Re-industrialization: Capitalism Takes Flight

Men's Movement

Health & Safety

Staff: John Demeter.

Associate Editors: Peter Biskind, Carl Boggs, Paul Buhle, Margaret Cerullo, Jorge C. Corralejo, Ellen DuBois, Barbara Ehrenreich, John Ehrenreich, Dan Georgakas, Martin Glaberman, Michael Hirsch, Mike Kazin, Ken Lawrence, Staughton Lynd, Betty Mandell, Mark Naison, Brian Peterson, Sheila Rowbotham, Annemarie Troger, Martha Vicinus, Stan Weir, David Widgery.

Cover by Nick Thorkelson

Radical America welcomes unsolicited manuscripts, but can return them only if sufficient postage is included. Writers may also send abstracts, or inquiries to Manuscript Coordinator, c/o Radical America.

RADICAL AMERICA (USPS 873-880) is published bi-monthly by the Alternative Education Project, Inc. at 38 Union Square, Somerville, MA 02143 (617) 628-6585. Copyright © 1981 by Radical America. Subscription rates: $12 per year, $22 for two years, $8 per year for the unemployed. Add $3.00 per year to all prices for foreign subscriptions. Double rates for institutions. Free to prisoners. Bulk rates: 40% reduction from cover price for five or more copies. Bookstores may order from Carrier Pigeon, 75 Kneeland St., Boston, MA 02111. Distribution in England by Southern Distribution, 27 Clerkenwell Close, London EC1R OAT. Typesetting by Carrier Pigeon.

Second class postage paid at Boston, Mass. and additional post offices.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to RADICAL AMERICA, 38 Union Sq., #14, Somerville, MA 02143.

RADICAL AMERICA is available on microfilm from Xerox University Microfilms, 300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106, and indexed in Alternative Press Center Index, PO Box 7229, Baltimore, MD 21218. It is also indexed in America: History and Life, Sociological Abstracts, and Women's Studies Abstracts.
INTRODUCTION

REINDUSTRIALIZATION:
A DEBATE AMONG CAPITALISTS
Goetz Wolff

FROM THE RUNAWAY TO THE SWEATSHOP:
"ENTERPRISE ZONES" AND REDEVELOPMENT
OF THE CITIES
Phil Mattera

FIGHTING FOR HEALTH AND SAFETY:
WINDSOR, ONTARIO
Jim Brophy and John Jackson

ADVERSARIES AND MODELS: ALTERNATIVE
INSTITUTIONS IN AN AGE OF SCARCITY
Carl Hedman

DANCING ALONG THE PRECIPICE:
THE MEN'S MOVEMENT IN THE 80s
Joe Interrante

GOOD READING
INTRODUCTION

As if on cue from a motion picture industry that floods theaters each summer with inane comedies and escapist adventures, the US press showed us the American eagle simultaneously swatting Medflies and Libyan aircraft while performing daring feats of aerial union busting. With the advent of fall, we can expect little relief, with shows such as “Raiders of the Lost Budget,” “Escape from the New Deal,” and “Endless Supply.” It’s more of the same in the continuing attempt at a general capitalist restructuring of American society, the economy, and the state.

While it is critically important to realize that there are variations — from center to right — in the proposals from the business and corporate community, their collective goal is to encourage a high level of investment — of capital formation — and thus to restore the competitiveness and profitability of US capitalism. They do differ on the degree of government involvement necessary for this restructuring, but they generally agree that “what’s good for GM is good for the country.” The question is, “What’s good for GM?”

As an attempt to provide an overview of two aspects of the Reaganomic strategy, we are presenting Goetz Wolff’s essay on capitalist reindustrialization strategies and Phil Mattera’s analysis of the “enterprise zone” proposal. Wolff’s article outlines the sweep of the various competing proposals and assesses their prospects for gaining support in the business community. Here we might mention a few blind spots or unstated assumptions in the strategies. The first is that the strategies uniformly discount the role of the US labor movement in any
development of new economic strategy. "Worker dislocation" while waiting for a mystical "bail out" of the economy is viewed by capitalist planners as a small price to pay for reindustrialization.

Yet, despite the collapse of liberalism and the Democratic Party, it seems unlikely that a sustained program for capitalist renewal can be successful without the incorporation of the trade unions. It is precisely in those areas of greatest trade-union strength, the industries organized by the CIO in the 1930s, that the reindustrialization programs are most ambitious. If such an alliance does take place, what will it be based on? Will it be marked by an extension of race and gender privileges and by appeals to nationalism? Will it be shaped by continuing high unemployment rates that make any job look good. The unabashed union busting typified in Reagan's handling of the air traffic controllers' strike will certainly be policy more than exception in the coming period of continuing industrial dislocation. What are we to read into the timidity of the trade-union hierarchy to this attack?

A second assumption in the discussion of the strategies concerns the military budget and its relation to reindustrialization. It will take a major effort simply to rebuild and retool the factories needed to produce the military hardware now budgeted for the next five years. That effort will be coupled with the military sector's large-scale absorption of technicians, engineers, and strategic materiel for the foreseeable future. Will people and planners alike continue to accept the leap of faith Reagan is asking as services, transportation, and necessities are cut to ward off the Soviet bogeyman?

It was a striking feature of activist politics in the 1970s that struggles for industrial health and safety were conducted largely in isolation from the mainstream of environmentalism. Yet as Jim Brophy, one of the authors of our article on the Windsor Occupational Safety and Health Council, has said, it is essentially the same struggle separated only by factory walls. This is one reason the Windsor article is politically interesting. The group is based in the Windsor trade-union movement, but from the start its activities have seen industrial health and safety as an environmental issue in which workers have the chance to act in behalf of the surrounding community. And, in turn, community support has been crucial to the victories that have been won; school janitors, for example, won a fight with the school board over asbestos only when concerned parents came to their support and students at one high school staged a walkout.

Here in the US, it is the Reagan administration that is making the connection between industrial health and the environment, by wielding a broad ax against all the protections that were fought for in the 1970s. Those, especially in the mainstream environmental movement, who were accustomed to winning victories in the seventies are now faced with the need for allies to avoid disastrous defeats in the eighties. The Windsor article shows, albeit on a very small scale, the possibilities of such an alliance.

The Windsor article is of interest also because of the extremely adverse conditions in which the health-and-safety struggles have been conducted. Windsor's depression-level unemployment has ranged as high as 20 percent over the past two years, and employers have been quick to use the threat of mass layoffs to discourage protests over workplace conditions. And to some extent this tactic has succeeded. But the Windsor Occupational Safety and Health Council, rather than folding under the counterattack, has dug in for a long struggle.
and has won some victories. Its experience offers hope for health-and-safety groups elsewhere, most of whom have much lower rates of unemployment to cope with.

Today we find ourselves defending basic public services against attacks from the Right. It seems hard to remember that, only a few years ago, we fought against some of these programs ourselves and struggled to create alternative institutions which would provide a vision for how education, health care, and other services could be more responsive to community needs. It is easy now to view such alternative institutions as utopian or as frills which we can no longer defend in the current climate of political reaction.

Carl Hedman's article on alternative institutions suggests that we should not be so quick to dismiss free schools, free clinics and other counter-institutions. In his examination of Multicultural, an alternative school in Milwaukee, he shows the important roles which such a school can play in giving working-class communities a model for what to demand from the public schools, as well as providing the Left with a forum for discussing the purposes and limits of public education under capitalism. He also explores the ways in which alternative programs must always fight the tendency to become "safety valves" for the establishment, whereby they take responsibility for all those who are pushed out or who fail within the existing stuctures. In all, his article reminds us of the importance and problems of alternative institutions which can provide a solid base for criticism and change of dominant institutions.

Despite all the current pressures, we need such a base more than ever. Budget cuts and right-wing attacks are pushing public institutions increasingly back into blatant social-control activity. Youth services revert to juvenile corrections programs. Changes in Medicaid rules take away the rights of poor people to choose their doctor. Educational cuts mean that "basic" education is all that is offered to students. The institutional innovations of the 1970s — many of which grew out of the examples and pressures of alternative programs — are the first items to be cut in times of "realistic choices." The result is that social expectations shrink and people cannot even imagine ways to make their schools, hospitals, or social services better; so they withdraw into themselves, decreasing their demand on the system in ways which can later be used as justification for more cuts.

Perhaps the conclusion here is that, difficult as it may seem in these times, Leftists may need to consider renewing their efforts in support of alternative institutions, especially of those community self-help efforts which do not rely on public money. We may need to take some time away from the angry and depressing work of fighting cutbacks to re-create small programs which remind people that other social options exist besides the increasingly narrow, mean-spirited or inadequate ones now presented. Here we can look to feminist services and to schools like Multicultural for lessons and examples.

There should be no question that a new sensibility about male gender roles has spread widely throughout the US. Since the rebirth of the women's movement a decade ago, there has been incessant challenge to masculinity. There is growing support for male parenting, men are questioning the roles that they have been conditioned to accept, and, in fact, there have arisen some loosely connected groups around the country that have identified themselves as part of a "men's movement."

As with many progressive changes in the
recent past, the media has also begun to reflect this change with a new "commodity": "the Sensitive Male." One friend reported seeing four instances of "sensitive male roles" recently in one evening's TV viewing.

With the decline in power and the fragmentation of the women's movement, the pressure against the traditional construction of masculinity has lessened. Indeed, the appropriate patterns of masculinity are sparking political issues today, but the sparks are coming mostly from the Right. New Right propaganda is powerful in part because of the images of masculinity it manipulates. By contrast, the Left is not offering any cohesive alternative sense of what progressive masculinity might mean.

In this issue, RA editorial board member Joe Interrante has written an examination of the men's movement using the occasion of the Seventh National Conference on Men and Masculinity held in July 1981 at Tufts University — a stone's throw from our office. He provides a history of this movement and an analysis of conflicts between its two major tendencies, as well as an overall evaluation of the conference itself.

His analysis places the men's movement in the context of feminism. There can be no doubt that feminism made possible this rebellion against conventional masculinity. Ironically, the men's movement is experiencing types of internal dissension and diffuseness that characterized the early women's movement. For example, the men's movement appears to be a bit beyond the consciousness-raising stage but falling short of any strategy for political action. More seriously, the movement is deeply divided between its profeminist sections and one organization, "Free Men," which is explicitly anti-feminist.

Yet Interrante argues that even within the progressive wing of the men's movement there are varying degrees of acceptance of analyses and actions that directly challenge the structures of male power and domination. Furthermore, there are inevitable ambiguities in the situation of those who, accustomed to dominating the political stage, want to relinquish that center-stage position without becoming politically inactive. These criticisms, skepticisms, and bewilderments are however offered from a position of support. Surely we all need groups which can work to stimulate further cultural challenge to destructive, insensitive, and instrumental patterns of masculine being.
REINDUSTRIALIZATION:
A DEBATE AMONG CAPITALISTS

GOETZ WOLFF

In the past few years business leaders have shown increasing concern about the state of the US economy. They see stagflation, insufficient productivity, decreasing profit levels, lagging technology, too little investment in productive capital, and lack of competitiveness in world markets. And they don’t like any of it.

At the same time, business leaders are careful to distinguish between these serious problems and other problems which they accept philosophically. Plant closings, in their view, are merely manifestations of a period of change and disruption for older, declining industries. The frost belt is losing to the sunbelt; the US is losing to Japan and to industrializing Third World nations; steel, rubber, textiles, and autos are losing to computers, aerospace, and machinery.

Integral to this process of change are the impetus of capitalists to increase their profits in order to enlarge the reproduction of capital (i.e., increase capital accumulation) and a concomitant class struggle in which workers tend to resist increased exploitation. In order to increase accumulation, a variety of strategies are pursued, including the disciplining of labor in order to keep wages low (and to reduce wages if they have risen) and the replacement of demanding and unruly labor with machines. In addition, capital seeks out cheaper, more docile labor. Thus the growth in manufacturing jobs has taken place in regions and countries where wages tend to be lower, and where unions are less evident and/or less militant.
But capital doesn’t only strike out geographically in search of higher profits. There also exists competition for investment among sectors of the economy (and within sectors). As was noted above, in the area of manufacturing, there are sectors that have been growing (“sunrise”) while others have been declining (“sunset”). In addition, the goods-producing sector as a whole has been giving way to the services sector.¹

For many economy analysts, this is but a natural process resulting from the births and deaths in the corporate species. They conveniently overlook the human costs that are involved in these changes. For them, a readjustment and restructuring will work itself out as corporations and individuals seek out the more profitable sectors and regions in which to invest. As this happens, the less profitable regions will adjust their business climate so that they will become more attractive to investment in the future. The process will result in a “convergence of regional incomes,” according to one study by the American Enterprise Institute.²

Nevertheless, even the businessmen and their economists are concerned with the way in which these structural changes are going to come about. From their point of view: will the changes come soon enough, or will America be left in the lurch while other countries surge ahead? How disruptive will this working out of “natural” market forces be? What corporations will suffer the greatest losses? Will the US risk losing some basic industries that are critical to military production? Their primary concern is how their own economic positions might be adversely affected by the economic changes brought on by the dynamics of capitalism.

This is where the idea of reindustrialization comes in. It’s a single name given to a number of different policy proposals for dealing with the economic maladies manifested by the United States. Credit for coining the name is claimed by Amitai Etzioni, a sociologist and former Senior Advisor to President Carter.³ Because the economic problems are so complex, there isn’t any agreement yet among business leaders as to which route is the best way out of the economic crisis. But if we are going to understand what business has in mind for the nation, we have to be able to distinguish among the various plans which are being proposed.

We can identify at least three major strands in this reindustrialization debate among business leaders and their spokesmen. One might be called the unfettered-capitalism version of reindustrialization because it is advanced by those who still have a great deal of faith in the free market. They believe that most of the economic problems of the US have their roots in excessive government–business interdependence. A second strand, called the Business Week version because of the now-famous issue which delineated the problems facing the US economy as well as provided a strategy for rebuilding the economy, is advocated by those who believe that, for better or worse, government and business are linked to each other’s fates.⁴ A third version of reindustrialization, pragmatic state capitalism, agrees with the second, but goes one step further and suggests that it is in the long-term interests of capitalism for government to take a guiding role in reindustrialization. It also holds that the most pressing needs of labor, minorities, women, and the poor should be taken into serious account in the restructuring process.

Although the three reindustrialization plans aren’t as sharply distinct as I’m portraying them, it is necessary to recognize that with each version different tactics and strategies are being proposed, and consequently working people will be affected differently. This means too,
that different responses may be called for, depending on the version of reindustrialization which is being promoted.

"Unfettered Capitalism"

Reindustrialization by unfettered capitalism relies upon a perspective of free enterprise which sees government as an impediment to the success of capitalism. Of course, this is the perspective that dominates the rhetoric — and to a surprising extent the actual policies — of the Reagan administration. The solutions that make up this reindustrialization approach can be encapsulated into a strategy of less government and more capitalism.

Specifically, this strategy wants to strip away or reduce virtually all social buffers (e.g. unemployment insurance, food stamps, COLA, the minimum wage) which have made life more tolerable and secure for workers and their families in the past half-century. The complaint by these free-enterprise economists and politicians is that the labor force has extracted a “cushy” existence which discourages productivity and keeps market forces from allowing wages to fluctuate with the demand for labor.

Another proposal is the creation of enterprise zones, recommended by the Heritage Foundation and presented to Congress as the Kemp-Garcia Urban Jobs and Enterprise Zone Act, which has some disconcerting similarities to the export platforms (Free Trade Zones, or FTZs) that are most common in Asian nations which border on the Pacific Basin. Closely related is the proposal to drop the minimum wage for young people — a first step toward a more widespread modification of the minimum wage, and thus the wage structure in general. Another tactic focuses on unions, for they are to “be considered an obstacle to the optimum performance of our economic system.” The thrust of these proposals and tactics is to make American labor cheaper, and thus more competitive with Third World workers.

Direct benefits for industry are also advocated in this approach to reindustrialization. Here the assumption is that as government “gets out of business,” business will be able to choose the most efficient strategies to compete in the world economy — unrestricted by so-called costly health, safety, and environmental regulations. (The costs will not go away — they will be borne, not by business, but by the workers in the form of injury and illness.) It is believed that the most profitable directions for investment will somehow be the ones that meet the needs of the nation. Thus the way forward is to cut taxes drastically through accelerated depreciation for capital purchases such as
equipment and buildings, through decreased corporate tax rates, and through decreased personal income taxes in the upper brackets.

Unfettered capitalism does not ignore the poor, the minorities, and "the truly needy" — in its rhetoric. One repeatedly encounters references to the concern for the less well off, and how workers and job seekers will gain with the soon-to-come booming, restructured, revitalized economy. But as the Reagan program takes shape, it becomes increasingly clear that this rhetoric was never anything more than a perfunctory window dressing.

Business Week

The second version of reindustrialization, the Business Week approach, includes some related proposals coming from other sources. For example, the Time-Life empire has jumped into the fray with a special project on American Renewal in which Fortune advocates a slightly more cautious, and somewhat more broad-
brushed, set of proposals. However, to avoid complicating this brief review, I will focus most of my attention on Business Week.

It should be noted that Business Week doesn’t oppose the labor sacrifices that are explicit strategies in the unfettered capitalism version. Thus it endorses Amitai Etzioni’s statement that reindustrialization will require “10 years of belt tightening.” Likewise, Business Week is supportive of cuts in personal income taxes as well as liberalized depreciation allowances, increased investment tax credits, and cuts in the corporate income tax. However, the somewhat more “liberal” Business Week perspective acknowledges that the government, if dominated by the appropriate business interests, can serve as an important coordinating agent in overcoming the anarchy of the capitalist system. Thus a key aspect of the approach is that selective budgetary and tax policies will strengthen industry by rewarding investment in the production of capital goods, by encouraging research and development, and by promoting exports. It is not simply a matter of putting money in the hands of investors, as in the unfettered-capitalism approach to reindustrialization.

Business Week wants to forge a “new social contract,” a tripartite consensus among business, labor, and government in order to achieve the needed climate for restructuring American industry. In particular, the worker-versus owner adversarial relationship (class struggle) is to be replaced by a partnership which Business Week calls a “collaborative relationship” in shops and factories. By such an arrangement, policies would emerge that represent the needs and contributions of all the economic elements, according to this approach. And among the first to “contribute” to the “needs” of business will be labor. “As part of the new social contract, unions will come under pres- sure to limit wage gains in the first phase of reindustrialization.” Business Week attempts to balance this bargain by affirming the need for “high employment and decent wages” — the point being, nevertheless, that business is the implicit decisionmaker about what is needed and how the needs are to be fulfilled.

The Business Week position still fears government as potentially unmanageable, because the electorate is made up of more workers than capitalists. Thus it says “It will be legitimate for government to work with the private sector in developing a road map for healthy industrial development, showing which industries should be encouraged to grow and which have only a limited future.” But “it will not be legitimate for government to legislate a new industrial structure. Nor will it be legitimate for government to take over sick industries to preserve obsolete jobs.” This principle has been taken to heart by Governor Jerry Brown who wants to “go with the flow” of industrial growth. In California he has proposed a state reindustrialization program which would aid research in microelectronics, encourage new firms in high-technology “sunrise” industries as well as create an “industrial reinvestment fund.” Whether these new industries will provide accessible and well-paying jobs to those being displaced by reindustrialization is open to question.

Both Business Week and Fortune take note of minorities, women, the needy — and they are quick to emphasize that reindustrialization must be fair. But not very well hidden in this rhetoric are statements such as: “each social group will be measured by how it contributes to economic revitalization.” “The drawing of the social contract must take precedence over the aspirations of the poor, the minorities, and the environmentalists.” “In the 1970s, however, the egalitarian thrust went too
far…. Now, without overreacting and subordinating equality too much, we need to restore the balance in our values, as we have so many times before.”

Finally, it should be noted that Business Week is not blind to possible failings within the leadership of capital. They are critical of business management itself for its short-sighted, quick-profit approach which hasn’t had the nerve to grab hold of the long range opportunities confronting the American economy.

Before turning to the third version of reindustrialization, it should be pointed out that while Business Week did the “outreach” work with its special issue, the outlines of the problem and the strategies for dealing with it were already formulated by the Trilateral Commission in 1979. There is no need to leap to assumptions of conspiratorial machinations to acknowledge the role of multinational corporations and financial interests in formulating the agenda for discourse on industrial policy. However, it is significant to note that such a powerful configuration of economic/political interests was concerned with this issue. Thus we may speculate that the Business Week version will be most likely to be adopted as policy in the long run.

Pragmatic State Capitalism

To the left of Business Week is an approach to reindustrialization which places even greater reliance on government involvement and includes an explicit strategy for dealing with the problems of the disadvantaged regions and sectors of the US. Felix Rohatyn — an investment banker and chairman of New York City’s Municipal Assistance Corporation — best typifies the pragmatic state capitalism approach to reindustrialization.18 Although this approach causes distress at the Wall Street Journal and heart failure among some of the advocates of unfettered capitalism, it must be remembered that the goals are basically the same: maintaining the health of the capitalist system. Rohatyn sees an even greater need for government involvement and direction of the capitalist economy than Business Week — but always for the long-term benefit of the capitalist economy.

While Business Week hesitantly considers the creation of a Reconstruction Finance Corporation as an option, Rohatyn embraces and advocates the idea without apology: in addition to intervening in the economy “to shore up America’s troubled older industries by providing equity capital… it would have the right to insist on management changes.”19 Because an America “half rich, half poor; half suburb, half slum… is a recipe for social strife,” the R.F.C. could “also play a major role in shaping regional policy,” aiding regions and cities that are hit particularly hard by economic changes.20 Such an intervention by the government is not meant to be a permanent one, however. “The R.F.C. should never become a permanent stockholder in any corporation.”21 Rather, the R.F.C. would gradually remove itself as the economy becomes regenerated. Rohatyn is undaunted by those capitalists who suggest that this strategy involves excessive interference in the free-market system: “Free markets are clearly desirable, but we do not in fact live in a free-market economy and never will; we live in a mixed economy in which prices and capital are, and will be, subject to governmental influence.”22

The basic thrust of Rohatyn’s proposal is that the US has to maintain its basic industries, for both national security and the economy as a whole depend on these industries. “Is it rational, in the name of the mythical free market, to let our basic industries go down one after the other, in favor of an equally mythical ‘service society’ in which everyone will serve
everyone else and no one will be making anything?"23 Furthermore, rather than waste precious capital by having to build new plants and the related infrastructures in one part of the nation while the other sections die "natural deaths," the reindustrialization project he envisions "will provide work enough for everyone as far as the eye can see."24

Before this approach to reindustrialization is accepted as the best one, we have to remind ourselves how Rohatyn arrives at his solution: it involves business interests dominating government policy making and it involves "belt-tightening" which means that the workers will pay for most of the changes he advocates, even though he claims that everyone will pay a price. It is the workers who bear the greater burden with frozen wages or givebacks, with higher energy costs, with reduced social services, with cutbacks in unemployment bene-

Francis Criss, Sixth Avenue El, 1938
fits. Thus the price of *pragmatic state capitalist* reindustrialization involves giving up the "padded society," as Rohatyn characterizes it. The problem is that this "padding" is a lot thinner for the workers than it is for the corporate interests who will be deciding where the padding gets reduced.

What does all this mean for the US? It seems pretty obvious that the unfettered capitalism approach wants little more than to convert the US into a Milton Friedman-approved Hong Kong free-market economy. It will rely upon unemployed workers (the "reserve army") forcing labor to become cheaper and more productive, thus encouraging new plant openings and expansions in the US. And too, as the declining industries die off, it is assumed that a new set of suitable replacement "sunrise" industries will be ready to take their place. Whether the laid-off workers will have the skills to fit into the sunrise industries and the "freedom" to move to the location of the new plants seems more certain in supply-side economic texts than in the real world.

The *Business Week* approach would keep government in the picture as an agent of general direction ("indicative planning"), and there would be some concern with having labor included in the planning for shifts that take place. The question, though, is which elements of labor will be speaking for the workers? Although *Business Week* wants to avoid major disruptions in declining industries, at the same time it doesn't want to maintain "sick industries to preserve obsolete jobs." And while on the one hand *Business Week* talks of labor nestling in with business as a way to improve communication and achieve a "collaborative relationship," it should be remembered that *Business Week* doesn't oppose corporations' attempts to dismantle unions and prevent workers from organizing independently of management.

Pragmatic state capitalism may hold out for those sectors and regions where industries have been in decline because this approach seems to be aware that you don't simply throw away investment in capital and skilled human beings. In addition, the Rohatyn approach seems to be more concerned with the "less fortunate" in our economy, although the reason for concern appears to be based on the pragmatic concern with the adverse consequences arising from "social strife" — i.e., disruption and disorder. In that sense, it appears that the Rohatyn approach is far more sensitive to the nature of the struggle between the classes. But as has already been noted, the cost of the strategy will ultimately be borne by the workers who will have to accept pay cuts, givebacks, and declining social services. And in the long run, the strategy of pragmatic state capitalism may create an even closer bond between business and government, resulting in what Bertram Gross has called "friendly fascism."26

None of the various reindustrialization advocates consider the fact that state and local government accounted for about one-fifth of the additional jobs in the US in the past twenty years. The government has played a special role in absorbing employable citizens in a changing economy. But now, obviously, that role will be much smaller. Not only will there be a decline in services by the government, but fewer jobs will be made available in precisely the major growing sector in which wages were higher, and increasing at a rapid rate. The service and trade sectors, also growing during the past twenty years, tend to pay less than the manufacturing jobs that are being eased out. Thus many of the "job opportunities" in the nonmanufacturing sectors are (and will be)
lower-paying, less unionized, and more likely to be dead-end jobs.\textsuperscript{28}

If, as \textit{Fortune} asserts, reindustrialization has become "an ‘empty-bottle’ word,"\textsuperscript{29} into which various wines have been poured, it should be recognized that whatever the vintage, all have come from the same capitalist vineyard. What needs to be added to this debate on reindustrialization is a perspective which speaks for the workers and progressives, not only for corporate interests.

\section*{Footnotes}


7. For a discussion of the Kemp-Garcia Bill by its authors, see \textit{Urban Revitalization and Industrial Policy}, Hearings before the Subcommittee on the City, 96th Cong. 2nd Session, September 16 and 17, 1980, pp. 205–224.


\begin{flushright}
GOETZ WOLFF has taught political science at several universities. He works with labor unions and is presently the coordinator of a conference on economic dislocation, November 6–7 at UCLA (where he is a graduate student in urban planning). This article was written in April, 1981.
\end{flushright}
FROM THE RUNAWAY SHOP TO THE SWEATSHOP:

"Enterprise Zones" and Redevelopment of the Cities

PHILIP MATTERA

Earlier this year Ronald Reagan told the national convention of the NAACP that his administration wants to free blacks from the "bondage" of government programs. Whenever public officials in this country speak of freedom, they usually end up meaning freedom for business — and Reagan is certainly no exception. It thus comes as no surprise that what Reagan is offering inner-city blacks, along with the rest of the urban poor and working class, as replacements for those programs are "urban enterprise zones." These zones would supposedly stimulate investment in the cities, especially by small business, through tax reductions and eased regulation — the two pillars of supply-side economics. Like that doctrine as a whole, the zone proposal is partly hucksterism parading as a serious policy prescription, and partly an element of a general capitalist restructuring of the labor market and industry.

The enterprise zone idea originated in Britain about four years ago, when Peter Hall, a professor of urban planning, became enamored of the political economy of fast-growing Asian countries such as Singapore and Hong Kong. Despite being a Fabian socialist by disposition, Hall apparently decided that unfettered capitalism was indeed the solution to economic development — in the first world as well as the third. The scheme described by Hall was picked up by Geoffrey Howe, a Tory theorist who became Thatcher's chancellor of the exchequer.
By 1980 Howe was able to incorporate enterprise zones into the government’s economic strategy, and the scheme was approved for about half a dozen blighted areas in Britain, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland. Although Hall initially wanted the zones to be free of virtually all regulation short of the prohibition against murder, political pressures forced the Thatcher government to limit itself to a few concessions such as the elimination of property taxes, 100 percent capital allowances, and simplified planning requirements. Nevertheless, the plan was denounced by the Left as an attempt to return to nineteenth-century conditions for industry.¹

Some advocates of a nineteenth-century renaissance here in the US adopted the zone idea about two years ago, amid the heated discussion over the future of areas such as the South Bronx. While Carter’s uninspiring urban policy proposals languished in Congress, conservatives, who had started mobilizing in a serious way, offered the scheme as a bold new approach to solving the crisis of the cities. The plan was pushed by the ultra-right Heritage Foundation and its staff member Stuart Butler. In a 1980 op-ed article in the New York Times — which introduced the idea to many people — Butler said the zones would “offer an attractive climate for private money and business.” Among the allures, he indicated, would be not only reduced taxes and eased zoning rules, but also the possible elimination of rent control and the minimum wage.²

Butler continued his crusade, which was endorsed by candidate Reagan, in the pages of Policy Review, the house organ of Heritage. He argued that the depopulation and economic stagnation of older cities are often their own fault, the result of misguided policies. “The chief barrier to the revival of dilapidated inner-city districts is not the lack of governmen...
rampant, or else what remains of the liberal establishment feels the zones are the most that can be expected in the way of urban policy from the Reagan regime. At least the AFL-CIO has denounced the plan as the "localized version of 'trickle-down' economics."

In its current form the Kemp-Garcia bill would permit zone businesses various types of federal tax relief and commit local governments to reducing such "burdens" as property taxes and zoning laws. As for workers, aside from the privilege of toiling in these paradises, the bill would reward them with a 5 percent refundable income tax credit. This is in line with the supply-siders' call for "incentives to the people." As Kemp puts it in a promotional pamphlet, "When it comes to his or her own personal welfare, every individual is an entrepreneur. Everyone makes economic calculations." As the legislature is designed, the entrepreneur will need to make few of those calculations; the scheme all but guarantees his success. For the worker, the "risk-reward ratio" seems considerably higher. Aside from the meagre tax credit, all that Kemp-Garcia holds out is the possibility of some kind of job. The bill is conspicuously silent on what types of employment might be generated in the zones.

Yet the discussion of the proposal strongly suggests they will not be the kind that insure rapid ascent up the ladder of success. Aside from the hints of possible encroachments on the minimum wage, there are indications that the jobs will be not only low-paying but probably dirty, unsafe, and nonunion. This is undoubtedly behind Kemp's talk of "small, independent, labor-intensive industries" and Butler's version, as stated by the New York Times, of "dozens of 'basement businesses' — laundries, garment shops, bakeries and the like — each employing a half-dozen or so unskilled workers." The emphasis placed by zone advo-

cates on small business entrepreneurs is significant and is part of a general glorification of small business in the supply-side creed. The implication here is not simply that the Right has been converted to a "small is beautiful" attitude, but rather that they recognize that any new economic activity in the inner cities will be limited to marginal enterprises employing workers from the lower rungs of the labor market hierarchy.

This is of no concern to the supply-siders, who think there is no such thing as labor market segmentation and that every worker is properly paid in accordance with his or her marginal productivity, in this best of all economic systems. Other less cynical supporters of the plan may feel that a bad job is better than no job at all, but, as usual, the people who will be affected by the policy will have little to say in

Clarence John Laughlin, The Spell of the Shadow, 1953
choosing between lousy regular work and a combination of lousy irregular work and inadequate government benefits. Kemp's talk of the zones as a form of "greenlining" will apply to nothing other than the pockets of these vaunted new entrepreneurs. Perhaps the best assessment has been given by former activist Sam Brown, who called the zones "colonialism brought home."  

In one sense, the emphasis on business tax relief in the zone proposal is simply bewildering. Why is this presented as something new, something that will suddenly stimulate new economic activity in urban areas? The fact is that the past six years or so have been characterized by an extraordinary effort by local governments to attract investment through wholesale reductions in taxes and adjustments of other laws and regulations. Mobile corporations have found themselves the recipients of seemingly endless "incentives" dished up by localities who have made a cult out of competitiveness.

What began as a shift from the snowbelt states — with their high levels of unionization and taxes — to the sunbelt states has turned into a national bidding contest for investment. The business press is full of advertisements from states and cities offering themselves to corporate planners. So aggressive are some of these ads in presenting the local workforce as disciplined, productive, and willing to work for subsistence wages that they sound like the pitches made by pimps to potential customers.

The religion of business incentives was so strong in the 1970s that in New York City, for instance, officials were proposing more and more of them even in the midst of a grave budget crisis. There seemed to be no reluctance to offer tax relief for capital at a time when the people were being forced to accept severe reductions in public services, layoffs of tens of thousands of city workers, increases in the transit fare, the end of free tuition at City University, and so forth. The unquestioned principle was that in a crisis, business gets incentives and the people get austerity.

New York City has also pioneered a zone approach to rebuilding the delicate "confidence" of business, at least in the field of finance. The large commercial banks were rewarded for their role in precipitating the budget crisis with an intense effort by local officials to get the entire city declared a free banking zone. The Federal Reserve finally approved the plan this year, freeing Citibank, Chase Manhattan, and their brethren from much taxation and regulation (including reserve requirements and interest rate limitations). The claim was that the establishment of a monetary free zone would create thousands of new jobs in the city by allowing the banks to bring back home the international finance business now conducted in places such as London and the Bahamas. The number of new jobs has been disputed, but in any event, the new scheme does little more than institutionalize a tax haven and give freer rein to a group of rapacious enterprises.

Corporations have become so used to this sort of treatment that, in the rare instance when a local government acts differently, business is outraged. This has happened with New York State's attempt to tax the oil companies for revenues needed to ease the financing of mass transit. Following the transit strike in New York City last year, the legislature approved a 2 percent levy on the gross revenues of oil companies and prohibited them from passing the tax on to customers. The oil behemoths, led by Mobil, first threatened to stop doing business in the state and then took the matter to court, claiming the tax was "discriminatory
and confiscatory." The courts agreed, and the taxes were voided.

This year the legislature passed a new tax that the companies were free to pass on at the pump. Still, Mobil spitefully raised its prices 6 cents a gallon — far more than the cost of the tax. The crude way in which Mobil acted provoked an outcry even from the likes of Mayor Koch, so the company lowered the increase to 1.3 cents. This is hardly a popular victory; it only means the tax will cost Mobil nothing rather than being an opportunity for gross theft.

This, then, is one side of the enterprise zone proposal. It furthers the reversal of fiscal power relations that has characterized the response to the social struggles of the 1960s. In that period, public workers and the poor forced the state — at both the federal and local levels — to improve the conditions of their lives by expanding public expenditures. Now the state unabashedly orients itself to meeting the demands of business. Supply-side economics is the elevation of this new policy to a theology; it is the culmination of a fiscal counter-revolution.

Despite the laissez-faire rhetoric of the supply-siders, the enterprise zone proposal should also be understood as a form of capital-
ist planning aimed at a basic restructuring of production and the labor market. In this sense it is not so different from the more explicit social-engineering approach, now largely out of favor but still promoted by Felix Rohatyn, Wall Street financier and supposed savior of cities. Over the past five years Rohatyn has issued calls for an urban Marshall Plan through the creation of a new Reconstruction Finance Corporation. To provide the managerial talent for such a project, Rohatyn has proposed an urban peace corps, consisting of young executives who would take time off from their corporate jobs to save the cities of America.

Rohatyn has made no bones about how he would reshape inner-city areas to serve the needs of business. He offered the following recipe in 1976: “Take a 30-block area, clear it, blacktop it, and develop an industrial park with the whole package of tax, employment, financing incentives already in place.” Actually, it does not sound so different from an enterprise zone, though Rohatyn’s scheme would include large federal investments and public jobs programs. That would be tempered, however, with the kind of local fiscal austerity he instituted in New York and has more recently been preaching to cities such as Cleveland and Detroit.

Each approach tolerates the uncontrolled mobility of capital at the same time that it encourages marginal industry. To some extent the latter aspect is meant as a remedy for the effects of the former. Urban redevelopment in whatever form is supposed to pick up the pieces in communities devastated by runaway plants. Waged work in substandard conditions serves as a form of social control. In line with the fiscal counter-revolution, it is deemed better to keep the people in precarious employment than to grant their subsistence through social spending.

The zone proposal pursues this aim with precedents from the Third World, where capital has been much bolder in its experiments in controlling labor. In a sense all of Puerto Rico was made a zone after World War II through Operation Bootstrap. An analogous scheme, the Border Industrialization Program, was instituted in Mexico following the end of the Bracero, or guest worker, system in 1965. Since the early 1960s dozens of Third World countries, especially in Asia, have created export processing zones, in which foreign investors, mainly from the US and West Germany, were able to take advantage of cheap and very closely controlled labor in assembly operations that had been shifted out of factories in the advanced countries. It is not surprising that the Washington Post recently said, “the ideal behind the urban enterprise zone is to help the nation’s blighted central cities follow the development trail blazed by the industrializing countries of Asia.”

In Asia, the zones have even spread to China, where Hong Kong entrepreneurs are seeking even cheaper labor than they have in that city-state. But to their dismay they have found that, although China’s new leadership is promoting foreign investment, the workers have a more casual attitude. The Economist magazine of London has reported that the Hong Kong bosses are confronted with “laziness, indiscipline, and shoddy workmanship.... Workers accustomed to the relaxed pace of Chinese communes have found it hard to adjust to the standards expected by Hong Kong profit seekers.”

The zone idea in the US suggests the creation of the Third World in the midst of the First. This is true in the change of sovereignty of cities implied by the establishment of special areas in which many laws do not apply. As in the export processing zones of Taiwan, South Korea, and
elsewhere, local authorities would play little more than a symbolic role, and the real power would be held by the entrepreneurs. Rohatyn and his colleagues have already paved the way for this in New York, Yonkers, and other cities, where emergency financial control boards have put businessmen in power over elected officials.

Also as in the Third World, the zones could be characterized by a virtual militarization of the conditions of work and living. Part of this would undoubtedly be a serious increase in the intensity of exploitation. Recent years have already seen a resurgence of sweatshop labor amid a general expansion of low-wage jobs in marginal industries. State Senator Franz Leichter has estimated that as many as 50,000 people may be working in sweatshops in New York City alone, for wages as low as $5 a day. There have also been many indications of growth in off-the-books labor and the underground economy, in addition to the increasing use of free-lance, temporary, and part-time workers in above-ground businesses.

While many people prefer more flexible working conditions, there is no doubt that business is eager to decrease its use of full-time, permanent, decently paid employees. This has gone along with a certain decentralization of production — the closing or scaling down of the operations of large factories in favor of smaller situations in which the workers are not unionized, are paid less, and have no job security. In some cases, the decentralization goes as far as relocating production in the worker’s home. There has been a significant expansion of home labor, both legal and illegal, in recent years, and the Reagan Labor Department has called for the elimination of all restrictions on this practice, which has traditionally been subject to extensive employer abuse. Since almost all home workers are female, this form of employment fits in with the Right’s move to force women back into the home while retaining them as a source of cheap labor.

Thus, one way to understand the enterprise zone proposal is as an attempt to rationalize and institutionalize the underground economy. Instead of the current situation, in which fly-by-night businesses exploit workers in sweatshops and through home labor for a while and then disappear, small entrepreneurs could do the same in a more orderly way. The sweatshop proprietor would no longer be a villain, but rather the protagonist of a new era of economic growth.15

It may seem odd to speak of sweatshops and marginal jobs at a time when the media are ballyhooing a new technological revolution and a new wave of automation in the factory, the office, and the home. Increasingly sophisticated microprocessors — and eventually computers that can think — are supposed to be transforming our lives.

The fact is that both tendencies are real: there are simultaneous moves toward labor-intensive, primitive forms of production and toward an advanced electronics, genetic engineering, and the like. What this implies is an increasing polarization of both the forms of production and the conditions of work and life for the people involved in each phenomenon. More and more, the economy and society will probably be divided. The larger number of people will find themselves in tighter spots: grossly reduced social services, irregular employment, poor wages and working conditions, and inadequate and deteriorated housing and transportation. A smaller group of industrial workers and technicians will be relatively privileged. As in the Japanese model, which large corporations here are hastening to adopt, this reduced labor force will be permitted good wages, benefits, and job security in exchange for loyalty and discipline.16 Working conditions
may very well be safer — since robots will be doing much of the difficult or hazardous labor — but probably more boring.

The two groups in this admittedly simplified scheme may very well fit together in terms of production. Even advanced industries would take advantage of cheap labor in certain processes. In addition to serving as a form of social control, the marginal sector (which would in terms of size be far from marginal) would thus contribute to the accumulation of capital. Like the export-processing zones abroad, all-American sweatshops would become integrated into the new highly fragmented international division of labor.

The fit may not be so neat in social terms. The attempt to create a new mobility of labor comparable to that of capital and the redefinition of territorial control in favor of business are bound to face more resistance. The events of Brixton and Liverpool may be repeated on this side of the Atlantic.

A hint of the new forms in which conflicts will take place can be seen in Detroit. After years of controversy around the country about plant closings, a community in that city found itself battling a plant opening. Residents in the Pallet-town section waged a brave but doomed battle against the destruction of fifteen hundred homes and the rest of the neighborhood to make room for a sprawling Cadillac factory. The main enemy was not General Motors, but the city government, which not only provided GM enormous tax abatements but also took
on the dirty work of assembling the needlessly large site. Those homeowners who refused to sell out at below-market rates found themselves harassed and faced with a wave of arson. A group of residents who occupied a church were forcibly removed by police, and the building was immediately razed by bulldozers.

Poletown shows how the left-liberal support for jobs at all costs (the position taken by the United Auto Workers and Mayor Coleman Young) is inadequate in the current context. Business is now in a position to expand employment, but the question is where and under what conditions.

An integral part of our response to the new offensive of capital must be the development of new forms of struggle relating to mobility and territory. This begins with simple resistance to displacement and militarization of the cities. Yet if we are truly going to turn the tables, we have to fight for community control in a more fundamental sense. Broadly, this would mean finding a way of improving our lives directly, not through aiding business. To talk of autonomous development in a society still controlled by capital raises all kinds of obstacles. But the only hope for the future is to replace enterprise zones with liberated zones.

Footnotes

9. Quoted in In These Times, March 11-17, 1981.
15. See the outrageous editorial, “In Praise of Sweatshops,” Barron’s, March 16, 1981.

PHIL MATTERA is a writer living in New York. He is a frequent contributor to RA and last wrote for us in the Sept.-Oct. 1980 issue — “Small is not beautiful: Decentralized Production and the Underground Economy in Italy.”
FIGHTING FOR HEALTH AND SAFETY: WINDSOR, ONTARIO

Jim Brophy and John Jackson

Every year 15,000 Canadian and US workers are killed on the job, and an estimated 150,000 others die as a result of having been exposed to cancer-causing agents in their workplaces. Many millions of others are injured — 5 million a year if we count only the minority of cases that are officially reported. Governments made timid beginnings in the 1970s at dealing with this ghastly toll, but these programs are now under sustained assault from industry, especially in the US. It is more important than ever for the grass-roots organizations that have grown up to work on industrial health and safety to keep in close touch with each other and compare experiences. In this article we will try to share the experience of the Windsor Occupational Safety and Health Council (WOSH) — how we came together and what problems we have encountered in our work so far.

Windsor is a heavily industrialized city in southern Ontario just across the border from Detroit. Aside from auto assembly lines Windsor has foundries, paint booths, factories for making plastic goods and asbestos brake linings, and other hazardous workplaces. It has long been a major producer, not only of automobiles, but also of industrially caused diseases. But it is only recently that the fight for a safe workplace has become an important

This article was written with considerable help from other members of WOSH. It is a revised and updated version of an article that appeared in Canadian Dimension, June 1980.
focus of worker activism and has gotten the understanding, sympathy, and support of workers’ families and the community at large. The development of WOSH has been closely interwoven with this struggle.

The Origins of WOSH

For a number of years before WOSH’s founding in the winter of 1979-80, health and safety had been an issue in individual workplaces. The United Auto Workers (UAW) local representing Bendix Corporation workers, who produced asbestos lining for brakes, had staged a three-month strike in 1977, mainly to get a full-time health and safety representative. Jack McCann, who undertook the job, worked especially on compiling information about cancer suffered by Bendix workers. Asbestos has been known since the early 1900s to be one of the most dangerous of all workplace substances; it is estimated to be responsible for 17 percent of all cancer deaths in Canada and the US. In 1979 the UAW presented the provincial Workmen’s Compensation Board with three cases of Bendix workers who had cancer of the larynx.

Likewise, the UAW health and safety committeeemen at the Canadian Rock Salt mine, Bob McArthu and Harold Woodson, did research for eighteen months on diesel emissions from underground machinery, a chronic problem for every miner in the country. The emissions bring headaches, drowsiness, eye and throat irritation, and the coughing up of black and gray sputum. The long-term effects are much more serious. The union’s research — begun when a worker showed a newspaper clipping to Bob McArthur, who talked to the reporter and followed up a widening circle of leads — showed that diesel emissions contain at least six carcinogens.

Larry Gauthier, the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers (OCAW) health and safety representative at Wyeth Ltd., a local producer of birth control pills and tranquilizers, was also getting a lot of complaints about health problems. Female workers were developing irregular menstrual periods and headaches, and one of the male workers developed enlarged breasts. The suspected cause was the estrogen used in manufacturing birth control pills. There was also growing fear about possible exposure to isosorbide dinitrate, a compound that can increase susceptibility to heart attacks.

A major step in taking these complaints out of the isolation of individual workplaces came in the spring of 1979, when the Ontario Federation of Labor organized a course for health and safety representatives in Windsor. Those workers who attended became better able to pinpoint the causes of the complaints they were receiving. They also learned how specific hazards could be removed and what legal routes could be used to pressure employers. To date, approximately five hundred union members from across the province have taken the course.

In July 1979, the UAW and the Ontario Public Interest Research Group (OPIRG) organized a public forum on the asbestos problem at Windsor’s two Bendix plants. The union leafletted the two Bendix plants and OPIRG distributed leaflets to the residents in the neighborhood. It was known that asbestos could have spread into the area because of the way it was dumped outside the factory. About 135 people attended this forum; many of these were from other workplaces around the city. Several stood up to voice concerns about their day-to-day situations. As a result, awareness was increased among the workers in this city about common problems they were facing. This recognition led naturally to an understanding of the need to work together and to deal with
their problems.

The forum and an accompanying news conference also stimulated new publicity for the issue. The Windsor and Detroit media and national news services in Canada have, since that time, paid close attention to the activities over occupational health in Windsor. Major articles appear regularly in local newspapers and the issue gets a lot of television time as well. In the spring of 1980, a half-hour special on the occupational health struggles in Windsor appeared on the local TV station; it was also shown on many other stations across the country.

The success of the forum in arousing public support encouraged the Wyeth and the Rock Salt safety and health committees to publicize their research that fall. Also a group of workers and other concerned citizens took every opportunity to discuss occupational health problems and to educate the public about their rights under The Ontario Health and Safety Act, Bill 70. This bill, enacted in October 1979 as a response to wildcat strikes by northern Ontario uranium miners, affords workers the right to refuse work that they deem unsafe. It also provides for health and safety committees in every workplace with more than twenty workers. The act further attempts, for the first time in Ontario, to establish some control over toxic substances in the workplace.

During the month of November, our first meetings were held establishing the Windsor Occupational Safety and Health Council. That beginning group was made up of about twenty people. Most of them were workers from a variety of different industries. Several of them were health and safety representatives at the plants they worked in. But in addition to these workers, the meetings were regularly attended by other concerned citizens in the community, several of whom were actively involved in other environmental issues.

During the first part of 1980, we formalized our existence by approving a constitution and electing officers. Gerry Becigneul was elected chairperson and Barbara Wimbush vice-chairperson. Both were long-time UAW activists, Becigneul at Canadian Rock Salt and Wimbush at a plastics factory. The role played by more experienced trade unionists such as this has been key in our work.

Into the Battle

To help spur public awareness, the new WOSH, along with OPIRG and the antinuclear Downwind Alliance for a Safe Energy Future, brought the famous American environmentalist Barry Commoner to speak. This meeting drew a lot of attention from the press. Dr. Commoner said that workers should be prepared for an industrial counterattack against the occupational health movement. He described the attempts being made to dismantle the Occupational Safety and Health Administration in the
US, and particularly the use of “cost-benefit” analyses as a means of avoiding workplace improvements.

Three days after Dr. Commoner’s visit, WOSH held a news conference. We released Ontario Ministry of Labour documents showing that the Bendix Corporation had failed to comply with directives issued against it in 1966,
and that the ministry had failed to enforce its own directives. This news was made all the more dramatic by the fact that a thirty-four-year-old Bendix worker had just been diagnosed as having two inoperable lung tumors; pathologists said these tumors contained asbestos fibers. It is difficult to describe the shock that set in even among the WOSH people when this news became public. It drew the attention, not only of the local community, but of the national media as well.

At first, Bendix and the ministry hid behind the fact that asbestos-in-air concentrations at Bendix were currently below legal limits. The ministry made some pious noises until two workers, exercising their new rights under Bill 70, refused to work in the asbestos department. Declaring that the area was unsafe, they refused to work until the asbestos level was significantly reduced. (In fact, the level permitted under Ontario law was twenty times greater than the level specified by the most advanced US law, that of California.) Under Bill 70, such a refusal immediately brings in provincial inspectors. The pressure on the ministry was made even greater by the attention that the national media were giving the struggle. Extensive monitoring was done and the ministry's chief physician admitted that the asbestos standard might be too lenient. He suggested public hearings to reexamine the standards and establish realistic levels for other toxic substances. This was a major change in the ministry's stance. It opened the door for every trade union and environmental group in the province to present briefs and attract public attention to carcinogens in the workplace.

On February 11, Ralph Nader held a public meeting with more than 125 trade unionists in Windsor on the issue of occupational health. Nader emphasized the menace of asbestos. He cited a study estimating that asbestos alone will claim the lives of a half-million workers between now and the year 2000. WOSH leader Gerry Becigneul helped focus Nader's discussion on the local situation; this made the meeting's impact all the more powerful. The exchange created an important atmosphere in Windsor. It secured Windsor Labor Council support for WOSH and it encouraged the health and safety people to maintain the struggle.

Counterattack

Two days after Nader's visit, the Bendix Corporation in the United States announced that it was selling one of the Bendix plants in Windsor to General Motors for a parking lot. This would eliminate sixty-five jobs. Windsor already had the highest rate of unemployment of the twenty-two largest cities in Canada and now, in the middle of a health-and-safety struggle, the employer was using its ultimate weapon: a plant shutdown.

The day after the closure was announced, the Ontario Workmen's Compensation Board rejected ten of the seventeen claims submitted by the UAW on behalf of Bendix workers. Although the Board failed to clarify the reasons to the public, many of the cases were turned down on technicalities, such as lack of a dependent to whom the pension could be awarded or use of outdated exposure-level standards. In one instance, a claim was denied because, even though the worker's employment extended for three decades, she apparently had been exposed to hazardous levels for less than the required ten continuous years.

The impact of these events, happening as they did in quick succession, was devastating for the Bendix workers. Many of the workers felt that perhaps the union had over dramatized the asbestos hazard and that the plant closure was a punishment for all the publicity. The
timing from the Corporation’s and government’s perspectives was excellent.

Four months later, the workers at the remaining Bendix plant in Windsor showed up for work as usual. At ten that morning they were sent home. The Corporation had decided to close its Windsor operations completely. In a city with an official unemployment rate of just over 15 percent, the loss of another five hundred jobs had a dramatic impact on the whole community. Rumors quickly circulated through other workplaces where health and safety issues were being pursued that the same thing could happen to their plants that had happened at Bendix. These not-so-subtle threats were initiated by management.

To this day, our health and safety work continues to be plagued by the workers’ fears of stimulating plant closures. With Windsor’s unemployment rate staying at an unusually high level, this fear is understandably a very deep-rooted one. The priority that workers place on health and safety problems is seriously affected by Windsor’s bleak economic situation.

The Plastics Investigation

The threat of shutdowns in a time of high unemployment has also stymied our work around the problems of the plastics industry. In the summer of 1979, Bob McArthur and Barbara Wimbush, the UAW health and safety representative for a small plastics factory, had met to discuss what should be done about the health problems arising at her plant. Workers were experiencing not only headaches and nausea but also hair and skin discoloration, breathing difficulties, loss of feeling in the hands, and severe nose bleeds. These seemed to be signs of toxic exposure, possibly to one of the most dangerous workplace carcinogens, vinyl chloride.

The WOSH council decided to contact workers at each plastics plant in the city and organize a meeting to bring together workers from all parts of the industry. This was the first time in Windsor that an occupational health issue had been approached on an industry-wide, rather than plant-by-plant, basis. This was important because the bottom line in any health and safety struggle is always the possibility of a plant closure. Since the plastics industry is labor-intensive, with little investment in machinery, it is easy for a company to simply shut down and move. We felt the only way workers in the plastics industry could reasonably influence both the government and the industry was to work together, making joint demands.

We asked Dr. John Marshall, a participant in the asbestos forum, to come back to Windsor to meet with the plastics workers. The aim was to make up a medical questionnaire which would help the safety committees educate the
workers about health hazards. We also hoped that data from the questionnaires could be used to force the Ministry of Labour to intervene in all the plants.

The meeting at which the questionnaire was developed was an intense learning experience. More than twenty-five workers attended. Dr. Marshall started by asking the workers to describe the work process and then asked if they experienced any discomforts or health problems. It was the first time many of the plastics workers made the link between health problems and the workplace. This link was made all the stronger when the people from different plants told about having the same symptoms.

With the assistance of a multi-racial center, we translated the questionnaire into three languages other than English so that immigrant workers would know exactly what was being asked of them. We also saw this as helping to break down some of the divisions in the workforce.

The questionnaires documented shockingly high rates of chest pains, dizziness, blackouts, nosebleeds, nausea, vomiting, and numbness of the fingers. For example, at one plant, 71 percent of the employees who responded said they had chest pains, 88 percent dizziness, and 41 percent blackouts.

As we feared would happen from the beginning, once the companies discovered that people were beginning to organize around health problems in their plants, management began to threaten plant closures. Even though ventilating systems would not have cost that much to install, the companies used the high unemployment rates as a weapon with which to rebuff the slightest hint of challenge to their mastery of workplace. We were faced with an atmosphere of intimidation and fear in which neither workers nor union officials were willing to take the risk of pressing the health issue. Therefore, the problems that were shown so clearly in the questionnaire results have still not been dealt with.

**Asbestos in the Schools**

Our first big success, on the other hand, came in the work we did with a public employees union. The Ontario Ministry of Education had asked all school boards in the province to inspect for asbestos during the summer of 1979. A year later, the Windsor Board of Education started its inspection. In October it reported that sixteen of its sixty buildings had perforated asbestos, but that none of these was serious. Eighty-five percent of the asbestos was in the boiler room so, according to the Board of Education, it was not a serious health hazard.

But the whole study was thrown into question when the person who conducted the inspection said that he did not know what asbestos looked like. He also said that he had taken samples and done repairs without being informed of the dangers to his own and others’ health. This man was a member of the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) Local 27, the maintenance workers in the public schools.

CUPE tried to persuade the school board to do a proper inspection, then came to us for help when they were rebuffed. We helped them gain the ear of the media, whose diligent reporting was crucial to making it a public issue. After considerable pressure — not only from the union and WOSH but also from parents — and a student walkout at one of the high schools, the Board agreed to a completely new inspection. This time an outside expert was brought in and the CUPE Local 27 president accompanied him on the inspection. Forty-six schools were found to have asbestos problems, with twenty-six of these schools requiring major repairs.
The repairs program was begun in February 1981, only three months after we had first gone public with the issue.

The union also charged the school board under Bill 70 with failure to protect the health of one of its employees — the maintenance worker who conducted the first inspection. This court case is now being heard.

Other WOSH Activities

Our primary focus tends to be educational. We have conducted several eleven-week courses at the local community college. We have also made many presentations at meetings in the community, under the auspices of unions, churches, schools and environmental groups. Such educational work often meshes well with the support work we do for specific groups of workers. In fact, it was CUPE members enrolled in our community-college course who started to question the way asbestos was being handled. After they decided to push harder for a proper inspection and cleanup, we helped them do the research, formulate their demands, and prepare for press conferences and public meetings.

We have also developed an extensive library with detailed materials on specific substances and workplace situations. It is used by a wide variety of groups. In our new office (made available by CUPE) we have become a resource that is used whenever health and safety issues come up. Recently when a pesticide that was declared illegal in Canada was brought to a storage facility near Windsor (preparatory to being "dumped" back in the United States) we helped give railway and other unions the information they needed to organize against having to handle it. Out of this fight has come a Right to Know Committee formed chiefly by the railway unions and the firefighters union. Even on issues that have no direct relation to health and safety, our work has given us a kind of credibility in the community. For example, workers at a chrome-bumper plant who were occupying their factory to keep it from being shut down called us because our research gave us some knowledge of their industry.

We have also prepared materials which can be used in our education programs. Probably the most successful of these is a fifteen-minute slide-tape show called "Acceptable Risks." It provides an introduction to the issues involved in health and safety. Local workers describe some of the health issues and struggles that they have been involved in. At this point, forty copies of "Acceptable Risks" have been distributed across the continent. An educational tool that we have just completed is "A Worker's Guide to Occupational Health and Safety." This pocket-size booklet explains common workplace hazards and suggests ways of dealing with them.

The Role of Professionals in WOSH

The almost complete absence of professional people from WOSH sets us apart from many of the occupational health committees in the US, which in general were initiated by scientists, medical doctors, health care workers, and industrial hygienists. In our case, although we have found lawyers who have been quite helpful, there has been almost no interest in our work among local medical people.

The absence of professionals has affected WOSH’s development profoundly. It has forced the workers to educate themselves and others about occupational health concerns and to become conversant with as much of the available data as they can. Rather than turning to professionals for investigations and written reports, the workers directly affected have been full participants in the process. This has given them a kind of power, since access to and
control over scientific information is a prime requisite for power in our society. It has also made us more of a direct contributor to the development of an occupational health movement than are many of those committees which see their main function as being a resource for workers in their separate plants.

Of course, the absence of professionals has been a handicap at times, and we would love to have more medical people to work with. Companies always have "experts" they can bring in to testify in hearings. Medical and scientific professionals who are familiar with the technical literature in their fields can also be immensely helpful in providing raw data that workers can assess.

The Role of the Unions in WOSH

When Barry Commoner visited us early in 1980, he pointed out that just as workers have to negotiate with companies to achieve that other basic right — a living wage — workers have to negotiate into their contracts adequate safeguards for health and safety. "The company won't give you anything," he said. "Your most powerful weapon is your negotiating power." The support of the union hierarchy is necessary to make these matters central negotiating concerns.

Most of the people who have been the leading force in the development of WOSH have been plant health and safety representatives and rank-and-file workers who have gotten together through WOSH to work on their problems. Our experience, however, has shown that we cannot take for granted the wholehearted support of those in the upper echelons of the union hierarchy.

Opposite: 50,000 copies of this pamphlet were ordered destroyed by the Reagan Administration because of its "Bias" cover.
In some of the work we have done, the union hierarchy has withdrawn support at a critical point. When this happens, the whole effort may fizzle out or at least be weakened. In other instances, however, the union officials have been the main leaders in very difficult health and safety struggles. The union leadership of CUPE put amazingly high levels of energy, time, and money into the fight against asbestos in the Windsor public schools. The railway unions provided strong leadership in the pesticide struggle. The Windsor Labour Council’s endorsement of our work has been helpful. The membership of CUPE Local 27 has shown how seriously it feels about our work by setting up an hourly addition to their union dues in order to give regular financial assistance to WOSH.

Daniel Berman in Death on the Job gives some important insights into why unions may have mixed feelings about health and safety issues.

One result is an inherent tendency on the part of top union leaders to favor money demands. Wage increases enable the organization to raise its dues without any corresponding increase in staff work. Similarly, increases in employer pension fund contributions give the union’s leadership more financial power; depending on the degree of control union trustees have over the funds, leaders can raise their own salaries and put more of their allies and relatives on the work payroll. By contrast, the occupational health and safety issue confers no direct benefits on union officials. Instead, it increases the staff workload without generating additional income to deal with the demands on staff time. New and untrustworthy health technicians who want direct contact with rank and file must be hired. Since safety is inherently a local issue it shifts power to “hotheads” who are the... natural enemies of the union official, with a disconcerting tendency to assume that every grievance must be settled here and now.

Although the unions’ wholehearted support cannot be taken for granted, it is clear that they must be brought into the health and safety struggle. Pressure from the rank and file will ensure that this happens.
Our Relationship to Environmentalists

Many people believe that the interests of environmentalists and of workers are diametrically opposed to each other. But two observers of WOSH’s activities and of our relationship to other community groups have made the following comment:

Once it is realized by environmental, occupational health and other groups that they are all opposing a common enemy, and are all seeking the same thing, i.e. to claim control over those elements which most directly affect their well-being, then a satisfactory resolution is more likely to evolve. It is to this end which WOSH is striving.3

From the very beginning our group was made up of people who were also involved in environmental issues. But the group which has most sharply pointed out the common concern is Citizens Rebelling Against Waste (CRAW). CRAW is a group of farmers and townspeople from Harwich Township, which is approximately fifty miles east of Windsor. They have been organizing to stop the dumping of liquid industrial wastes at a dump site in their township. They have been in frequent touch with WOSH and we have helped them set up joint meetings and demonstrations with other groups elsewhere in this section of Ontario. This cooperation has led to a growing recognition of how much we have in common. Not only are we all concerned about toxic substances, but we also meet the same frustrations when we try to protect ourselves from them. The indifference of corporations toward complaints, and the government’s habit of siding with the corporations instead of with the concerned public, take very similar forms. The discovery of this common link between the problems of city workers, of townspeople, and of farmers has given all of us a deeper understanding of the problems we face and of the potential for developing broad-based coalitions.

The Potential of WOSH

The Windsor Occupational Safety and Health Council has already had a substantial impact upon the development of a movement by Windsor workers around health and safety issues. WOSH has been important in educating the workers about the causes of many of their health problems and methods they can use to solve them. As they have trained themselves and as they have worked together as a mutual support group, they have gained a sense of the potential power of such a movement.

We also have had substantial impact upon making the general public aware of the difficulties faced by workers and raising community support for their struggles. WOSH has provided a forum where professionals and workers can come together. It has also helped to bring together environmentalists with workers as they recognize their common concerns. Breaking the isolation of the workers from each other and from other parts of the community has been very significant.

Many groups in Windsor, including WOSH, are now planning to conduct a “Town Meeting on Windsor’s Economic Situation” at the beginning of November. We hope to pull together a wide spectrum of concerned people in the community to spend a day discussing how Windsor’s depressed economy is affecting their lives and their groups’ work. This effort reflects our recognition of the need to broaden the base of our work well beyond traditional occupational health and safety activists.

We recognize that we face a long and difficult struggle to clean up the workplace which may well involve many setbacks. For, as Ralph Nader pointed out when he spoke with us in February of 1980, occupational health hazards are “the classic corporate blackmail in America.” When the corporations have exhausted their excuses of ignorance and lack
of money, they confront the unions with the choice of jobs or health. Workers in Windsor are becoming increasingly aware that they must not fall for this blackmail. The health risks are too obvious. Being pushed into making this choice, graphically exposes the corporations’ callous disregard for the lives of the workers. These workers are coming to realize that, if they are to have a safe workplace, they must control the work process.

Footnotes

2. Ibid., 171.

JIM BROPHY is a former auto worker and JOHN JACKSON is a long-time activist in the antiwar and environmental movements. Both are staff members of WOSH.

COMMUNITY PRESS FEATURES WOMEN’S SCRAPBOOK IS A GOLD MINE FOR ANY WOMEN’S ORGANIZATION. It’s a comprehensive collection of 170 graphics ready for use in leaflets, posters and publications. This collection reflects the strength and diversity of the last ten years of the women’s movement and covers every aspect of our ongoing struggle. It’s a valuable collection to have and to use. To purchase, send $35.00 to Community Press Features, 100 Arlington Street, 2nd floor, Boston, MA 02116.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CRACKS IN THE EMPIRE</th>
<th>THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF HEALTH</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| State Politics in the Vietnam War  
Paul Joseph  

Cracks in the Empire focuses on the state, its structure, its operation, and the divisions and struggles within it. Joseph's book presents a case study of the Vietnam War that doubles as a critical analysis of decision making during the war, addressing who was served, and how different groups manifested influence. The book includes chapters on the various struggles within the state during this period, the role of international relations, especially the Soviet Union and China, and how economic factors and pressures of the period affected decision making. | Lesley Doyal & Imogen Pennell  

This book goes far beyond familiar questions about medical practice to address issues of the social production of health and illness. The authors emphasize the relationship between medicine, underdevelopment and imperialism, and takes a close look at medical ideology's contribution to women's oppression. |
| $6.50 |  
U.S. IMPERIALISM  
The Spanish American War to the Iranian Revolution  
Mansour Farhang |
| Mansour Farhang, former Iranian ambassador to the U.N. and a leading advisor to Bani Sadr, presents a historical analysis of U.S. international relations with emphasis on relations with Third World nations. The book focuses not only on economics, but on culture, politics and issues of race. | $7.00 |
ADVERSARIES AND MODELS:
Alternative Institutions in an Age of Scarcity

Carl Hedman

A distinguishing feature of the alternative institutions of the 1960s and early 1970s was that they tried to combine an external critique of mainstream institutions with an internal critique of top-down organizational structures. Thus, for example, the typical free clinic of this era was concerned not only with challenging the inequities of the dominant health care system by also with creating new, more democratic ways of working together as aides, nurses, doctors, and patients. As Paul Starr puts it,

"nearly all adversary groups attempted to exemplify at least some alternative ideals as they protested against dominant institutions."

To be sure, this attempt to combine adversarial and exemplary roles was not without its problems. In Starr’s view, counterinstitutions faced a “trade-off between exemplifying ideals and waging conflict” and there was a “tendency for them to adopt either exemplary organization, without engaging in conflict, or adversary organization without immediately attempting to realize ultimate values.” Indeed, Starr goes on to suggest that those of us who are still committed to the guiding ideas of the movement would be well advised to adopt more realistic goals:

Most counterinstitutions experience some tension about how exemplary or how adversarial they can afford to be, and make the necessary trade-off and compromises. A few counter-institutions of the sixties attempted to push both to their limits, and burned themselves out in a brief incandescent glare.
But is Starr correct to imply that alternative institutions took on too much when they attempted to do justice to both the adversarial and exemplary roles? I think not. Building on the ten-year history of an alternative high school in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, I will argue that at a certain stage in the development of an alternative institution, the failure to adopt an adversarial role is one of the principal threats to a truly exemplary practice. I will argue that, contrary to Starr, an alternative institution increases the danger of burning out if it pulls back from a strongly adversarial role.

The Dangers of Being a Safety Valve

To set the stage for my discussion of the alternative school case, I want to consider briefly Rosemary Taylor's recent discussion of the problems confronted by a free clinic. According to Taylor, workers at this clinic enjoyed a supportive atmosphere during the early years and "were able to discard the forbidding symbols of clinical authority and build more egalitarian relationships among workers and patient." But ultimately they failed to "reach out to other community programs or pressure the medical institutions around them." The result was that the internal pressures built-up to the point where their exemplary goals were subverted:

A hard-headed weeding out of the patients they should or shouldn't serve was almost impossible for clinics bent on correcting the selective procedures of hospitals and private practitioners. The Gilford clinic complicated things even further because its workers conceived the roots of their patients' problems as primarily social rather than medical. So they were prepared to take in almost everyone: transients who needed somewhere to spend the night, adults who needed a physical examination for a job application, people who wanted to find out if the street drugs they had bought were pure. After a while their case load became too large to handle. But clinic workers could think of few palatable ways to pare it down. One of the most damaging consequences of their reluctance to cut some people off was that most of their frustration was vented on their patients. "Free clinics just promote the class system," said one overworked medic in a meeting. "Poor people who come here don't have to face realities; they could get on Medicaid. We're not a free clinic. Someone has to pay for it. We have to make people responsible for their own care. I'm burnt out with all these demands. We're abused."

In short, a kind of "dumping" phenomenon put pressures on the institution that made it extremely difficult to create new ways of relating to patients. The clinic came to be a kind of "medical safety valve" for the prevailing system and in the process lost not only the ability to change existing institutions but also the ability to exemplify new ways of meeting the health needs of its community.  

Filling a Vacuum

I want now to consider in some detail the case of Multicultural Community High School, a tuition-free alternative school in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. This institution has prospered just because it had the good fortune of being forced, early on, to combat the attempts of public school administrators to use it as a "safety valve" for students they didn't want to deal with.

Multicultural began in the fall of 1971 as a rather typical "free school," with students and volunteers who reflected its university neighborhood. Given this middle-class context, it seemed reasonable to deemphasize nuts-and-bolts courses in reading and math in favor of such things as glass blowing and medieval history. It soon became apparent, however, that it wasn't Multicultural's fancy list of
courses that was bringing dozens of new students each month. What was attracting most of these people was the school's explicit commitment to open enrollment and absolutely voluntary attendance.⁴ It became clear that there were hundreds, perhaps thousands of young people in the city who needed a tuition-free escape from traditional public schools. By the end of its second year, most of the students were from low income families. What the students wanted — once they had decided to get down to work — was highly individualized instruction in basic skills. As Multicultural was pulled into the lives of inner-city people, as its volunteers got beyond the euphoria of starting their very own "free school", its literature began to stress Ivan Illich's analysis of how schools rationalize a class-divided society:

[Dropouts] have been schooled to the belief in rising expectations and can now rationalize their growing frustration outside school by accepting their rejection from scholastic grace. They are excluded from Heaven because once baptized they did not go to church. Born in original sin, they are baptized into first grade, but go on to Gehenna (which in Hebrew means "slum") because of their personal faults.⁵

Courts were still sending young people to reform school for truancy when Multicultural was founded. Given a typical big-city situation where thousands of young people were refusing to attend traditional schools, Multicultural's enrollment began to take off. Beginning with 30 students in 1972, enrollment reached 100 by 1973, and 200 by 1974. To meet the needs of all these people — and Multicultural was finding that a surprisingly large number of so-called

Tom Bamberger
dropouts did want to work on their basics when given a supportive environment — they established three small outreach centers in donated space in churches and social agencies. The population of each of these centers tended to reflect the inter-city neighborhood it served. The Westside center was nearly half black and had three or four Native American students. The Southside center had a large number of Latino students. Students were pretty evenly divided between men and women, and there were students from all socio-economic classes, though the majority of students continued to come from poor families.

As the word got out that Multicultural was not only a place to escape the truant officer but a friendly place to begin preparing for the high school equivalency (GED) exam, enrollment snowballed. By 1975, Multicultural had four centers and served as the official school of record for over 400 young people between the ages of fourteen and eighteen. Throughout these early years Multicultural relied primarily on volunteers — many of whom put in as many as twenty-five hours a week while supporting themselves with other jobs. When it became possible to pay a modest stipend to people through VISTA, these positions tended to go to key volunteers who had a clear understanding of the school’s philosophy. Thus, there was no division between paid staff and volunteers.

The various centers were given a good deal of
autonomy in managing their own daily affairs, but overall policy was worked out by consensus at biweekly community meetings. Again, there was no presumption of special prerogatives for those who happened to be paid a modest stipend. The unwritten rule was that if you were contributing on a regular basis to the work of the school, your input would be given equal weight regardless of whether you were a student, VISTA, a volunteer tutor, or a parent. Since all classroom space was donated by community organizations, and since VISTA wages were administered by a VISTA umbrella agency, Multicultural’s annual budget was only around $800. This money, which went for things like a citywide phone and mimeographed worksheets, was raised through small benefits and individual gifts.

Pushing Out

During these early years, students tended to enroll at Multicultural over the objections of public school administrators. The school’s basic commitment to voluntary attendance and its public stand against state certification guaranteed an adversarial relationship with the public schools. Thus, though overworked, Multicultural teachers felt that enrollment pressures simply reflected a tremendous need on the part of individual students. There was little talk during this period of public schools “using” Multicultural as a “dumping ground” for unwanted students. But as Multicultural continued to thrive, things began to change. In January 1976, the coordinator of the Southside center reported that during a two-week period some twenty young people had come to him saying that their public school principal had told them they “had to go to Multicultural.”

As coordinators from other parts of the city compared notes, they found that a similar “push-out” phenomenon was occurring at other high schools in the city, particularly in the solid working-class neighborhoods where high schools prided themselves in having high academic standards and low truancy rates. In short, Multicultural found itself being coopted in the sense that public schools were using it to limit the options of young people. And in the process its centers were being inundated with young people who weren’t making a conscious choice to come to Multicultural and make a fresh start. Staff members and volunteers were beginning to express some of the same feelings Taylor found characterized the overworked medics at the free clinic: “Who are we to think we can liberate the whole city? Does a kid have the right to walk into my over-crowded study group expecting individualized attention when that is what public school people get big salaries to do?”

Multicultural’s first impulse was to storm back to the principals who were orchestrating all this and demand that they create, on the spot, the nontraditional programs the students wanted: a morning-only tutoring program in basic skills, an informal, highly individualized GED preparation program, and so forth. But — and thus arose Multicultural’s dilemma — many of these young people didn’t want anything more to do with public schools, especially after they had talked with a Multicultural coordinator and gotten a glimpse of what a “school” could be like. Multicultural felt trapped, much as the free clinic people felt trapped. It didn’t want to let public schools off the hook via its absolutely open enrollment policy. But neither did it want to “use” individual students in its desire to put pressure on the public system. Yet this would have been the result of its saying to each and every “push-out” something like “You’ve got to go with me to get you back in public school.”
As the Multicultural community struggled with this dilemma at an abstract level, someone came up with the suggestion — which carried the day — that the school opt for the more messy but more palatable strategy of trying to work with these young people on a case-by-case basis. How the school would respond, it was decided, would depend on the student’s desires in the matter. Many “push-outs,” after all, wouldn’t mind returning to public school if public schools would budge a bit. If the Multicultural coordinator sensed a student was a “push-out,” he or she would ask if the student wanted to fight back. The school devised a form to take back to public schools in such cases to insure that the administrator had indeed offered genuinely new options to the student. It was felt that public school officials would be hesitant to sign a form in effect admitting that they couldn’t meet the educational needs of the young person. To its chagrin, Multicultural found these forms came back almost as quickly as they were sent out. Public school officials were not being brought into line.

At this point, Multicultural realized that it could stem the tide of “push-outs” only by escalating the struggle, that there was no magic paper procedure that would force public school people to do their job of finding appropriate programs for these young people. It began to dawn on them that they must do at least three things. First, they must find the time to go in person to offending public school administrators and challenge by every means possible their treatment of particular young people. Second, they must find the time to begin mounting a political campaign at the School Board level that would force central administrators to meet the educational needs of all young people. Third, they must be prepared to fight attempts to pass regressive truancy laws that would subvert the first two strategies.

Nobody realized in 1976 just how much time and effort all this would involve. At first, they got nowhere. Leaflets handed out at a slickly promoted “anti-truancy” conference were ignored. High-level meetings with public school administrators — gained with great difficulty in those days — resulted in words like “What do you guys want, anyway? Do you want us to take you over as public alternatives?” Some individual principals were downright hostile when confronted; others merely pretended to create new options for young people. Meanwhile, conservative forces in the city were working quietly to tighten up truancy arrangements. At one point, there was considerable support for a program where all truants would be rounded-up daily and placed in a special building until proper “placement” could be determined.

This is not to say that nothing was accomplished in the years from 1976 to 1978. At one point, five public school teachers were assigned to spend a few hours each week observing the Multicultural model. Progressive forces in the city rallied together to stop the truancy proposal. Most important, perhaps, was the decision by Multicultural to attend each and every School Board meeting simply to repeat time and time again that “dropouts” are not flawed people, but are driven away by the school system. Meanwhile, even though Multicultural’s enrollment had gone above 500, it was able to recruit enough volunteers and committed staff members to steadily improve its offerings at what was now a network of six learning centers serving all parts of the city.

Two CETA positions were assigned to the school and two agencies that donated space agreed to pick up the salaries of the Multicultural coordinators. Thus, the amount of money that the school needed to raise each year
remained around $1,000. (Multicultural’s reliance on volunteers, donated space, and cooperative funding arrangements with host groups has allowed it to prosper in the face of Reagan’s attacks on CETA and other programs.)

The “dumping” phenomenon continued to be a problem, however, and in 1979 one of the most committed and gifted coordinators told the community that the tide of “push-outs” was preventing him from doing the kind of job he felt he must do. “I just can’t keep up with the people we are already committed to,” he said. And so the entire Multicultural community reaffirmed the need to put pressure not only on central administration by on individual principals and social workers as well. A VISTA was assigned to document especially blatant cases of “dumping,” and one group of Multicultural people reserved Wednesday mornings to go en masse to talk with principals at offending schools. For whatever reason — be it concern with losing state aid for the hundreds of young people who come to Multicultural each semester, or the dawning realization that more and more young people cannot be forced to attend traditional high school programs, or the fact that progressive forces had beaten back yet another hard-line truancy bill — top public school administrators finally agreed to work with Multicultural to set up a wide range of public alternatives."

Multicultural’s enrollment seems to be leveling off at approximately 500 students each semester, but no one is taking anything for granted. If the lessons of the last four years make anything clear, it is that one can never forget, in Illich’s words, the establishment’s penchant for “substituting new devices for school and readjusting the existing power structure to fit these devices.” But — and this is the point I want to stress — Multicultural has been able to maintain its exemplary role through all of this. It still maintains its commitment to open enrollment. No one who shows up at a center expressing a desire to get down to work is put on a waiting list. It still holds fast to its voluntary-attendance policy, and the atmosphere at each center is still one of voluntary learning. There are no discipline problems because students simply don’t show up unless they want to work on their basics or to prepare for the state-administered high-school equivalency exam. (Typically, a student will have a part-time job and show up at a center two or three times a week for several hours of hard work.)

Some of the younger people use their time at Multicultural to catch upon their basic skills to the point where they feel they can return to public school. Most, however, prepare systematically for the GED exam. Last year over seventy people, many of whom had been written off by traditional educators, passed this exam. Through cooperative programs with local postsecondary schools, these people are encouraged to continue their education. (All of this confirms, by the way, Paul Goodman’s point that adolescents don’t need to be locked up all day every day to make real progress. Multicultural has found that it is the quality of time that matters.) In short, the problem the Multicultural volunteer or staff member faces is the psychologically manageable one of keeping up with people who want to learn, rather than the psychologically debilitating problem of trying to work with adolescents who have been forced to come to school. By continuing its adversarial role, therefore, Multicultural continues to minimize the tendency — noted by Taylor in the case of the free clinic worker — to resent the person one is ostensibly serving. Rather than turning against the young person, there are already identified targets in public
schools!

Multicultural has also maintained its commitment to nonhierarchical modes of internal organization. Although each center continues to have a good deal of autonomy in its daily operations, citywide policy continues to be worked out at the biweekly community meetings. Typically, these Saturday morning meetings are attended by the dozen or so people who play key roles at the six centers. Although three people are paid a modest stipend through VISTA or a host agency, most are volunteers who contribute a significant number of hours each week. (At present, three centers are actually coordinated by volunteers. One is a young mother who is also pursuing graduate work in exceptional education. One is a young woman who supports herself through a weekend job at a shelter for young people who have problems at home. Another supports himself by teaching guitar and by playing in a band.) All happen to be certified teachers but Multicultural continues to stress that it isn’t necessary to have a teaching degree to be an effective alternative educator. The task of chairing these meetings is rotated, as are official titles within the school. While new volunteers, students, and parents are invited to attend these meetings and share in the governance of the school, most do not choose to attend on a regular basis. Each year, however, the school seems to attract the one or two people needed to replace key people who move on to other things.

Another Example

I’ve argued that Multicultural’s ten-year history shows that there is not always a deep tension between an alternative’s exemplary goals and an adversarial stance vis-a-vis mainstream institutions. I suspect many other cases could be cited in support of the claim that at a certain point in its development, an exemplary institution must take on an adversarial role. Let me mention briefly one more example. Consider the case of a co-op as it moves into an inner-city market abandoned by a traditional supermarket. As it tries to survive in this fragile market niche, it experiences various pressures to abandon some of its original exemplary goals. For example, the push to increase sales volume so that it can bring down prices creates pressure for tighter management practices, thus threatening its commitment to member involvement and worker self-management. In short, while traditional market forces hand potential patrons over to the alternative institution, the larger economic and political structures deliver nothing in the way of support. In fact, recent developments in connection with a Milwaukee co-op show that new roadblocks can be placed in front of such groups just as they reach what looks like a “take-off” point in terms of sales. I refer to the precedent-setting judgment by the Internal Revenue Service that Gordon Park Food Co-op’s system of volunteer discounts constituted a form of wage and was subject, therefore, to Social Security and federal income taxes. Clearly such an action, if generalized, would threaten every small co-op that relies on volunteer contributions. In the words of Ron Cotterill, “the extra expense of federal contri-
utions and the bookkeeping would thwart its successful program to lower food costs and develop strong member participation. Here, then, is another case where an alternative institution cannot afford to set aside an adversarial role and concentrate simply on internal matters. While Gordon Park remains very much committed to membership involvement and worker self-management, it has realized that continued progress in these areas will require a strong adversarial stance vis-a-vis the government. It has been working with its local US representative to find ways to deal with the IRS challenge, and what began as a purely local matter has attracted the support of over forty small co-ops from all parts of the country.

This discussion has focused on a particular practical reason for combining a strongly adversarial role with an exemplary role. To fully develop the case for alternative institutions as “adversarial exemplars” one would also have to consider theoretical reasons for combining these roles — reasons that have to do with creating the dialectical process that will be required to build a genuinely democratic socialism from within the context of advanced capitalism. Clearly this last kind of case for combining both roles is important. The Multicultural experience has shown that such theoretical arguments provided the basis for linkages with progressive political groups that had no particular feeling for alternative educational practices. But there are also straightforward psychological reasons for adopting both a strongly exemplary and strongly adversarial role. First, it feels good to win a victory vis-a-vis a dominant mainstream institution. Multicultural felt good when it helped defeat a bill that would have taken drivers licences from truants. It feels good to help a student stand up to a traditional educator and get back into public school on her own terms. Second, it feels good to get the support of other exemplary organizations when one adopts an openly adversarial role. Gordon Park felt good when a small Detroit co-op set up a spare change can on its checkout counter to help pay for the IRS struggle. Third, an adversarial stance helps attract the kind of people who, while they want to create new forms of working together, also feel the need to engage the larger system in concrete ways. Both Multicultural and Gordon Park report that some of their key people would not still be with them had it not been for the larger struggles. To be sure, there are times when people in these organizations wish that they could simply be genuinely nonauthoritarian teachers or self-managed grocers. But they realize more clearly than ever that given present-day society they cannot be these things without also being such things as hard-nosed advocates and effective lobbyists.

Footnotes


3. Toward the end of her essay, Taylor takes up in greater detail the reasons behind the clinic’s failure to develop a strong adversarial stance. She notes that while it had tried to “band together with other free clinics in a broad coalition to pressure the medical establishment,” these attempts had floundered on quarrels between the alternatives themselves. In focusing on how the “dumping” phenomenon can subvert the exemplary function of alternative institutions, I don’t for a moment want to downplay the difficulties that surround coalition building. All of us who have worked with alternative institutions are well aware of how difficult it is to form a coalition around anything short of an explicit threat to one’s survival. For an interesting discussion of this problem, with particular reference to food co-ops, see David Zwerdling’s “The Uncertain Revival of Food Cooperatives,” *Co-ops, Communes, and Collectives*, pp. 89-111.

4. From the beginning, Multicultural drew on the work of Ivan Illich for moral support regarding their rejection of teacher certification and compulsory attendance arrangements. Thus, an early flyer contained the following passage from Illich’s *Deschooling Society* (New York, 1973): “The first article of a bill of rights for a modern, humanist society would correspond to the First Amendment of the US Constitution: ‘The state shall make no law with respect to the establishment of education.’ There shall be no ritual obligatory for all” (p. 16). When students came to enroll, they were told that it was up to them and their parents how
they used their time at the school, be it working at a job of their choosing, catching up on their basics by attending a study group a couple of times a week, or whatever.

5. Illich, Deschooling Society, p. 64. It might be noted, by the way, that Multicultural’s reading of Illich differed from that of Herbert Gintis who accused Illich of accepting the “basic economic institutions of capitalism.” I defend this anticapitalist reading of Illich in “The ‘Deschooling’ Controversy Revisited: A Defense of Ivan Illich’s ‘Participatory Socialism,’” Educational Theory, 29 (Spring 1979) pp. 109-116.

6. That Multicultural’s philosophy did not go unnoticed by the establishment is clear from testimony before a State Assembly hearing that a way must be found to deal with “so-called alternative schools whose innovative curriculum made it difficult for local districts to set standards,” (Milwaukee Journal, May 19, 1977) and the State Superintendent’s concern with the “proliferation of small, poorly organized, poorly staffed and poorly supplied private operations masquerading under the title of private schools.” (Milwaukee Journal, Sept. 16, 1977).

7. Due in large part to Multicultural’s pressure, the public system had created two alternative centers by 1979. The 1980-81 school year saw the creation of two additional city-wide centers modeled on these earlier programs, and the overall enrollment at these public alternatives passed 700. Recently the School Board instructed all senior high schools to replicate the “outpost” model that Multicultural helped two high schools set up in 1980. There are also plans, again at Multicultural’s urging, to set up an experimental “outpost” for middle-school “dropouts.”


2. It is clear that the battle has not been won just because the public school system has created a vast array of “public alternatives.” Multicultural is convinced that everything will depend on whether it and other progressive groups can find ways of making sure that these units do not become internal “dumping grounds.” One encouraging sign in this connection is that the administration recently implemented Multicultural’s proposal for a systematic review of these programs.


12. It should be noted, however, that neither group feels comfortable with people who are attracted to the group just by its adversarial role. For example, Multicultural continues to suggest that anyone who wants to take an active role in the struggle with public schools should find a way to involved themselves in the exemplary aspects of an alternative school as well. Its point is that the ongoing critique of existing educational institutions must be grounded in an alternative daily practice.

---

CARL HEDMAN is a teacher in the Milwaukee area and has been active in both Multicultural High and Gordon Park Food Coop.

---

THE NEW YORK INSTITUTE FOR SOCIAL THERAPY AND RESEARCH

presents its Fall Courses:

- The Economics of Fascism
- The National Question
- Soviet Psychology: Application to Learning Disabilities
- Mind and Society: Marxist Clinical Psychology

We also practice a Marxist clinical psychology, offering group, individual and family therapy to poor, working and middle income people, senior citizens, teenagers and children; to minorities and Third World people; to people in inter-racial relationships and families.

For more information, call or write:

New York Institute for Social Therapy & Research
865 West End Avenue, #1C, New York, N.Y. 10025
(212) 663-5056
DANCING ALONG THE PRECIPICE:
The Men’s Movement in the ’80s

Joe Interrante

“A what? A men’s movement? Organized for what? Men’s liberation?! You’ve got to be kidding! What do they want, anyway, higher wages? Good grief, aren’t there enough men’s groups already — the government, General Motors, the American Medical Association... the list could go on and on. Isn’t a conference on ‘Men and Masculinity’ a bit like a conference on rich people and money?”

“Oh, those people. All they do is sit around and play touchy-feely. It’s like being trapped in a crowd of gender moonies. No, I’m not going to the conference. I’m afraid of being hugged to death.”

Those are composites of reactions I received when I told friends that I was planning to attend the Seventh National Conference on Men and Masculinity, “Reweaving Masculinity,” at Tufts University in Medford, Massachusetts, on June 12-16, 1981. They are, I believe, typical of the attitudes held by many people. Television, motion pictures, and best-selling novels have swamped us with stories about men: about the tribulations of men’s lives (Annie Hall, The World According to Garp); about “sensitive fathers” rescuing their families from, or deserted by, “insensitive mothers” (Kramer vs. Kramer, Ordinary People); about the pleasures and dangers of heterosexual male bonding (The Deer Hunter, Cutter’s Way, “Hill Street Blues”). In many cases, these presentations of “new men” experiencing uncertainty, vulnerability, and sometimes emotional expressiveness have also communicated an antifeminist message, by making independent women part of the problem.
facing their male characters. Clearly, in such a context, one may be skeptical, if not openly suspicious, of a movement organized for “men’s liberation.”

But I came to the conference with excitement as well as misgivings. There is a new literature about the male “sex role” — books like Jack Nichol’s *Men’s Liberation* and Joseph Pleck and Jack Sawyer’s *Men and Masculinity* — and it looks self-critically at the ideology and practice of masculinity. Much of what these books say rings true: an obsession with social and economic success inside and outside the workplace; insensitivity born of a fear of making oneself vulnerable; deep-seated fears of “femininity,” “sissyness,” and homosexuality; crippling restraints on emotional expressiveness; competitive zeal fraught with implicit and explicit violence. Here, I thought, were men who recognized sexism as a deeply embedded problem that men need to confront.

What bothered me about some of the new literature was its frequent myopia about political implications. A focus on the “costs” of masculinity had led some of these writers to claim that men were “oppressed too,” a claim that skirts the fundamental issue of male power and privilege. Unless you distinguish between the *forms* of male behavior and the *substance* of male privilege, you are led into the world of make-believe typified by *Kramer vs. Kramer*. Indeed, I had heard what were called “men’s movement figures” on the TV news complain about women’s “power” in divorce and child custody cases. Was the men’s movement promoting white, middle-class men’s “personal growth” without questioning the directions of that growth? Would men at the conference consider such questions “avoiding what’s really going on with your feelings”?

As a gay man, I also had suspicions about the heterocentrist bias of this work. It told me that my gayness existed “in addition to” my masculinity, whereas I had found that it colored my entire experience of manhood. I distrusted a literature which claimed that gay men were just like heterosexual men except for what they did in bed. Moreover, I found the literature at times homophobic, as in its assurance that gentleness doesn’t mean being a sissy, or that wanting to touch and hold men doesn’t mean wanting to “sleep” with men. What if I *am* a sissy? What if I *do* want to be sexual with other men? Was this the men’s movement? Would the conference be a group of “sympathetic” heterosexual men loosening themselves up at my expense?

What I found at the “Reweaving Masculinity” conference, despite my misgivings, was a loose network of local and regional groups with serious politics. They are working to build a profeminist, progay, and antiracist movement. These men face a crossroads in their efforts to develop a set of comprehensive goals which can appeal to men from different classes, races, and sexual orientations. To understand the dilemma, one needs to know something about the changing character of men’s lives during the last century (especially in the last twenty years), as well as the beginnings of the men’s movement itself.

**Background:**

**Men’s Lib Discovers a Fork in the Road**

Historically, the men’s movement developed out of feminism. Many men who first joined men’s “consciousness-raising” (CR) groups in the late 1960s and early 1970s did so out of conflicts with women — wives, lovers, friends, acquaintances — who had discovered feminism and begun to challenge men’s sexist behavior.

My full introduction to the women’s movement came through a personal relationship.... I met
and fell in love with a woman who was being politicized by woman's liberation. As our relationship developed, I began to receive repeated criticism for being sexist. At first I responded... with anger and denial. In time, however, I began to recognize the validity of the accusation, and eventually to acknowledge the sexism in my denial of the accusation.³

Borrowing the consciousness-raising format of women's groups, men around the country began to form "men's groups" to deal with the feelings of confusion, hurt, anger, defensiveness, and guilt which they were experiencing. For many men, these groups were a transformative experience in self-awareness:

We did some "guilt-tripping" at first — flagellating ourselves for the ways we were oppressing women — but we soon moved on to sharing other problems. We soon came to see that it wasn't just the women in our lives who were having problems and that we were having problems relating to, but that we also had problems within ourselves, and problems relating to each other. We discovered in some way that we had been dehumanized...³

By 1974, when the first national conference was organized by the Women's Studies Program at
the University of Tennessee in Knoxville, there were hundreds of men's CR groups and "men's centers" around the country. Three hundred men and women attended the conference, at which they organized a Men's Awareness Network (MAN) to publish a "Men's Resource Guide and Newsletter."

During the seventies, the men's movement grew and diversified. Men continued to form CR groups and men's centers in order to recruit new men and to provide a source of ongoing support for men already involved. Men also began to work politically on a range of issues. The broadest-based activity was support for the ERA, embodied in groups like Men Allied Nationally (MAN) for ERA. (Indeed, the ERA remains a kind of "bottom line" criterion for involvement in the movement.) Beyond that, however, political activity moved in two directions.

On the one hand, there were men who formed groups to support more radical feminist issues. These groups, such as the California Anti-Sexist Men's Political Caucus and OASIS in Boston, began to work on issues like abortion and lesbian and gay rights. Some organized men's childcare collectives to offer childcare at women's and (in some cases) Third World people's events. Men also formed counseling organizations, such as Boston's EMERGE, St. Louis's RAVEN, and Denver's AMEND, to combat rape, battering, and other forms of violence against women. These groups also saw fighting class and race privileges as part of their work to "reweave" masculinity.

On the other hand, there were men who formed "men's rights" and "fathers' rights" organizations. The largest of these groups was and is Free Men, which is based in Columbia, Maryland, and has members in thirty-five states. They supported the ERA, and like the other groups, welcomed women members. But they focused on the revision of divorce and child custody laws, in order to give men "equal rights" to alimony, child custody, and visitation. Their emphasis was on freeing men from the responsibilities of patriarchy.

During the seventies, these groups continued to work as part of a loose network. Yet there were clear differences between the two tendencies. For the antisexist groups, male privilege was a social question, linked to a host of other issues such as reproductive rights, violence against women, lesbian and gay rights, racism, and imperialism — to the very structure of society. For the Free Men, it was more of an individual question. This was a crucial difference, because it brought to the surface the experiences which led these men to the men's movement in the first place. Those experiences were the personal conflicts which grew out of women's involvement with feminism. The last thing many men wanted to hear, once they became involved in the men's movement, was that they still enjoyed privileges as men. Clearly, this was a difference which questioned the very meaning of men's liberation. Could men be nonsest in a sexist society, or could they be, at most, antisest?

The growing split in the men's movement was and is a response to changes in the forms of male dominance first pointed out by feminists, a change from what Barbara Easton has called "legitimate" forms of legal and economic discrimination, to "illegitimate forms... that lie outside traditionally accepted definitions." Let us look at this phenomenon more closely. The withering away of America's post-World War II international hegemony, and the concomitant crumbling of the postwar corporate economy, have together eroded the credibility of the professional or bureaucratic career.
These middle-class careers always had built-in insecurities: men’s personal achievement as breadwinners was always threatened by competition from others (even within the so-called teamwork of management) and by a nagging inner sense of incompetence. These insecurities could be tolerated, so long as the professional could justify his perseverance by an ethos of “duty” to the higher goals of the corporate or governmental enterprise. For men who could not do so, academia and service professions offered a relative autonomy from corporate priorities. Most important, for both groups of men, home and a companionate family life were the sources of emotional fulfillment. (Consider, for example, the fifties film, The Man in the Grey Flannel Suit.)

The current economic crisis has both reduced work opportunities outside corporations and undermined the ethos of professionalism within the corporation. Men’s responses to this erosion have been a withdrawal into cynicism about the rewards of work, and an increasing investment in the home as an emotional haven. Since domesticity is predicated upon women’s subordinate position within it, however, the feminist movement has denied men this easy escape. The “castle” itself has become a battleground. As already noted, men’s response has often been anger, an anger fueled and focused by the media’s misrepresentation of feminism-as-lifestyle. And it is this anger which finds expression in the intensified use of cultural, as opposed to legal, forms of male domination. As Easton notes, not only are men turning more to “emotional withdrawal” as a weapon, but:

As the older mechanisms of male control over women break down, the blatant efforts of some men to retain that control, through rape and other forms of violence, intensify.6

The antisexist groups, particularly those like EMERGE and RAVEN, were attempting to deal with the intensified use of these forms. This work pushed them to confront issues of men’s sexual and personal behavior, which highlight the ways men’s very personalities are wrapped up in the structure of male dominance. It led them to take up issues like freedom of choice on abortion which conflicted with the demands of “father’s rights” groups. The
conflict began to surface in debates over political resolutions at the national conferences in St. Louis (1977), Los Angeles (1978), and Milwaukee (1979). And it began to emerge within local men’s groups and centers, over the individual vs. social nature of men’s oppression of women. Except for the ERA, the men’s movement was in sharp disagreement over the nature of its relationship to feminism.

The Two Men’s Movements

The issue was, in a sense, resolved by 1981. At the conference at Tufts, I discovered that Free Men, along with a number of father’s rights and men’s rights groups, was holding a conference during the same weekend in Houston, Texas, to organize a “National Congress of Men.” The Tufts conference, in contrast, reflected the diverse interests of the antisexist groups. There were seventy-four workshops on such topics as directions for the movement, images of masculinity, the experience of growing up male, fathering, men and violence, men and women, men and men, heterosexuality, homosexuality, bisexuality, androgyny, homophobia, antisemitism, racism, class arrogance, guilt, anger, assertiveness, and nurturing. In particular, the antirape and antibattering groups exerted a strong influence on the conference. There were seven workshops specifically on men and violence, and EMERGE screened its new film on domestic violence. Male violence was the most clearly articulated political issue at the Tufts conference.

It was, in fact, violence as a political issue that crystalized the differences between the antisexist men and the Free Men. Some members of Free Men submitted a proposal for a workshop on “A Look at the Violence Women do to Men.” The conference planning committee rejected the proposal as not in line with the “Men and Violence” workshop series. In response, Robert Sides, the director of Free Men/Boston, wrote an open letter to the Tufts conference, “On Male Oppression.” The following excerpts illustrate the differences between the two movements:

It is oppressive to hear of universal female powerlessness while seeing the ubiquity of “Women’s” . . . Studies, Book-store Sections, Theatre, Art Shows, Information vans, Health Centers, Radio Shows, etc. . . . It is not a little ironic, too, to hear of women’s “second-class” status when they have such privilege in divorce settlements, custody hearings, draft acts, statutory rape laws, sexual harassment hearings, lifeboat seat allocations, etc.

It is angering to hear feminists give lip-service to sexual equality while avoiding responsibility for their needs. Just ask yourself how many “assertive” women came up to meet you last year versus, if you are single, how many you had to approach. Also ask yourself how much you had to mask your loneliness and needs to be seen as attractive. Or even how it feels to be “evaluated” by the impression of your approach by someone who has never had to face or acknowledge the stress involved.

It is bad enough not to meet many assertive women. It is worse to meet so many the feminists never mention: insensitive and rude women who, far from being the “intuitive, feeling” beings we think all women are, act like emotional-bank examiners when they deal with the inner lives of men; who ignore or act crudely toward men who must approach them if anyone is to get their needs met; who dehumanize male feelings by calling them, clinically, “egos”; whose passivity necessarily causes them to respond to the very macho behavior they decry . . . ; who don’t care what pressures “privileged” men are under to earn money just so long as they spend it on them . . . ;
who are sexual only if prompted by booze-or-bennies to avoid responsibility and blame male sexuality (A.K.A. “lust”) for taking advantage of them.... All women are not like this, but few are truly acting like the New Woman they so often talk about."

According to a New York Times article on the Free Men conference, they also argue that “abortion performed unilaterally by women, often trample on the legitimate rights of the father-to-be.”

The Free Men have bought the feminism-as-lifestyle version of the women’s movement. They are responding to men’s anger and violence within the confines of this “you’ve come a long way baby” image of the ideal woman (which, I suspect, some of these professional men helped to create). Their response has been, “Fine, if women want to be independent, then let them be self-dependent; if women have a right to their interests, men also have a right to their own.” This seems to be the gist of the statements by Robert Sides. As the name “Free Men” suggests, it is a response to feminism within the confines of an individualistic “free market” mentality. This is how they can support the ERA and in the same breath attack other feminist issues as women’s failure to “act like the New Woman they so often talk about.”

By focusing on civil inequality and ignoring the existence of extra-legal forms of male dominance — by ignoring what has not changed — Free Men offers an ideology which absolves men of responsibility.

The antisexist men are aware of men’s anger — one man on the conference’s closing panel on “The Men’s Movement in the ’80s” spoke of men’s anger as a critical issue for grassroots organizing. But they obviously deal with that anger very differently. For example, a workshop on “Men’s Anger at Women” focused on men’s expectations of women as the starting point for a critical self-examination of that anger. This workshop clearly distinguished between the confusing and often painful personal experiences of negotiating new, nonexist relationships between men and women, and the political question of power and privilege. As one man told me, “Sometimes individual women do abuse individual men, but that’s not a political question. We shouldn’t generalize from that to contend that women have privilege — which they [Free Men] do.”

Despite this difference, the antisexist men were unable at this conference to formulate a clearly defined political relationship toward the Free Men, even though they were confronted with the issue directly. Some men objected to the decision to reject the Free Men workshop on the grounds of censorship, an issue which some people told me has existed since the fifth national conference in Los Angeles. The workshop was still rejected, but a compromise was reached by inviting a member of Free Men to speak at the closing panel of the conference. However, this invitation was withdrawn when some of the antirape and antibattering groups protested. Then the planning committee changed its mind again and permitted a member of Free Men to make a statement from the audience. Indeed, the final panel turned into a discussion about the Free Men. Yet the issue remained unresolved, and many men felt uneasy about the issue of censorship.

I think there were two reasons for this uneasiness. First is a kind of guilt that grows naturally from the initial acceptance of the critique of male dominance. Although not universally shared at the conference, this guilt surfaced over questions of organization, decision-making, and leadership. Refusing Free Men a forum here — saying “no” to the Free Men — was perceived as traditional male behavior and as violating the conference’s ethos of openness.
and support.

Second, this guilt is accentuated by the anti-sexist men's realization that they and the Free
Men start from similar analyses of masculinity. An incident from the closing panel can illus-
strate the ambivalence that is involved here. One panelist read from the New York Times article
on the Free Men conference, selecting out anti-feminist statements like the one on abortion
mentioned earlier. Then another man read from the same article, selecting out the state-
ments about the cost of masculinity. These latter statements sounded exactly like the
critique of masculinity made by the antisexist
men.

Here, then, are two groups which talk about
the male role in identical ways, but draw differ-
ent political implications from their analyses.
For the anti-sexist men, this difference is one of
“understanding.” Their response to the Free
Men is a desire to “talk with” and “counsel”
the Free Men so that they can reveal the “larger
issue.” But the Houston conference indicates
that these men are no longer open to dialogue.
And given the closed nature of Free Men’s focus
on “men’s rights,” it seems to me like trying to
“counsel” Phyllis Schafly about abortion and
the ERA.

The Spatial Politics of Men’s Liberation

“According to usage and conventions which
are at least being questioned but have by no
means been overcome,” John Berger observes
in Ways of Seeing, “the social presence of a
woman is different in kind from that of a
man.”

A man’s presence is dependent upon the promise
of power which he embodies. If the promise is
large and credible his presence is striking. If it is
small or incredible, he is found to have little
presence. The promised power may be moral,
physical, temperamental, economic, social, sexual
— but its object is always exterior to the man. A
man’s presence suggests what he is capable of
doing to you or for you. His presence may be
fabricated, in the sense that he pretends to be
capable of what he is not. But the pretense is
always towards a power which he exercises on
others.

As Berger suggests, this masculine “presence” is both an outward style of presentation
and an internalized self-image. It is at its core
instrumental in nature (what he can do to or for
you). It is communicated through the sugges-
tion of distance from others, which establishes
the individualized presence of the man and
helps to maintain the illusory promise of the
man’s power, to set him above by setting him
apart. In the body language of masculinity,
men do not touch, except for occasional backslapping which represses as much as it expresses. (I was at a meeting once where we discovered that the men had all sat in chairs while women shared the couch — this is simply one minor example of the way distance is maintained.) Distance is also maintained on an emotional level: men talk about themselves but rarely from themselves; they are trained not to be directly introspective, but to organize their thoughts, to clear out the self-doubts, before speaking.

Men came to this conference for a variety of reasons, but one of the most frequently voiced goals was to use it as an opportunity to break through some of the restraints and isolation of masculinity. Indeed, one of the oldest and perhaps strongest features of men’s conferences has been the creation of an environment supporting this kind of personal growth. Many of the seventy-four workshops were patterned after consciousness-raising sessions, and the speakers on panels emphasized their experiences in a way which expressed the complexity of nuance and sensation, uncertainty and change. There was allotted time for men to gather in “affinity groups,” with interests ranging from alcoholism to homophobia to domestic violence counseling, to share their ideas and experiences. There were cultural events of theatre, song, and poetry scheduled each evening. And there was time to socialize and play.

“It is political for men to be playful,” one man tells me; his view is echoed by many others. It may be difficult at first to take this idea seriously. We have all grown up in a culture in which play is regarded as an idle, trivial pursuit, something reserved for children. That equation suggests some of its importance for men. Play (as opposed to “leisure”) is activity pursued for its own sake; it is open-ended and noninstrumental. Play is animated by fantasy and imagination; it allows men to act “as if.” In that sense, play allows men to experience what nontraditional interactions — interactions not organized around a division of labor — might become. It allows men to experience masculinity as something to enjoy rather than as something around which to erect a presence.

All of this is important, and needs to remain an integral part of men’s movement activity. But there is a way in which these activities can seduce you into a kind of stasis. Consciousness raising can reach a dead end of “personal” differences, as the imbroglio with Free Men makes clear. Play can generate an ambience, but not specific goals and strategies. Left at this level, it seems to me that this nontraditional male presence can itself become a way to exercise power; I saw a few men at workshops use their “sensitivity” to manipulate the group. It also seems to me that such a presence animates a film like Kramer vs. Kramer, and is part of the difficulty which the antifeminist men have in formulating a political relationship toward the Free Men.

This problem is embedded in the ambiguities of a “men’s politics.” It can support pro-feminist, progay, and antiracist legislation — which many men here see as the legislation of “others” — but it has no legislation of its own. Rejecting the “men’s rights” legislation of Free Men, it sees its main function as encouraging personal growth. This perception is reinforced by the fact that many conference participants do not have (or know of) an antifeminist men’s group in their communities. Many men told me that they came to the conference for “renewal,” “regeneration,” or “resuscitation.” Isolated and even exhausted by their efforts to live nontraditional lives, and lacking a group which can support their personal efforts on an ongoing basis, they came for enough “nurtur-
ance” to carry them through to the next conference. This attitude toward the conference as an “energy” refueling station is part of the history of the antisexist network, and can only be dealt with by organizing at the local level. But to do that, the movement needs to develop a set of political issues and strategies which move beyond the limits of sensibility. In the context of 1980s reaction, “personal growth” may not be political enough to engage with the majority of men’s lives.

The Privatization of Gay Concerns

In their efforts to “reweed masculinity” all men might learn a lot from the way socialization is experienced by gay men. For men coming to grips with their gayness, masculinity is a problem which must be dealt with in the absence of the staple references of heterosexuality. Yet while at least half of the men at this conference were gay, only a few workshops reflected gay concerns: two on developing a Radical Faggot Identity, one on specific gay male sexual practices, one on homophobia, and two on gay and straight cooperation — six out of seventy-four. At the opening panel, one man of eight identified himself indirectly by using his male lover’s name, but never suggested in his remarks that his sexual orientation had anything to do with his experience as a man. This “privatization” of gay concerns pervaded the workshops I attended on “general” male issues. The upshot was an extreme heterocentrism that ironically also inhibited discussion about how to change men’s roles.

For example, I went to a slideshow on “The American Male: Exploring Male Consciousness in American Society.” Admittedly, this show was done several years ago, and qualified itself as the experiences of white, middle-class men. The show was a collage of images which men are supposedly told to emulate; the narration told me how destructive these images are. While I identified with some of this experience, I also had reactions very different from what I was being told to feel. I found many of the images of men erotic. I also kept noticing images that told me something more complicated than simple destructiveness. For example, in a section on war, I saw a picture of a soldier holding an injured or dying soldier. A picture, I thought, of a man nurturing another man. I thought of gay historian Allan Berube’s work on World War II as a massive “coming out” experience for lesbians and gay men.11 And I thought about how contradictory the experiences of men are; how we need to rediscover and emphasize the ways men have survived by adapting or avoiding the limits of male socialization. In the discussion afterwards, I only heard gay men raise that question. I wondered why that was, and I wondered if the way gay men are forced to deal more immediately than heterosexual men with the issue of survival had anything to do with that awareness.

The invisibility of gay issues at workshops and conference panels contrasted with the quite visible presence of gay singers, poets, and performers during the cultural events held each evening during the conference. It also contrasted with some of my personal interactions at the conference. Some gay and heterosexual men with whom I talked told me that, at men’s gatherings and conferences, they often can’t tell who is gay and who is straight — meaning that men are openly affectionate with one another regardless of sexual orientation. This was certainly true to some extent; socializing did seem more relaxed here. On the other hand, I felt a difference in the way I personally interacted with openly gay men and other men, especially in the way these men touched me. I don’t have precise language to describe this difference — there was electricity, energy,
"sexuality" in the touches of gay men. When openly gay men touched my body, I could feel it elsewhere; a knuckle moved down the middle of my chest sent sensations through my arms. When other men touched me, the sensations were localized; they were sincere and pleasurable, but they were different. I don't expect this difference not to exist, but I think it is dangerous to privatize it and pretend it doesn't exist or is of secondary importance to outward behavior.

I asked one gay man about the separation between what was going on at this conference on an individual basis, and what was said at panels and workshops. Part of the problem, he said, is the difference in the experiences of "veterans" of past conferences and men's groups, and of newcomers. Men who have been through the consciousness raising of past conferences — for example, at Des Moines in 1976, when gay and heterosexual men were paired up and sent around the city to act affectionately with each other in public — forget that these issues need to be raised afresh for new people. He added that raising the issues is made more difficult by the fact that the movement wants to attract men (both heterosexual men and men unsure of their preference) who are threatened by homosexuality. This seems to me a persistent problem in a mixed movement. But the problem is not resolved by tacitly ignoring or at best ghettoizing the issues of homophobia and heterosexism. Indeed, the problem can only become worse as the movement grows, as more men affiliate with the antisexist movement without dealing with those questions. I also doubt that these are issues only for newcomers, that homophobia is easily dealt with by heterosexual men in one or two sessions. At this conference, the separation was not challenged until the final panel.

Women and the Men's Movement

The antisexist men's conferences have always welcomed and encouraged the participation of women. Women have always held key administrative positions at them. The women at the conference with whom I spoke expressed a variety of reasons for their attendance. Some came because their partners are active in this movement, and they wanted to share the experience of the conference. Others, who had attended past conferences for that reason, developed their own interests in the movement which they felt were related to their work in women's organizations.

Despite the sincere interest in having women participate in the movement, I sensed a certain ambivalence or awkwardness around the presence of women here. "The presence of
women and gays is and isn’t an open issue,” one woman told me. Part of this discomfort seemed related to planning decisions: how to create a space in which women are welcome, while at the same time providing space for men to explore issues on their own. Providing such spaces raises issues of guilt about being exclusionary. But this awkwardness seemed to be handled fairly smoothly.

A deeper part of the ambivalence seemed to come from the way in which this conference perceived its relation to the women’s movement. Many men told me that one of their personal goals is to become more like women in their behavior. Many felt that the best way to do this was to “learn from” women. Behind this phrase (which I hear over and over again), I sensed a perception of women as the sources of “political correctness”: not only that women can show men how to change, but in many cases that men need women in order for men to do this. To put it in a slightly different way, I sensed a hope that, by copying the women’s movement, this men’s movement could avoid the “mistakes” which are a part of any group’s growth. If feminism was, historically, the “mother” of the men’s movement, some men at this conference seemed reluctant to give up the security of the relationship.

This perception seems a way for men to abdicate responsibility for taking chances that might not work out as intended. Male guilt and a fear of not appearing “politically correct” surfaced at moments when women spoke at a panel or workshop. Some men would suddenly become studiously attentive (the “now we’ll find out the answer” syndrome), others would shift positions uncomfortably (the “oh no, I’m going to be criticized” syndrome), while the faces of others would tighten with resentment (possibly a reaction against either syndrome, or a reflection of the fact that some men at this conference seemed close to the Free Men in their views). This treatment of individual women as the guardians of political virtue must place a terrible burden on the women who came to the conference. And it may be one reason why the number of women at these conferences has declined steadily.

Treating individual women in this way also assumes that there is something known as “the women’s movement,” which they can each represent in a holistic way. Ironically, this perspective bears similarity to the different view taken by Free Men. If the Free Men have bought the “you’ve come a long way, baby” image of women, the antisealist men seem to take a “they’ve got it all together” attitude toward the women’s movement. With the exception of obvious groups like STOP ERA, the antisealist men tend to regard every statement made by a women’s organization as the feminist position on that issue, one which they must uphold if they are to think of themselves as antisealist. There is a tendency here to reduce feminism to a set of commandments which men can follow. It avoids all the difficulties involved in using feminism — a woman-centered perspective — to understand the experiences of masculinity. And it simply doesn’t work for some issues (like pornography, adult-minor relationships, and specific sexual practices), over which feminists are deeply divided.

A Comprehensive Theory is Possible

Both the Free Men and the antisealist men rely on a theory of men’s liberation based on the sociological work on sex roles mentioned at the beginning of this article. This sociological work is largely ahistorical and generally liberal in its politics. To the degree that it does contain a historical perspective, it treats men’s roles in terms of a linear progression, from restraint toward liberation. Men are beginning to ques-
tion their dedication to work; they are beginning to take on domestic tasks in order to make their marriages more equal “companionate” partnerships. As they do this, they are becoming more openly emotional. There is no question that these changes are good for men. But this literature does not discuss the social context in which these changes are occurring. While the sex-role literature assumes that social arrangements are in part maintained and reproduced by male socialization and male role identification, it does not examine in detail how this occurs. Thus, the fact that the male role is changing is taken as prima facie evidence that male domination is declining.¹²

There are historical examples which would contribute to a different conclusion. Changes in the male role between 1860 and 1920, from an ethos of self-disciplined individual competition to an ideology of cooperative team effort and loyalty to the corporation, did not change the substance of male privilege in the “public sphere.” The rise of companionate marriage and suburban consumerism between 1900 and 1970, did not in itself challenge the social and sexual power of the husband and father in the home.¹³ The current sharing of housework by men and women may be less of a decline in male dominance and more a response to “stagflation” which requires both husband and wife
on the male role need to overcome their almost reflexive hostility to psychology. This hostility is an understandable reaction to the ways psychology has been used to prop up male dominance. But without a critical use of psychology (which feminists writers have shown to be possible), they will not be able to understand the social and cultural relations of dominance which are not easily or automatically affected by social reforms. This is one lesson to be learned from the intensified uses of “nontraditional” forms of male dominance described previously. In short, a comprehensive theory of masculinity needs to treat masculinity as a cultural rather than a sex role.

If masculinity is a cultural role, then it includes class and race as well as sex distinctions. The fact that masculinity cuts across class and race lines does not mean that the male role is the same for all men. A working-class boy, for example, not only learns to relate to women as “other” and inferior beings; he also learns to relate to some men as “bosses,” as superiors who will manage his work, give him orders, yet relate to him as another man. He faces, not the promise of future achievement in which domesticity is the fulfillment of that success, but a daily routine of hard alienating work in which his “home life” is an expected compensation. This does not mean that working-class men or men of color are necessarily more sexist than white, middle-class men. It means, rather, that working-class men and men of color learn to wield at home the authority which they are denied at work — an authority which, in both places, is defined in terms of masculinity. Moreover, the ways in which these men are able to exercise authority in their families is itself shaped by the forms of household organization which families of different classes and races devise to meet their distinctive problems of day-to-day survival. These men’s class/race experi-
iences do not exist "in addition to" their experiences as men; they are interwoven threads of a single masculine identity.

For working-class men and men of color, this masculine experience poses a unique problem. Masculinity is not only part of the ideology of class and racial oppression, which condemns them to the frustrations of the workplace or the back of the social bus. Masculinity has also been part of their cultures of resistance. A culture of male comaraderie has been a vital part of union "brotherhood" and a source of flexibility and spontaneity in shop-floor politics. But to the extent that a masculine perspective has colored every aspect of working-class politics — a perspective based on men as "breadwinners" — it is also a source of weakness and division. Customarily this weakness has been "resolved" through forms of discrimination against working women: in the nineteenth century, for example, in the AFL's complaint that women workers threatened a man's right to a decent "family wage." Today, the weakness appears in the dilemmas faced by unions in dealing with cases of sexual harassment. In similar ways, paternalism has been a source of strength and limitation in Afro-Americans' day-to-day resistance to slavery and racism, as well as a politics of black power. Thus, a critique of masculinity from the perspective of working-class and Third World men must be directed both at a system of capitalist exploitation and white supremacy, and at their traditional forms of opposition to that system.

A comprehensive analysis of masculinity can therefore offer much to traditional left groups, by enabling them to reexamine bases of class and race consciousness. The men's movement is in principle committed to that kind of analysis: the sixth national conference in Milwaukee endorsed a series of resolutions passed by the Third World Task Force which dealt with broadening the movement beyond its present white, middle-class constituency, grappling with racism, and recognizing the distinctive styles of Third World and working-class manhood. But in practice, these remained future issues at the seventh conference. There were two workshops on racism, one on class, and two that mentioned capitalism. The mixed workshops also ignored these issues, assuming a uniform male experience. The conference was pervaded by what one black man here called an atmosphere of white liberalism. Multi-issue politics became a way of avoiding hard issues of race and class. But these issues must be confronted substantively if the movement is to attract working-class men and men of color.

Similarly, if the movement intends to keep and attract more gay male members, it will have to examine critically the distinctive features of their experience of masculinity. Gay men cannot rely on the staple references of masculinity to build their identities as men. If the ultimate reward for adherence to the standards of masculine behavior is, as the literature on the male role argues, "ownership" of a woman in marriage and family life, the bottom line of this reward is sexual possession. For men who acknowledge their sexual desires for other men, however, this "reward" obviously has less "value." These men and boys are forced to deal with the issue of what being a man means to them. Of course, they can resolve this question in numerous ways: outright acceptance of the standard; compensation for some perceived "lack" in themselves; rejection of the standard; inversion of it; or redefinition of masculinity. But in all these cases, gay men are forced to think consciously about masculinity in a way heterosexual men are not. Gay men are forced to invent their identities as gay men.

The question is itself a historical one. In the
colonial period of agrarian patriarchy, when all men were considered liable to sodomy, and marriage was an economic and religious necessity for all men, "homosexual" and "heterosexual" men lived very similar lives. Difference was not a question of "orientation" but a matter of "sinfulness" which applied to "unnatural" acts between persons of the opposite sex as well as persons of the same sex. Only in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries did a classification of these acts as different kinds of behavior emerge. It was in this period that singleness and other forms of companionate living became options in industrial cities, that masculinity became a cluster of attitudes inculcated into boys during "childhood" and "adolescence," that "proper" sexual desire became a central aspect of the male role, and — perhaps most important — that homosexuality and heterosexuality came to be seen as dichotomous conditions constituting the core of a man's being. As sexual "orientation" became a question of gender (and vice-versa), growing up male became a fundamentally different experience for gay and heterosexual men.¹⁹ The meaning of this difference needs to become part of a comprehensive analysis of masculinity and part of the antisexist political program.

Consideration of this difference seems crucial as the men's movement begins to deal with issues like pornography and with "fringe" practices such as S/M and adult-minor relationships. "Sexual objectification" is an old concept in movement writings; it is currently being used as a catch-all term to show that something like pornography is intrinsically related to violence and exploitation. "Sexual objectification" seems to cover almost any kind of attraction. (If you look at someone you do not know and find yourself "turned on," you are objectifying that person.) I cannot categorize my own sexual experiences so neatly. Does this mean that all "sex without feeling" (as if there were such a thing) is objectification? Could it be, rather, sexual play? As a gay man, I often experience being a sexual subject and a sexual object at the same time; and I experience this in a way which (in the best and, not coincidentally, most pleasurable instances) empowers both parties rather than one at the expense of the other. I do not think this experience is intrinsic or unique to same-sex relationships. I see it rather as a glimpse of what all "sexual" interactions and relationships might be like in a society where women truly have power of sexual self-determination (including the right to be sexual), where sexual orientation is not a principal criterion of differentiation (this does not mean that sexual preference will not exist), and where power is not divided along class and race lines. If the men's movement wants to build a theory and political program toward these goals, then it will have to develop a theory which does not connect sex and power in a knee-jerk way.

**Conclusion**

The need for a comprehensive analysis of masculinity which can inform antisexist politics seems the most pressing concern of the antisexist men's movement at this time. It gets a great deal of its importance from growing conflict between the antisexist men and the Free Men. There was a virtual news blackout on this conference, while the Free Men in Houston received quite a lot of national coverage in the *New York Times* and elsewhere. The only real coverage of the Tufts conference appeared in the *Boston Sunday Globe.*²⁰ This hatchet job described the conference, in no uncertain terms, as a bunch of fairies: from the erroneous claim that eighty percent of the participants were gay, to the repeated (and usually mistaken) references to "homosexual themes," to
the inaccurate statement that many heterosexual men were alienated and left the conference early, to the rather vulgar innuendo behind the claim that the participants were "confused, frustrated and lonely."

As one participant told me, the sensibility generated at this conference is threatening. Personal change, introspection, and play are important parts of this nontraditional sensibility. But sensibility alone cannot be the basis for an antisexist men's movement identity. For the network to grow as a movement for social change, it needs to deal with the political issues that have crystallized in the conflicts with the Free Men. And it needs to do that in a comprehensive way, without backing off from the uncomfortable questions raised by differences of class, race, and sexual orientation. This is crucial if the movement expects to exist in anything other than a small enclave of American society.

Footnotes

An earlier version of this article appeared in Gay Community News, July 11, 1981, pp. 8-9, 11. My thanks go to Cindy Patton of GCN and the Radical America board, especially Phyllis Ewen, for comments on that version.


An up-to-date bibliography is available from the Men's Studies Collection, Charles Hayden Humanities Library, MIT, Cambridge, Mass. 02139.


7. "An Opportunity to Explore Both Sides of the Gender-Liberation Coin," a letter from Robert Sides to participants of the seventh annual conference on Men and Masculinity, in possession of author (emphases in quote are in original). The national advisor of Free Men is Herb Goldberg, author of The Hazards of Being Male and The New Male: From Macho to Sensitive But Still All Male.


12. For a critique of the progressivist view, see Winter and
Robert, "Male Dominance, Late Capitalism and the Critique of Instrumental Reason."
13. See Pleck and Pleck, The American Man; and Dubbert, A Man's Place, both of which are fairly uncritical of current changes.

Joe Interrante is an RA editor and a member of the Boston-area Lesbian and Gay History Project.

Now that we have a movie star in the White House are you ready for a radical film magazine?

When a group of us from Boston were getting ready to go cut sugar cane in the projected ten-million-ton sugar harvest of 1970, we got a briefing on the Cuban economy from Arthur MacEwan. He was the only person we met for the next few months who supported the Cuban revolution but at the same time suggested that the ten-million-ton goal might not be achieved.

Revolution and Economic Development in Cuba brings the same mixture of support and detachment to bear on the sweep of Cuban economic development from 1959 until the late 1970s, with a special emphasis on the role of agriculture. The book focuses especially on the role played in Cuban development by decisions about economic equality, moral vs. material incentives, and hierarchical vs. democratic organization.

These are key issues for any country trying to build socialism, and therefore in socialist theory and debates today. Interestingly, MacEwan explains Cuba’s changing policies on these issues in terms of the immediate domestic needs and alternatives facing Cuban policymakers at various times. He does not base his explanation on the leaders’ ideologies, on factional struggles within the Cuban Communist Party, or on pressures from the Soviet Union.

Because of this approach, I found the book a welcome relief from most writing about Cuba in the 1970s and ’80s — whether by liberal academics or by left-wing critics — which is dominated by the urge to identify the good guys (if any) and bad guys. This book summarizes and evaluates the twists and turns of Cuba’s attempt to put together a socialist system which can meet its own economic needs. It is really about Cuba and not about something else.

The book does have certain limits, some self-imposed and some unavoidable. It is an interpretive essay, not a picture of the Cuban economy, and as a result there are not many people in it. We don’t learn how the revolution in agriculture has affected what an average Cuban gets to eat, or what concrete changes a sugar mill worker has seen in the pace of work and division of labor. The style is on the academic side, and therefore slow, though it does successfully avoid economics jargon and confine most statistics to tables that don’t interrupt the text.

Through no fault of the author’s, the publisher has so far limited the audience by marketing the book only in a ridiculously priced hardback edition. And, given the delays in getting information from Cuba and in commercial publishing, the book is not able to deal very much with the events of the past five years.

On the whole, I recommend the book to anyone who wants to come to grips with the problems and choices facing successful socialist revolutions in the Third World, as well as anyone who wants to understand the Cuban economy. Certainly anyone planning to visit Cuba should check it out, to avoid the common pitfall of assuming that the way things are is the way they have been since the Revolution took power. The dynamic of the past is easy to miss — and therefore the likelihood of significant changes in the future as well. This history of the evolution of the revolution in the economic sphere is an effective antidote, and good preparation for a trip.

Dick Cluster
BACK ISSUES OF RADICAL AMERICA

Vol. 14 #4 (July-Aug. '80): Workers' control and the press; Conversations with Italian auto workers; Pre-history of rock and roll; Utopian Socialists and Marxism; Edward Carpenter.
Vol. 14 #3 (May-June '80) Self-help movements; Battered women's shelters and feminism; Clerical workers and unionism, 1900-1930; Gramsci and Eurocommunism.
Vol. 14 #1 (Jan.-Feb. '80): Hollywood's Myth of the Working Class; Independent Film and Working Class History; Women Factory Workers in Malaysia; Analysis of the Hungarian Revolution; Reunion of Shoeworkers.
Vol. 13 #6 (Nov.-Dec. '79): David Montgomery on the Past and Future of Workers Control; Workers and Automation in the Computer Age; A Document of Black Feminism; Alexandra Kollontai, Biography of a Revolutionary.
Vol. 13 #3 (May-June '79): Andre Gorg on Nuclear Fascism; Sylvia Pankhurst: Biography of a British Socialist Feminist; the Iranian Left.
Vol. 13 #2 (March-June '79): Abortion Workers Strike; U.S. Political Cartooning; Youth Culture and Politics in Britain; Politics of Rank and File Organizing in the Teamsters.
Vol. 13 #1 (Jan.-Feb. '79): Pornography; Community Organizing in Boston; Future of the Auto Industry; Liberal Coalition Politics.
Vol. 12 #6 (Nov.-Dec. '78): Personal Accounts of Civil Rights and Farm Worker Organizing and a Rank and File Strike at GE.
Vol. 12 #5 (Sept.-Oct. '78): Black South in the Seventies; Women, Families, and Unions in Early Industrialization; Italy's Communist Party.
Vol. 12 #4 (July-Aug. '78): Sexual Harassment in Workplaces; Radical Social Service Work; Shopfloor Politics in an Auto Plant.

Vol. 15 #4 (July-Aug. '81): Sexual Harassment: Organizing and politics; What happened in Youngstown; Growth of the service sector; Happy times in mill city.
Vol. 15 #3 (May-June '81): Poland and the workers' movement, and documents of struggle; Amilcar Cabral; Hollywood blacklist.
Vol. 15 #2 (Jan.-April '81): see ad this issue. Special double issue on the New Right.
Vol. 14 #6 (Nov.-Dec. '80): Tupperware and women; Organizing clerical workers; Health and safety in a leather factory; Greensboro and the Civil Rights movement.
Vol. 14 #5 (Sept.-Oct. '80): Draft resistance: '60s to the '80s; Cuban photography; Social history of City College of New York; Women's bestsellers.

NOT AVAILABLE IN STRAIGHT BOOKSTORES!

Vol. 12 #2 (March-April '78): People’s Art and Social Change; the Wonderful White Paper; the Clerking Sisterhood; Frank Ackerman on Reformism and Sectarianism; Judy Syfers on Organizing Paraprofessionals.

Vol. 12 #1 - Vol. 11 #1 (Nov. '77 - Feb. '78): Sex, Family and the New Right; American Leninism in the ‘70’s; Industrial Park Poems; Women's Culture in Crisis; Remembering the Tet Offensive; Carl Boggs on Workers' Control.


Vol. 11 #4 (July-Aug. '77): Teamster Organizing; Origins of Mattachine Society; Hosea Hudson—Negro Communist in the Deep South.

Vol. 11 #3 (May-June '77): Professional-Managerial Class, Part 2; Dorothy Healey on the CP; Beauty Parlors; Popular Power in Portugal.

Vol. 11 #2 (March-April '77): Professional-Managerial Class, Part 1; Report on Spain; Interview with Barbara Kopple on “Harlan County.”

Vol. 11 #1 (Jan.-Feb. '77): Piven & Cloward on the Urban Crisis; Daytime TV; Women in the Army; Documentary Photography in the U.S.

Vol. 10 #6 (Nov.-Dec. '76): Italian Feminism; the Italian CP; Labour and Labor in Britain.


Vol. 10 #4 (July-Aug. '76): Wage Labor in the U.S.; the Working Class in Italy; Organizing the Unemployed.

Vol. 10 #3 (May-June '76): Stalinism and China; the GI Movement and the Volunteer Army; Bolsheviks and Women Workers.

Vol. 10 #2 (March-April '76): Seniority System in Industry; Women’s Work; Dialectics of Production and Reproduction.

Vol. 10 #1 (Jan.-Feb. '76): Organizing Office Workers; Race Relations among New Orleans Dockworkers; a New Look at “On the Waterfront.”

Vol. 9 #6 (Nov.-Dec. '75): Special Issue on Portugal; plus Analysis of Coalition of Labor Union Women.

Vol. 9 #3 (May-June '75): American Workers and African Liberation; Slavery and the Origins of Racism.

Vol. 9 #2 (March-April '75): Traditions of Class Struggle in the South; Tenant Organizing; Workers’ Commissions in Spain.

Vol. 9 #1 (Jan.-Feb. '75): Current Economic Crisis; League of Revolutionary Black Workers; IWW and Taylorism; Elizabeth Gurley Flynn.

Vol. 8 #6 (Nov.-Dec. '74): Racism and Busing in Boston; Immigrant Workers in Europe; Soviets and Factory Committees in Russian Revolution.


Vol. 8 #4 (July-Aug. '74): Feminization of Clerical Labor Force; Eugenics and Birth Control; Racism and Working Class Organizing.

Vol. 8 #3 (May-June '74): special issue on the Anti-War Movement.


Vol. 7 #2 (March-April '73): special issue on Class Struggle in Italy.

Vol. 7 #1 (Jan.-Feb. '73): issue on Popular Culture; Quilts; Donald Duck; “Dirty Harry.”


Vol. 6 #2 (March-April '72): Southern Textile Workers; Shop Floor Organizing.


Vol. 5 #6 (Nov.-Dec. '71): Theses on American Marxism; C.L.R. James on the Historical Basis for Present-Day Revolutionary Potential.

Cut out this box and mail to Radical America
38 Union Square, Somerville, MA, 02143

Name ____________________________

Address ____________________________
City __________ State ________ Zip __________

ISSUE (VOL. & NUMBER) QUANTITY COST

SUB TOTAL ______________________
Add 25% for mailing
Massachusetts residents add 5% Sales Tax

TOTAL ______________________
(Please include payment with order)
Sex, Family and the New Right (Linda Gordon and Allen Hunter) 75¢ Anti-feminism as a political force: its origins and expression in the US.
Women's Place in the Integrated Circuit (Rachael Grossman) $1.00 Asian women workers in multi-national high tech factories.
Sexual Harassment at the workplace (Mary Bularzik) 75¢ Historical notes on the experience of American working women.
Fleetwood Wildcat (John Lippert) $1.25 An autoworker's account of a walkout at the Fleetwood Fisher Body Plant and its implications for trade unionists.
American Leninism in the 1970s (Jim O'Brien) $1.00 Probing examination of the New Communist movement: its roots, issues and organizations.

Also available:
Racism and Busing in Boston by the Radical America editors, 1974, 50¢.
The Demand for Black Labor by Harold Baron, 75¢.
Sports and the American Empire by Mark Naison, 50¢.
Personal Histories of the early CIO edited by Staughton Lynd, 60¢.
Working Class Communism: A review of the literature by Brian Peterson, 35¢.
Race and Ethnicity in the Working Class by the editors, 60¢.
Woman's Place is at the Typewriter: The feminization of the clerical labor force by Margery Davies, 75¢.
Women in American Society by Ann Gordon, Mari Jo Buhle and Nancy Schrom Dye, $1.00.
Rosie the Riveter: Myths and Realities by Paddy Quick (also, "Working Women and WW II: Four narratives"), $1.25 (Xerox).
Counterplanning on the Shop Floor by Bill Watson, 25¢.

To order:
Send title and quantity and 25% to cover postage and handling to: Radical America, 38 Union Square, Somerville, MA 02143.
Bulk discount for 5 or more of same title (20% for institutions, 40% all other).
RADICAL AMERICA is an independent socialist-feminist journal, featuring the history and current developments in the working class, the role of women and Third World people, with reports on shop-floor and community organizing, the history and politics of radicalism and feminism, and debates on current socialist theory and popular culture.

Cut out this box and mail to: Radical America
38 Union Square, Somerville, MA 02143

Name __________________________
Address ______________________________________________________
City __________________________ State __________ Zip ______

☐ $30.00 sustaining subscriber*
☐ $12.00 (1 year — 6 issues)
☐ $8.00 if unemployed
☐ $22.00 (2 years)
☐ Add $3.00 per year for all foreign subscriptions

SPECIAL OFFER
SUBSCRIBE NOW AND RECEIVE "FACING REACTION", RA's SPECIAL DOUBLE ISSUE, FREE! ($4.00 value with a new one or two year subscription). Use this tear sheet.
☐ Yes, send me "Facing Reaction"

PAYMENT MUST ACCOMPANY ORDER

Make all checks payable to Radical America
*Checks for $30.00 or more are tax deductible and should be made payable to Capp Street Foundation and sent to Radical America at above address.
JUST WHEN THE NEW RIGHT THOUGHT IT WAS SAFE TO COME OUT OF THE WOODWORK...

"FACING REACTION" — A SPECIAL DOUBLE ISSUE OF RADICAL AMERICA

Featuring:
- IN THE WINGS: NEW RIGHT ORGANIZATION AND IDEOLOGY by Allen Hunter
- THE CONTINUING BURDEN OF RACE: A REVIEW by Manning Marable
- ABORTION: WHICH SIDE ARE YOU ON? by Ellen Willis
- THE LONG STRUGGLE FOR REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS by Linda Gordon
- THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENTS: FEMINIST AND ANTIFEMINIST by Barbara Ehrenreich
- RETREAT FROM THE SOCIAL WAGE: HUMAN SERVICES IN THE 80s by Ann Withorn

also, THE NEW TERRAIN OF AMERICAN POLITICS by Jim O'Brien; ECONOMIC CRISIS AND CONSERVATIVE POLICIES: US CAPITALISM IN THE 80s by Jim Campen; DEMOCRACY, SOCIALISM AND SEXUAL POLITICS by the editors of Gay Left; and, Noam Chomsky and Michael Klare on COLD WAR II and US INTERVENTIONISM IN THE THIRD WORLD.

Plus, BILLBOARDS OF THE FUTURE!!!

INDIVIDUAL COPIES OF THIS 160-PAGE DOUBLE ISSUE:
$4.00 (plus 50¢ postage). SPECIAL BULK RATE AVAILABLE:
40% Discount for 5 or more copies (only $2.40 per copy). Useful
for classroom, study group, or as a fundraiser for conferences and
forums.

TO ORDER: Alternative Education Project, 38 Union Square,
Somerville, MA 02143 or call (617) 628-6585.