ponoma is typical of the changes occurring in California; it sits squarely in the midst of what were once orange groves but are rapidly becoming apartment complexes for young working class families and singles. Settled largely by whites from the South and Midwest, Ponoma's current growth is largely due to greater numbers of Blacks and Latins.

Central Baptist Church there is headquarters for Reverend Ray Batema, the slick young right-hand man in John Briggs' "Defend Our Children" organization. The church boasts attendance of over 4,000 and does bus ministry Sunday School outreach over a 100 mile radius to Black and Latino, as well as Anglo children. The gay visitors found the pulpit adorned with red-white-and-blue bunting and hundreds of "Yes on 6" bumperstickers lining the back pew. The 95% white congregation heard Batema compare Briggs and Anita Bryant to Christ's brave disciples in his sermon "Jesus loves the little children of the world." But during the Invitation to be born again, the Reverend broke out of his usual honeyed tone to show another side. Furious at some adolescents who had been fidgeting during the 50 minute sermon, and taking a time honored option in church, he bellowed, "Don't think I don't see you. Any more teenagers laughing or trying to walk out the back and I'll have you in my office first thing tomorrow. Anyone trying to leave during Invitation would have to be sick."

A mile away in a small modern apartment a racially mixed lesbian couple had met with the visitors via a mutual friend from high school days. They were now planning how to get literature to other closeted gays they knew to quietly distribute in workplaces. At an all-night food franchise in the adjacent shopping area, a salesperson with an ERA button commented on the visitors' "No on 6 and 7" t-shirts and bought two for herself and her boyfriend. The young man working the shift with her, though, tried to
keep the length of the store between himself and the gay customers. What was occurring throughout this and many other suburban towns was that the previously untouchable topic of homosexuality was beginning to come out in the open.

Eventually over thirty grassroots organizations sprang up, in addition to many informal groups which grew out of local gay communities, women's centers, student groups and circles of friends. As events progressed, a decentralized structure and an increasingly radical but non-rhetorical line developed as the strongest trend of the campaign. What finally emerged had advantages over either the professionally-run campaign and the strong leftist coalition which had proven impossible, and involved a great number of all kinds of activists. Each group had a distinctive character, a political unity hammered out among whoever was willing to be active against Proposition 6 in each area. Thus the energetic group in Sonoma County had a strongly feminist bent, while in San Jose a coalition was headed by Libertarians and gay church members.

A wide variety of tactical methods were used, each group deciding how to use its own resources most effectively. Where precinct work was not feasible, as in suburban areas, shopping centers or football games were picked as community focal points to pass out leaflets. In San Diego people set up tables at approaches to the beach. In politically conservative areas like the Central Valley, where even the United Farm Workers don't identify themselves publicly, radio talk shows were used.

The grassroots nature of the campaign called up a good deal of creativity. People who had never done public speaking before went out to address local churches, PTA's and professional and union groups. In San Francisco a gay teachers' group hosted a children's day in the park. Problems of scarce resources and funds were met by enlisting aid from sympathetic members of the community. Many gay and non-gay workers in print shops donated the labor and skills which put out vast amounts of campaign material. Managers and staff in theaters volunteered to produce benefits.

In cities people that could not work under the same roof regrouped, each group carving out an area of work appropriate to its politics and resources. CACABI was refounded by members and ex-members of the Socialist Workers Party as a "single-issue" coalition, in the San Francisco Bay Area becoming "BACABI" and in Los Angeles "CABILA." Democratic Party members with experience in running electoral drives often helped organize precinct walking. Since only the election was not at stake and not any particular organization, people who had fought before were now able to cooperate.

During the course of the campaign the press largely ignored the massive grassroots response to Proposition 6, especially the overwhelming participation by the women's community. In towns all over California the most likely place to contact anti-Proposition 6 activists was at the local women's center. The network built over the years by the feminist movement was one of the campaign's major resources. Women were responsible for initiating and organizing mixed groups in city after city, and they were in leadership in nearly all the grassroots efforts. This helped assure that stereotypes such as gayness being a male phenomenon were confronted directly.

Problems around sexism sometimes surfaced. The media, for example, continually singled out men as spokespeople. Access to financial contributors was of course greater among males. In some cases gay men were reluctant to work in groups made mainly of lesbian-feminists. But the fact of gay men and women working together, often under women's leadership, was a historical breakthrough for Cali-
fornia Movement politics.

After it became clear that the largest anti-Proposition 6 coalitions would adopt a "single-issue" approach, the radicals who had pushed for a multi-issue stand were forced to reevaluate how to organize. To them the larger picture behind Proposition 6 was a growing New Right menace, a movement whose tactics of mass mobilization had scored successes against abortion, trade unionism, the ERA and affirmative action. The current thrust against homosexuals was particularly ominous because it echoed all too closely past anti-homosexual crusades launched by Adolf Hitler and Joe McCarthy.⁵

A consensus grew among radicals that the Proposition 6 fight should be used to warn people of the dangers of the New Right and to form alliances with others under attack, which would lay the groundwork for later anti-right wing organizing regardless of how the Proposition 6 vote went. Their style of aggressive, indignant propaganda which pulled no punches at spelling out the dangers of Proposition 6 was to come into general use by the heated final months of the campaign. What distinguished the radical groups most of all was that they also campaigned actively against Briggs' Proposition 7 by emphasizing the racist application of the death penalty.

A few local groups and many individuals working in local efforts pushed this radical perspective. In cities the multi-issue supporters often formed their own organizations. Lesbian Schoolworkers, an all women's group, formed early and distributed leaflets and a slide show drawing connections to other issues. Graphic artists developed cartoons to make the issues of homosexual discrimination more vivid, and produced dramatic posters. Research on the New Right was collected and dispersed widely to Proposition 6 activists by the California Outreach Group and Action Coalition in L.A.

A major question which all grassroots groups faced was how to deal with the issues of sexuality. Somehow a middle course needed to be found between Goodstein's strategy of a return to your closets and a pure gay liberation line which would use the campaign to educate about the virtues of gayness. Both these approaches forsook any hope of actually defeating Proposition 6. The solution was worked out in the grassroots "winning strategy" of high visibility, aimed at overturning people's prejudices and misunderstandings about gay people by confronting them in the flesh with the presence of actual homosexuals.

The literature of the campaign thus usually took a moderate position on these questions. It stopped short, for instance, of saying that gay teachers make better teachers because they tend to smash sex role stereotypes. Typically it merely asserted that gay teachers were as good in a professional sense as straight teachers. The real education was done in face-to-face work,
during leafleting and especially in public speaking. Advice was distributed to campaign workers on how best to handle sexual questions once they came up. Speakers found that the most effective way of explaining gay oppression in non-rhetorical terms was to talk about sexual repression in general, moving then through the purely sexual to the larger political issues. What was paramount was to get citizens to vote for homosexuals, not necessarily because they liked or fully understood them, but on the basis that nobody should suffer the kind of persecution spelled out by Proposition 6. By dealing honestly with sexual questions it was often possible to lead people beyond their fears toward a broader political understanding. A woman speaker from the California Outreach Group, for example, was confronted in a public debate by a particularly rabid fundamentalist preacher. He referred to her as a “pervert” who, it followed, could have no understanding of moral values. She, never one to deny being a lesbian, instead asked for his solution to the problem of homosexuality. His own admission of support for the Nazi’s genocidal solution allowed her to convince the audience, including much of his shocked congregation, that such ideas were in fact frightening and reactionary.6

On one sexual issue, however, there was no compromise — child molestation. This issue never became the bugbear it provided for Miami’s Save Our Children organization precisely because people had learned to confront it directly at the outset. Time and again, in all the media and literature, the feminist analysis was put forward with the facts and statistics that it was overwhelmingly (95-98%) heterosexual men who were guilty of child-molestation — most often the fathers or relatives of female victims.

Such direct and aggressive responses effectively undercut the fear tactics historically used by the Right, tactics aimed at squelching sym-pathizers from speaking up for fear of guilt by association. Additionally, the grassroots groups rejected CVC’s original admonition to stick to the simple arguments that Proposition 6 was unnecessary, expensive and unconstitutional. Instead a multiplicity of approaches were used to demonstrate that Proposition 6 could be a threat to anyone and everyone. Briggs’ Initiative was dangerous government interference, slandering students as helpless and teachers as sex-crazed. Its scapegoating of one unpopular group was perilous to all minorities. The continued growth of the New Right could lead in the direction of neo-fascism. It was anti-woman as well as anti-gay, since most teachers are women. It was an affront to labor and the guarantees of a grievance procedure and due process before loss of employment.

In the early summer of 1978 few believed that the campaign to defeat Briggs could be successful outside of liberal urban pockets. Rural Sonoma County provided the first indication that pro-gay forces might have popular support. Unable to find a single gay teacher in the state accused of molesting a student, Briggs instead aimed his first publicity volley at a soft-spoken elementary school teacher, Larry Berner of Healdsburg. Berner had been quoted in a local newspaper as an openly gay teacher opposed to the Briggs Initiative. The school board, with Catch 22 logic, wanted to fire Berner for his stand, but claimed its hands were tied prior to passage of Proposition 6, and invited Briggs to Sonoma County to speak. But alongside the twenty or so supporters who met Briggs at the local golf course were several hundred county residents — including a contingent of children — come to support Berner’s right to both a job and a private life. Prominent were parents from Berner’s school. Several of his students’ parents removed their children from his class; most of the others rallied to his support as someone they had always known as
a good teacher. Berner’s case received wide publicity, but he remained in a decided minority among teachers in the state, as most teachers feared to speak out.

Underpinning the Right’s anti-gay teacher attack are assumptions that young people cannot make their own decisions and are so impressionable it is unsafe to allow them in the same classroom with a homosexual. Some conservative voters showed a similar bias arguing that Proposition 6 should be defeated because it lay “innocent” teachers open to unjust attacks by disgruntled students. Student newspapers across the state, such as a junior high school paper in San Diego, showed that young people were eager to debate the issue. They interviewed teachers and ran student opinions on both sides of the issue, generally ridiculing the proposition.

A group of high school students in San Francisco made their own views against Proposition 6 known at a noontime rally the week before the election. Called by Gays Under 21, over 200 people attended. The voice of youth who already know they are gay is not often heard. They are already present in the classroom and must deal both with the hostility of straight peers if they are “out” as well as their “illegal” status as minors within the gay community. Passage of Proposition 6, they argued, would legitimize further violence and harassment by authorities. That young gays raised these issues in the campaign helped to undermine the image of the young as unsexual, or as

Proposition 6 would give everyone a lot to do—other than learning or teaching. Witch hunts are expensive, destroy lives, and teach cowardice, hatred, and fear.
mere victims of adults.

Although "minorities" will soon constitute a majority in the state, their voting strength has traditionally not been great. Many of the largest group, Latinos, are still restricted to another "closet" of sorts by the Immigration and Naturalization Service. Vote-counting expediency, as well as racist attitudes in the gay community held over from the Miami campaign, led the professionally-oriented "No on 6" efforts to discount non-white population blocks. The assumption that people of color are more anti-gay than whites was shattered by the election returns, however, which showed that percentages of those opposed to 6 were at least as high among Spanish-surnamed and Black voters as among whites. Though non-white gays have often felt caught between racism among gays and anti-gay intolerance within their ethnic community,

Nor are all gay people white, though non-white gays have often felt caught between racism among gays and anti-gay intolerance within their ethnic community. Outreach work was done in Oakland, East Los Angeles and other predominantly minority communities by Third World gay groups like Lesbians of Color, Latino/as Unidos, and the Third World Gay Caucus. Early in the campaign while politicians like Brown, Reagan and Carter were sitting out the trends, minority leaders such as Lee Brightman, Angela Davis, and Cesar Chavez spoke out clearly against Proposition 6. Local coalitions and individuals made contact with Third World community groups and found responsive audiences who easily understood the nature of the attack on an unpopular group.

Black Lieutenant Governor Mervin Dymally drew the connections: "The persons most vocal in opposing gay rights are the same who charge reverse discrimination... the same who protect their economic interest while ignoring the outrageous unemployment of minorities."

Dymally, who received only lukewarm support from Gov. Brown in the campaign, was not re-elected. Proposition 7 (Briggs' death penalty bill) opposed by radical gay groups but not mentioned by the single-issue organizations, won a large victory. In Seattle a law and order pro-police power ballot initiative passed even in Black neighborhoods. The civil rights issue of the electoral arena was the persecution of gay people, but the losses suffered by Third World people underscored the fact that there are economic and historical differences between gay people as a group and oppressed racial minorities. This is a difference which the "No on 6" campaign showed little signs of recognizing, tending instead to lump gay people as another "minority" subject to "discrimination." Tensions remain between the Third World and gay communities, for instance, over scarce housing in San Francisco. However, wholehearted Third World opposition to Proposition 6 as well as past support of gays for the Coors boycott, the UFW strike and anti-Bakke forces are concrete steps toward building stronger alliances in the future.

New and more substantial inroads were made in building cooperation between the gay cause and organized labor. "No on 6" forces, especially coalitions in major cities like BACABI and EBACABI in the Bay Area, had gone after union endorsements early and eagerly. Teachers' unions were, of course, adamant against the Briggs Initiative from the first, although gay rights supporters complained that it was not followed up with material assistance. But Proposition 6 was in itself a formidable attack on grievance procedures and unions' rights to protect their members, and the list of union officials opposing Proposition 6 grew steadily. The Machinist International president William Winpisinger warned that "the radical right has joined forces with the corporate power structure in a frontal attack." Public employees
had felt the sting of several defeats, most recently Proposition 13 which cut services and jobs, and were quick to see Briggs’ effort as more of the same.

A Workers’ Conference to Defeat the Briggs Initiative was convened in the Bay Area behind the slogan “An attack on one will be answered by all.” At first this was hopeful thinking, but it was largely fulfilled. Lesbians and gay men formed caucuses within unions and prepared presentations to get rank and file endorsements against Proposition 6. They sometimes encountered hesitation or embarrassment over the sexual questions involved. One protracted struggle in a Teamsters local was successful only after a group of lesbians had come out, thus complicating their own situation within the union which, as some of the very few women drivers, was difficult enough. In this way the rank and file of the UAW, Steelworkers, Teamsters, Culinary Workers and Postal Employees confronted a gay issue for the first time, and in the end they gave their support. These efforts demonstrated the relevance of gays fighting for sexual preference clauses in their contracts.

One segment of the labor movement was not supportive. Members of the handful of Left sectarian “party-building” groups, whose antiquated line on the decadent nature of homosexuality put them in the same camp as fundamentalists and reactionaries on this issue, were generally silent.

Much of the popular opposition to Proposition 6 saw it as a simple matter of job rights and economic opportunity. A retired Italian grandmother living in a Catholic, working-class San Francisco neighborhood summed up an attitude heard time and again by canvassers and leafletters. She reminded precinct walkers, “You know, everybody has to make a living.”

“AN ATTACK ON ONE WILL BE ANSWERED BY ALL”

WORKERS CONFERENCE AGAINST BRIGGS/PROPOSITION 6

After the concerted energy of an electoral struggle, the tabulation of figures is anticlimactic, even in victory. Did 58% of the voters affirm gay sexuality? No! The original fear was that people would have a reflex vote when they saw the words “homosexual schoolteacher” on the ballot. Among California voters, 2,879,000 apparently did vote to give right-wing moralists the power to remove gay teachers. Many more engaged in some degree of soul-searching and were reached by arguments that such persecution of homosexuals could ultimately threaten their own security and livelihood. Briggs carried only counties in the desert, sierra and isolated north where no local grassroots coalitions had developed. Every coastal county and most in the central valley opposed his Initiative. These included rural areas like Sonoma and Fresno, and conservative southern counties including San Diego and Briggs’ own Orange County. All racial minorities voted against Proposition 6, with the exception of Asian groups, toward whom no outreach effort had ever been aimed.
It appears that Briggs lost the vote in precisely those areas where Californians are facing the need for new answers to their questions about community and family.

For many gay people the vote tabulation provided a heartening surprise. Those whose sexual orientation had become a public issue, who had something very personal on the line, had an emotional election night. Thousands jammed the headquarters of San Francisco against the Briggs Initiative to dance and see Harvey Milk and Sally Gearhart hugging madly. Even more were partying on the street to the music of Meg Christian. In Los Angeles CVC held a more classy bash at the Beverly Hilton to thank its monied supporters. A television newscast interviewed one overwhelmed gay man who summed up the night’s feelings of validation and gratitude, “I don’t feel like an animal anymore.”

Some credit for the defeat of Proposition 6 must also go to Briggs himself. Except for a few fundamentalist congregations and several police and sheriffs’ groups, he succeeded in rallying almost none of the support he was counting on. Even the Catholic Church, which pro-gay forces had hoped at best to remain neutral, eventually came out against Proposition 6. Lack of funding forced Briggs to rely on free media by granting personal interviews and debating in public. Briggs was out-organized and isolated from the first.

The feminist network which over the years had succeeded in establishing some kind of women’s group in nearly every California community, including small towns, provided much of the leadership, energy and organizing skills all over the state. To a lesser extent a community of radicals active around gay issues over the years provided an informal network of communication. Together, these two groups prodded the campaign continually to the left. After the electoral crisis was over, few ongoing groups emerged from the campaign. The temporary marriage of convenience between separate lesbian and gay male activists however, demonstrated to many that such cooperation was now feasible, and could count on support in many independent progressive organizations.

The only explanation the media could find for the upset vote was the opposition by conservative leaders like Ronald Reagan, Hayakawa and Jarvis, as well as President Carter. But such endorsements came only at the eleventh hour and were pragmatic. Carter, on a stage with Jerry Brown a few days before the election, was overheard on a microphone he didn’t know was on when he asked Brown if he should say anything about Proposition 6. It was perfectly safe now, Brown told him. Reagan’s cautiously worded proposition was that there were already sufficient laws on the books to handle the problem. By election time a stand against Briggs was almost mandatory for politicians looking toward 1980.

Here was the explanation for the defeat of the Briggs Initiative that the media could not see — a massive mobilization by those who felt directly threatened. The results of this activism were concrete; in the end virtually every public figure, every newspaper, most trade unions, community groups, political and educational bodies had been lobbied to take a stand. Most passed a No on 6 endorsement on to their constituencies.

The campaign clarified long-debated arguments about the potential of the gay community for being organized. One source of strength was reflected in the gay liberation adage “We are everywhere”. Contrary to many assumptions, little organizing was to grow out of the bar scene — bars by their nature are places to get away from reality. The breakthrough trend in gay activism of this campaign was for gays to reach out to non-gays in all the areas where being gay was not the central focus. Faced with
the material threat that jobs could be lost by being "out", large numbers of gay people who had formerly kept their private lives separate from their public lives reached out in their neighborhoods, their places of work, their churches or community organizations.

The diversity of the gay community which cuts across race, class and gender lines also worked to the advantage of the campaign effort. It made for a myriad of anti-6 organizations that specialized, but cooperated. Physicians' organizations, shopkeepers, lesbians in blue collar trades and gay men in the service sector worked toward the same end, but in very different ways.

Such diversity may not always play such a positive role in the long run. It is unlikely that the same intensity of effort could be mobilized to save abortion rights or the ERA. And the campaign showed up class differences within the gay male community that can become antagonistic when there is no common enemy. For instance, a gay caucus of the Restaurant, Hotel and Bartenders Union which evolved out of workplace campaigning is not welcomed by non-unionized gay businesses. There are gay bourgeois "power brokers" and gay real estate speculators whose interests are ultimately antithetical to the interests of most gay people. Continued cross-class alliance with bourgeois elements within the gay community would cut gays off from mutual support with minorities and other working people.

California's Proposition 6 was not the only example that year of people mobilizing a broadly based coalition to defend themselves against an attack from the right. In Missouri rank and file labor activism succeeded in defeating a "Right to Work" ballot proposition. In Michigan voters were offered two Prop 13-like "tax relief measures." Third world community groups and others protective of the social services which were threatened organized a grassroots campaign based on exposing the measures as frauds which gave their biggest breaks to big business. They defeated one and came close to dumping the other. These three are all instances of broad alliances winning populist victories around issues important to the left. The likelihood of mass gay participation in similar struggles in the future depends partly on how clearly they perceive themselves threatened and partly on the growing openness of non-gays toward them.

NOTES

1. There is now documentation to show that homosexuality was accepted, even honored, by California's native Americans, but quickly repressed by shocked colonist missionaries. There were all male drag balls among the miners and the problem of women passing as men was so widespread that laws were written affixing a jail term to "this manner of defeating the opposite sex." All women street gangs of ex-prostitutes, led by lesbians, were the scandal of the 1880's. A series of pamphlets on new research, including Berube's work, is being prepared by: San Francisco Gay History Project, Box 1653, San Francisco, CA 94103.


4. Recent research and analysis of the New Right include:


5. The use of anti-homosexuality by fascist demagogues has often been glossed over by historians. Jews Against Briggs and The Lost Tribe did extensive research to Jewish communities, who voted Prop 6 down by a larger margin than any other group, according to an NBC poll. The general public was also educated about
the 100,000 to 500,000 homosexuals killed in Hitler’s camps. A source on gays in Germany is:


7. There was, unfortunately, no leftist organization in California capable of spearheading the campaign or later consolidating its gains. As mentioned, groups such as Revolutionary Communist Party took no visible stand. Sympathizers of Prairie Fire Organizing Committee, accused by police in a bombing attempt at Briggs office, did not participate in any of the campaign organizations. A number of groups, such as Rebel Worker, printed articles or editorials against the Briggs Initiative in their monthly paper. While SWP was central to CACABI, independent Trotskyists chose to work within other groups. Both Campaign for Economic Democracy and the Peace and Freedom Party carried No on 6 literature as part of their regular precinct walking. New American Movement made opposition to 6 a statewide priority and joined forces with predominantly gay groups.

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SAN FRANCISCO
Courts and Cops Vs. Gays

THE WHITE RIOT

“He got away with murder. He got away with murder.” “Dan White, Dan White, hit man for the new right.” Once again, we made the long march down Market Street in San Francisco. For the 6th time in two years, we walked the 1½ miles to the Civic Center, yet this time our fury was at its height. At City Hall it was difficult for anyone to address the furious crowd of 5000. The demonstration became more than just a demonstration. Rocks were thrown at City Hall windows. The Tac Squad shouldered through the crowd, into the building. The crowd was not intimidated by the cops, and broke windows, uprooted parking meters, and smashed newspaper stands. Trash fires were set in every container. The cops began to charge the crowd, pushing us away from the buildings, tear gassing, clearing the area, viciously beating every civilian within a club’s reach. They particularly chased and clubbed women. Upon claiming the steps, the cops chanted, “Are we happy? Yes. Why are we happy? Because Danny got off.” Clearing us away from City Hall, the
riot then spread around Civic Center Plaza. Fires destroyed 14 police cars, and numerous windows were broken in other government buildings and surrounding banks. Meanwhile, at the Opera House a block away, the orchestra was paid to play overtime, so that respectable people wouldn’t have to face the angry gay riot.

Around 1 am, while remnants of rioters were still working downtown, another squadron of cops charged into the Elephant Walk, a gay bar on Castro Street, the major gay male “ghetto.” Yelling “seig heil” and “bonzai”, they beat everyone in the bar and tore the place up. Even gay people who had stayed away from the demonstration didn’t escape the cops’ wrath.

BACKGROUND

The May 21 riot was not simply a response to the White verdict, but a result of growing tensions and defeats for the gay and lesbian communities. Just two years ago Anita Bryant’s victory in Dade County, Florida, started a wave of anti-queer activities nationwide. Wichita, Eugene, and St. Paul all defeated or repealed gay rights ordinances. Although Proposition 6, the infamous Briggs initiative, was defeated last November in California, the other Briggs Initiative, Proposition 7, which drastically broadened the death penalty, passed overwhelmingly. For gay leftists, who had worked to defeat both 6 and 7, the victory on 6 was a hollow one. Victory on 6 meant only the maintenance of the status quo while we lost ground on 7, which is aimed at Third World people and politicos.

Just a few weeks after the election the news of the murders/suicides at Jonestown hit. Still reeling from that shock, it was hard to believe the news that Dan White had killed George Moscone and Harvey Milk. 30,000 people joined a candlelight march from the Castro Street area to City Hall.

White, a city supervisor who had resigned because of financial pressures, had been encouraged to regain his seat by conservatives, including the police force and big business, whose interests he served. White, an ex-cop and Vietnam veteran, had been elected on a campaign against “social deviants” and the “criminal element,” thinly veiled references to homosexuals and Third World people. Milk was not only a leader of the gay community and the first openly gay person to be elected to such an office, he was also the most progressive supervisor on the board. Moscone was the most liberal mayor that San Francisco had seen in years.

Since the murders, a 6-year affirmative action suit against the SFPD has finally been settled. Although the terms are not those desired by the plaintiffs (NOW and the Officers for Justice — a predominantly Third World group organized to combat racism in the PD), the PD has begun to recruit women and racial minorities. Enough gains were made to anger the Police Officers Association, a right-wing organization to which the majority of cops belong.

At the same time, the cops have been testing how far they can push City Hall, with three new members on the Board of Supervisors, and a more conservative mayor, Diane Feinstein. There is also an internal power struggle within the PD, with attempts to dump Chief Gain, who
is not as reactionary as his potential successors. Cops have tested their power by increasing harassment of lesbians, gay men, and prostitutes among others. This includes brutal beatings of women in two separate incidents at women’s bars.

MURDER AND VERDICT

On November 25, angry that Moscone had decided not to reinstate him, White packed his 38 special and extra ammunition; to avoid the metal detector at City Hall, he climbed through a basement window and went to confront Moscone. He shot Moscone several times, reloaded, and walked down the hall to Milk’s office. White claims Milk “smirked” at him, thus eliciting the same violent response. He turned himself in to the police shortly afterwards, and gave his confession to a friend and ex-coach. While he was in jail, he received special treatment. And cops appeared wearing “Free Dan White” tee shirts.

The prosecuting District Attorney, Tom Norman, asked for a verdict of first degree murder, with special circumstances, which, under Proposition 7 (which White had vigorously supported) would mean either death or life imprisonment without possibility of parole. The way Norman handled the prosecution, however, revealed the true intentions of the District Attorney’s office. First, Norman never challenged the fact that White had confessed to a friend, and that no interrogation had taken place, as is standard practice. In fact, White’s emotional confession was a primary tool of the defense to prove his “diminished capacity.” Norman would have had to take on the Police Department to expose these irregularities, and he chose not to do that. Secondly, the defense presented a psychological case, which Norman failed to rebut successfully, presenting only one psychologist to the defense’s five. Thirdly,

Norman totally failed to deal with the political implications of the assassinations and the homophobic and reactionary nature of White’s politics and motivations, but instead tried the case like any other murder. (Norman was the prosecutor in the case of Los Siete de la Raza, a 1969 attempt to frame seven young Latino activists for the murder of a cop.) Finally, the jury was all white; four of its members have close family connections with law enforcement agencies; and Norman allowed the defense to summarily dismiss all gays from the jury.

Although we (gay leftists) had not expected a harsh sentence for White, somehow, we were all struck by the verdict: voluntary manslaughter, with a maximum sentence of 7 years, 8 months. Although it is not possible to overestimate the homophobia in this country, White had also assassinated the mayor of a major city.
AFTERMATH

The May 21 riot, which left 26 arrested, about 75 people hospitalized from police clubbings, and an estimated $1 million in property damage, had a strong effect on the lesbian and gay communities. Many of the people in the street were gays who had believed in the system, and had finally discovered that it didn’t work. Chants, posters, and speakers all pointed out that a black man would have fried for the same crime. Gay people were outraged. Even people who had not joined the demonstration were not immune from the power of the police. There was also a high level of awareness that if we had been a primarily Black or Latino crowd, the cops would have used guns against us instead of clubs. One other reason they might have shown restraint is that the riot took place not in a ghetto, but in the Civic Center.

The following night, Tuesday, May 22, at a Castro Street block party to celebrate what would have been Harvey Milk’s 49th birthday, conservative gays and the police worked to train a force of 300 monitors wearing T-shirts begging, “Please, no violence.” They policed crowd activity so effectively that the cops were able to remain out of sight, although stationed on nearby streets and inside buildings. Although the anger of the community was temporarily cooled out that night, it has not disappeared.

Potentially that anger could erupt at the Gay Freedom March, June 24. This year’s march committee, dominated by gay businessmen, has made plans for a “non-political” march, in the year of Briggs, Milk, and White. Meanwhile, two days after the riot, the Police Officers Association demanded a grand jury investigation into how decisions were made on the night of the riot. They claim they were restrained too long, and were made fools of in front of their brother cops called in from neighboring counties. People involved in the riot and beatings are worried about the possibility of this grand jury investigation, realizing it will be used to smash the gay left, not the SFPD.

Divisions in the gay communities are quite apparent. There is not one community; most dykes and faggots have few connections with each other. Organization within the gay communities is strongest among the more conservative factions — the Tavern Guild (gay bar owners), several gay businessmen’s associations, and Gay Democratic Clubs, who are hurriedly meeting with Police Chief Gain, DA Joe Freitas, and other city powers, to put the horrible violence “behind us.” Gay leftist men have had no organizations in more than a year. Most of the mixed organizations working against 6 and 7 have folded since the election. Two lesbian groups are working actively, and a new leftist gay coalition is forming. As in other cities, many SF leftists have been sucked into the sectarian politics of the Marxist-Leninist malestrom (sic), and are unavailable for gay politics.

Between activists of liberal and radical persuasions, deep divisions remain from political differences that emerged around the anti-6 work, especially around connecting Props. 6 and 7 (versus single-issue mobilizing). Third World gays still face the racism of white gays. And the red-baiting of radicals continues, with so-called gay leaders claiming the riot was incited by “commie dykes.”

The relationship of the gay communities to straight San Francisco exhibits similar problems. Many gay men are congregated in the Castro area, just west of the Mission. The Mission district, the home of the majority of the Latino population, is increasingly prey to gay male real estate speculators, who are buying up and refurbishing run-down Victorians, and then raising the rents 200 and 300%. Many lesbians live in the Mission, and
We may end up doing more time for our rage at the Civic Center than Dan White will do for killing Harvey unless we keep quiet.

If you male-ego-trip in a bar, and the wrong person hears you, the cops will know what face to look for in the photos, and where that face hangs out. DON'T TALK.

Even if you didn't trash, there's a possibility of a grand jury and a conspiracy indictment, just for being angry enough to think about it. BE QUIET.

If you want to file a police brutality suit, get some legal advice first. The National Lawyer's Guild (285-5066) is a good legal resource.

They'll say they want to investigate the attack on the Elephant Walk. But giving info to the cops is like spreading the crabs. Once you begin you can't stop without blood. And our blood is silence.

We've seen what happens when the D.A. tries an ex-cop - he throws the case, cause he needs the cops to win any case in the future. All he needs us for is defendants. Our defense against the police is each other, our strength and our silence. DON'T COLLABORATE.
are faced with the same housing problems as the Latino community, but are predominantly young, childless, white women, who can afford higher rents by living collectively. Class, racial, and sexual tensions abound.

Left gay men and lesbians have an opportunity to provide some leadership to our communities. The events of May 21 and 22 and the struggles around Props. 6 and 7 all point to the lack of a unified progressive gay front in San Francisco. We need to expand our base and be able to act, rather than always be forced to react. As the right wing gains in strength, we of the gay left have to build stable grass-roots organizations to fight back. This clearly is a task not just for SF’s gay left, but for the nation’s straight and gay left. It has been said that what happens in San Francisco is indicative of what will happen elsewhere. If this is true, then our future work is cut out for us.

Pam David
Lois Helmbold
for Lesbians against Police Violence

(Lesbians against Police Violence is a women’s organization formed in response to police harassment and beatings of women this winter.)

P.S. Contributions for the defense fund can be sent to:
May 21st Defense Committee
c/o Capp Street Foundation
558 Capp Street
San Francisco, CA 94110

The new Bookmarks (#2) describes over 100 new and little-known books about:

- Sexual Politics
- Nukes • The Left
- The Third World
- Socialism & Anarchism

... and more

Look for it in all radical and feminist bookstores, or send $1 for two copies to Carrier Pigeon, 88 Fisher Ave., Boston, Mass. 02120.
WE GOT COOLED OUT TUESDAY,
BUT WE RIOTED MONDAY

Yes, it was lesbians and gay men together with other angry people protesting the verdict.

We were not violent, we were outraged. The issue is not property, the issue is people. Damaging property is not violence.

REAL VIOLENCE IS

Cops singling out women for special beatings Monday night.

Cops marching storm-trooper file, yelling, "Danny's free!"

Broken ribs, punctured lungs, multiple skull wounds, tear gas, billy clubbing, and no cops in the hospital.

Dan White getting special treatment while prisons are filled with Third World people whose only crime is trying to survive.

Cops murdering unarmed Black youths like Melvin Black.

Going to robot jobs every day for shit pay just to make some fucker rich.

The daily threat of being hassled or beat up for being queer.

Cops beating up prostitutes.

DON'T GET.fooLED

Dan White got off because he's white, a family man, an ex-cop, an ally of big business. Are you? What sentence would you get?

We got temporarily cooled out Tuesday by gay "leaders" hand-picked by the cops, and gay monitors manipulated into working with the cops. We won't let San and the police decide for us who gay leaders are.

DON'T LET THE RIGHT WING USE THIS RIOT AS AN EXCUSE FOR STEPPED-UP LAW AND ORDER

More cops on the streets, harsher laws for oppressed people and easy laws for the Dan Whites, more conservative police chief and mayor.

WARNING

Take care on the streets. The cops will be after individuals now.

A Grand Jury is investigating the riot. Plainclothes cops are snooping. Anything you say or that is overheard can and will be used against you. Don't brag yet. Don't call the cops. Call the National Lawyers Guild, 5056. To report and get info about police brutality.

WE DEMAND

NO PROSECUTIONS — NO ONE SERVES TIME FOR THIS RIOT.
No Grand Jury.
Police out of gay communities.
No expansion of the Police Department.
No more police attacks on Third World people.

WE ARE EVERYWHERE...

SFPD

WE ARE STRONG

Barbaryes United Against Police Repression, Daly City Committee for the Elimination of the Ruling Class, Great Mother, People for a Police-Free Future, Politically Correct Lesbians, Lesbian Underground, Your Friendly Neighborhood Revolutionary Dykes.
LYNN VOICES

These poems and paintings about Lynn, Massachusetts arose out of collaborative efforts by poets Peter Bates and Bill Costley and by painter Arnold Trachtman, all of whom either lived or worked in Lynn. They are part of a larger work, Lynn Voices, which concerns itself with the oral/docu-art of the decaying NNE industrial city.

ARMAND T. CHANDONNAY, G.E. GENERAL MANAGER

“Hair’s growing out of my ears
And turning grey.
I never hear a thing.
Don’t ask me about it,
They tell me what to do,
I pass it on,
Quickly, quietly as possible.
I stick out as much
As Xerox machines beside my desk
And put out as much power.
I sign nothing but my income tax,
All else is rubberstamped,
Untraceable and deniable.

Walk a day in my shoes
And you’ll have seen more
In a walk downtown at two A.M.
There’s nothing I do not know
In my plant
And nothing I care to know
Anywhere else.
I never climb or plot;
When someone dies or retires,
My income jumps, I don’t.
Time is my escalator;
When I retire
I’ll never see this place again.’’

Photographs by Harold Crowley
"it was ground into his oil-proof heels  
with the chips off the lathe  
& we smelled it  
when he came in the door:  
the factory  

it was transmitted thru the floorboards  
late in the nite  
& we heard it  
in the sub-sonic test rumble:  
the factory  

it was etched into my retinas  
w/ the 1st poems i wrote  
laying the oak-tree over it  
as the 3 smokestacks blew:  
the factory  

we lived by it with it & on it  
everything but in it  
& he spent most of his day there:  
the factory  

tell me another advocate planning fable about it  
tell me another corporate profit-sharing plan about it  
tell me another post-war industrial lie about it  

& let it eat you too.  

it eats us.'"
THREE OBITS

1. "George Fielding, 67
Of natural causes,
Following a brief inhalation of smoke
At the Bellcrest Plaza last night, late.
There will be a short investigation
Into his own smoking habits.
He leaves a belt buckle, three shoe eyelets,
And a collection of Kennedy Half-Dollars
In poor condition.
There will be a closed urn.
2.

Sophie Barnes, 69,
Found on the bottom stair
At the Olympia Hotel.
Apparent suicide.
Her clothing will be sold
To pay the last week’s rent.
Her paperbacks and magazines
Will be returned to Goodwill Industries.
Relatives are advised
Funeral tomorrow, Morgan’s Funeral Home. 10 A.M.
No formal dress required.
3.

Charles Norton, 78
Founder and Manager 5¢ Savings Bank,
Honor Guard White Knights of Darkness.
Laid to eternal rest Pinegrove Cemetery.
Leaves his loving wife Marion, loving son David,
And three greenhouses.
No flowers, please.
Donations may be sent to the Rhodesian Relief Fund.
Funeral by invitation only.”
TWO INTERVIEWS AT THE LYNN
DIVISION OF EMPLOYMENT SECURITY

Anna McDonough

"It's not the macaroni and cheap rooms
That get to you
(though they can if you got no friends)
It's not having to sell things,
'Cause you always think you'll get them back,
It's the waiting.
Waiting in line for weeks
For nothing;
Waiting in line for more weeks
For next to nothing;
Waiting to talk to someone
So plugged up with themselves
They can't look at you;
Waiting, watching your applications
Get to outweigh you;
Waiting.
Like waiting for a traffic light
That's stuck on red."

Raimon Hernandez

"Dante's Inferno all those years
And Now they send me further down.
'Job market's tight,' they say.
Yeah, tight as a prickler bush.
Your own hands are dead weights.
You've either got to squeeze
Or shoot your way through.
Or maybe - here's a way -
Maybe take a pitchfork
To the roots and rocks
And with big rips -
Nothing less -
Split paths through that nest
Where only mice and bugs
Grow old in peace."
LYNN IN HISTORY

A city now in decline, Lynn was once “Shoe City”, the leading producer in the world of women’s footwear. For more than a century the cheap but sturdy shoes from Lynn shops made the town prosperous and growing.

Lynn and Lowell were the twin glories of industrial capitalism in Massachusetts. They were leaders in shoes and textiles, the two major branches of manufacturing in Massachusetts. Together with metal fabrication centers they were the engines that powered the state's economy through most of the 19th century. It was medium-sized towns like Lynn, Lowell, Haverhill, Fall River, Worcester, Fitchburg, Chicopee and Clinton that put Massachusetts in the forefront of the industrial revolution of 19th century America.

Lynn and Lowell, especially Lowell, were showcase cities that attracted visitors who came to observe America’s version of industrialism and to discover the secret of Yankee ingenuity. Today the visitors to Lynn and Lowell are apt to be historians studying the past or urban engineers seeking either to learn the causes of urban decay or to plot a plan for urban rejuvenation. Though only 10 miles from Boston, Lynn is not a stop on the tourist’s itinerary in search of historic New England.

Immense red brick factories dominate Lynn’s skyline, casting long shadows across the empty gray streets below. Windows from which hundreds of workers once leaned for a breath of air or a touch of warm sun on a March afternoon are dark or blank in Trachtman’s depiction. Desolate streets no longer echo with the shouts of the throngs of shoe workers on a march with banners and bands through Central Square. Nestled among these masonry monsters is the St. Vincent DePaul Society, a Catholic charitable agency that dispenses used furniture and clothing to the poor. A century and a half ago unemployed workers in the depression of 1837 ridiculed a charitable employer who offered to set up a soup kitchen.

Lynn was once a city of young people, vigorous and robust young men and women in the prime of life who flooded into the town to work for cash wages, to mingle, some to return home, many to marry and raise families. In 1850 most of the children born in Lynn were born to young women from New Hampshire.

Lynn is a city of great natural beauty which even immense brick piles cannot hide. Unpolluted ponds and lakes, the unspoiled Lynn Woods, one of the few splendid ocean beaches still open to the public in Massachusetts, a magnificent view of the Atlantic, and an attractive coast line, several spacious parks and recreational facilities, all are resources that few cities possess.

Lynn epitomizes a critical problem for New England: the decline of old industries, the loss of jobs, the redirection of capital to other areas and into other sources of profit. Lynn was among the first towns in Massachusetts to experience this change more than a half century ago when shoe shops either relocated in rural New England or the West or went out of business entirely. The manufacture of women’s shoes happened to be ruthlessly competitive and unstable, a business of bankruptcy and turnover.

Lynn’s economy in the 20th century was never wholly dependent on shoes. While Lynn was “Shoe City” it was also a major center for the manufacture of electrical machinery. The General Electric Company is a peculiar progeny of the shoe industry. In the 1880's Lynn was the home of the Thompson-Houston Electric Company headed by Charles A. Coffin, son-in-law of Micajah Pratt, formerly Lynn’s largest shoe manufacturer. In the 1890's Thompson-
Houston combined with several other companies and re-emerged as General Electric. Coffin was president of GE from 1892 to 1913 and chairman from 1913 to 1922. GE is the nation’s largest producer of electrical machinery and the largest employer in Lynn. Although the company has begun transferring operations in the making of jet engines and turbines to locations outside Lynn, GE is nonetheless the mainstay of the local economy.

Workers in Lynn have had a long tradition of class solidarity and struggle. Working class consciousness originated with the skilled shoemakers of the pre-factory era who established class institutions — unions, newspapers, cooperative stores and shops — and a working class ideology. Beginning in 1860 they waged the first of several massive, well-organized strikes. The skilled shoemakers, or mechanics as they called themselves, imparted these traditions to factory workers, male and female alike, who together formed the bulk of the working class in Lynn. The factories that Trachtman shows did not begin appearing until the 1860’s, long after class and class consciousness had emerged in Lynn. In the 1860’s and 1870’s the shoe workers in the United States formed the Knights of St. Crispin, the largest union in the country, as well as the Daughters of St. Crispin. The shoe workers were later a powerful element within the Knights of Labor. A vigorous trade unionism, sometimes divisive, has long persisted among shoe workers.

Shoe workers in the late 19th century were often hostile to capitalism and receptive to alternatives to the existing system of social relations and class structure. One critic said of the Civil War era in Massachusetts that “radicalism went with the smell of leather.” That association lasted for a generation. Starting with a belief in the superiority of labor, based on the labor theory of value, many shoe workers saw the wage system as little more than systematic robbery. When Wendell Phillips ran for governor of Massachusetts on a labor ticket with the promise to abolish the wage system he found his strongest support in the shoe making cities. Republicans tried to regain the affections of workers with the creation of the country’s first Bureau of Statistics of Labor, for which historians can be forever grateful. Although socialism was never as strong in Massachusetts as in other states the pockets of radicalism were chiefly among shoe workers. Foreigners augmented the slender ranks of native socialists with the radicalism for which the craft of shoemaking was notorious.

We know little of how traditions and ideas are transmitted from one generation of working people to the next. Traditions seem to disappear, only suddenly to reappear in unexpected ways. In Lynn trade unionism and socialism, enfeebled by the disintegration of the shoe industry, re-emerged in the 1930’s among electrical workers at GE who would help found the United Electrical Workers Union. Although the UE was an industrial union that sought to represent all workers in the industry, the founders in Lynn were skilled workers — tool and die makers, core makers, pattern makers — many of them socialists, several Scottish immigrants. Together with assembly workers they gave organized workers a vigorous voice in Lynn. Their representative in Congress, W.P. Connery, Jr., would co-sponsor with Sen. Wagner the National Labor Relations Act to give government protection to workers wishing to organize.

There may be much that is bleak and ominous in Lynn. Certainly those are the signs that predominate in the preceding selections. But many working people in Lynn have pride and affection in their city, perhaps because they realize their labor has created it and their eyes see its potential.

Paul Faler
FIGHT FANS ITALIAN AND NEGRO!

DON'T ALLOW ANY SENSATION SEEKERS TO CREATE ENMITY BETWEEN THE ITALIAN AND NEGRO PEOPLE ON ACCOUNT OF THIS BOUT!

This is a boxing match between two professional boxers and nothing else. It is not a symbol of the Mussolini-Ethiopia conflict. These sensation mongers merely want to spread hatred and conflicts between the Italian and the Negro people; and after all, the war of Mussolini against the Ethiopian people is not a RACE WAR.

JAMES W. FORD, Secretary of the Harlem Section of the Communist Party, and HARRY GANNES, columnist of the Daily Worker, in their pamphlet "WAR IN AFRICA, MAKE THIS VERY CLEAR."

A section of the pamphlet reads as follows:

WAR AGAINST ETHIOPIA FOR WHOM?

"The Italian workers have no interest in Mussolini's war of conquest, hunger and murder, which Mussolini is trying to plunge them into, hoping to make them forget their misery and hunger. Workers and soldiers have already shown their resistance to being sent off to Ethiopia that they understand this fact.

"Neither have the Italian workers in the U.S.A. any interest in Mussolini's adventures. Many of them have been forced to flee Italy and come here because of their struggle against fascism. Among the Italian workers we can win sympathetic supporters against the invasion of Ethiopia and for the defeat of Fascism.

"There are, however, fascist supporters of Mussolini in the U.S.A. E. LaGuardia, for example, is one. He has been decorated by Mussolini. Edward Corsi, former head of the Relief Bureau is one. There are others like him.

"These men are supporters of reaction because they are a part of the ruling class of this country which is interested in establishing a fascist rule against the militant workers here; they are friends of Mussolini and therefore interested in his attempt to bolster up his tottering regime by an adventurous war against Ethiopia. That is why the city administration of New York, which is headed by LaGuardia, did all it could to prevent the anti-Fascist protest demonstration of the Provisional League for the defense of Ethiopia on March 30. We must do all we can in this country to break down this resistance and to build up a strong anti-Fascist movement.

DANGER OF THE "RACE THEORY"

"There are certain sections of the Negro people, however, who look upon the events in Ethiopia as a war of all black men against all white men. In other words, "a race war." This is incorrect! Ethiopia's war is a national defensive war against an imperialist attack for plunder and should and must receive the support of all anti-Fascist and anti-imperialist forces. Upon this basis can be built the united front of all allies of the Ethiopian people.

"Certain Negro leaders, no doubt supported by Japanese imperialist agents, contend that the Japanese imperialists are friends of the Ethiopian people under the false notion created by Japanese agents that Japan is the friend of so-called darker races against white imperialist nations.

"This race theory has great danger in it for Ethiopia as well as the danger of imperialist war. The fact is that the Japanese ruling class maneuvers with the Ethiopian rulers do not lessen but increase the danger of imperialist war. They intensify the conflict among the imperialists' powers—all at the expense of Ethiopia—which is the prize over which they fight.

WHO ARE THE FRIENDS OF THE ETHIOPIAN PEOPLE?

"The real friends of the Ethiopian people are the oppressed masses in the colonies and the exploited workers in the capitalist lands, colored and white, and particularly the liberated masses of the Soviet Union. It is these forces who are striking shattering blows against imperialist and colonial world domination. The Japanese toilers particularly gave a brilliant account of themselves during the militarist invasion of Manchuria in 1931 and are today challenging Japanese militarist rule under conditions of the most terrible terror by revolutionary struggles.

"The mobilization of the Italian workers in the U.S.A. against fascism and Mussolini's invasion of Ethiopia is very important the more so in view of the efforts of certain people to stir up friction between the Negro people and the Italian workers in the U.S.A. Such developments find fertile ground among Negro leaders who hold nationalist views and who fan suspicions by 'race war' slogans.

"We in the U.S.A. must more than ever before build up strong anti-imperialist struggles to support the people of Cuba, Puerto Rico, Haiti, Hawaii, the Philippines, the West Indies, etc., in their struggle against American imperialism and for their unconditional independence."

DOWN WITH THE LYING SENSATION MONGERS!
BOYCOTT THE HEARST PRESS!
DOWN WITH DISCRIMINATION AGAINST NEGROES IN SPORTS!
LONG LIVE THE INDEPENDENCE OF ETHIOPIA—Last Independent Negro Country!
LONG LIVE THE SOLIDARITY OF THE ITALIAN AND NEGRO PEOPLE!

☐ I wish more information about the Communist Party.
☐ I wish to join the Communist Party.

Name .........................................................

Address .........................................................
(All information strictly confidential)

Issued by:
HARLEM SECTION, COMMUNIST PARTY, U.S.A.
415 Lenox Avenue, New York City
LEFTIES & RIGHTIES
The Communist Party and Sports During the Great Depression

Mark Naison

One of the most important and long-lasting legacies of the New Left has been the regeneration of popular insurgency in American sports. The Civil Rights movement, and the rebirth of feminism inspired broad based efforts by blacks and women to win equal access to athletic resources, while the anti-corporate agitation of the student movement helped set the stage for sports action groups like FANS and Sports for the People. Sports activism has persisted and even expanded throughout the seventies, as feminists have carried the battle for equal athletic funding into schools throughout the nation, campaigns have arisen to prevent sports franchises from squandering public funds in Minneapolis, Syracuse, and New York, and protests to end sports contacts with South Africa have achieved many of their objectives.

Most of those involved in these protests, and their critics, have regarded sports activism in the United States as something unique to the '60s and '70s. But thirty years before, under the aegis of the Communist Party, a very different movement arose to reshape American sports. From the late twenties through the mid-forties, Communist youth, fraternal and trade union organizations sponsored independent sports leagues in cities throughout the country, participated in two Olympic boycott movements, sponsored numerous track meets and benefit games for political prisoners, and waged a thoroughgoing effort to end the exclusion of blacks from major league baseball. Although sports organizing was rarely mentioned in party theoretical journals and party resolutions (except those of the Young Communist League), it represented a major theme in organs directed at the party rank and

I would like to thank Leon Fink and Molly Nolan for commenting on an earlier version of this essay.
file. From 1928 to 1935, the *Young Worker*, the Young Communist League newspaper, devoted far more attention to sports than to any other cultural activity, and from 1936 on the *Daily Worker*, the party’s national newspaper, sponsored a sports page that took up fully one-eighth of the paper’s space.

An examination of this activity promises to contribute to the growing debate on the possibilities of American radicalism during the Depression years. Some New Left scholars, notably James Weinstein and Staughton Lynd, have argued that the Communist Party’s reluctance to espouse explicitly socialist objectives during the late Depression years prevented the emergence of a strong socialist movement — minimally a labor party on the British model — as a permanent feature of the American scene. They imply that the American working class was receptive to socialist perspectives and that the Communist Party’s adoption of New Deal liberalism as the American version of “antifascism” undercut the growth of radical forces. The usual focus of this discussion is the party’s trade union work and electoral activity, but a look at party sports organizing suggests these critics may have significantly overestimated both the breadth of working class radicalism, and the party’s ability to shape working class attitudes.

In the early 1930’s Communists tried to organize a workers sports movement with an explicitly socialist orientation. They confidently posed this activity as an alternative to professional and collegiate sports, to YMCA and AAU recreation programs, and to company and church sponsored sports leagues, but failed to attract participants beyond a tiny immigrant constituency. Only as Communists gradually embraced existing patterns of working class spectatorship and participation — from enthusiasm for prize fights and pennant races, to involvement in YMCA and church sponsored leagues — did Communist sports activities reach a sizable audience. Moreover, the most effective Communist efforts to influence the shape of American sports — the campaign against Jim Crow in baseball and the effort to create trade union sports leagues as an adjunct of the organizing campaign of the CIO — made “democracy” rather than socialism their rallying symbols. This experience — even when interpreted cautiously — suggests that working class receptivity to socialism was less than overwhelming, and that the Communist Party’s movement toward liberalism and practical reform may have been the price it had to pay to attract an American-born constituency and acquire a modicum of influence in the mainstream of American life.

**THE ERA OF WORKERS SPORTS**

During the 1920’s, Socialist and Communist parties throughout Europe organized workers sports movements that attained impressive size and strength. Designed to encourage class consciousness among workers and to insulate them from “bourgeois” sports organizations that had military and nationalist overtones, these organizations became a distinctive aspect of sporting life throughout central Europe. The German organization grew to a membership of 1.4 million by the early thirties, the Austrian to 250,000 and the Czech to 200,000, with smaller but significant movements arising in Switzerland, Belgium, Finland and France. The largest of these organizations were affiliated with the Socialist International, but Communists were also quite active, and both parties took the initiative in sponsoring international workers sports festivals as alternatives to the Olympics.¹

The American Communist Party tried to found a workers sports movement in the United States, but its effort in this direction assumed a very peculiar shape because of the immigrant character of the party. When the Communist
Party was founded in 1922, no more than 10% of its membership spoke English as its first language. After an intensive Americanization program, the percentage rose to over 40% by 1929, but the organization was still overwhelmingly composed of the foreign-born, the largest groups of which were Finns, Jews, and South Slavs (in that order). Some of these immigrant Communists had strong networks of sports clubs, providing a sound initial basis for a workers sports organization, but the sports which they emphasized — soccer, gymnastics, and track and field — were ones which had little attraction for native Americans or even second generation immigrants. From the very first, Communist sports strategists faced a contradiction between their desire to insulate their existing following (which consisted of fewer than 10,000 Party members) from “bourgeois” influences in sport — the mass media, the AAU, and church and corporate organized sports clubs — and their desire to build a left wing sports movement that attracted American-born workers.

The CPUSA’s sports organizing began in 1927. In January of that year, representatives of Finnish athletic clubs in the Detroit area, aided by some English-speaking Communists and Detroit labor officials, founded an organization called the Labor Sports Union whose purpose was “to encourage athletic activities by workers and win them away from the bosses who utilize the Amateur Athletic Union and similar bodies to spread anti-union propaganda.” The Young Communist League assumed the task of spreading this organization nationwide and started a regular sports page in its monthly newspaper, the Young Worker.

During its first year of operation, the Labor Sports Union held track and field and gymnastic competitions in New York, Detroit, Chicago and several smaller cities. Its national track meeting, in Chicago, attracted 300 participants, including three world class runners (2 Finns and a Filipino) and several thousand spectators. In the fall of 1927, the New York chapter of the LSU founded a Metropolitan Workers Soccer League that grew to 28 teams and 400 participants by February of 1928, and the Detroit LSU formed a soccer league shortly thereafter.

These activities had an extremely narrow social base. “The bulk of the participants” in the LSU national meet were Finnish, the Young Worker complained, and the soccer leagues drew exclusively from the memberships of foreign workers clubs — Czechs, Germans, Hungarians, Finns, Estonians, Spaniards and Jews. “It is the American workers who are mostly the victims of bourgeois sport,” the Young Worker editorialized, “commercialism, professionalism, and corruption, and among them must the work be carried on.”

To advance the Americanization of the movement, editors of the Young Worker began to examine popular American sports like baseball, boxing, and football, and to analyze working class patterns of recreation. Their evaluation of what they saw was uniformly hostile. In the eyes of Young Worker sportswriters all “bourgeois” sports organizations, whether amateur or professional, represented conscious efforts to insure working class loyalty to capitalism and to inspire individualist and escapist fantasies that prevented workers from dealing with their problems. Although the vision that underlay their writing was constricted and sectarian, some of their analysis was shrewd. As the Young Worker charged, many large corporations whose workers were not unionized (among them General Motors, Westinghouse, U.S. Steel, Standard Oil, Metropolitan Life, and General Electric) had set up large sports programs for their employees during the twenties, and management consultants openly advocated such activities as a way of saving workers from “street corner agitators ...
painting fancied wrongs." In addition, the huge sports programs sponsored by the American Legion, the YMCA's and religious organizations often explicitly inculcated values hostile to radicalism, and Young Worker writers erred only slightly when they argued that wealthy businessmen supported such programs in order to "deaden class feeling... and break class solidarity." In an extraordinarily heavy-handed manner (a typical headline was "American Legion and Public School Athletic League Poison Minds of Children"), Young Worker writers did raise the issue of business domination of American sports programs, and presented arguments why trade unions and the left should sponsor sports programs of their own."

However, in dealing with mass spectator sports, Young Worker writers presented the far more questionable position that popular enthusiasm for sports, particularly identification with professional teams and athletes, represents the outcome of a capitalist plot to render the working class politically passive. The political impact of spectator sports is a continuing subject of debate among radicals, but the Young Worker presented the most extreme formulation of an argument which portrays "rooting" as merely the quest in fantasy for the power one lacks in real life, and something which invariably diverts energy from political struggle. In an article on the 1928 World Series, Walter Burke argued that:

_Thru the means of this professional capitalist "sport", the capitalists were able to hoodwink the greater part of the American workers to eat, sleep and talk nothing... but baseball for a week.... Baseball is still a method used in_
The May 1930 issue of the Young Worker printed pictures of heavyweight boxers Max Schmeling, Jack Sharkey and Gene Tunney under the heading "Three Dope Peddlers," and denounced them as "tools of the bosses in dope the workers to forget the class struggle." College football players, another Young Worker writer declared, are given under the table payoffs and soft jobs in order to "feed the young workers an opium that beclouds their minds and draws them into an ocean of patriotism and faith in the robbers of their bread and butter." The paper occasionally accompanied this critique with discussions of real abuses in big-time athletics — professionalism in college sports, discrimination against blacks, fixed boxing and wrestling matches, the class based distribution of facilities, the abandonment of athletes after they passed their prime — but the only solution they proposed for these ills was for athletes to join the Labor Sports Union, which, they claimed, was preparing "one mighty onslaught which will send this corrupt professionalism to its grave."

During the spring and summer of 1930, YCL leaders launched an effort to Americanize the Labor Sports Union, to transform it from a "small unknown, sectarian and isolated sports organization," in a "mass workers sports organization composed of young American
workers.’’ Leaders of the group were urged to shift their emphasis from sports popular with immigrants, particularly soccer and gymnastics, to American games like baseball, boxing and basketball, and to actively recruit American-born workers into the organization.16

Labor Sports Union organizers tried to follow these directives. They founded basketball and baseball leagues in some of the cities in which they were active and tried to broaden the publicity for the track and field meets which they sponsored. During 1931 and 1932, the LSU took responsibility for organizing an International Workers Olympics in Chicago in protest against the official Olympic movement, and sponsored “Free Tom Mooney” street runs in cities throughout the country that attracted thousands of onlookers. The LSU track meets and street runs attracted considerable public attention (the AAU actually banned its members from participating) and brought a small number of black athletes into its activities for the first time. In addition, the LSU used the Counter-Olympics as the basis for a campaign to demand free gymnasium space for worker-athletes, and won some confrontations on this issue in New York, Cleveland and Chicago. The final outcome of this activity, the International Workers Athletic Meet, was an impressive spectacle, attracting 400 athletes (100 of them black) and 5000 fans. Women athletes were included in the competition, participating in seven of the thirty-four events.17

But the campaign for the Counter-Olympics fell far short of the ambitious objectives that the YCL had set for it. The LSU did grow — by the summer of 1932 it had some 5,000 members, with centers of activity in New York, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Cleveland, Chicago, Minnesota, and New England. But the hoped-for influx of American workers never materialized. Although basketball and baseball leagues arose under LSU auspices in certain areas, reflecting the growing popularity of American sports within the immigrant milieu, the most popular LSU activity remained the old immigrant standby, soccer. Probably the most impressive sustained achievement of the LSU was the founding of the Metropolitan Workers Soccer League in New York, which incorporated 45 teams in four divisions (two of them were West Indian teams from Harlem) and drew crowds of up to 6,000 for its championship matches. While activities such as this flourished, the English language publication of the organization, Sport and Play, failed to attract more than a few hundred readers for any of its issues.18

The weakness of the Labor Sports Union in the early thirties is striking, not only when compared to workers’ sports organizations in Germany or Austria or Czechoslovakia, but when compared to another American sports organization founded roughly in the same period, the Catholic Youth Organization (1930). Aimed largely at urban working class youth, the CYO grew to a membership of millions of young people by the end of the 1930’s.19 The mass enthusiasm which it generated, in contrast to the LSU, reflected both the size and influence of the American Catholic subculture (churches, schools, and parish organizations) and the limited appeal, at least in the United States, of an effort to organize working class leisure around revolutionary socialist objectives. Workers in the United States, if the LSU’s experience is indicative, did not respond positively to sports programs that tried to segregate them by class and undermine their interest in professional sports. The openness of professional sports, their seeming transendence of class barriers, constituted one of the major components of their appeal, and Communists assured their marginality by dismissing them as “opiates.”
MOVING INTO THE MAINSTREAM

During the spring of 1933, the Young Communist League began to recognize the limits of the Labor Sports Union, and indeed, its whole approach to sports. Like all aspects of party activity, sports organizing was deeply affected by a new Comintern line promulgated after Hitler’s rise to power, which encouraged Communists to break out of their isolation and make limited alliances with trade unions and Socialist groups. YCL leaders, in applying this line to sports, called upon the Labor Sports Union to develop a new approach to “Y’s, Community Centers, Boys Clubs, etc.” where working class youth were concentrated and try to draw such groups into its activities rather than agitate against them. In addition, the YCL suggested that Communist organizers, inside the Labor Sports Union and out, should shift the locus of sports organizing from the neighborhood to the factory and concentrate their efforts on building factory and trade union sports leagues.

Along with this strategy came a whole new approach to professional sports. In the fall of 1933, the Young Worker began covering major league baseball in a manner virtually indistinguishable from the daily press, predicting pennant races, and analyzing teams and players, in a breezy, journalistic style. Although no theoretical pronouncement accompanied this change, it seemed to imply a belief that big league baseball represented a legitimate focus of working class enthusiasm, and that covering baseball in a lively manner in party publications would make Communists more acceptable to workers they hoped to organize.

The paper still continued to give extensive coverage to sports leagues organized by the LSU, the YCL, and other party-affiliated organizations and to publicize campaigns such as Olympic boycotts and struggles for free gyms. But the sports page as a whole projected a far more relaxed attitude toward the American sports scene, a sense that even professional athletes could play a progressive role if approached in the right way. In 1934, one of the most publicized sports events under left auspices was a benefit game for the Scottsboro boys in Harlem, pitting the Renaissance Five, a black professional basketball team which possessed an 88 game win streak, against an all-star team of white pros.

In the spring of 1935, the Communist Party’s approach to sports underwent yet another shift in emphasis that led to the virtual abandonment of the Labor Sports Union. The Party’s movement in this direction was tremendously accelerated by the Seventh World Congress of the Communist International, which called upon Communists to make alliances with Socialists and liberals to stop the rise of fascism, and to become defenders of the democratic traditions of their respective countries. The International Program prompted American Communists to begin identifying their movement with egalitarian trends in American history and popular culture, no matter how little they embodied “class struggle” themes or explicitly socialist ideals and objectives.

The new line had a particularly dramatic impact on the Party’s Olympic boycott strategy. Throughout the summer and fall of 1935 American Communists worked to unite a broad coalition of organizations in opposition to American participation in the 1936 Berlin Olympics. Anti-fascism, not workers sports, served as the party’s credo; it chose the American Youth Congress and the American League Against War and Fascism (both large organizations with many non-Communist members) as its mobilizing vehicles for the campaign, and defined the goal of the movement as a demonstration of American solidarity with anti-fascist forces in Germany. Communist organizers, who in 1932 had used the
given itself veto power over city labor contracts. In April 1976, the transit workers union averted a strike at the last moment with a contract agreement that again contained no basic wage increase, again had a meager cost of living adjustment, and again was later vetoed by the Control Board and replaced unilaterally with another set of terms. But by this time the strategy of the financial junta had advanced: instead of absolutely opposing any increase in compensation, they were willing to tolerate small cost of living adjustments so long as they were financed by demonstrable increases in worker productivity. The strategy was to establish strict control of total wages and thus avoid any repetition of the “leapfrogging” dynamics of the 1960’s, as well as bring about substantial changes in work rules. Given the meaningless of the concept of productivity as applied to most municipal jobs, the aim of the junta was not so much increasing “output” as it was increasing control over the public work force. This same deal was readily accepted by the leaders of the unions of 200,000 other city workers when they signed new contracts in June. These leaders also agreed to $24 million in further reductions of benefits and promised to participate in a newly formed labor-management committee on productivity. Even the labor editor of the usually reactionary New York Daily News wrote that he was surprised at the extent to which the unions had “joined the mayor’s management team.”

This integration of the union leadership into the state was defended as essential for the process of “saving the city from bankruptcy.” Victor Gotbaum, head of the largest municipal union, declared his enthusiasm for his new role when he stated in 1976, “We must set up an efficiency-productivity system in this city that is the envy of the rest of the nation.” The unions were also brought into the state through the leadership’s agreement to invest nearly $4 billion (out of $11 billion in total assets) of pension funds in the very city notes and bonds that the large banks had dumped in 1974, precipitating the budget crisis. Rank and file workers were thereby seriously inhibited in any attempt to resist the collusion of the union leaders, since the financial junta could respond by declaring bankruptcy and thus jeopardize the retirement money.

PUBLIC/PRIVATE RESPONSE
The new composition of state power over the city has not been limited to the new role of the unions. There has also been a dramatic and decisive transformation of the involvement of the private sector as well as the state and federal governments in city affairs.

In the early stages of the implementation of austerity in 1975 it was the open intervention of the business community that was most remarkable. In June, Mayor Beame and Governor Carey bowed to business pressure and agreed to the creation of the Municipal Assistance Corporation, whose key members turned out to be investment banker Felix Rohatyn and William Ellinghaus, president of New York Telephone Company. MAC was ostensibly designed to help the city borrow money after it had been shut out of the capital markets, but Rohatyn and company wasted no time in pushing through the wage freeze as well as a large increase in the transit fare and a large decrease in funding for the City University. By the end of the summer, the new junta decided it needed an even more powerful body to carry out its plans for disciplining the city. The result came in September, with the creation of the Emergency Financial Control Board, whose main figures were again Rohatyn and Ellinghaus. Further corporate intervention was carried out through the creation of a Management Advisory Board headed by the president of Metropolitan Life Insurance Company and the appointment
working class were turned around and used against capital, with the result that city workers could no longer be relied upon to control the poor, who themselves could no longer be counted on to function as a reserve labor supply to undermine the power of workers in the private sector.

The cops, whose behavior vis-a-vis the city administration during the 1960's was as militant as that of other public workers in New York, were consequently targeted along with other groups in the course of the layoffs implemented beginning in December 1974. Hence the police played a central role in the largest mass action taken against austerity prior to Black Christmas: in July 1975, after Mayor Beame carried out thousands of scheduled dismissals, the city's 10,000 sanitation workers staged a wildcat strike; hundreds of laid-off cops blockaded the Brooklyn Bridge and fought with on-duty cops; hundreds of firefighters called in "sick;" and traffic controllers staged job actions during the rush hours. This overwhelming display of militancy turned out to be short-lived, however, as the police and firefighters decided not to strike, and the sanitation workers ended their three-day walkout with an agreement that amounted to the first in what would be a long series of city worker defeats. Nearly 3,000 laid-off sanitation workers were rehired, but on the condition that their wages be paid with $1.6 million in union funds. This unusual settlement marked the beginning of the state role of the municipal union bureaucracy, its active participation in the implementation of austerity.

Following the imposition of a three-year wage freeze in the summer of 1975, the teachers' union settled a nine-day strike with a contract that included no basic wage increase and only a small cost of living adjustment — and even this was rejected by the new Emergency Financial Control Board, which had
The party's acceptance of many traditional perspectives on sport emerged most dramatically in the campaign waged by the Daily Worker sports staff for the integration of major league baseball. From the first day sports became a daily feature, Daily Worker sports writers gave enormous space to the exploits of black athletes and tried to arouse public sentiment to end racial discrimination in sports. On an almost daily basis, articles appeared describing exhibition contests between black and white teams (in which blacks more than held their own), quoting major league players, managers, and sports writers who favored integration, and providing colorful portraits of black athletes in every major sport. Although sports writers in the white dailies spoke out occasionally against baseball Jim Crow, and black papers hammered away at the issue, Worker writers made a real contribution: they got Joe Dimaggio to declare that Satchell Paige was the best pitcher he had ever faced, National League President Ford Frick to proclaim there was "no written ban against Negro stars," and Satchell Paige to pose a public challenge to play the winners of the World Series to determine his fitness for the major leagues.32

After three years of agitation in print, more practical measures followed. The Young Communist League, in 1939, began circulating petitions supporting an end to baseball's color bar at major league ball parks. Communist city councilmen in New York proposed resolutions banning discrimination in baseball, and Communists endorsed anti-discrimination bills in the New York State Legislature offered by Harlem representatives. In 1942, the Daily Worker editor arranged a tryout for Roy Campanella with the Pittsburgh Pirates, and in 1945, the Daily Worker and the Harlem People's Voice jointly sponsored a tryout for two black players with the Brooklyn Dodgers. That same year, Communists picketed the Yankees' home opener to press that club to hire black players.33 Though integration of the sport would eventually have come without Communist activity, the Party's agitation probably accelerated the process. Virtually every book on the subject mentions the Party's contribution. Daily Worker sports editor Lester Rodney recalls that when the Dodger publicity man read the announcement that Jackie Robinson would be brought up to the Dodgers, two writers from the other papers came over to him and said, "you guys can be proud of this."

In waging this campaign, Communists presented themselves as defenders of the American democratic heritage. Daily Worker writers hailed baseball as a great American tradition "with roots... deep in the heart of the American people" and claimed (with a certain amount of wishful thinking) that owners rather than players and fans posed the opposition to integration. "Abner Doubleday... did a job to be proud of," one article declared. "The one
flaw in the American baseball setup is the discrimination against Negro ball players by the major league magnates, but the campaign to banish Jim Crow from the diamond...is making good progress.”

*Daily Worker* sports editor Lester Rodney, equally confident of victory on the issue, claimed that the values inculcated on the playing field were incompatible with racial prejudice: “American sportsmanship can no more be denied than American democracy. They go together and grow together.”

Though silent on the crucial question of women’s exclusion from sports, this vision of a “democratic impulse” within American sports had a certain resonance with events. During the mid- and late 1930’s, New Deal construction programs vastly expanded the amount of recreational facilities in the U.S. and promoted a boom in sports participation as well as in hiking, camping and vacationing. In addition black athletes, notably Jesse Owens and Joe Louis, emerged as national sports heroes with white followings, suggesting that egalitarian attitudes on race had begun to spread, in a somewhat muted form, beyond an elite of white intellectuals. Such developments gave Communists active in sports work the feeling that they were only the cutting edge of a broad democratic tendency in the society, and that the pragmatic militancy they espoused offered no barrier to social acceptance.

No set of events reinforced this worldview more than the huge popular celebrations in black communities that followed Joe Louis’ victories. “Millions of Negroes,” Richard Wright wrote in the *Daily Worker: are looking upon Joe Louis to uphold the honor of his race. Because boxing is simple, and the desire to knock out a man is easy to understand, millions are pinning their submerged racial and social hopes upon two men in a ring whaling away at each other.

...Many people will deplore the wild elation of millions over a prizefight, but against the background of deadening cynicism, indifference, and money-grabbing, such wholesome enthusiasm is bracing. It signifies...that there lies in the simple heart of the masses of people for loyalty, devotion and exultation, all of which can be channelized toward meaningful and historic ends.

When whites participated, Communists waxed even more enthusiastic. Benjamin Davis Jr proclaimed that the huge interracial demonstrations in Harlem that followed Louis’ victory over Schmeling “expressed the sentiment of...all who treasure the American traditions of liberty and clean sportsmanship...Nothing is more indicative of the power of Negro and white unity for progress and democracy — once it hits full stride.”

Such sentiments, written by black Communists, showed how far the Party had changed from the days when it looked contemptuously on American sports from its vantage point in the immigrant ghettos. The Americanization of the Communist movement, so dramatically displayed in its sportwriting and sports organizing, coincided with a period of rapid party growth. From a rather insular and sectarian body with less than ten thousand members (most of whom spoke little English) the party
had swelled (by 1938) to include over 50,000 members and had begun to exert significant influence in the labor movement, among intellectuals, and in black protest activity. 19

Nevertheless, the evolution of Communist sports activism offers a telling commentary on the weakness of working class radicalism in the United States and the marginality of the left. Communists did some creative and important sports organizing in the late Depression years. Their work in building trade union sports programs, along with the sports activities of their fraternal groups, represented a modest beginning in detaching workplace and community sports from business sponsorship and control. (Why this initiative lost momentum is an important subject for further study.) They made discrimination against blacks in sports a major political issue and initiated a campaign of protest and education aimed at integrating major league baseball. But in doing so, they abandoned all efforts to develop a socialist critique of sports, to root concepts of labor solidarity and racial equality in a larger socialist vision.

In their sports organizing, Communists proved unable to find a language that could simultaneously express socialist goals and resonate with the values and worldview of the mass of American workers. In the late '20s and early '30s, they tried to organize an opposition sports movement among American workers, antagonistic to professional sports, but reached only foreign-born workers who already identified with the left. American-born workers proved deeply resistant to politicizing their habits of sports spectatorship and participation; they responded to trade union sports programs as an adjunct of unionization, but not to workers sports leagues that sought to undercut their interest in big league baseball, football and boxing. Communist sports activists who shared some of the tastes and enthusiasm of the people they tried to organize could not remain immune to the response to their activity. Once released from the "workers sports" strategy by the Popular Front line, they found themselves pulled inexorably into a romantic identification with the openness of American sports, their ability to give talented people from the working class an outlet for creative energies. But in doing so, they were drawn into a vision which was more liberal than Communist, which defined the good society in terms of equal opportunity rather than a working class seizure of power.

Some have defined this shift as a lost opportunity, a failure to develop a popular socialist politics in a period of great political upheaval. But if sports policy is an indication, it represented a concession to popular sentiment that was the price of the most minimal political influence. American society, even after ten years of Depression, did not represent fertile soil for revolutionary upheaval, and Communists found their metier as an exponent of democratic reforms, which, while compatible with a socialist program, did not inevitably lead in that direction.

NOTES


7. *Young Worker*, August 1, 1927, November 1, 1927, and February 15, 1928.

8. *Young Worker*, August 1, 1927, and April 1, 1928.

9. *Young Worker*, August 1, 1927.


12. *Young Worker*, October, 1928.

13. *Young Worker*, May 19, 1930.

14. *Young Worker*, October 21, 1930.

15. *Young Worker*, April, 1930.


21. *Young Worker*, September 15, 1933, October 15, 1933.

22. *Young Worker*, November 7, 1933, March 27, 1934; *Daily Worker*, March 31, 1934.


27. Betts, p. 317; Mandell, p. 81; *Daily Worker*, November 27, 1937.


34. *Daily Worker*, June 14, 1939.


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C. WRIGHT MILLS
The Responsible Craftsman

E.P. Thompson

EDITORS' PREFACE

We are reprinting this appreciation of C. Wright Mills as part of our biographies series, even though E.P. Thompson wrote it in 1963, just 18 months after Mills' death. * Thompson offered a contemporary assessment of Mills' importance, especially to the British New Left. We believe C. Wright Mills' work is still of value to the left, though his influence upon the New Left of the 1960's was far more profound that it is today. His remarkable writings are his intellectual and political legacy.

Mills was one of the first critics on the left to analyze the bureaucratization of the CIO unions. In The New Men of Power (1948) he identified the modern labor leader as a "manager of discontent." White Collar (1951) presented a non-Marxist class analysis of the decline of the old middle class and the rise of a new middle class of white collar employees dependent upon corporations and the government for wages and salaries. The Power Elite (1956) was Mills' most influential book; it pioneered in the kind of non-Marxian elite analysis that later characterized New Left research.

As Thompson points out below, The Causes of World War III (1958) and Listen, Yankee (1960) were strikingly popular tracts for the time; they were two of the earliest and most effective attacks on modern U.S. militarism and imperialism. Although Mills' style would

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be copied again and again by writers opposing the war against Vietnam, none equalled Mills in passion or eloquence. In The Sociological Imagination (1959) Mills presented the first incisive critique of the ideology of academic sociologists and in The Marxists (1962) he criticized Marxism from a constructive viewpoint and assessed the damaging effects of Stalinism.

Unlike many left intellectuals in the independent socialist camp, Mills did not become a disillusioned Cold War anti-communist or an arm-chair social critic. He was deeply involved in what he thought were the most promising political developments of his time — the popular insurgencies in Eastern Europe, the emergence of a New Left in Britain, and the Cuban revolution. And so we should remember and reexamine C. Wright Mills as a political activist and propagandist as well as a critical intellectual and a “responsible craftsman”.

Mills was well aware of the independent leftist’s dilemma. As he wrote in 1948: “Like the little magazines which carry their opinions, independent leftists come and go. In a way they are grateful parasites of the left: they seldom attempt organization but can feel strong only when left organizations are going concerns. Because of their lack of organization they are prone to political hopelessness.”

Mills was a maverick and loner who did not see himself as part of a movement, socialist or otherwise, but he refused to despair at a time when pessimism prevailed throughout most of the Marxist left. He doubted that the proletariat could be the agency of revolution Marxists believed it to be, and so he searched for an alternative agency just like the New Leftists who followed. He looked to the dissident Communist intellectuals in Eastern Europe and England, to Third World revolutionaries like the Cubans, and even to intellectuals in the U.S. who could, he believed, play a revolutionary role. It is to these critical intellectuals that Mills’ work speaks most clearly today.

Wright Mills had few disciples. He didn’t ask for intellectual allegiance, nor did he respect those who offered it too readily. His work provoked a critical admiration.

Mills would have wished his work to be judged within its proper historical context. He would most readily have assented to Blake’s warning: “The man who never alters his opinion is like standing water, and breeds reptiles of the mind.”

In his last years, the stagnant postures of some of his contemporaries called forth his most caustic polemic — those former liberals (but practising conformists) who celebrated institutional devices which had long been rendered irrelevant by changing realities of power: of the “futilitarians” of the disenchanted Left, so transfixed by their horror of Communism that they were unable, in 1956, to see new human realities struggling within the old doctrinal and institutional forms.

As life changed, so his own thought changed. We live (he wrote in 1952) in “a time of irresponsibility, organized and unorganized; when common sense, anchored in fast-outmoded experience has become myopic and irrelevant. Nobody feels secure in a simple place; nobody feels secure and there is no simple place.” To think was to grasp at a reality which changed even at the moment of apprehension.

Marx he admired, as the greatest of the “big men” of the 19th century, upon whose foundations classical sociology had been raised. (This common-sense view remains heretical in some American universities.) But the latter-day
Marxists repelled him by their doctrinal arrogance, their tendency to naive economic reductionism, their failure to attend to the "irrational" dimensions of human behaviour, and their failure to assimilate the continuing discourse of scholarship. He wrote to me, of a Communist critique of his own work (in 1960): *It's not such a bad book if you grant two assumptions that run through it all: One, Victorian Marxism, or rather "Marxism-Leninism", is a model adequate to understanding the U.S.A. today; Two, the viable values of the Left are all contained in the Soviet Union. Since I deny both, it's just all boring to me.*

What he sought to do was to connect Marx's insight into the large drift of historical change — the structure of power, exploitation, and class-bound ideologies — with our enhanced understanding of the ways in which values, ideas, patterns of behaviour, actually arise or are confirmed among individual men and women. It was the lack of any such nexus, between the socio-economic and the personal dimensions, which "bored" him in latter-day Marxism. (In his late book, *The Marxians*, he tried, with unusual patience — and with the audience of Communist "revisionism" partly in mind — to indicate some of its deficiencies.)

This task of effecting a connection he approached from two converging directions. In some difficult but fascinating early papers he addressed himself, at a high level of abstraction, to the theory of knowledge itself, and to language, the integument of knowledge. We must regret that he laid down this work — and in particular his analysis of language as, in itself, the carrier of value-systems, the peremptory indicator of approved patterns of behaviour — so early in life. From another direction he examined the problem of character-formation, the way in which certain types of human character are fostered or "selected" in different historical contexts — work which was carried furthest in his study (with H. Gerth) of *Character and Social Structure* (1953).

How far did he effect a synthesis? Did he succeed in locking together the personal (or "biographical") and the historical dimensions of social analysis? Before we attempt an answer we must attend to the inconsistency of Wright Mills.

For Mills was a moody, deeply-committed, and, in his last years, impatient man. Jumbled together in this way these essays convey at times the wholly-misleading impression of a man of snap judgements and of rhetorical exhortation. At one time, early in his career, he leant towards the traditional left-wing acceptance of
the Labour movement as the effective agency of radical structural change within capitalist societies. In later years he dismissed this *tout court* as a mere article of faith (the "labour metaphysic"). He observed the Labour leaders to be assimilated within the "adaptive" politics of expediency, and he relegated them to an inferior position beneath the real power elite. Their memberships he lumped (by implication) among the minds made captive by the mass media.

In his attitude to these media themselves there is an ambivalence, a fluctuation of mood. He took the early measure of Naziism (his reviews of Neumann's *Behemoth* and of Burnham's *Managerial Revolution* are among the high points of this volume). His more pessimistic findings were confirmed, in the 1950s, by Milosz's *The Captive Mind*, which he regarded as "one of the great documents of our time". "In our time," he wrote in 1955, "all forms of public mindlessness must expropriate the individual mind, and we now know that this is an entirely possible procedure."

So far, the pessimism. It is in the mid-1950s that the pessimism encroaches furthest. Just as the rationalisation of late capitalism had replaced the anarchy of the "free" market, so he suggested that the 19th-century ideal of middle-class opinion-formation, through little independent producers of ideas or policies competing with each other for the support of open publics, had been displaced by the centralised organisations of communication which market ideas and attitudes to a captive audience.

Against this expropriation of the individual reason and conscience he adopted a stance reminiscent at times of Auden ("September 1, 1939"):

*All I have is a voice*
*To undo the folded lie,*
*The romantic lie in the brain*
*Of the sensual man-in-the-street*

And the lie of Authority
Whose buildings grope the sky...
There is much in the American radical tradition which had prepared a role for him as the intellectual rebel, the lone fighter or maverick, exposing the conspiracies of the great but always returning, a solitary rider, to his own mountain-range.

Against this one must set a quietly optimistic line of self-criticism. There is the report on field-studies in Decatur, Illinois, which show the degree of resistance among small-town housewives to the conditioning of the media. (Once again, the "molecular" evidence breaking down the overblown concept). There are his scattered remarks upon the role of a minority of individuals, in all social milieu, as opinion-formers. There are his almost traditionally-liberal exhortations, when addressing workers in the field of liberal adult education, envisaging a growing resistance-movement to the media among the critical and the informed.

Above all, there is the seeming inconsistency of his own work and example. For if the arguments of pessimism had been overwhelming, surely he would have submitted to them, or opted (like some of his colleagues), for the virtues of the academic recluse, scoring up knowledge like some Alexandrian monk in the hope of some future time when the higher barbarism of the Nuclear Age would disperse?

But Mills addressed — and increasingly addressed — a *public*: students, designers, educationalists, ministers of religion, housewives, craftsmen, radicals. He addressed anyone who would listen, but he was confident that a public was there. With *White Collar* and *The Power Elite* he found that public. In his last book-sized "pamphlets" — *The Causes of World War III* and *Listen, Yankee* — he broke through even more widely. The last book achieved astonishing sales, and for a time Mills speculated on the paper-back as a radical "counter-media".
Pessimism seemed to tip over into its opposite. If he had seen the "cultural apparatus" as an agency ensuring the cultural servitude of the masses, a trailer hooked onto the back of the Cadillac of the power elite, he now saw it as "a possible, immediate, radical agency of change". The cultural apparatus was made up of men — scholars, designers, cultural workers. If these men refused to act as the "hired men" of the power elite, but accepted the highest responsibilities of their intellectual crafts, and addressed the public with the best truth at their command... if this should happen, what then would follow? Mills did not say, but he challenged his fellow intellectuals to ask the same questions. At the least it was conceivable that World War III might not occur.

There are inconsistencies and smudged areas of thought in his work. But the inconsistencies appear more explicable if we replace Mills' work within its changing historical context.

There were three phases in Mills' intellectual life: an apprenticeship in sociological method and theory; an intensive period of empirical research; "and third, an effort at combining these interests into a workable style of sociological reflection". The first phase coincides with the early years of the war. The second, which took him through his studies of trade unionism and the white collar workers to *The Power Elite*, was completed in 1955. The final phase carried us from 1956 to 1962.

These dates have more than a biographical significance. The second phase is that of deepening Cold War, Stalinism at its zenith, and McCarthyism at home. Mills had, perhaps fortunately, been born too late to sink any of his moral capital in the Thirties. He had no intellectual allegiance to the Communist tradition, nor (despite the attempt to affix to him the label, "Texan Trotskyist") did he feel happy with the obsessional anti-Communism commonly found in American Trotskyist circles.

The McCarthy assault passed him by. And there were fellow-radicals in the States who felt that Mills had ducked under it. I suspect that there was a sense in which Mills felt that the McCarthy battle was off-centre, a distraction. While the mindless ideologues of the American right jammed the media with their virulent witch-hunting, the real men of power were consolidating their positions in the background, scarcely noticed or criticised by the American left, which had been thrown into defensive postures or which (still worse) had disappeared in recriminations and self-exculpations.

Civil liberties were to Mills of prime impor-
tance. But their importance was to be found, not in their celebration, but in their use. He was also (I suspect) in this phase more of a Texan, more of a political isolationist, than one might suppose. He saw no place within the international configuration which afforded room for an affirmative stance. If he had no illusions about Stalinism, he was greatly discouraged also by the post-war record of West European social-democracy. Hence the implicit pessimism of his outlook in the early fifties. But hence also his choice of thematic material. If there were no easy affirmative banners to pick up, then the intellectual workman must return to his first obedience — to discover and report the truth within his own field of vision. Temporary disengagement might prepare the way for a more well-mounted commitment. The Power Elite was among the most substantial counter-blows which McCarthyism received.

In 1955 and 1956 biography and history came together. One might suggest that the logic of Mills' work pointed in a different direction to the one which he chose to take (or which, perhaps, the context chose for him). His early conceptual studies enriched by the empirical research of the second phase equipped him to return to the work of conceptual analysis at the fullest stretch. He might have succeeded, where so many abstruse claimants have failed, in uniting in a common theoretical nexus the psychological and historical dimensions of social analysis, and in developing those "theories of society, history, human nature" in which (he noted in his "Letter to the New Left" in 1960) we are still "weakest".

I must say plainly that I don’t think he achieved this synthesis. Nor would he have made any such claim. Nor will it enhance his reputation if the claim is made on his behalf.

He never returned, in his later essays, to a sufficiently high level of conceptual abstraction to effect such a synthesis. There is a tension in his writing between the Marxist concept of "class", Weber's terminology of "status", and his own preferred language of "structure" and "elites", which — while fruitful in descriptive analysis — is never resolved on a theoretical plane.

There are other loose ends to his thought. The close-up, contingent sociology of ideas at which he was so expert — the placing of intellectual workmen within their proper social milieu, among the pressures of power, employment, esteem — was never spliced into the larger notion of ideological thresholds and ideological drift. His work contains no exacting analysis of Soviet civilization; the suggestive parallels which he noted between the bureaucratic and militaristic logic of American and Soviet societies were left... as suggestions. The splendidly-provocative The Sociological Imagination (1959) is the work of an impatient, hurried man. Its critique of the conformist schools of American sociology would have been more telling if he had paused for passages of rigorous conceptual analysis of the kind for which (see his early essays, "The Social Life of a Modern Community" and "The Professional Ideology of Social Pathologists") he was eminently well-equipped.

This is to say that he died far too soon, and left much of his work for others to complete. Horowitz is right to claim that he attained, in his last years, "a workable style of sociological reflection". It is a style, rather than a comprehensive theory of social process; and it is the style of a responsible and catholic eclectic, playing "by ear" because the issues were so momentous the time so short — drawing now upon one, now upon another, of the concepts available in the work of previous sociologists, testing them in practice by their adequacy for the work in hand.

If the world of ideas were autonomous — if even the most abstruse intellectual exercises
were not connected by indissoluble organic ties to the world of action — then Mills might have been content in 1956 to return to his academic life. But history overwhelmed his personal biography. He had always been unusual among fellow sociologists in his refusal to assume the largest questions — those of power and social structure. He did not take these things as "given", and employ himself upon molecular enquiry into this or that fragment of a going social process. He asked those questions which somehow disappear from academic syllabi — why? where is it going? to what purpose? for whose benefit?

The Power Elite disclosed to him the goal towards which (under the celebration of affluence and Growth) one giant civilisation was proceeding at accelerated pace — the cremation of the world. At the centre of power he found, not so much greed or active evil, but emptiness, an emptiness which he named "crackpot realism" or "organised irresponsibility" — the rational, technologically expert, bureaucratically-intricate realism of interest and inertia, without a higher will or directive reason. The compulsive drift towards war was sustained and justified by a permanent war economy, a "military metaphysic", according to which all other human priorities were subordinated to "a military definition of reality" and a permanent defensive ideology.

This ideology (he challenged his fellow intellectuals in the West) was sustained by their "default". Stricken by the disillusions of the thirties and forties, the older generation projected their own sense of defeat into the future, where they could see only images of "sociological horror". Anti-Communism in the West served often as the excuse for the abnegation of all responsibilities, all except peripheral defensive actions. Step by step they had opted for accommodations with the status quo, private self-immolations; some, indeed, had become celebrants of the general drift of negation. Among the younger generation he found too many of the "young complacents" — men and women who had surrendered (and without a struggle) their responsibilities into the hands of the bureaucracies of Government and business, serving simply as their "hired men".

It was not that Mills became "anti-American", or that he "sided" with the Communists against the West. It was exactly this trivial but compulsive vicious-circle of ideology from which he sought to break free. He was, in an old sense, a socialist, and he sometimes referred to himself as a "Wobbly". The Wobblies (whose tendency was syndicalist) never fell into that most dangerous error which supposes that socialist endeavour achieves some consummation in State Power, whether "workers" or "People's Democratic" or Fabian-constitutionalist or however qualified. And Mills' study of Weber, Sorel, Simmel, Mosca, and Michels had served to confirm in his mind the wisdom which had come instinctively to the transport-workers and lumberjacks of the old I.W.W. His notion of socialism entailed the decomposition of State Power.

Thus he was scarcely material for a Communist fellow-traveller, at whatever remove. (These essays are curiously innocent of any considered statement about Communism before the mid-fifties. Perhaps the subject — being, in one way or another, obsessional to so many of his colleagues — simply made him weary.) What excited Mills, and blasted down the inner walls of pessimism, was 1956. Poland, Russia, Hungary — the revisionist ferment among the Communist Parties — it was possible for the thing to be shifted, the Monolith could be moved, established power could decompose. The "silent enslaved minds" (not Mills' words but Gomulka's) could defy their own conditioning, there were resistances, in life-experience and in minority traditions, which could reply to
the centralised propagandist media.

Hence the upsurge of hope — a hope as valid for the Western as for the Communist world. What moved him most deeply was the evidence of intellectuals resuming once again the role of international carriers of disaffection and dissent. As he wrote, in *The Causes of World War III* (1958):

*Western intellectuals should remember with humility, even with shame, that the first significant crack in the cold-war front was not made by those who enjoy the formal freedom of the Western democracies, but by men who run the risk of being shot, imprisoned, driven to become nervous caricatures of human beings... Talking in Warsaw and Zagreb and Vienna with some of those who have made the cultural break, I have seen the fingers of such men for two hours at a time continuously breaking up matchsticks on the table before them as they talk of possible new meanings of Marxism, as they try honestly to define the new beginnings in Eastern Europe after the death of Stalin. I have seen the strain and the courage, and now in the inner forum of myself those Poles and Hungarians and Yugoslavs are included. I can no longer write seriously of social and political reality without writing to them as well as to the comfortable and the safe.*

But as hope revived within Wright Mills, so it brought with it an enhanced sense of personal responsibility. Before 1956 the great impersonal drift towards war merely deadened the will. “Most of us,” he had written in 1952, “now live as spectators in a world without political interlude: fear of total permanent war stops our kind of morally oriented politics. Our spectatorship means that personal, active experience often seems politically useless and even unreal.” After 1956 he felt the critical human predicament with a new poignancy. The devil’s finale could be averted. He was astounded by the complacency of those Western intellectuals who met the Communist ferment with an “I-told-you-so,” or who chalked it up as a gain — not to humanity — but to “the West”. It was their plain duty to move as decisively outside the military and ideological “metaphysics” of the West as Nagy and Tibor Dery had moved outside that of the East. They must go out to welcome their Eastern colleagues, meeting not in some quasi-official twilight of ideological compromise, but making with them common cause in sharply confronting the twin ideologies of power and mass-manipulation. Together they must fight “the indifferent professors and smug editors of the overdeveloped societies in the West” and the “cultural bureaucrats and hacks, the intellectual thugs of the official line... in the Soviet bloc”.

The arguments of power and expediency —
and their outcome in world war — were their common enemy. Wright Mills found added inspiration in our own Aldermaston and C.N.D., in the scattered European groupings taking the title "New Left", in the stirring of student movements and of new forms of direct action from Japan to Alabama, from Turkey to Johannesburg.

It was at this point that he encountered the Cuban revolution, and through this the needs and gathering ferment of the hungry third of the world. He held the Cuban revolution to be — his friend Ralph Miliband had written — "the best and most decent thing that had ever happened in and to Latin America". There was much in the Cuba of 1960 to appeal to the Wobbly in Wright Mills: the improvisation, the egalitarian revolutionary tone, the unmanipulated "self-activity" of the campesinos, above all the ideological openness. He encouraged Western intellectuals, of different persuasions, to take up work in Cuba. He even cooked up with Castro a somewhat-bizarre scheme for a "Seminar on Varieties of Marxism" to which visiting lecturers of the calibre of Deutscher, Lukacs, Kolakowski, might be invited, and at which Titoists and Stalinists, Revisionists and Trotskyists, might have face-to-face intellectual encounters.

It was not, of course, the duplicity of Castro or the deep-laid schemes of Khrushchev which hardened this revolution and walled up much of its openness, but, in the first place, the American economic, ideological, and military offensive. Wright Mills saw the Bay of Pigs disaster coming all the way. Privately, yes, he had "reservations" as to the Fidelists' relations with the Communists, but these were not of a kind which would bring the least comfort to those guilty, in any degree, of any complicity with the siege of Cuba. These — the fair-minded liberals too pure to associate with a "Hands Off Cuba" committee for fear that they might sit alongside an under-cover Communist, the dogmatists (whether under Trotskyist, pacifist, or radical labels) who smugly prophesied that Cuba would "go Stalinist" while doing nothing to prevent the State Department from driving her into exactly that logic — he regarded such people as being equally guilty with the men of the Pentagon. "I am for the Cuban revolution. I do not worry about it. I worry for it and with it."

He tried, almost physically, to place his body between Florida and the Cuban coast. His Listen, Yankee (1960) verges at times on stridency. Analysis and apologetics become confused. But its tone was enforced by the organised hysteria of the great American media — the chain-press, TV, the State Department itself — against which he wrote. These media at last were able to get him within their conventional sights, to hound and lampoon him as a "Red". Against medical advice he worked through night after night, during the late autumn of 1960, mastering the history and problems of Latin America, preparing for a nation-wide TV encounter with the State Department expert, A.A. Berle. "I am bone tired," he wrote to me at this time:

I've been running since last February, when I first went to Mexico, then Russia, then Cuba. Too much fast writing, too many decisions of moral and intellectual type, made too fast, on too little evidence. Anybody who is "non-communist left" today and goes into the hungry nation bloc, he's got one hell of a set of problems... Now it looks like I debate A.A. Berle... in early December on NBC national TV hook-up (9:30 Sat. night, est. audience 20 million) on "U.S. policy towards Latin America". I have to do it: it's my god damned duty, because nobody else will stand up and say shit outloud, but... I know little of Latin America and have no help to get me ready for such a thing. But I have to. Then the pressure on me
because of Cuba, official and unofficial, is mounting. It is very subtle and very fascinating. But also worrisome and harassing. I want to escape to reality. I want to escape to my study, I want 6 months to think and not to have to walk or write... 

He drove himself, through late October and November, beyond the limits of his strong physique. A few days before the debate he collapsed with a grave heart-attack. Although he recovered sufficiently in the summer of 1961 to visit Europe, West and East, he knew that he was a man living on borrowed time. He was offered academic posts, in England, Poland and elsewhere, in which he might, perhaps, have found some retirement, might even have borrowed from death an extra year. He preferred to return to America.

This is the man who (Professor Edward Shills has informed readers of the Spectator) "was a Manichaean who saw power as darkness", who "really cared very little for humanity", and whose "self-portrayal" as a man "who was attacked on every side by overwhelming odds" was "completely a self-deception":

Now he is dead and his rhetoric is a field of broken stones, his analyses empty, his strenuous pathos limp. He was a victim of his own vanity and of a shrivelled Marxism, which will not die and which goes on requiring the living. (5 July 1963)

This dancing-on-the-grave hurt some of Mills' friends. I think it did so unnecessarily. He would certainly have preferred it to the grudging proprieties and polite devaluations with which the Establishment generally buries its enemies. It would have reassured him to have known that he had drawn blood. After all, was it not of such men as Shills that he had written: Their academic reputations rest, quite largely, upon their academic power: they are the members of the committee; they are on the directing board; they can get you the job, the trip, the research grant. They are a strange new kind of bureaucrat. They are executives of the mind... They could set up a research project or even a school, but I would be surprised, if, now after twenty years of research and teaching and observing and thinking, they could produce a book which told you what they thought was going on in the world, what they thought were the major problems for men of this historical epoch...

I suspect that there is as much failure of the imagination as malice in the Professor's obsequies. He really does not understand what Mills was about. What he (and so many others) can't apprehend is the fullness of the strain taken by a man of Mills' stature and with Mills' profound responsibility both before ideas and before the audience which attends upon his thought, in the Nuclear Age.

The globe spins, but as they cross the campus to the next committee they don't notice any movement. The conventions of their ideologies hem them in but they have lived inside there so long that they don't know it. The world of politics chunters on from one unprecedented
danger to the next, but the salary still gets paid in to the Bank, and promotion (if one keeps one’s nose clean) may be round the corner.

For those who are more open-eyed it is easy to make a gesture of renunciation, to call down a plague upon both ideological houses. Neither house is going to be troubled by that. What is more difficult than any of us realise is to build, on secure foundations, the house of the future in the no-man’s-land between. The Communist revisionist speaks his mind — and he is hammered by the State for giving comfort to the enemy. He conforms or falls back into despair. The Western liberal speaks his mind — and he is hammered as a crypto-Communist, or becomes a fellow-traveller, or, as often, is “taken up” and given a licensed niche as a quaint protestor. The Fidelists try to break through in their own way, and the ring of power closes in. At every side there are traps for the mind or sensibility — well-worn glissades of complicity or default down which the intellect must slither.

It is more difficult to think about the large questions, independently and to affirmative purpose, than any of us know. Never before our time have intellectuals who operate among higher historical generalisations been asked to contain within their minds so many complexities and tensions — to comprehend simultaneously the inner dynamic and contradictions of two, and perhaps three, conflicting social systems. Nor has the outcome of their work been of such moment to the world.

It was this strain which Wright Mills took in his last years, and under which he died. He entered precipitately into the heart of the conflict, and found a world which was in many ways strange. Where he had been most familiar with academic discourse, he now encountered a Babel of voices. Western radicals told him to “tell Castro...” Men from the hungry nations told him to “tell the West...” Embittered Communist revisionists, their eyes full of remembered suffering, warned him against the smoothies of Communist ideological “co-existence”. Pragmatic Gomulka-type revisionists warned him against the self-flagellant utopianism of the moralistic revisionists. He was solicited by petty factionalists and scorned by proponents of a deflationary realpolitik; he attended as readily to little student journals as to men of established academic repute. He had to find his own way, distinguishing the original from the eccentric, the men of integrity from the opportunists. No doubt he made errors of judgement: he was a hard-pressed and impatient man. The important thing is that he got the discourse moving. He served in himself as a hyphen, joining the dissenting intellectuals of two conformist worlds.

To build that house of theory between the camps requires an independence of intellect, and a willingness to call ridicule upon oneself by exposing one’s immature notions in public (which Mills called the “nerve of failure”) which can easily tip over into the aridity of self-opinionated isolationism. It requires an openness before changing experience which can tip over into opportunism. “When events move very fast and possible worlds swing round them,” Mills wrote in 1942, “something happens to the quality of thinking. Some men repeat formulae; some men become reporters. To time observation with thought so as to mate a decent level of abstraction with crucial happenings is a difficult problem.”

Twenty years on, and the difficulties are greater. It becomes more evident that the building of that house must be done by many workmen, from the East as well as the West. Theories of society must be developed adequate to the analysis of both Communist and late-capitalist societies. A utopian goal of a humane, democratic, communitarian society must be projected, to which the greatly-differing societies of East, West, and “Third World” may be
directed — and indeed must be directed if we are ever to achieve, not a tetchy truce, but the supersession of the Cold War.

Men must discover, East and West, how to decompose power within complex “over-developed” industrial societies. Addressing himself to this theme, the rise of the “cheerful robot, of the technological idiot” within the middle-levels of both American and Soviet power hierarchies, Mills wrote in 1958:

_The fate of these types and this ethos, what is done about them and what they do — that is the real, even the ultimate showdown on ‘socialism’ in our time. For it is a showdown on what kinds of human beings and what kinds of culture are going to become the models of human aspiration. And it is an epochal showdown, separating the contemporary from the modern age. To make that showdown clear, as it affects every region of the world and every intimate recess of the self, requires a union of political reflection and cultural sensibility of a sort not really known before. It is a union now scarcely available in the western cultural community. Perhaps the attempt to achieve it, and to use it well, is the showdown on human culture itself._

That is one reason why Mills sought so earnestly in his last two or three years to open a discourse with the Marxists, to help in unloosing the reserves of experience and sensibility which were locked up within their doctrinal forms. When I had the temerity to criticise him (in 1961) for failing to appreciate the extreme sharpness of the encounter between the humanist revisionists and the opportunists within the Communist camp, he replied:

_You might not quite realize… that in many ways, just like you, I too am in all that… I come to the anguish of it from another position than you, indeed from another way of life, if I may put it so, but still we are finding ourselves in the same kind of difficulty, I think. As for me, being there makes me feel better, I mean being so generally close to you. Its like Thoreau said: in a dishonest country the only place for a man is in jail. I suppose one could say that what I am talking about is the “marxism of the heart”…_

He felt that the Western intellectual must repudiate the ideology of permanent war (at whatever remove) as decisively and as publicly as the scribes of _Encounter_ demand that Communist intellectuals should, repudiate their origins. No intellectual worth his salt could serve in the echelons of either “side”; and he should refuse to serve as a mercenary in their bureaucracies. He should live, act, and above all _work_, as already a citizen of a world in which the Cold War had been superseded. His allegiance should be to the healed human consensus of the future, and to no partial — national or ideological — salient. The only “security problem” which should properly concern him should be the security of human reason.

It was in this sense that he looked toward the intellectuals as hopeful agents of change. He thought that they must take urgent steps to secure their own cultural apparatus, for international as well as the national discourse, independent of the intrusions of power. But he did not regard their role in any elitist sense, as his choice of the term “cultural workman” was intended to emphasize. An “International” of political or trade union bodies must be mediated (and thereby obstructed and distorted) by _apparatsnks_ and bureaucrats. But cultural workmen already _were_ a diffuse International. Already West and East, South and North, the books were passing, the scholars, writers, and scientists were meeting, the students travelling, the technicians exchanging data.

The intellectual, in his proper role, he regarded, not as an “expert” (a piece of mystification which drew his fire), but as a _craftsman_. He had no higher claim upon reward or status.
than any other craftsman, in industry, or on the farm. But in the Nuclear Age his responsibilities and opportunities, in communicating his findings across all barriers, were greater. In one of his finest essays, addressed to industrial designers in 1959, he defined a “properly developing society” as “one in which the fact and ethos of craftsmanship would be pervasive”:

*In terms of its norms, men and women ought to be formed and selected as ascendant models of character. In terms of its ethos, institutions ought to be constructed and judged. Human society, in brief, ought to be built around craftsmanship as the central experience of the unalienated human being and the very root of free human development. The most fruitful way to define the social problem is to ask how such a society can be built. For the highest human ideal is: to become a good craftsman.*

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Bengali women in East London.
THE BRITISH GENERAL ELECTION

A Predictable Disaster

Paul Thompson

THE CONTEXT
The Tory victory in the General election was seen, not least by socialists, as the end product of an all too predictable process. Yet the start of Labour’s 5 years in office had begun much more brightly. The momentum of the miners’ strike that brought down Heath’s Conservative government in 1974 carried on in the first year under Labour. They were forced to concede large wage increases by many groups of workers, while others pressured the Government to save their jobs through aid or nationalisation.

The tide was turned by the 1975 Common Market Referendum result. The victory by the pro-market business and political establishment changed the political climate and gave a salutary lesson to those on the Left who see such events as irrelevant. Wage and job struggles can always be halted or superceded by a loss at the general political level. An important by-product of the referendum was a shift to the right in the balance of power within the Labour Party itself, and they were on the retreat from that point onwards.

The following four years saw a steady but substantial shift of Labour’s policies to the right. It wasn’t just a case of failing to implement election promises. For a change, the accusation of “Labour’s Tory policies” was literally true. To add to the usual wage controls, we got strict monetarist economics, big cuts in public spending on health, welfare and education, stricter control on immigration, unemployment trebling and the prosecution of radical journalists on absurd secrecy charges.

A closed and conservative government, openly lauded as such by the real Conservative press, was bound to have its effect on the class struggle. The Labour Party is useful to Capital precisely because of its relationship to the working class, especially its links to the unions. From the 1976 “Social Contract” onwards, the union leaderships fought to limit any rank and file response to cuts in wages, public spending and jobs. It’s not that the union leaders were particularly for such policies, but to struggle against them would involve a break in the organic link which holds British social democracy together — union machines and the Labour Party. It wasn’t just the blackmail of letting the Tories in that did the trick. Labour did actually deliver some of the goods for the unions, abolishing the anti-union “Industrial Relations Act,” and creating legislation on Employment Protection and Health and Safety. While such measures were welcome, they were a subtle process cementing Labour Party loyalty.
among union officials, including an increasingly bureaucratised layer of shop stewards.\(^1\)

The dam had to burst sooner or later, and it was the round of wage struggles in 1978 which did it. Spearheaded by low paid workers in the public sector, aided by some of the more traditionally powerful groups like Ford workers and lorry drivers, large holes were punched in the 5% pay guidelines. Union leaders simply could not hold back workers any longer, even though they knew that they were sinking the Labour Government by showing that the “usefulness” of the special relationship with the unions was no longer convincing.

Yet the image of a working class, super-militant and yearning for socialism, but held back by the union bureaucracies was sadly off the mark. Even the wage struggles of the latter period, breaking a long spell of defense and retreat, were largely fought in a sectional way, on very particular needs. Although less tangible than visible struggles, the political climate had swung sharply to the right. Labour’s policies had fed this swing, it did not create it. On every single level, Labour and by proxy, the Left, lost the key ideological arguments — picketing and the power of the unions, public spending, race and immigration, monetarism, amongst others.\(^2\)

It was this political climate that was the determining factor in the elections. The Tories were able to present the crisis in British society as one of collectivism, state intervention and bureaucracy. Although these are products of both the Keynesian infrastructure necessary for the survival of capitalism and social-democracy’s attempt to manage its crisis, it easily spilled over into a phoney “crisis of socialism.” Such trends have an international dimension, such as the resurgence of the right in Portugal, France’s “New Philosophers,” and America’s Proposition 13, to name a few; but it has a particular force in Britain where a narrowly “statist” Labour Party has governed for 11 out of the last 15 years.

THE CAMPAIGN

The imprint of this political climate was strongly present in the actual campaign from the start. After leaving a further sour taste in people’s mouths by hanging on to power until a humiliating House of Commons’ defeat, Labour’s election manifesto contained no radical policies, in fact few policies of any sort. The Callaghan leadership wanted and got a campaign structured round the theme of the danger of change, personified in the safe figure of the Prime Minister himself. But while his opportunity did outstrip the appalling Thatcher,\(^3\) policyless conservatism had little appeal to an electorate who rightly felt they were in a crisis and needed change.

The Tory campaign, in contrast, was explicitly geared to that message. Its policies of tax and spending cuts were presented as radical ones, and were put in the framework of a buoyant ideological conviction in free enterprise, Thatcher even referring at one stage to a continuity with an authentic tradition of crusading socialism.

This meant that Labour had conceded the general political arguments in advance, giving the Tories the confidence to go further than they dreamed possible, for instance in proposing to cut benefits from strikers’ families.

The only challenge to the new conservative consensus came where the Left channelled its energies: race and Ireland. The Tories ran an explicitly anti-immigration campaign, Thatcher repeating her famous remark about people feeling swamped by immigrants. These racist sentiments are popular in large sections of the working class, so the Labour Party is always afraid to challenge them. Instead they turn the
anti-immigration screws as tight as possible, close their eyes and hope "race problems" go away. The National Front, of course, were pushing them for all they were worth. But The Left had built an impressive machine for stopping them — the Anti-Nazi League. While harassing a small fascist party might seem a diversion, given the race policies of the major parties, in fact it is not the case. Combatting the Front specifically addresses the racist logic of those policies and highlights their origin and end result. In the only moment of mass struggle in the election campaign, thousands of Asian and West Indian people aided by many white socialists, fought the police to stop a National Front rally in Southall, London. In the battle hundreds were injured and Blair Peach, a local teacher, was clubbed to death by the Special Patrol Group, an elite group in the police force set up specifically to break strikes and attack the Left. The next day 5,000 marched in his honour and the local Asian population mourned him as one of their own, clenched fists raised in salute at the spot where he died.

Equally dramatically, the wall of silence surrounding the question of the British presence in Northern Ireland was broken. A "Make Ireland an Issue" campaign was run by the United Troops Out Movement (UTOM), the Socialist Unity election alliance, and other militants. Every speech of Callaghan was interrupted by hecklers, until his nerves were visibly frayed. Many Labour Party meetings were picketed by demonstrators wearing blankets, calling attention to the continued refusal of the British government to give "political" status to the Republican prisoners in Northern Ireland, particularly those detained in the notorious "H" block at the main prison camp. (Until they are given "political prisoner" status, most prisoners in Northern Ireland refuse to wear prison uniforms, and wear only blankets.)

To add to Callaghan's miseries, veteran pacifist Patricia Arrowsmith ran as a socialist-Troops Out candidate in his Cardiff seat, interrupting his victory speech in front of millions of television viewers. More successful in voting terms was Brendan Gallacher, the father of a political prisoner, who ran against Roy Mason, the particularly repressive Secretary of State for Northern Ireland. To get 638 votes for Troops Out, as well as an estimated 1,000 spoiled votes for him and Labour in the solid mining area of Barnsley was little short of amazing! And there are signs that the consensus is breaking; a demonstration backed by the Young Liberals, UTOM, plus some individual Liberal and Labor MP's has been called for August on a Troops Out platform.

THE RESULT

Although one late opinion poll gave the Tories collective heart-failure by showing a narrow Labour lead, the result of a modest but decisive 45 seat majority for the Tories conformed to most expectations. Labour's defensiveness could not allow them to build out from the core of their support, and their conservative policies had whetted the appetite for the real thing among even some traditional Labour supporters. At a superficial level, the overall voting patterns seemed to give some comfort to the British establishment, giving a swing to the Tories and a return to polarisation between the two major parties, with nationalists and others being squeezed. But few were celebrating too much. The days when Britain could be held up as a model of a stable two-party system have still not returned.

THE FAR LEFT AND ELECTIONS

The impact of the far left in the period of the Labour Government often suffered the same fate as its predictions of continuing upsurge in
class militancy. Industrial activity in particular suffered from the defensive character of the period, although revolutionary candidates in union elections achieved some impressive results, indicating that some workers were being radicalised leftwards. Far left militants were also particularly influential in the Ford and health service struggles.

But only solid successes were in specific campaigns, like the Anti-Nazi League and the allied Rock Against Racism, picking up on and developing a growing youth radicalisation. Given the depth of the crisis, the sectoral defensive-ness of much of the working class movement, and the dangers of the failure of social democracy being identified with a failure of socialism, it was vital that the far left make a challenge on the general political terrain. The elections were an important opportunity to do this. But despite some promising results in bye-elections and local elections, it didn’t happen.

Socialist Unity, an electoral alliance (chiefly of the International Marxist Group and Big Flame) ran or supported a dozen candidates, with the aim of using the election to build ongoing struggles and campaigns, and put forward a basic socialist action program. Although some advances were made, the impact and vote was small, being decisively weakened by the non-participation of the Socialist Workers Party. Although initially refusing on the grounds that general political alliances were impossible; in the end the SWP stood no candidates at all, overturning their previous conference decision. Stress instead was put on a propaganda campaign with the theme of “Defend the unions, keep out the Tories.”

These events unfortunately left the field open to the ultra-sectarian Workers Revolutionary Party to appear as the revolutionary alternative. Financed by various Arab nationalist regimes and arguing a whole range of absurd policies that included restoring wage differentials, the threat of a Tory inspired civil war and apologetics on the Radio for Idi Amin from Vanessa Redgrave (because of the Arab/Libyan link), their 50 candidates could not be said to have actually advanced the already tarnished image of socialism. It seems that the British Left is paying for its own sins, the primary one being self-imposed ghettos of parliamentarianism and economism.

TORY POLICIES: Rhetoric or Reality?

All important parts of the far left had called for a Labour vote on the correct grounds of the threat posed by the Tories and the lack of an alternative. But this time many believed that the threat was very definitely real, the Tories being new and potentially more dangerous creatures. The significantly different character of the Tories was in fact trumpeted by Left and Right.

The Keynesian economy can be modified through monetarism, but it cannot be dismantled without disastrous consequences for Capital. The key role of the Conservative Government will be to consolidate the ideological shift to the right, thereby undermining the willingness of people to struggle. Cut-backs in public spending, tax cuts, tightening immigration and so on will hurt, but should be seen as both a continuation of Labour’s management of the crisis and as symbolic in an ideological sense. This is particularly the case in relation to cutting strikers benefits, which has no practical effect, but huge symbolic political value. The one aspect of the domestic order which produces significant changes is the sale of council houses. The specific Tory aim is to produce a “property owning democracy,” in which class allegiances are shifting. In the past there has been some accuracy in this. Only time will tell, but at least it will force the Left to develop a comprehensive housing programme!
PROSPECTS FOR STRUGGLE: TASKS OF THE FAR LEFT

The prospects for class struggle are not particularly good at the moment. Many militants, not just in industry but in the women’s and other movements, are either defensive, demoralised or both. There seems to me to be two particular dangers. The first is an intensification of individual and group entry into the Labour party, as tired and demoralised militants seek a shelter from the Tory storm, alongside the perennial Trotskyist raiding parties. The second is simple anti-Toryism, consisting of bashing the Tories and waiting patiently for a repeat of 1970-74 when mass industrial struggles forced the Tories out. But history is unlikely to repeat itself in the same way. Of course there will be struggles, industrial and otherwise. But to be both successful and to break the cycle of mass anti-Tory struggles leading to a limited call for the return of Labour, such struggles will have to break out of their sectional, militant trade union straitjacket, even if led by revolutionaries!

The emphasis must be on the socialist alternative to Labourism and the Tories, the kind that have been developed by the Lucas workers in their “Alternative Plans for Production.” These must be extended to the service and public sectors where a defense of things like the National Health Service must be linked to struggles to transform them. The rank and file movements built to fight these struggles need to have a wider political program and cease to be “party-fronts.” Essentially, socialists must situate their perspectives and organising with a more general political terrain and in doing so build a more conscious cadre of militants, less likely to be satisfied with the return of Labour. If we even half-succeed the election result will be less the disaster it appears to be at the present time.

NOTES

1. Documented by Richard Hyman, “Shop Stewards as Full-Time Officials,” in Revolutionary Socialism, no. 3 (the theoretical journal of Big Flame).

2. The shift to the right was helped by a number of prominent Labour defectors to the Tories, mainly ageing Lords, but including ex-ministers like Prentice and Marsh. The former has ended up in the Tory cabinet.

3. If the article says nothing about the “Thatcher factor” of being a woman contender for Prime Minister, it is because I don’t think it was important. The Tories won despite her personal unpopularity, which included some sexism, but was primarily because she personifies the English middle class. Some bourgeois feminists agonised and other radical feminists embraced her as a “sister.” The vast majority rejected her for her politics.

4. The consensus on the Left is that the voting setback will force the National Front to a more open fascist, hard-line racist practice, structured around their core support. Many also believe that the Anti-Nazi League has reached the limits of its usefulness as an anti-Nazi initiative, and that it should focus on anti-racism.

5. The Scottish and Welsh nationalists suffered from a backlash following the defeats in the recent Devolution Referendum (which would have given a certain amount of self-government to Scotland and Wales). Many working-class supporters went back to the Labour Party and middle-class supporters went back to the Tories. But nationalism will prove to be far from dead, as the contradictions in capitalist development, which produced it, still exist.

6. See my previous article, “Youth Culture and Youth Politics in Britain,” in Radical America, vol. 13, no. 2 (March-April, 1979).

7. The usual vote for Socialist Unity and other far left candidates was between 1 and 2%.

8. It is interesting, for instance, that they have not abolished the National Enterprise Board, the main arm of industrial intervention created by the Labour Government.

9. A good model for such organizations is the Ford Workers Group, created prior to the Fords Strike and influential in its development.

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