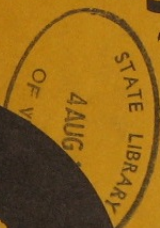


Australian Left Review

No. 65

August 1978



**Democracy in Queensland
Women and Labour
Television**

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IN THIS ISSUE

Queensland secretary of the Building Workers' Union, Hugh Hamilton, discusses anti-democratic trends in Queensland and the struggle against them.

Seven participants in the Women and Labour History Conference discuss its successes and failures and its place in the development of the women's movement.

We reprint, from the American journal *Socialist Revolution*, a socialist analysis of television by Daniel Ben-Horin. The role of TV in reflecting and shaping popular culture and ideology has long been recognised as a key weapon of capitalist hegemony. But key theories of the media have been few and far between. Ben-Horin does get beyond such approaches and for this reason we are publishing an edited version of his paper.

A member of a small socialist group in West Germany writes on the anti-nuclear power movement there and describes the massive repression and intimidation of it by the state authorities.

David McKnight reviews Regis Doherty's book on socialist strategy in Latin America, *A Critique of Arms*. While the issues discussed arise from the Latin American situation, they do have relevance to the problems of socialist transition in advanced capitalist countries.

Comment and *Economic Notes* complete the issue.

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COMMENT

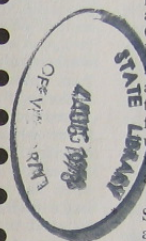
As is to be expected in times of social crisis there is a growing trend in ruling circles in the capitalist democracies to adopt authoritarian and repressive methods to cope with the problems besetting them. This trend takes a variety of forms, including:

- * Covert support for, or turning a blind eye to, extremist rightwing groups like the National Front.
- * The 'creeping fascism' tactic of imposing partial constraints on democratic rights, as exemplified by recent events in Queensland. (See the article by Hugh Hamilton in this ALR.) Such measures not only restrict particular rights; they are also designed to create a climate of tension which can be used as an excuse for further repression. And they are a useful thermometer to gauge public reaction and assess just what people will accept.

Sophisticated propaganda campaigns against unions in the name of democracy. This approach uses ceaseless media hammering of the idea that union leaders 'run the country' and force their members to do things like strike. It skilfully plays on some legitimate discontent amongst workers over the bureaucratic nature of unions (the worst offenders though, in this regard, are the most docile industrially). The 'Right to Work' legislation being adopted in the Liberal/NCP states is a further refinement, cloaking an anti-democratic law in a seemingly democratic garb.

- * Increasing the powers and organisation of the various 'security' services under the pretext of anti-terrorism but with the real aim of increasing surveillance and intimidation of all opposition forces.

All these and other similar moves add up to a cautious, step-by-step strategy of containing dissent and isolating the most dangerous opposition forces preparatory to destroying or neutralising them. The left should not underestimate the dangers it and the broader working class and progressive movements face if the growing climate of



authoritarianism and repression intimidates people or, worse still, convinces them ideologically that such measures are necessary to solve problems such as inflation and unemployment.

It would be a mistake to believe that the conscious aim of the ruling class at present is to establish some new form of fascism. Fascism, 'the openly terroristic rule of the big bourgeoisie', means the denial of all democratic liberties; civil, political and industrial. Historically, it arose out of the economic and social crisis following World War I, a crisis much more severe than the present one, at any rate so far. Since that time more advanced and sophisticated tools of social control have been developed in all areas: economy, ideology and culture, politics and physical force. So far in the advanced capitalist democracies (with the possible exception of Italy) the balanced use of these has been sufficient to maintain order of the system. The manipulative use of parliamentary democracy and clever use of the modern mass media are two examples.

Naturally, as the effectiveness of these tools diminishes so does the trend to authoritarianism and repression increase. In this situation the struggle for democratic rights of all kinds assumes great importance for the left in both a defensive and a strategic sense. A strategy for the democratic movement and an analysis of the role of the democratic struggle in the more general struggle for socialism are therefore essential.

A good starting point is the assertion, which can be backed up by a deal of historical evidence as well as current experience, that antidemocratic and authoritarian trends are both necessary and logical for the ruling class in situations such as the present. At a time of crisis it is difficult if not impossible for an establishment to be as tolerant of dissent and opposition as in more stable times. In the first place, this is so because contention over policy and directions for society is objectively more dangerous when the system is in difficulties. There is less room to manoeuvre, it is more vital than usual that the ruling class policy be implemented exactly without influence by the needs of other classes and opposition movements, if they 'get out of hand', they may strike a deeper chord of discontent than in 'good times'. And in the second place it is

so because subjectively a ruling class at such times feels more insecure and therefore less tolerant, whether or not its fears of what might happen if it doesn't clamp down are justified. It can't afford to take the risk, as it were.

It should be remembered too that existing democratic rights are not simply 'bourgeois'; many of them were not invented or easily conceded by the bourgeoisie. Rather they were the outcome of struggles, often long and bitter, by the 'lower orders' of the newly established capitalist society: workers, peasants, women, etc. Universal suffrage for men of all classes and votes for women are two good examples. Even more is this true of workers' class rights, such as the right to form unions and job organisations, conduct strikes and so on. Many of these rights were forced on the bourgeoisie, which accepts them only so long as it has to or while the exercise of those rights does not seriously threaten it. The ruling class always hankers after 'the good old days' when the masses had even less rights than they do now. Thus, in good times or bad, the tendency of the ruling class is to restrict and limit democracy.

This by itself has important implications for socialist strategy but there is a further, perhaps more important point. The ruling class never wants an expansion of democracy. It fears, denounces as subversive and fights tooth and nail against democratisation at any level of society, whether it be a more democratic electoral system or more rights for workers on the job. For these reasons, struggles for both the defence and extension of democratic rights are potentially anti-capitalist, especially at times of crisis when ruling class authoritarianism is heightened.

As part of a socialist strategy, democratic struggles are important in several respects: ideological, educational and organisational. Ideological, because one of the central myths of the system is that it is free and democratic, as opposed to socialism which is supposed to be inevitably dictatorial and bureaucratic. Any struggle which helps people to see the limitations of bourgeois democracy therefore plays a part in breaking down the ideological hegemony of the system. This is made all the more important by the fact that the lack of democracy in industrialised socialist countries, especially the Soviet Union,

makes the myth of a free and democratic capitalism versus an unfree socialism more believable.

The educative value of democratic struggles is that participants in them may more easily find out the real views of the establishment on democracy. This happened in a striking way in the movement against Kerr's sacking of Whitlam but it can also happen, for example, at a job level. Quite minor demands for worker involvement in decision-making meet with very hostile responses. Most businesses in Australia at present oppose workers' participation, let alone workers' control.

Democratic struggles are also important to preserve basic organisational rights (job, union, party and movement) without which there is no possibility of any real opposition to a powerful and well-organised ruling class. These basic organisational rights are under strong attack at workplace level and through legislation like the 'Right to Work' laws and the recent laws introduced by all the Lib/NCP governments to destroy the Australian Union of Students. These defensive struggles are important in themselves to preserve workers' organisational and political strength which in the last analysis is the only real barrier to authoritarian threats. But they can also, in some circumstances, lead to offensive struggles.

Seen in a still wider perspective democratic struggles can develop a 'transitional' aspect; that is they can begin to take the movement out of the narrow confines of the system. This is especially so if the expansion of democracy can be raised alongside defence of existing rights. In this connection, the origins of the term 'Social Democracy' should be remembered. This term was accepted by all the socialist parties up to World War I, when the sellout to national chauvinism by the majority gave it such a bad name that the left, in the first instance the Bolsheviks, chose the name communist instead. The term originally distinguished the working class parties from bourgeois democratic parties. It was meant to convey that they stood for a democracy going beyond political democracy (right to vote for a parliament, etc.) by extending it into other areas of social life, especially economic life, where the capitalists had all the rights and

'votes' and the workers virtually none. The qualitative extension of democracy could only be achieved through economic and social democratisation. This concept is the link between the original formulation of the aims of socialism and the present-day concept of self-management socialism. The superior democracy of self-management socialism compared to either capitalism or bureaucratic socialism is a significant part of its appeal and may be for many a way into development of a more rounded socialist consciousness.

Given these general points, how should the left approach current democratic struggles? In the first place, some dangers in the present situation should not be ignored. While the conservative forces have a healthy respect for the fighting potential of the trade unions and other mass movements they have also shown a capacity to carefully test out the limits of this potential. Instead of head on confrontation with all the movement at once, there is a series of moves in one place and then another, with the results of each move assessed before moving further. In some important respects this strategy has succeeded and there has not been nearly the response there should have. A good example is the lack of a concerted union response, in action, to attacks on the unemployed by governments, business and the media. And the response to the blatantly undemocratic street march laws in Queensland has not been what it should be. There seems to be a numbed acceptance by many ordinary people, either because they accept Bjelke-Petersen's views or because they feel intimidated and that nothing can be done to change things. Either way, the future is black unless a very broad and powerful movement can be mobilised.

That requires, as in other struggles, an end to all forms of left purism and a reaching out to all potential allies, starting on their terms and in their language. For reasons discussed above, it is important to the left that the democratic movement succeed even if only in the limited defensive aspect. Whether the movement goes beyond defence to a struggle for expanded democracy depends on such things as how the establishment responds and how well, or badly, the left works in the movement.

DEMOCRATIC STRUGGLES IN QUEENSLAND

HUGH HAMILTON

A long shadow hangs over Queensland's usually sunny skies — the shadow of harsh and systematic government repression of the workers and the people. It is a shadow that could envelop all of Australia unless the ordinary people act together to dispel it.

Rights taken for granted in most parts of Australia have been denied in Queensland, epitomised in tragi-comedy at the time of writing by the arrest of thirteen Christians for singing hymns in a park on the Sabbath.

A one-man band government — acting in collusion with the joint mining interests which gain most from the exploitation of Queensland's rich mineral resources — is tightening a noose around Queensland democracy.

For long, the Queensland government directed its spite and vindictiveness most of all against social minorities, all the while preparing itself for, and conditioning the public to accept, wholesale attacks on the trade union and labor movement.

The stage was set with repressive amendments to the Conciliation and Arbitration act late in 1976. Next came the prosecution of union officials under an ancient part of the Criminal Code.

Then, civil prosecution of unions for damages arising out of industrial dispute. Now, the phoney 'Right to Work' legislation — Joh's plan for wrecking unions.

There are many public figures who have referred to Queensland as a Police State. Others have suggested that the actions taken by the government, by the Premier of Queensland, are leading to a form of creeping fascism. The latest to make such comments was the leader of the Australian Democrats, Senator-elect Don Chipp. He said:

"I am not paranoid about a police state, but Queensland is coming perilously close to one."

Mr. Chipp gave 10 stages of how Queensland was approaching Germany of the 1920s and '30s. They ranged from gaining power with a minority group, through gerrymandering the electorate with the help of the coalition, to passing laws designed to provoke chaos and incite violence.

Mr. H. Tarlo, Professor of Law, University of Queensland, referring to Mr. Chipp's comments, and the situation generally, had this to say in a letter to the press on April 24, 1978:

Mr. Don Chipp (Courier Mail, April 18) is right about the Premier's demeaning of Queensland.

Whatever truth there may have been about this boast in years gone by, it is unfortunate that recently he has been, as Mr. Chipp puts it, 'isolating you from the rest of Australia by his outrageous conduct.'

Professor Tarlo went on to say:

The dangers inherent in this style of leadership are obvious. One hesitates to use labels in the way that the Premier does, but if level-headed conservatives are 'Communists', it may not be too far off the mark to describe the Premier's actions as tending towards that brand of right-wing extremism known as 'fascism'.

In trying to find a solution to the problem he promoted the following:

The main hope of the people of Queensland is that the Liberal Members of Parliament, including Cabinet Ministers (if they can forego their 'perks' for a short while) will withdraw their support from the Premier and the Coalition.

It is a great pity that the opportunity of reforming the gerrymandered electoral system, by a temporary alliance of Liberal and A.L.P. members, was lost at the time when the present coalition government was in the process of negotiation. This gerrymander is the root cause of our troubles.

However, it may even now not be too late to save Queensland from the disaster which may befall it if Mr. Bjelke-Petersen is allowed to proceed to his logical conclusion.

The Premier of our state is also well known for his comments on political, social, economic and moral issues. In fact, many of his quotations are quite well known. On uranium, the Premier, Joh Bjelke-Petersen, has this to say:

What's the man in the street got to do with it?

or —

We won't be able to sit on uranium firstly because it would not be right and secondly because it would be wrong.

On the economy —

The 40 hour week has given the opportunity to many to while away their time in hotels.

On women —

My pilot is a woman and some of my ministers' secretaries are women — we're right across the board in this regard.

On Aborigines —

When I get accused of this one (prejudice against Aborigines) I like to say to the accuser, and usually he has long hair, 'You're just the sort of man I'm looking for, dedicated, keen, devoted to the cause.'

I wonder if you'd mind if I moved a family of Aborigines to a house in your street.

On education —

Someone in the Education Department does not seem to know what the government wants children to be taught.

On flying and fatherhood —

Right before they (his children) went to school they'd fly around the State and even down to Brisbane with me, strapped alongside my little single-engined aeroplane.

Joh's single-handed government and the things that have happened in Queensland in recent years, led Hugh Lunn the author of JOH to state the following in the opening paragraph of the preface of his book:

Once upon a time an academic said to me: 'In thirty years people will wonder what happened in Queensland in the seventies. It will all sound like a fairy tale — a man ruling with 19 per cent of the vote, a state politician whose manoeuvres removed a federal government.'

For decades in Queensland the country vote was a Labor vote. The impact of technological change altered this and it led to the dominance of the Country Party (now known as the National Party) which took the place of Labor and won the support of the country dweller in the country towns.

Queensland has a notorious gerrymander and this is not a new phenomenon to Queensland either. The gerrymander has been used to keep government in office, whether Labor or the National-Liberal Party coalition. The gerrymander helped keep the Labor government in office until the time of the split in 1957, when the breakaway Queensland Labor Party was formed.

This is how the present government in Queensland operates. Joh Bjelke-Petersen and his National Party colleagues with 27.2 of the votes have 35 seats. The Liberal Party with 25.5 of the votes has 24 seats, and the Australian Labor Party with 42.8 per cent of the votes has 23 seats.

Due to the gerrymander, one vote west of the Dividing Range is worth nearly three in Brisbane and the provincial cities. As Denis

Butler said in his controversial *Courier Mail* article in August 1976:

Sanity doesn't count when 25 per cent of the votes gets 50 per cent of the seats and God's on your side.

Before the 1974 elections, the National Party ruled with only 19 per cent of the votes and could do so even now with as few as 17 per cent of the votes.

In explaining the Bjelke-Petersen phenomenon, firstly it must be conceded that Queensland has a large, traditionally rightwing country and provincial town population. The decentralised nature of the state reinforces this. Ten of Australia's 24 most populous cities are in Queensland and the Queensland population living outside Brisbane is greater than the population of either South Australia or Western Australia.

Bjelke-Petersen has wilfully stimulated base reaction and acted as a mouthpiece for it.

His words sound as if they come from an ignorant and inarticulate man. (I personally think he has both these qualities.) However, he also has animal cunning and has proved beyond doubt that he is a stayer and a survivor of many challenges. He has the largest public relations force of any government in the country. Cabinet has the services of 54 salaried journalists.

The Joh Bjelke-Petersen phenomenon is not new in Queensland — in fact it goes back many decades. Personalities like Joh Bjelke-Petersen have always been part of the political scene and men of his ilk have had top positions in government, the Public Service, institutions of the state and, for that matter, in the trade unions.

Are Joh Bjelke-Petersen's political attitudes and actions so different from those of people like Vincent Gair, Katter Senior, Walsh, the Treasurer in the Labor government in the '50s (who lent support to Vince Gair and the Queensland Labor Party and then became an independent), "Bombshell" Barnes of Bundaberg, Tom Aitkens and many others? Similar men with similar philosophies were Commissioner Bishop and Commissioner Bauer. One could go on and on.

So Joh Bjelke-Petersen is not an entirely new phenomenon. He just seems worse than the others. The shade of difference is that Joh

Bjelke-Petersen has made a deliberate attempt to present an image of a strong upholder of State rights, populist conservative prejudice and God-fearing which appeals to a substantial section of the people in the community, both town and country, but particularly to people in the isolated country areas, of whom there are many in Queensland.

In the past decade, various issues have confronted the trade unions, the labor movement and the democratic rights movement in Queensland.

The campaign against the war in Viet Nam which brought about a re-assessment by many in the community, brought a questioning of the values of society. It also saw repressive measures by the institutions of power to counter opposition to the war.

Here we saw another Queensland first - the use of the law and order Riot Squad armed with batons 2ft 4 ins. in length to deal with those who dared to demonstrate on Queensland soil against Australia's involvement in the Viet Nam war.

Then there was the State of Emergency during the Springbok tour, aimed against people who wanted to come together and express their opposition to racism and apartheid.

The trade unions and the anti-war movement, on both these issues, were later proved right and they are now respected matters of concern to none other than the Prime Minister, Mr. Fraser — who has caught up with the stand that was taken by people like myself and others in the trade union and peace movements some ten years ago.

Bjelke-Petersen has made many threats in recent years to bring down a State of Emergency as part of his union-bashing campaign when unions are in dispute.

Then there was that blot on the consciences of all decent Queenslanders, indeed, all decent Australians, in the search and destroy incident at Cedar Bay and the subsequent cover-up by the government of the actions of the police involved.



Map of Queensland which shows in stark geographical outline the extent of electoral territory held by the National Party after their landslide 1974 victory. National Party seats are in black. Liberal, Labor and independents held the rest between them — mostly in Brisbane. Amazingly, just 20 years earlier the ALP held every seat west of the Great Dividing Range.

The state government's attack on the ABC TDT program because it dared to show the facts and question publicly the ethics of the Queensland police force and the responsibility of the minister concerned with the search and destroy operation at Cedar Bay and the cover-up that happened subsequent to that — burning of the reports, the extradition of one of the main witnesses to Western Australian, the outright lies told by Police Minister Newbery and the Premier.

November 1976 saw the sacking of three teachers in North Queensland for having pot in their possession and the vindictiveness, the arrogance, the brutality and hypocrisy that accompanied the government's attack against the three young people, the Teachers' Union and the trade union movement generally.

It was at that time that Ray Costello, secretary of the Teachers' Union warned the Queensland and Australian people of the development of creeping fascism in Queensland and urged them to stand up and be counted and to take counter-action against the policies of the government, to support the Teachers' Union in their struggle against double penalties and the hypocrisy of the government in its attitude to the use of marihuana.

Then there was the sacking of Police Commissioner Whitrod and the appointment of Terry Lewis.

Joh Bjelke-Petersen then decided it was time to get stuck into the unions.

There was the Zaphir case and the ultimate conviction of Ted Zaphir, organiser for the Storemen and Packers' Union, by the use of the Criminal Code. The implications of this were enormous. Zaphir was charged with "threatening to cause detriment". When applied to the sensitive area of industrial relations this can be so widely interpreted that any employee, union delegate or official who threatens to strike or to organise a strike or a ban can be so charged.

In this sense, the Zaphir case decision threatens the entire basis of trade union activity in Queensland.

September '77 saw the government-influenced police provocation at the trade union rally called to express solidarity with Ted Zaphir and to voice opposition against the amendments to the Arbitration Act and the use of the Crimes Act.

The 6,000 trade unionists gathered at the Roma Street Forum were surrounded by 1,000 police daring the unionists to challenge the new right to march legislation by staging a march. The government was bitterly disappointed. The rally was a tremendous success and displayed a high degree of responsibility and discipline by those responsible for organising the demonstration and by the rank and file.

We also have the attitude of the Premier, obviously supported by his government, that the "police can do no wrong".

Numerous cases of police brutality and of police operating outside a normal code of ethics have been proved but Joh Bjelke-Petersen comes to their defence and the inquiries are either squashed or excuses are made for the police. They are white-washed and exonerated.

What of the Inspector of Police who bashed a young student on the head?

Joh Bjelke-Petersen prevented Police Commissioner Whitrod from conducting an inquiry. Instead of being disciplined, the Inspector was promoted and in the Queen's New Year Honors list, he received the Queen's Medal.

More recently we have the banning of street marches. On September 4, the weekend before the Zaphir trial, from the vastness of his Kingaroy property, Bjelke-Petersen off-handedly announced:

Don't bother applying for a permit. You won't get one. That's government policy now.

The Premier was addressing himself to the broad spectrum of people organising an anti-uranium rally and march on October 22, as part of a national mobilisation against the mining and export of Australian uranium.

The rally took place. There was an attempt to march resulting in approximately 500 arrests.

The revelation that Bjelke-Petersen determined government policy surprised no one. His declaration from his Kingaroy home was law in three days.

Then there is the proposed "Right to Work" legislation which poses a danger and threat to the whole trade union movement, greater than any other issue it has confronted in Queensland.

When one goes deeper into the activities of the government and the undemocratic nature of the government, one can cite further issues such as interference in the Education Department, the banning of MACOS and SEMP, the education programs for high schools, programs used by educationalists in every other state in Australia and also used by the private schools' system in Queensland, but banned

for use in government schools.

Recently, we saw the Premier manipulate Cabinet to spend \$200 million more of the public purse for the establishment of the new power house at Tarong rather than Millmerran. The collective knowledge of the experts of the various government departments commissioned to bring forth recommendations on where the power house should be built was rejected by Joh Bjelke-Petersen and his "Running Dog" Conzinc Riotinto, who never for one moment thought of it being anywhere else than Tarong and Tarong is where it is to be.

One just begins to think that he has gone to his limits when all of a sudden another front is opened.

This time it was Aurukun and Mornington Island — the sacking of the Uniting Church administration on the Aboriginal reserves, and the announcement by the Queensland Aboriginal and Island Affairs Minister, Mr. Charles Porter, of the take-over of the affairs of the reserves.

Then there was the subsequent altercation with the Federal government, where their "pusyfooting" once again gave Joh a victory at the expense of the rights of the Aboriginal people.

The "fly in the ointment" was no other than Joh's old pal, Conzinc Riotinto, the "under the surface" issue at Aurukun being the control of the rich bauxite deposits for which CRA has the mining lease. In the midst of the battle for the control of Aboriginal land, state rights versus centralised government, implications about Queensland seceding just as a diversion, Joh's cops, Hogan's Heroes, Inspector Hogan, Special Branch chief, arrested clergymen for humming in the streets on the Sabbath.

The *Telegraph* of April 10, 1978, reported the incident above as follows:

News of the arrests made national and international news this morning and tightened the pressure of all Queensland parliamentarians to force the government to reverse its tough attitude against the marches of dissent.

The news reports told Australians and overseas listeners that the clergymen had been ordered by police to stop

singing hymns in Adelaide Street, City, and later in Queens Park, George Street.

The police also told the protesters to stop humming the hymns and then stop whistling.

The three clergymen were arrested on charges of having failed to obey a police direction and with having resisted arrest.

Free enterprise cashed in on this tragic event and marketed a new perfume in Queensland called "JOH" (to stop you humming in the streets).

There is a danger of Queensland creeping into fascism by default and the ineffectiveness of the trade unions' and the labor movement's opposition to this state of affairs is worrying.

I must qualify this by saying that the stance of the Liberal Party has considerably aided Bjelke-Petersen in his rise to absolute power and his use of dictatorial and undemocratic legislation.

On the ban on the right to march issue, differences have surfaced - many in the Liberal Party. The president and secretary of the Queensland Branch of the Liberal Party are opposed to the law banning marches. They want an appeal to a magistrate instead of to the commissioner of Police.

However, their outspoken criticism and opposition has prompted Joh to respond in the same way as he responded to the Bishops and other leading churchmen on the same issue **They're all a bunch of Commos.**

When a former Miss Australia (Mrs. Bonner) an ardent anti-uranium supporter asked him questions about civil liberties during the state elections in November last year, in reply about the November 22 rally, his reply was:

If you fly with the crows you get shot with the crows.

The *Courier Mail* of April 17, 1978 reported that the Premier (Mr. Bjelke-Petersen) attacked the Liberal Party state president (Mrs. McComb) and state director (Mr. Leggoe) over the right to march issue. He accused them of "hoodwinking" Queenslanders and allying themselves with the Communist Party to give Brisbane's streets back to the mob. He said:

The Liberal executive has burnt its fingers badly in the march issue.

It is the supreme irony that the Liberal Party executive has proved the Communist Party's best ally in attempts to give Brisbane's streets back to the mob.

And Mr. Knox, the Deputy Premier, in his reply to the criticism stated:

There can be no inference drawn that the views of Liberal Party officials are in any way connected with those of the Communist Party.

For long the Liberals in Queensland have regarded Joh Bjelke-Petersen as a fool who would soon bring himself undone. They have been prepared to sit back and accept the fringe benefits.

Some in their ranks realised that this was a mistaken stand to take but their realisation came too late. Other than for one or two skirmishes, the Liberal Party generally gives whole-hearted support to Bjelke-Petersen's leadership.

Catherine West, a long respected academic of the Liberal Party, at the Sherrington Memorial Lecture in 1976 said the following about her Queensland colleagues:

In Queensland the Liberals have often seemed to suffer from what you would call the oppressed minority syndrome. Entrapped within the coalition, the minority party has displayed a kind of love-hate relationship with its dominating partner.

On the one hand the Liberals have resented the Country (now National) Party and wished to be free of it. On the other hand they have too readily allowed their political reference point to be the National Party rather than themselves.

In other words, politics in both wings of the Queensland Liberal Party has been far too much taken up with being pro-or anti-National Party rather than being pro-Liberal.

Now to the happenings since Bjelke-Petersen proclaimed the ban on political marches.

This period has seen the emergence of an organised campaign for the right to march, the formation of the Civil Liberties Co-

ordinating Committee and the attempts to march have displayed courage and dedication by thousands of young people who have been in the forefront of the campaign.

There have been more than 1,200 arrests, tens of thousands of dollars in bail and fines.

The situation is the same right throughout Queensland. Public forums expressing dissent are spied on by Special Branch cops while the presence of uniformed police intimidate those present and prevent others (because of the fear of going on the Special Branch dossier) from joining in.

To refer to one simple action by a young dentist residing in Bundaberg, a town 350 kilometres north of Brisbane This young man was concerned at the denial of civil liberties in Queensland so he applied for a permit for one person to march in a deserted bush street at 2.30 a.m. He was refused. He later did walk that street He and his dog at 3 a.m. in the morning accompanied by a car load of cops.

One car load of cops, though, fades into insignificance when one considers the police presence at recent demonstrations and public meetings in Queensland.

Just to talk about a march brings forth hundreds of police as has been the case on Brisbane's two university campuses.

There are estimates that it has cost the Queensland government approximately one-quarter of a million dollars to maintain the police presence at public rallies since this seven months' old law.

At the recent National Anti-Uranium mobilisation, on April 1, the report in the *Sunday Mail* of April 2, 1978 was as follows:

One-third of the Queensland police force spent yesterday, April Fool's Day, in pouring rain at an anti-uranium demonstration in Brisbane.

There were an estimated 800 police in Brisbane and another 200 at Warwick, the Gold Coast, Toowoomba and Nambour.

Yesterday's police exercise will cost a minimum of \$30,000 wages, without transport, dry cleaning, and food. Some police came from as far away as Maryborough.

Following a recent vigil at the Hamilton Container Depot where uranium was being shipped out of Australia, the following security plan was drawn up for the Port of Brisbane as reported in the *Sunday Mail* of April 2, 1978:

Police have drawn up a tight security plan for uranium ore ships visiting the Port of Brisbane.

The plan makes it virtually impossible for anti-uranium demonstrators to get anywhere near the ships, by land or water.

Until a few weeks ago it would have been relatively easy for extremists to interfere with a ship's passage up and down the river, or to daub anti-uranium slogans on berthed ships.

But the new security plan, devised after an anti-uranium demonstration at Hamilton container terminal on March 6, will ensure the ships are under constant surveillance from the moment they enter the river.

Water police will stop every private craft near the shipping channel when an ore ship is arriving or leaving and ask the occupants' business.

Two 80 kmh Sharkcut launches will escort each ship up and down the river, keeping private craft well clear.

In addition, police will search the wharf area and the area on the opposite bank before any uranium ship ties up.

In March a small boat passed the area and was pounced on. Sergeant Munn of the Water Police said of the incident:

It got our adrenalin going, but it turned out to be a bloke testing a boat he had just bought.

He thought it would be a quiet time to test his boat and he got quite a surprise when the spotlights hit him.

Following the Special Federal Unions Conference held in February this year, the trade union movement has virtually opted out of the struggle against the exporting of uranium.

As for the opening up of new mines the ACTU executive recommendation endorsed by a Special Unions Conference (and endorsed by the majority of state Trades and Labor Councils), when stripped of the

"gobbledegook" gives the pale green light to go ahead and open up new mines.

The example given regarding security measures at the Hamilton Container Depot should be given serious thought by all in the trade union movement. This action is only the beginning of the draconian measures that will be taken by governments of the future if Australia develops along the lines of a nuclear technological society.

Such a society will bring with it a massive security system that will impinge on people's privacy and civil rights. The ban on street marches is a clear warning of this. The struggle against uranium mining and uranium export is synonymous with the struggle for civil rights. It is for these reasons that I strongly believe that the Australian trade union movement made the wrong decision when it gave the OK for the export of uranium and a pale green light for the opening up of new mines, and they must get back into the struggle.

The situation is getting worse, not better. The Queensland government has been clear and systematic in its curtailment of rights and the suppression of opposition. It has moved in stages: first making the police force the open instrument of the ruling party, appreciating well which side its bread was buttered. The next stage was to step up the attack on minorities and dissenters around emotive labels and issues — hippies, drugs, dole bludgers. Then the main thrust of the attack was shifted to the mass labor movement and the trade unions.

Suppression of opposition has one universal feature everywhere — once started it develops its own logic and momentum. One restriction leads to another, each requiring more penalties and more police powers to enforce it.

Strengthening of police powers was foreshadowed in the Criminal Law Inquiry Report, new industrial legislation was promised in the election platforms of the coalition parties. And given the character of the government's methods and objectives, the restrictions on the right to protest marches may well reveal themselves as merely the first step towards a more draconian muzzling of opposition.

The democratic movement must ask itself how further steps in this direction can be prevented.

WOMEN & LABOUR CONFERENCE



The Women and Labour History Conference was held at Sydney's Macquarie University in May 1978. More than 60 papers were presented on the themes — The Experience of Work; Australian Feminism; The Politics of Sexuality; Popular Culture; Religion and Methodology.

Here, seven of the 2,000 participants discuss their impressions of the conference. The group includes communist party and non-communist party women. They are: Rosemary Pringle, Lesley Lynch, Sue Wills (non-communist party) and Eva Bacon, Pat Ranald, Carmel Shute, Joyce Stevens (CPA).

R: It was the best women's conference I've been to - but I don't think we should be too self-congratulatory about it because it was very clearly a beginning rather than any sort of a triumph. It was good because it was non-sectarian in ways that previous conferences have not been — instead of setting ourselves

up to defend positions we were, for the first time, trying to come to terms with the present crisis and we were looking largely to historical material to do that.

In a hesitant way we were trying to talk about real problems. It was both exciting and depressing to feel that the women's

movement is still so fucked, that we've got a hell of a lot to do to organise politically. Some were still thinking in terms of individual actions and that the women's movement or a conference is the place to discuss what they were doing, rather than a place where the movement itself could get politically organised. But the frustration was that, at times, we almost started to jump the hurdle to get to that stage, to start talking about organisation.

L: I think it was the most interesting part of the conference, and a lot of that had to do with the historical nature of it; also the interesting tensions in the structure of it as people tried to cope with what has been variously described as 1,000 or 2,000 people over the three days. That sometimes worked, it was never a disaster and it sometimes worked quite well.

P: I'd like to take up the point about was it a women's movement conference. Rosemary was saying that it almost got to the point of being a conference of the women's movement to discuss the political organisation of the women's movement. I think the reason it didn't get there was because it was trying to do both things. It was trying to be both a conference at which academic historians could discuss their work on women's history and also a conference about ordinary women talking about their experiences in a non-academic sense.

Because it was both these things, there were conflicts and the biggest conflict and contradiction still there is between people doing that kind of theoretical and academic work and activists or non-academic women. But what impressed me about the conference was that, even though those conflicts are still there, we've got further in tackling that kind of dichotomy between theory and practice and the dichotomy between intellectuals and activists and non-intellectuals than in other left movements that I've been involved with. I don't know of any other conference where you'd have so many non-academic people giving papers about their own experiences and such an attempt as was made by academics to speak plainly so that they could be understood by non-academics, even though people still complained about this problem. That's the direction in which we should be working — a situation in which

everyone's an activist and a theorist, and I think that in the women's movement we're getting there, although we've still got a long way to go — people still aren't conscious enough about it.

R: It was impressive that there was a lot less theory bashing this time, and the occasions when there was a bit of theory bashing or academic bashing, it was totally justified by confused presentation of papers, particularly in the Problems of Feminism session.

J: One of the reasons why that happened was because the conference didn't attempt to separate off theoreticians from activists. If you structure a conference that's deliberately pointed towards theory, many activists select themselves off; they stay away because they don't see themselves as theoreticians and they don't see that they can take part in that process. I thought it was very interesting how women who obviously hadn't thought very much at all about a large number of the questions that people were writing papers and developing theory about became so involved in the process of developing and putting to a test those ideas. In that respect, too, it was non-sectarian. That was an important feature of the conference — it had breadth and yet the politics were quite radical.

C: That was the most important thing about the conference. It did bring together the theorists and what some people call the practitioners, and that was the real strength of the conference and we've all gained from that. There were some women in Melbourne who were really worried that the conference wasn't going to be academic enough and we had a debate about this and someone suggested that the theoreticians ought to be separated out because there wouldn't be enough common ground, and maybe the practitioners would feel oppressed by them. Others argued that there would be some conflict but we could all learn from it.

R: I don't like this distinction between the theorists and the activists.

C: No.

R: One reason it was good was that a lot of the people giving theoretical stuff are activists and were addressing their work to specific problems that they've been facing in the practice of the movement, particularly on unemployment.

C: But I think there's a whole lot of women working on theoretical work to do with women who have never been part of the women's movement. That really struck me at a conference on women's studies in Melbourne two week-ends ago. It really does affect the theoretical work they do and the way they teach women's studies courses.

P: I agree with you — I want to work towards ending that division but I think it's still there. I've particularly noticed it in the ways Carmel talked about it. Women's studies have become very popular and there are a lot of women involved, both from the teaching and learning aspect if you want to divide it up that way, who haven't had much contact with the women's liberation movement. I think the conference was very good for them in that respect because so many of the sessions honed in on bringing the two together. I met several women who told me that they'd never been to a conference before, never been in the women's movement and the conference was really encouraging for them. A lot of conferences aren't like that, they intimidate new people rather than encourage them.

C: For a lot of Melbourne women the conference was a bridging ground to the women's movement. Just being with 1,500 or 2,000 women has allowed them to become part of the women's movement in a non-threatening way and this will affect the way in which they work politically. We have women from Melbourne, say, who have been working in their community setting up day care centres and learning exchanges for women in the suburbs, and for those women particularly I think it has been really important.

S: I have a very distorted vision of the conference — I wasn't in any session for longer than two minutes. (Sue was taking photos of the conference.)

E: Having sat through many conferences in the course of my life, I must say this has been probably the most exciting one and it had some outstanding features. Of course, it wasn't a conference towards action, there were no resolutions taken, which meant that there was no need to polarise thoughts.

Thinking back to the beginning of its organisation it did look like being a very helpful and important exercise in academia. But that there was such a huge response to it proves that it filled a very vital need in the women's movement. I think everybody must have changed in the course of it. From that point of view, it must take the women's movement forward.

If I have any criticism it is that quite often it did get stuck in academic contemplation of the past without any evident endeavour to draw the lessons for today which to me seems to be the importance of history. I think one other very fundamental lesson that has been learnt, or can be learnt by those who want to learn it, is that a conference can be spontaneous and free-flowing and democratic despite the fact that it has a certain structure. The absolute tyranny of structurelessness and endless arguments of what we should discuss and who should talk first was totally absent and the very spirit in which the sessions took place indicated a coming of age. From one who is very close to the age of saying, well, this is it for me, it's a tremendously reassuring thing to have experienced.

S: From the experience of going around to each session, my impression is something similar to yours. The courtesy which people extended to each other in just listening in silence and allowing people to get up from the floor. There weren't, as far as I could see, any bun fights, political or otherwise.

J: Very few, anyhow — there were a couple of places where you got it, but it didn't develop very much and there was a reaction against it, too, whenever it happened.

C: In one way it was a pity the conference grew so big because the sessions were so large, particularly the three that were going on simultaneously in the main theatres. But on the other hand it would have been a pity to split up sometimes because just being together was an enriching experience. You gained a whole lot of strength from being with that huge number of people, and just listening.

J: There were a couple of times when I felt sessions should have broken up. In the first sessions when Carmel and Margaret Power gave their papers, for example. I was trying to follow through the discussion on

unemployment, and the traditional explanations for women's unemployment and that discussion got bogged down in that first session. There was no way to discuss both papers in that large group of people. It wasn't a perfect conference, if there is such a thing.

L: I would like to come in and say that I disagree with Carmel. There is a tension between the desire to sit and glorify all the numbers of people and feel good about it and the cost — a much greater cost — of discussions not being able to get anywhere. I found it particularly frustrating at this conference that we did have the organisational capacity to break those meetings down and the times we did it were just much, much better. People didn't sit there feeling deprived of what was going on in the other three smaller sessions they were missing. I think we've gone a step further. This conference did it better than any other huge conference I've been at, but occasionally it broke down. That is perhaps as close to an ideal structure as you can get. That is, you get your 4-500 people together for about an hour, then they can go off into small sessions for a further hour and a half. In the discussion on Jan Aitken's paper on prostitution the room was packed, people in the aisles, people couldn't even get to the microphones, and you could sense, as Jan sensed, that there was enormous resistance to what she was saying, and then there was confusion about it. But there was no way that Jan's paper could have been properly discussed, nor was Marian Simm's paper on Conservative Feminism in Australia treated in the way it should have been.

R: But Marian was so arrogant in her presentation that she gave all academics a bad name.

L: That paper needed a detailed response that you couldn't make in that structure even if it had been delivered in an accessible fashion.

E: A lot of what was discussed was more or less by chance inasmuch as discussion was confined to what people brought forward in papers. There are some very cardinal points which didn't come forward because the people who have either the pertinent questions or the answers were not those who prepared papers or could physically be there. That brings me to the forty dollar questions,

the perennial question of how to reach to the majority of women, the working class women, the uncommitted women, those who will have to change it in the long run, and women in a position to influence important actions. I'm thinking specifically of people like Alice Hughes who is right in the hub of a very important union struggle — and no way could she take the time off to write a paper, or have the physical energy to come to this conference — and there must be lots of others. From that point of view, despite the number of activists there, it was still somewhat removed from many vital centres of action or potential action. But that was unavoidable and does not in any way detract from the phenomenal value of the conference.

C: In Melbourne we made strenuous efforts to reach as wide a number of women as possible. We sent letters to all women's organisations, to all the trade unions and chased up individuals we knew in unions, and publicised the conference through three CR groups. Our group has been meeting since August, and we actually got a large number of trade union women to come to the conference. The Australian Insurance Employees Union sent two reps from the eastern states and representatives from each of the others, the MOA sent two reps, the teachers' unions sent reps, the food preservers — still that's just a drop in the bucket and as we are organising a conference in Melbourne in 1980, we'll make much more effort to get women from the trade unions, and also women in the wider community to be involved. One way you can do this is via the learning exchanges — we've got about a dozen in Melbourne and that's one way to get women from the suburbs involved. However, unfortunately you can't have a conference that will do all your political work for you. It's unreal to expect that a conference can reach all women.

R: I'd like to take up the question of why the women's movement is getting into history — whether it's something that we can call a new history, that's drastically different from the old history. I'd like to suggest that part of the problem is that the new history isn't as drastically different from the old as we're inclined to think, despite our new emphasis on oral history, social history and so on. I'm a bit worried that we find history the most attractive of the disciplines precisely because

it's the least theoretical, the least threatening. Possibly the new history's simply a new version of fact grabbing or will remain that way unless we can inject more theory into it than we've done so far.

L: What do you mean, the new history? Do you just mean new interests in history? That is, that people are going back and looking at women.

R: I think, for instance, that the oral history is really important and I'm sorry I missed that session which I was told was very good. Obviously, we do need to do that sort of work if we're going to have any understanding of the past because we're dealing with the various parts that haven't been adequately recorded. At the same time, there's a real danger of just finding new heroines, for instance, rather than getting into theorising what the past was about.

P: I can see that danger, but probably coming from a politics background in the sense of a university discipline, I've had the opposite sort of frustration. In the area that I've worked there's been a lot of theoretical work done about, say, women and class, and what women's oppression is about, what are the origins of it, with very little empirical exploration of those theories. So, although there is a very strong emphasis on facts and not on theory, in the academic tradition of history, it's good that there are so many concrete studies being done and most of them seem to be informed by a fairly explicit theoretical viewpoint. They're either testing out specific things about feminism or class or the nature of women's oppression, but even if they're not we can still use them for that purpose, question them in that way. It's a good development in terms of political analysis to be looking at the experiences of the women's movement in the past, but I'd agree that you don't want to get stuck in that nor use it as a refuge from the real political problems or the real analytical problems of today.

R: Do you think there were problems in the presentation of the historical papers — that the issues weren't really drawn out very clearly? And of course it's hard to present historical stuff without getting into a wealth of detail immediately.

L: Yes, one of the problems with the history papers was that people weren't able to summarise them. They weren't able to

deliver them in a 10-minute synopsis and that said two clear things. It said, on the one hand, that's what history's about — history's full of detail. But it also revealed that people didn't know what they were doing with their papers which is why they couldn't summarise them. So, time after time, you sat there while people who were giving historical papers and had 10 minutes, simply treated that as meaning "I'm going to go real fast through as much of my paper as I can, and when I get near the end of the 10 minutes I'm going to say the last paragraph of it". Now, that's a heritage of empirical history.

P: I don't think it was just that.

L: No, I don't think it was just that, but I think that was one of the things that was happening.

P: I know that the reason why I decided to summarise the content or give an outline of the content of my paper was because I knew people hadn't read it. So if I had simply talked about the theoretical aspects of it, all the questions would have been about 'but what do you base this on', so what I tried to do was give a summary of the historical events.

L: I would except your paper from what I said because you began, if I remember, with quite a coherent statement of what it was about. I know that you were trying to do some empirical work to put into a framework. And I don't think it was that some people didn't know that they only had 10 minutes. I'm saying that with some of those papers even if people had sat down and tried to make a synopsis, they would have found it very difficult. We do have this empirical heritage in history, and it is coming up again and again. So much so that often the new history doesn't mean anything more than people writing about women in the same fashion that they've written all their other history. That's a real danger in the academic women's history that I've encountered.

J: But there was another trend which I think is just as dangerous in that people adopt a political analysis and then try to reconstruct history in a way that simply justifies it. There were a number of papers which I thought did that. Now, I don't mean that you can't use history if it justifies a certain political position, but neither do I think that you can be selective about what you are going to observe in the past as a justification

for something that is being done now.

R: I thought Lesley was saying that if you don't have a clear perspective and you get bogged down in empiricism, you're doing something fairly reactionary.

L: So many of our historians have been trained in this extraordinarily barren empirical method. I was trained as a historian and came out of the Sydney history department completely barren of theory.

As I entered the women's movement and the political left I've had a reaction similar to Joyce from the other side, that is, that the theory I read was so ahistorical that I had to reject much of it. Often, it was nothing other than complicated sets of rules or complicated theories with no historical substance and therefore meant nothing to me. I found my own intellectual position a very difficult one — on the one hand there are political theorists in the women's movement from the left in general who aren't historical and therefore are probably quite simply wrong or certainly not to be trusted, and on the other hand, historians who are so simplistic, for example, the Rickard book is so simplistic in its analysis of class, yet it's the big book because history in Australia has no theory. And we aren't outside that.

R: The thing that came across most strongly to me was the importance of not seeing theory as a static body of knowledge but something that has to be constantly developed and is developed in the process of attempting to apply it.

C: I agree with Lesley and it's not just a matter, either, of developing a theoretical perspective that's been totally lacking in our training, but also the language in which you write. I find that I either write journalistic stuff or academic stuff, but I can't get a middle ground which is more accessible and it's very hard, particularly when you have to write theses. You do have to write in a language which is acceptable to academia. One of the problems for historians who write about women is that to prove our point and to get our message accepted we have to be doubly academic, we have to prove everything ten times over, otherwise it won't get accepted. That danger is very hard to escape and then there's all the unconscious training going on as you progress through the university and you're not really aware of it.

L: Actually I think that this is the way into the question of how we use history. Do we look at our history to give us answers for now, or do we look at it for contemplation. The answer is more in terms of a general thing about informing theory. I don't ever have in my head the question "am I looking at the late 19th century to get answers about now?" — it just seems to me a totally unreal question. I'd come back and say I'm concerned about now but I also have a fear about theory being ahistorical and somewhere there's a ceiling. But I never ask that question and I'd never try to answer it.

E: I wonder to what extent those of us who are communist party women adopting an historical and dialectical attitude towards our own party. I find it quite hurtful on occasions, particularly as occurred over the weekend, when communist women find it necessary, for what reasons I don't know, perhaps to prove their own superiority, to talk about our party and communist men in a very destructive way. I don't think that we need to be protective or stick up for the party, come what may, but the criticism seems based on the assumption that communist men should have always known better, totally forgetting that even those of us who are the keenest feminists lacked any insight or knowledge of sexism and were unable to play our part within the party to overcome sexist practices as they existed. We weren't able to fight our own battle, so I don't see why we have to berate men for the very efforts that were made to develop women within the party and as leaders within the women's movement. Sexist and all as the practices were, I don't think that any other political party has ever set out to develop women, to have a policy on women, to have women's committees however faulty and inadequate and so on.

Attempts to make women part of the forces that would change society were always there in the history of our party — that they were inadequate is as much our fault as it was anyone else's. Very many, myself above all, very happily accepted the role that flowed out of our conditioning, and the broad society. Why should we think that communist men should have been less hung up than the rest of society? It was as much an historic phenomenon as the fault of the men — it was the fault of the whole ideology.

Simplistically, call it stalinism — when we all, even the most rebellious of communist women, sincerely believed that equality would come with socialism. We didn't see the fight for women, for equality, through feminism.

C: One of the things that struck me was that the most articulate women, particularly among the older women were in fact communist party women or ex-communist party women and where they had got their political training and their ability to speak, etc. was, in fact, in the communist party.

L: Do you mean they were the most articulate women or the most politically articulate women? I would very much query that they were the most articulate — perhaps the most politically articulate — there was a mass of articulate women.

C: Particularly among older women — I thought the number who had been through the communist party was quite stunning.

J: I think that you've got to look further than the communist party to see why that was so. For example, Audrey Blake talked about the part that the youth movement played particularly in developing young women, and many women developed through the women's movement.

I think it's true that quite often criticism of the communist party is not put into an historical perspective — people judge the CP simply from today's standards but I don't quite agree with the way you put it Eva, that women are as much to blame as the men. I think that misses the point of what sexism is and how and why it is reproduced in the CP. Then there are women, including my own mother, who didn't fit the stereotype and in fact moved outside the constrictions of male dominated leaderships and were pushed out, or into positions that narrowed their ability to fight for a different way of seeing women in the party. I know that didn't happen to everybody, but the men held the power in the party and the dominant ideology was, and is, patriarchal — that held back feminist struggle or the development of feminist ideas in the party. You say that the victim is as much to blame as the oppressor. When I first came into the party, feminism was a dirty word. When you talked about working class and middle class, which was also a dirty word, one of the things that was said to be identical with middle class was feminism.

That sort of attitude in the party suited men in the leadership and rank and file more than it did the women because it served male privilege. You heard rumbles among the women for instance about how they couldn't go to meetings because their husbands were always out but there was no way they could come out strongly or change the situation. Sexism is not just wrong ideology, it also comes from male privilege and that did, and still does, exist.

P: I was amazed that so much of the discussion revolved around the communist party. I think it reflects the role of communist women in the women's movement and the importance of experiences in the communist party even for women who left it. Partly it was accidental — it just so happened that in all of those sessions some of the women who presented historical material were either communist or ex-communist and the example of the political organisation of women was the communist party. In that sense we got too much of the limelight, because the sort of problems we were discussing really are the problems women have in any political party to some degree. And I agree with what Eva was saying in the sense that about half of those sessions were devoted to people saying, well, my life began when I left the communist party, and how dreadful it all was. And yet there was a contradiction which was expressed by Audrey Blake who got up at the end and said, look, I want to say that while I have all these criticisms, the period that I was in the communist party was one of the most exciting periods of my life, it was when I learnt a whole lot of things and it gave me an education — and that needed to be said. At one point I felt that the party was being put on trial — and I was tempted to say why I joined the party from the women's movement, because all these women were saying why they left it as if it was still the same, and I don't think I should have felt that, and I don't think that session should have been all about the communist Party.

L: This is all quite interesting because I sat through some of those sessions and, yes, I knew that they were communist or ex-communist women, and I knew most of the women who spoke and, yes, come to think of it, the references were to the communist party, but my impression was that it was

totally different. I would have said, off the top of my head — the communist party, no, it wasn't discussed at those sessions. I think that all you're doing is reflecting, I guess, how I'd feel if (but I've never belonged to an institution like that, I've never belonged to a party, so I can't think of an example off the top of my head), but I think that you're just all reflecting that your organisation, past or present, came up a few times. And yet I agree with you the thing about the communist women is a different thing, like the catholic women there.

P: I guess what I'm asking is where were the Labor Party women, where were the other ...

C: The Labor Party was mentioned once.

P: I think you're over-reacting to our over-reaction, because people who weren't in the party said to me afterwards that the discussion had focussed entirely on the communist party and why are we talking about the communist party in this way.

L: Well, that might have been the session that I missed.

E: Doesn't this in some way almost prove the point that communist women and the communist party were involved when other parties weren't.

J: Everybody knows that — it's what sort of sense you make of what the communist party did. But it is interesting that in those sessions on women in political movements that there was virtually no discussion on the Labor Party.

R: Sue Ryan was in the session on government policy and she was bloody good and my only other experience of the Labor Party being mentioned I felt rather antagonistic towards because they were naively saying, look, we're here, come and tell us what you want and we'll do what we can.

L: Yes, it came up during the constitution session in that way.

P: I was talking more in terms of analysis of women's experiences of the Labor Party.

S: In terms of the papers submitted — were most of the papers in that area by CP women and not ALP women.

C: Yes, and that's why it came out in the conference. The ALP had been notified and

we had women from the ALP State Committee coming along and I thought that the Melbourne Women's Committee was to do a paper. There was one complaint about a paper from Melbourne ALP women that they said was sent but never arrived.

L: Yes, there were a few papers that went astray.

When Rosemary made her introductory remarks on the conference she pointed out that maybe one of the reasons it was so delightfully free of sectarian upheavals was because it was also singularly free of where are we going to go, of explicit confrontation of the situation at the moment. In fact, the only session that I was in that attempted to pose things to do was the prostitution one and that was where you could just feel the extraordinary division of opinion. So maybe that brings us back to the general question of what the conference was about or does the conference show us the way forward, where to or whatever.

C: That also came out in the problems of feminism session, because, as someone said, we don't really want to face the problems.

L: But also the notion of what the problems are were radically different. The notion of what the problems were from some people's points of view were very much at the personal level and they were the priorities and there were other people who saw the lack of theory, that the women's movement has no coherent broad politics in the old meaning of the word.

P: I think it's a bit unrealistic to expect that at a conference of that kind you'd be able to draw out those strategic implications and have a political discussion in that sense, but I think that it's extremely difficult to both look in a worthwhile way at historical experiences and draw out the political implications and have a decent discussion about them in three days. I thought that maybe we'd formulate some questions at this conference for maybe another conference about strategy, and I know that's a schematic way of looking at it, but I think that I didn't expect very much. It's true that inevitably, as soon as we start to discuss strategies, then the differences in approach come out more and some of those are expressed in a sectarian way and some aren't.

But although the women's movement does shy away from expressing differences, and at other times expresses them too sectarianly, it's better than any other left movement that I've been in. It's impossible to have a conference — a political conference — where all the different left tendencies come along — without actually falling into physical fights at times, whereas in the women's movement it is possible. We have done it, and have had actual discussions on strategy where there was a minimal amount of sectarianism.

L: I agree — I wasn't opening it up as a criticism of the conference, I was simply reminding us of what the limitations were and what would seem to be one of the prerequisites for that conference to function the way it did. I don't know whether it's worth speculating on the difference between this one and the feminism and socialism one, and even the feminism and anarchism one — they were very, very different sorts of conferences.

J: But that was because they were about political strategies.

L: Yes, and the first one, the huge feminism-socialism conference in Melbourne, was an absolute disaster.

R: Although we set up the question, was it a political conference of the women's movement or a history conference, it seems to me that we've got further in starting to talk about political strategies via this sort of conference than the Melbourne one.

L: Much further.

S: I heard just one passing comment as I was walking past a group of women — they were very angry and saying nothing came out of this conference, there's been no resolutions, it's just been a huge wank. That's the only criticism I heard.

R: The resolutions we make are usually a huge wank.

Various: That's true.

E: I think that people who would be disappointed on the last day, or people who are disappointed by seminars are those who go along in the hopes that the conference will tidy up things very nicely in their own heads and that they'll go away and say "now I know".

C: They'll get the magic solution.

E: To me the great value of the conference was that there is so much material for us to work on.

R: I would think the important thing for the women's movement to do is to decide on some priorities, and have some focus. The thing that concerns me is that we're spread out all over the place and part of the disappointments with conferences is that people do expect that to be the refuge, the source of strength and stimulation for them to go out and fight their own separate battles. Surely what we've got to do is to decide the central issues over the next couple of years and focus our energies much more on those — what seems to come out quite clearly are unemployment and child care and the connections between them and working out what sort of strategies could challenge the sexual division of labor.

C: And also abortion — that's still crucial.

R: I'm not saying we should exclude other things, but as a movement we need much more focus than we've got.

Next year is the United Nations Year of the Child — already reaction is using that to get at women. The time is ripe for us to start an alternative campaign in terms of what children need. I was disappointed that we couldn't even start getting interested in that together.

L: I don't think a conference of 1500 people is the place to do that if you're going to have the sort of conference that we had. If you're going to have a convention with 2,000 people in a hall and super amplification and people getting up the front, well, that's the sort of place you can play that sort of game, but I don't think you'd have had 1500 women from the women's movement there if you'd done that.

J: I think that a women's movement conference is needed — not next week — but we should work towards a women's movement conference towards the end of the year.

R: I'd like to see another research oriented conference, where people take up particular aspects, where we have planning meetings and people go off and divide up the work so we have much more concrete stuff to deal with.

J: That's true — even in terms of women's health, child care, you name it, and if you start talking about how the women's movement can go forward you've got to start concretely at where we've got to, and what we've done, how are we working around and where does it go from here; and how does it connect up with the virtual organisational collapse of the women's liberation movement.

The only other thing that I heard talked about specifically at the conference was the organisation position of the women's movement. People saying that they felt really isolated and how marvellous the conference is and it's going to give them a lot of enthusiasm — but they don't know how they're going to use it. One woman talked about trying to work with women in her own locality where she's found that it's like a long-range ten-year plan of how you even talk to the women in your own street. What does a conference like that mean to that woman in terms of working as a feminist in her own community.

C: This conference has been especially important in bringing together a whole lot of women who are usually not part of the women's movement. The other thing is a lot of women, us as well as older women, are gradually coming to some recognition of themselves as historical actors — of movers in our society. I think it's been the most important thing about the conference.

R: I was very concerned that a decision was taken to give the feminist bookshop the complete monopoly on selling things at the conference — that left newspapers, etc. were banned. I wasn't satisfied with the explanation that was given. It seemed completely unnecessary to ban those sorts of stalls that traditionally appear at conferences of this type. It was a decision taken by the organising collective and I believe ratified very quickly at the introductory session which most people didn't know took place. I thought that it was a serious political question and was very freaked by people's unwillingness to even hear out what the Sparts had to say about it. They were booed down and it seemed to be a confusion between a dislike of the Sparts and the underlying issue.

L: I think I was at the meeting that decided

this and all I want to say about it is that if we made that decision I think we made a mistake. I thought we made the opposite decision, except that the Feminist Bookshop was going to have a stall, and that anyone else could sell other materials.

J: Outside.

L: I thought anywhere.

J: As I remember there was a ban on people setting up stalls in an area that was provided for people to come to have coffee. The Feminist Bookstall was to be the only group to set up a bookstall, if others wanted to negotiate with the Feminist Bookshop about having publications that were otherwise inaccessible, that they could do so.

L: The Feminist Bookshop just said no.

J: The only other things that could be sold in there were women's movement publications and they couldn't set up big tables all over the place, but they could have a chair or a small table. Just from a practical point of view, you couldn't have had Intervention, the SWP, IS, etc. setting up tables in that area.

R: Are you saying that they were free to set up tables outside?

J: Yes.

L: People claim that they were stopped from selling outside and stopped from setting up tables. It seems that there was more to it than that the Sparts were thrown out but I don't think we should make an issue of it — I think that there are things to talk about — you couldn't possibly talk about them in that last session, it wasn't that sort of session — the combination of no microphone and Sparts would have been chaos. I think the people down the front did the right thing in getting off that. I agree it was a bit unpleasant, but I'm glad we got off it. But I think we did make a mistake, I think with all the best intentions in the world in terms of space, in retrospect, I'm sorry we made that decision.

R: I was worried about the hysteria when the issue was raised at the final meeting.

L: I think that means nothing at all, people reacted to the Sparts — and a lot didn't know why people were angry about it — we don't seem to have the facts, but it will be discussed and I don't think now we can say much more about it.

economic notes

One of the most striking features of the Australian economy is the key role played by large banks and insurance companies. A small number of very large financial institutions not only dominate their own sector of the economy, but also are the biggest owners of shares in manufacturing, mining, transport and retailing companies.

A recent study by Michael Lawriwsky* shows that financial institutions together own 35.3 of the shares in the 226 large Australian corporations in his sample. Individuals hold another 21 per cent of shares while all other companies (including nominees) account for the other 43.7 per cent.

The Australian Mutual Provident Society, for example, owns shares in some 280 of Australia's largest companies. In many of these companies the AMP is the largest single shareholder. The total value of its shareholdings is a massive \$1234.3 million.

The role of institutions like the AMP is certainly important, but it is often misunderstood. In particular, it leads to two persuasive myths.

The first, traditionally popular on the left, sees "money power" as the linchpin of capitalism. Since the banks control the economy the way to break the power of capital is to in turn control the banks.

Two traumatic episodes in Australia's history seemed to confirm this view. Both the 1890s and the 1930s saw massive economic dislocation accompanied by heightened class struggle as the ruling class tried to shift the burden of depression onto the working class. It was easy to cast the banks as the main villains in both cases.

Within the newly formed Australian Labor Party the left embraced this analysis. Frank Anstey (Frank Ashton in Hardy's *Power without Glory*), writing in 1916, described how the banks were profiting from the war:

"The essence of capitalist war", Anstey argued, was "so the nation can levy men - but not Money. Men may die - Money lives. Men come back armless, legless, maimed and

shattered - Money comes back fatter than it went, loaded with coupons, buttered with perpetual lien..."

"Out of the war", he predicted, "will emerge two classes - Bondholders and slaves of Bondholders".

The very name of Anstey's pamphlet - *The Kingdom of Shylock* - powerfully evokes this tradition's picture of how Australian capitalism really works.

The second myth I want to examine begins from the same observation that banks and other financial institutions are large owners of other capitalist enterprises, but it draws a very different conclusion.

The argument is that the money deposited in banks or paid to insurance companies in premiums comes in the first place from ordinary people. Since these people benefit from the investments made on their behalf by the institution concerned, aren't they the real owners of the rest of the economy? This particularly applies to mutual insurance companies like the AMP, where there are no shareholders and policyholders legally own all the company's assets.

Every worker who has a bank deposit or an insurance policy and who receives interest or bonuses from his/her bank's or insurance company's investments has therefore become a little capitalist. So much for outdated ideas like class struggle between workers and capitalists!

Both these myths seriously obscure the real role the finance sector plays in the Australian economy, as I will try to show in these Notes.

Highly concentrated

The total assets of all financial institutions in Australia come to about \$82,000 million - almost exactly one full year's Gross Domestic Product. These assets are very highly concentrated in a small number of companies. Thirteen trading banks, for example, control assets totaling \$23,130 million while the same number of savings banks have assets of \$17,324 million.

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Together, therefore, the banks account for almost exactly half of the sector's assets.

The rest of the financial sector includes 49 life insurance companies (13.3 per cent of all financial assets), 214 non-life insurance companies (5.5 per cent), 93 building societies (7.6 per cent), and 82 finance companies (15.6 per cent). As well, there are a number of small but aggressive and rapidly growing "fringe" institutions such as merchant banks.

These figures show that finance is much more concentrated than other sectors of the economy and are dramatic enough as they stand, but they actually understate the real degree of monopolisation that exists.

For example, of the 13 trading banks operating in Australia, the seven majors account for 87 per cent of trading bank loans. As well, each is linked in turn to a savings bank - and in most cases to a finance company.

While there appear to be a large number of finance companies, this too is overstating things since thirteen companies probably do well over 80 per cent of all finance company business with the top three having over a third of the business. With life insurance it is even more dramatic. There, the four top companies (the AMP, Colonial Mutual Life, National Mutual Life and Mutual Life and Citizens) have 81 per cent of all assets.

These relatively few large financial corporations are the main source of capital for the rest of the Australian economy. They supply this capital in two main ways, either as loans to productive enterprises or as direct investments in these enterprises. Either way, they receive part of the surplus value produced by workers in these enterprises in the form of interest or dividends. In turn, this income is used to pay operating expenses and any left over is reinvested or distributed to shareholders or policyholders.

The advantage for productive enterprises is that they are able to expand their scale of production by employing more workers and more machines. Of course, they have to pay interest on the money they borrow or dividends on new share issues they make. This will be alright, however, so long as the rate of profit they make on this new investment (or rather, their workers make for them) is greater than the interest or dividend rate they have to pay.

In a normally operating capitalist economy the market rate of interest is always less than the average rate of profit. The latter, for a given group of capital goods employed, depends on the share of output appropriated by capital. It is therefore determined within the production process, ultimately by the struggle between workers and capitalists over the rate of exploitation. The interest rate, on the other hand, is determined by struggles between different groups of capitalists, outside the production process.

Does this mean that bankers and the directors of insurance companies are interested in high interest rates while industrialists want low rates? In general this is true but it is complicated by the fact that financial institutions are not really lending their own capital to productive enterprises but are actually lending funds they in turn have borrowed from depositors or policyholders.

What matters to the shareholders and directors of a bank is the **difference** between the rate at which it borrows money (that is, the rate you, the depositor, receive) and the rate the bank charges on its loans. So long as lending and borrowing rates go up or down together the bank will still make money. In fact, if a general **lowering** of interest rates leads to an increased volume of loans the bank will benefit rather than suffer.

(You can be sure that, as interest rates start to come down over the next few months following the recent moderation in the inflation rate, it will be the interest rates the financial institutions offer say, debenture holders, that will come down before the rates they **charge** borrowers.)

So long as the institution itself is viable it may even be in the interests of its directors to hold interest rates artificially low in order to provide cheap funds for their mates in other companies - particularly when these directors may be also sitting on the boards of these companies.

The Bank of New South Wales, for example, is linked in this way to such important manufacturing and mining companies as Amatil, CSR, ICI, Alcoa and Mount Isa Mines and directors from other banks are involved in similar links.

While this mechanism is easy to follow

when it concerns money that banks and insurance companies lend to other enterprises it may not be so clear in the case of equity investments. Nevertheless, the same thing is happening, though to see how we need to look more closely at the share market.

The Sharemarket

At first sight the sharemarket seems to be all about the buying and selling of capital. If you buy up all the shares in a particular company, you become the owner of that company's capital. However, if this is so, why doesn't the total market value of a company's shares (the company's "market capitalisation") equal the value of its assets? A quick look at the financial pages of any newspaper will show these quantities are not generally the same.

The answer is that a company's market capitalisation reflects not the present value of its assets but a claim on future income from those assets. Shareholders are interested in making the most out of their investments and since, if you have the money, it is fairly easy to buy and sell shares, shareholders will continue buying into any particular stock (and so bidding up the price) until the projected return on their investment is no more than they'd get by, say, investing their money at the current interest rate.

If we assume the company involved is making the average rate of profit on its assets then the difference between its market capitalisation and the value of its assets will reflect the difference between the rate of interest and the rate of profit.

For example, if a company with assets of \$1 million declares a profit of \$100,000 and (we will assume for simplicity) pays this all out as dividends, then shareholders will receive 10 cents for every \$1 share they hold. Now if we assume the rate of interest is say, 5 per cent, anyone who buys a share in this company for \$1 or even \$1.50 will make more than the rate of interest on his/her investment. This will remain true until the share price is bid up to \$2.

At that point the rate of return will be 10¢ divided by \$2.00, that is 5 per cent.

Looking at it another way, so long as the price of the shares involved remains below \$2 it would pay anyone to borrow money (at 5 per cent) and immediately invest in shares.

Market capitalisation of this company would then be \$2 million, twice the value of its assets since we assumed the rate of profit is twice the rate of interest.

Note that we have left out important questions like risk. That is, we have assumed that the company will continue to pay a \$100,000 dividend every year and that investors know this and remain confident of the fact. Of course, if it was all as simple as that, it wouldn't be capitalism. Nevertheless this does give us a first approximation to how the sharemarket works and shows why a company's market capitalisation is generally greater than its assets. (For readers who prefer() a formula I have given a couple in an appendix,

Lenin actually drew attention to this process, pointing out that it allows stockmarket operators to launch companies and make an immediate killing by exploiting the difference between the amount they originally invest and the market value of the shares these assets represent.

Thus in **Imperialism, the highest stage of capitalism**† he explains how the Union Mining Company of Dortmund was founded in 1872 with an issued share capital of 40 million marks. "The market price of the shares rose to 170 (that is, up 70 per cent - T.O.S.) after it had paid a 12 per cent dividend for its first year. Finance capital skimmed the cream and earned a trifle of something like 28 million marks."

In other words, market capitalisation in this case increased 70 per cent, from 40 million marks to 68 million - and the difference was clear profit for the promoters, the Disconto-Gesellschaft.

Lenin goes on to explain that the opposite can happen: "Later, the dividends of the Union declined to nil; the shareholders had to consent to a 'writing down' of capital, that is, to losing some of it in order not to lose it all. By a series of 'reconstructions' more than 73 million marks were written off the books of the Union in the course of thirty years. At the present time, the original shareholders of the company possess only 5 per cent of the nominal value of their shares but the banks 'earned something out of every reconstruction'.

How 'mutual' is the AMP?

How does this work in practice, today?

Let's look at the AMP Society, itself the largest holder of equity in Australian companies.

Sitting on its board is Sir Vincent Fairfax who also sits on the board of the Bank of NSW and John Fairfax Limited. The AMP in turn owns \$15.2 million worth of shares in the former company and \$4.2 million in the latter.

Another director is Sir Theo Kelly, chairman of Woolworths. The Society owns \$20.5 million worth of Woolworths shares. Or again, consider Mr R. R. Law-Smith, who as well as being a director of the AMP sits on the board of BHP and the National Bank. The Society has shareholdings totalling \$71 million in these two companies.

In fact, some 21 per cent of the AMP's massive shareholding is in companies with which the Society's directors are associated.

Who gains from such a relationship? Certainly not policyholders, as a quick look at the AMP's annual report for 1977 shows.

The Society began the year owning ordinary shares valued at \$644.2 million. During the year it bought another \$96.5 million worth of shares and at the end of the year its portfolio was valued at \$754.5 million. In other words, it made a capital gain of \$13.8 million. If to this we add the Society's dividend income from ordinary shares of \$50.1 million we get a net gain of \$63.9 million - or an average return of 9.1 per cent.

When we recall that the consumer price index rose 9.3 per cent during 1977 and that the Commonwealth short term bond rate ranged between 9.91 and 9.26 per cent we can see that this result was hardly spectacular.

In other words, policyholders lent massive resources to the Society and through it to some of Australia's largest corporations for no real return. In exchange they merely had the value of their investments preserved - though they were clearly better off than the savings bank customer who received only 3.5 per cent interest - or in real terms paid his/her bank nearly 6 per cent interest for the privilege of lending out their money to others.

If this is the real role financial institutions like the AMP Society play, then both the myths I described above are discredited.

These institutions occupy a very large place within Australian capitalism, but they do not dominate it, as the "money power" view would have it. Rather they are used by the big corporations in other sectors to mobilise capital, including workers' savings.

On the other hand, the important role these institutions play and the fact that some (though by no means all) are mutual societies in which policyholders legally own the group's assets cannot be used to argue we now have some sort of "people's capitalism" in which everyone has a stake.

In fact, the same people who exploit workers as workers are also exploiting them as policyholders and bank depositors - and borrowers, for that matter.

T. O'S., 21.6.78.

*Ownership and Control of Australian Companies, published by the Transnational Corporations Research Project, University of Sydney.

†Collected Works, Volume 22, p. 235.

APPENDIX

Calculating market capitalisation:

To the extent that the restrictive assumptions I made above hold, the market capitalisation C of a company invested capital I is given by $C = \frac{I}{r-i}$, where r is the rate of profit and i is the rate of interest.

If the company, in addition to its initial invested capital of I, borrows loan funds equal to L so that the total funds employed equal I + L, then market capitalisation becomes:

$$C = \frac{I}{r-i} (I+L) \cdot L$$

If L = 0, this reduces to $C = \frac{I}{r-i}$. On the other hand, if there is no invested capital and the promoters borrow the whole amount they need to capitalise the company, its capitalised value after repaying the loan is:

$$C = \frac{(r-i)}{r-i} L$$

This is pure profit for the promoters since they have contributed nothing except the skill to convince others to lend them money. Company promoters teach sharemarket speculators this. Continued on inside back cover -

TV WITHOUT TEARS- Outline of a socialist approach to popular television

Daniel Ben-Horin

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High Art vs. Mass Art

The basic outlines of the confrontation between high and mass culture are familiar. But the left's stance in this arena deserves closer examination. In terms of conscious ideology, the left displays a supportive attitude toward "people's culture" (toward Leadbelly's blues, say, or "primitive" art). However, below this tendency an elitist vision holds sway, and popular TV feels the full glare of this vision.

A majority of those on the left, and an overwhelming majority of those who have assumed the roles of theoreticians and strategists, have strong links to that segment of society which can be called the intelligentsia. Unlike others, leftists tend to avoid expressing their individualism through the accumulation of material property. Is it surprising, then, that a tendency appears toward the accumulation of non-material - i.e., intellectual, emotional, or spiritual - property? As leftists become

immersed in Buddhism or bioenergetics, they tend to relax their leftism. In contrast, immersion in intellectuality leads not only to reinforcement of political commitment, but to preservation of intellectual property against all threats.

The left has been friendly to new media only to the extent that these media can be converted to intellectual currency. Dylan was swell until he went electric. Mass cinema is suspect unless it can be reinterpreted in such a way that a special angle of appreciation is reserved for those with the proper intellectual lexicon. And TV, particularly popular TV, must shiver in the shadows until *Cahiers de TV* elucidates the arcane merits of the "Situation Comedy Noire". For the moment, popular TV receives the ostracism it deserves for having "[done] away completely with the 'intellectual property' and liquidat[ing] the 'heritage', that is to say, the class-specific handing on of non-material capital".(1)

Mao has referred to bourgeois roots causing communist artists to fail to understand "the rich lively language of the masses" and therefore to end up "hero[es] with no place to display [their] prowess".(2) Something very much along those lines has occurred between the left and popular TV. (True, TV is imposed, and not a natural, mass language, but in the United States the situation is: "TV spoken here".) Those on the left holding a bias against the intransigent anti-intellectualism and "massness" of popular TV are all too often unconscious of their stance or of its psychosocial origins. As an example, the author of an article in *Jump Cut*, a socialist cinema review, entitled "Video at the Crossroads", could only discuss the medium insofar as it approached an acceptable high art form - art cinema. Naturally, he found video rather lacking. His choice of video's principal fault was far more revealing of the bias mentioned than of video: "Video has its disadvantages...the biggest drawback of all is that video is easy - easy to use and easy to abuse".(3)

A middle ground exists between class-linked banishment of TV and uncritical idealization of the medium. The left has yet to find that ground.

Manipulation Theory and Its Offspring

The left's basic perception of TV has been that it operates in a manipulative manner. In this section, I will introduce manipulation theory and then move to a description of four approaches that stem from this theory. A critical analysis of the theory and its related approaches will be presented later.

Manipulation Theory. From liberal TV professionals to Marxist theoreticians, the same basic portrait of TV emerges: the people who control programming *manipulate* viewers into an acceptance of both the status quo and personal passivity. The manipulators are sometimes seen as operating willfully, sometimes as unconsciously reflecting the class interests of the corporate moguls who interchangeably occupy the directorates of the major media and industries of the United States (and the world).

Herbert Schiller, in *The Mind Managers* (and the earlier *Mass Communications and American Empire*) provides the fullest

exposition of manipulation theory. The first paragraph of *The Mind Managers* stands as a basic definition of manipulation:

American media managers create, process, refine and preside over the circulation of images and information which determine our beliefs and attitudes and, ultimately, our behavior. When they deliberately produce messages that do not correspond to the realities of social existence, the media managers become mind managers. Messages that intentionally create a false sense of reality and produce a consciousness that cannot comprehend or willfully rejects the actual conditions of life, personal or social, are manipulative messages.

Several pages later Schiller makes clear that manipulation does not depend upon conspiracy or even conscious intent but is, rather,

embedded in the unquestioned but fundamental socioeconomic arrangements that first determine, and then are reinforced by, property ownership, division of labor, sex roles, the organization of production, and the distribution of income. These arrangements, established and legitimized over a very long time, have their own dynamics and produce their own "inevitability".

Manipulation occurs through the inculcation of five basic myths, Individualism and Personal Choice, Neutrality (of institutions), Unchanging Human Nature, Absence of Social Conflict and Media Pluralism.

Manipulation theory provides the underpinning for a variety of stances toward TV, stances that on the surface appear to share little common ground but do share the assumption that TV is primarily a causal agent - a creator of perceptions, a manipulator.

Within the manipulation theory, there is no distinctly socialist perspective; rather, socialists' contributions have melded with those of radicals and liberals (often under the proud, many-shades-of-gray banner of social science research). Consequently, in the

remainder of this section and in the next, I have not attempted to distinguish socialist TV work from the broader range of leftist TV theory and practice. My goal in the remainder of this section is to categorize the main leftist approaches to TV and to relate these approaches to manipulation theory.

Content Analysis. "Content analysis" focuses on the social and political aspects of TV programming (as distinct from quality of acting, etc.). Typically, content analysis has concentrated on news programming, since that is the area wherein TV most directly treats social and political themes. In recent years, however, a broader content analysis has emerged; leftist critics have turned their attention to the sexism, racism, and other socializing influences within entertainment programming.⁽⁵⁾ A component of this broader analysis has been an increasing willingness to consider popular TV on its viewers' terms. From the *New Yorker* to *Socialist Revolution*, a "new TV journalism" is discussing Mary Hartman and Mary Tyler Moore as they appear to the people who watch them. By contrast, traditional criticism of popular programming (cf. daily newspapers review columns) has featured intellectuals of liberal leanings directly or coyly comparing TV shows to movies or plays they have enjoyed. Invariably, critics from this "film manqué" school have found TV shows wanting.

Content analysis has served as a bulwark of manipulation theory by supplying innumerable examples of televised distortion of the "truth". Whether a critic lambastes a news program for lying about Vietnam or a children's TV show for overemphasizing violence, there is a common critical premise—simultaneously stemming from and feeding back into manipulation theory—that TV's prime role is pulling its puppet-like viewers' consciousness strings.

Documentary Production. Liberals have used their access to broadcast TV to introduce "relevance" to popular programming, to produce an occasional special of arguably progressive content, to shape network news into a liberal mold, and to introduce high-art elements into the TV aesthetic.

Out-of-the-closet socialists, by contrast, have been excluded by the broadcast

industry, except when liberals make available an "Open Studio" slot on public television, or hire socialists as consultants on liberal-controlled specials. The only recourse consistently open to socialists concerned about the development of alternative TV content has been independent video.

The major thrust of leftist video work has been toward the production of alternative "specials", programs in a documentary format, with an explicit ideological content. Distribution of these alternative specials poses severe problems. Most often, the only distribution available is through special showing by the videomaker.

Many leftist videomakers are unconcerned with the mass appeal of their material and produce tapes of interest to specific audiences, such as training tapes and consciousness-raising tapes. Commonly, these tapes are shown as part of an organizing effort in the field addressed by the tape. The documentary production approach is tied to manipulation theory in essentially the same way as the content analysis approach. Once again, TV's role is isolated as a purveyor of influential messages. By producing "truer" messages, leftists seek to adapt TV's manipulative mechanics to a higher end.

Positive Formal Analysis (Technological Optimism/McLuhanism). This form of intervention bears an ambiguous relationship to both manipulation theory and the left as a whole. In its purest aspect—as expressed in McLuhan's concepts of the "global village" and "retribalization"—this approach runs directly counter to historical materialism. But there is a strand of leftist thought that retrieves elements of McLuhanism and uses these elements as a sort of fallback position, an almost ineffable grounds for optimism. This optimistic strand analyzes TV's form and finds it manipulative and oppressive in the present, but with a profound liberating potential.

Gene Youngblood, in his book *Expanded Cinema*, expresses both the dismay over present technology and the hope for future technology. First the dismay, which is rooted in manipulation theory:

Commercial entertainment works against art, exploits the alienation and

TELEVISION WITHOUT TEARS

boredom of the public, by perpetuating a system of conditioned response to formulas. Commercial entertainment not only isn't creative, it actually destroys the audience's ability to appreciate and participate in the creative process.

But the culture that produces this repugnant commercialism has created a Frankenstein:

A culture is dead when its myths have been exposed. Television reveals the observed, the observer, the process of observing. There can be no secrets in the Paleocybernetic Age... Television extends global man throughout the ecological biosphere twenty-four hours a day. By moving into outer space, television reveals new dimensions of inner space, new aspects of man's perception and the results of that perception.⁽⁸⁾

The interventionist tactics that flow from this analysis essentially involve mastery of the technology. Art and experiment video, to the extent that the artists and videofreex involved conceive of themselves as acting politically, would be the prime example.⁽⁷⁾

Negative Formal Analysis (Inverse McLuhanism). This tendency directly extends manipulation theory's emphasis upon the links between TV's form of transmission and viewers' passive mode of reception. The contention is that TV's form is intrinsically reactionary: the tactic suggested is to find some way of circumventing or suppressing TV.

This tactic is most easily accomplished on a private level. Hence the common stance on the left: "I can't stand TV, haven't watched a show since I was eight, wouldn't have the thing in the house, don't you have something better to do than watch that stuff? etc".

This strategy obviously presents some problems. At least one exponent of this analysis does not shrink from these difficulties and forthrightly calls for the abolition of TV:

No revolution of values is possible through media because commitment to media itself is the overriding counter-revolutionary fact... The first step is to allow the possibility of even imagining being free of television. The operating

paradigm now is that TV is here to stay. Like cars. But is that necessarily true...?

Through a combination of a grassroots personal choice movement, abetted by "an ad campaign for the abandonment of television" and the compiling of a "legal constitutional case against television", the author goes on to envision the beasts' elimination.⁽⁸⁾

Critique of Manipulation Theory and Related Approaches

The preceding section is not a complete categorization of attitudes and approaches to TV on the left. Clearly, overlap between categories exists. Further, I have passed over the considerable left-liberal impetus toward regulation (increased or reinterpreted) of TV. I have also neglected that portion of leftist TV analysis which confines itself to description while more or less frankly awaiting the development of a political organization or movement that can operate effectively within the TV arena (e.g., a socialist party that can operate a network). The reason for both omissions is that the relevant arguments are extensive and go beyond the domain of TV. Is it realistic to expect a capitalist government to regulate itself meaningfully? Should party building receive primary emphasis at this historical juncture? Both questions require extended discussions which this article cannot hope to encompass. I will limit myself to suggesting that regulation-oriented maneuvers should be seen as tactics, not strategy; and that the development of socialist organizations should be viewed as a concomitant of cultural practice, not as a precondition for that practice.

Criticism of manipulation theory should not obscure the valuable contributions made by the theory and its derivatives, such as: heightened awareness of the manipulative operation of TV; pressure on TV to produce occasional progressive programming; heightened awareness of psychological demographics (through analysis of popular programming) and of the effects of broadcast TV's form; and development of technical expertise in video.

Important though these contributions are, they have not formed a strategic approach. Certainly it is true that the absence of an

organized major socialist movement poses a serious obstacle to the formulation of a coherent strategy in any area - housing as much as TV. But more than an organizational vacuum is at the root of the left's TV incoherence.

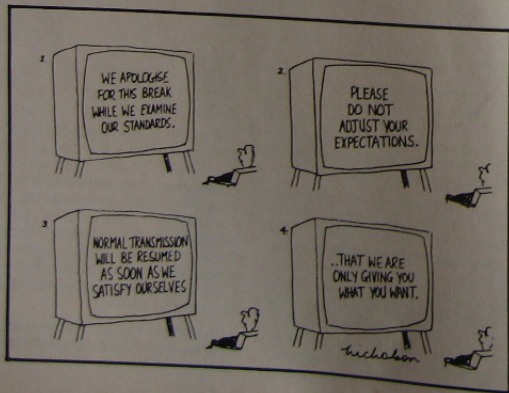
The basic premise of manipulation theory itself undermines strategic understanding of TV. We can understand this premise if we first ask the key questions facing socialists in a society ruled by monopoly capital: Why do people accept capitalism, an economic and social order whose original basis - the limited availability of political freedom and material necessities - no longer exists? Why do workers under capitalism seem inclined to accept their exploitation? In answer, manipulation theory points at the stream of false data and passivity-inducing techniques that flows between transmitters and receivers. Bombarded by evocations of the glory of dry underarms, the receivers presumably are forced to turn to one or another of the deodorants advertised. Bombarded by "tough cop" images, the viewers are forced to discount the First Amendment. But from where does this "force" derive? Manipulation theory does not tell us.

Manipulation theory overconcentrates on transmission at the expense of receiving - on the mind managers at the expense of the "managed" minds. Liberal manipulation

theorists think manipulation is the fault of the people who run TV. Socialist theorists blame the people who run the country. But the conclusion is the same: "Kids who have never heard real laughter"(9) suffer from a disease that TV causes. The dialectical relationship between transmitters and receivers is obscured and the relationship of the entire viewing experience to the entire configuration of American life - and the potential for change inherent in that relationship - is lost. Immersion in manipulation theory leads to the conclusion, "So capitalism is a lousy system which obviously looks after its own interests". And then nothing - distance, defeatism, despair.(10) A starting point becomes a conclusion.

Enzensberger's 1962 essay called "The Industrialization of the Mind" expresses this central criticism of manipulation theory:

Consciousness, however false, can be induced and reproduced by industrial means, but it cannot be industrially produced. It is a "social product" made up by people; its origin is the dialogue. No industrial process can replace the persons who generate it....The mind industry is monstrous and difficult to understand because it does not, strictly speaking, produce anything. It is an intermediary, engaged only in



production's secondary and tertiary derivatives, in transmission and infiltration....

The mind industry can take on anything, digest it, reproduce it, and pour it out....It is capable of turning any idea into a slogan and any work of the imagination into a hit. This is its overwhelming power, yet it is also its most vulnerable spot; it thrives on a stuff which it cannot manufacture by itself. It depends on the very substance it must fear most, and must suppress what it feeds on: the creative productivity of people.(11)

Reduced to its essence, manipulation theory is a copy theory of knowledge. TV is certainly riddled with manipulative aspects, but to overemphasize those aspects mistakes the symptom for the cause, and thereby obscures the possibilities for dealing with the situation as a whole. As Richard Lichtman notes,

it is one of the deepest deficiencies of any copy theory of knowledge that it cannot account for what is copied. For it regards consciousness as passive, much as wax is passive in receiving any imprint that is pressed upon it....Knowledge is always an active construction as well as a receptivity to the world. An interpretation must be made; the "given" is always a "taken".(12)

Lichtman goes on to criticize the notion that people work unconsciously and then are induced to become falsely conscious of the nature of their work (and their lives and their society) by superstructural institutions outside of work. Rather, the fabric of work is stitched together with the development of consciousness. Neither Marx's famous dictum that "the ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas", nor Gramsci's concept of ideological hegemony are contradicted by the suggestion that under the particular conditions of contemporary society, consciousness production has become an integral part of the base of production. This notion of interpenetration adds a vital element to manipulation theory by providing a way to understand why objective conditions have often not resulted in subjective rejection of exploitation. As Lichtman writes:

As contemporary capitalism advances and the "base" and "superstructure" come more and more to interpenetrate each other, the forms of mystification provided through the superstructure become more vital to the continued reproduction of the economic structure itself....One way to revitalize the classic relationship between base and superstructure is to trace the relationship between the mystification of consciousness as it occurs in the fetishism of production and the manner in which consciousness is malformed in the remaining social institutions. (13)

How, exactly, is consciousness malformed in an institution such as TV? Angriily rejecting the networks' and Madison Avenue's self-serving cry of "We're only giving the people what they want", manipulation theory produces an equally mechanical slogan: "TV (and/or advertising) creates needs". But the malformation is far more complex than such a slogan indicates. The act of TV-watching, of avid TV-watching, has a point of origin in the consciousness - in the wants and even the needs - of the viewers. Certainly, another point of origin is in the (perceived and intuited) interests of the ruling class. Understanding of both points of origin is necessary to deal strategically with the domain. Popular TV conducts real needs into artificial channels. I'll discuss this channeling further below - let us turn now to a critical consideration of the manipulation theory - linked approaches outlined in the previous section.

Content Analysis. The absence of consideration of TV's form diminishes the value of much content analysis. For example, critiques of network news often lend themselves to the conclusion that "enlightened" writers and anchorpersons would remedy the situation. This conclusion ignores the needs met and effects caused by fragmented, immediacy-ridden TV news - of whatever ideological stripe.

More subtle examples of content analysis often consider popular programming (i.e., implicitly ideological programming) and often consider formal elements. Much of this work provides valuable descriptive and analytic data. But whether the analysis

conveys a sense of personal relationship to TV and the people who watch it or a kind of "critic doing his or her job" detachment, the constant is the omission of any suggestion that the people who watch popular TV might own the capability to affect significantly what they watch. This analytical hopelessness (regarding the possibility of actually working with TV) resembles the passivity that the act of TV-watching supposedly induces.

Documentary Production. Again, failure to deal with TV's formal components is a crucial omission, demonstrated by independent videomakers' tropism toward public affairs programming. These shows, if they have the great good fortune to achieve any significant exposure, fall into a category whose very name - "specials" - indicates it lies outside the mainstream of TV viewing. Revealed here is a failure to understand the needs TV addresses through its popular (ordinary) programming, a failure to understand TV's formal relationship to society as a whole.

As liberal broadcast personnel and socialist independents exploit their opportunities to produce "better" - aesthetically richer, ideologically purer - content, they become bogged down in tactical considerations and lose sight of the bigger picture, of strategy. Those working within the bowels of the culture industry are particularly susceptible.

The general problem, of course, is to operate within capitalist society without accepting that society's standards. A particularly poignant example of this double bind appeared in an interview in *Toward Revolutionary Art* with Lester Cole, the screenwriter and member of the "Hollywood Ten". Cole refers to a film called *White Dawn* as honest, good, and "revealing of imperialist aggression". Then he adds, "So if *White Dawn* fails to make a profit, the producers are going to scratch pretty hard to get backing for their next. And this has a corrosive effect; they may find it so difficult to get backing they'll choose a more 'acceptable' subject next time". It is clearly necessary to find ways of greasing the financial wheels of oppositional cultural work, but it is a mistake to build strategy around the expectation that the system will finance its own exposure. To paraphrase Gil

Scott-Heron, "the Revolution will not make a profit" (though it may well be televised).

Positive Formal Analysis (Technological Optimism/McLuhanism). The objection to this approach is essentially the same as the objection to McLuhan and other technological exceptionalists. Either one believes that there is a class struggle or one doesn't. Either technological advance occurs within a dialectic which can and must be historically understood and worked with, or technology completely transcends the society that produces it and moulds that society in its own image. Tom Nairn puts it well:

To anyone who can extricate himself from the McLuhanite trance for a few seconds, it is reasonably clear that the existing global village was created by European imperialism, not by television; that it is not a "village" but a cruel class society tearing humanity in two.... That we could live in a "global village".... is another and different point. The potential of the electric media is, in fact, in contradiction with a great deal of the actual social world. And the actual, historical and social grasp of the meaning of such media depends more than anything else upon seeing the contradiction.

McLuhan's mythical history and sociology consists precisely in evading such contradictions. And, by this evasion, what is lost is the very idea of a historical understanding of social phenomena.... This is not merely unscholarly. It is an attack upon.... the work of generations to demystify our consciousness and confront our own reality.(14)

In short, artists and other independent videomakers who consider themselves leftists but limit their practice to technological proliferation are limiting either their political practice or their artwork. There is room for technological experimentation (indeed, a crying need for it), but investment in technical advance *sine prescription* for co-optation and irrelevance.(15) The practice of "casting your media upon the (capitalist) waters" results only in waterlogged media.

Negative Formal Analysis (Inverse McLuhanism). This approach is so mired down in disgusted examination of TV's invidious form that it ignores the needs TV meets. As noted above, this approach has contributed to our understanding of TV's formal effects, but when negative formal analysis extends either to boasts of private ostracism of TV or to calls for public renunciation of the monster, it becomes irrelevant or worse insofar as it alienates TV watchers. A compulsion to preserve intellectual property values is all too apparent here.

Strategy: Foundations

The elements necessary to formulate and implement a socialist TV strategy are already present in this society. They include, first, the widespread public acknowledgment of TV's power. Any high-art bias notwithstanding, the barriers to serious consideration of TV's effects and strategic potential are being removed. In a sense, the various critical messages about TV have combined into one: "TV is not a hula hoop: it's not going away". The left is going to find it more and more difficult to decline work in the TV arena.

A second element of a strategy involves the character of the present political period. Specific struggles abound, but it seems clear that the left is undergoing a kind of protracted identity crisis in the wake of the ending of the Vietnam war, the overthrow of the Nixon totem, and the dispersal of the new left. Though "obvious" calls to action (End the War!) are lacking, people are adjusting to the reality of a long struggle, and priorities are shifting. Recent organizational activity on the left suggests that socialists are becoming willing to recognize that the "spectacle" of American life extends from the factory floor to the home TV screen, and that meaningful politics must encompass all aspects of society without placing artificial barriers between "productive" workplace experience and the diverse experiences of everyday life.(16)

A third ingredient in the development of a strategy has been noted by Enzensberger:

With the aid of systems theory, a discipline which is part of bourgeois science.... it can be demonstrated that a

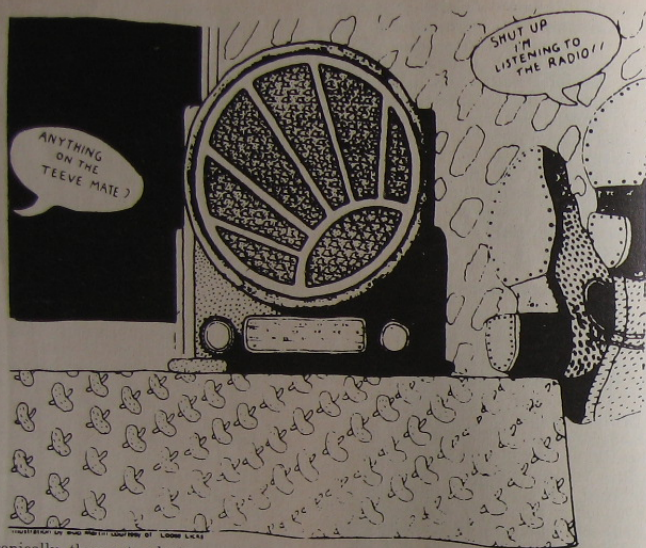
linked series of communications.... to the degree that it exceeds a certain critical size, can no longer be centrally controlled.... This basic leakiness of stochastic (i.e., random) systems.... demands a monitor that is bigger than the system itself.(17)

The ruling class can certainly co-opt the electronic revolution, but the ruling class did not plan that revolution. A great deal of flux is apparent, and the left can either respond creatively to that flux or (as has typically been the case) be swept away by it. Imminent advances in mass-marketed TV technology indicate some of the possibilities.*

A fourth element of the strategy involves recognizing the existence of a constituency as eager to transmit as to receive. "Breaker, breaker", the signal of CB radio, is neatly symbolic, for CB represents nothing less than a breaking of the transmitter-receiver lock-step that capitalism has imposed upon the use of electronic media. Historically, electronic transmission has been the domain of a privileged few, operating from communications industry bastions removed from the public view. One could write a letter to the editor or make a home movie, but the electronic bananas were out of reach; nor could one make home TV or (popular) home radio. The closest one could come was radio phone-in shows, those eerie testimonies to humans' need to communicate, regardless of what and to whom.

A million songs down the road, the truckers decided they would rather bypass the middlepeople, and the CB phenomenon geared up. Since then, CB has traveled a long way. Now, people sit at home nights making small talk over their \$100-plus CB setups.

* Video discs, analogous in functioning and price to audio discs, are virtually upon us. The immediate results of these trends will not necessarily be heartening, if untold millions convert their "leisure" into gluttonous consumption of Hollywood escape fantasy. But concerts, and hard-core pornography. But the increased passivity isn't the only option. The independent distribution route which is likely to result from the development of disc technology could truly revolutionize TV-watching (to offer just one optimistic scenario). A good starting point for understanding the possibilities of video proliferation is Anthony Reveaux, "New Technologies for the Demystification of Cinema", *Film Quarterly*, 1974.



(Ironically, they not only ignore their own TVs, but often foul up their neighbors' reception in the process.) What they say may not be all that compelling to an eavesdropper, but it's *their* small talk, not Mary Tyler Moore's.

Also, TV's constituency is open to new types of content. True as it is to note the similarities among popular TV shows of the past twenty years, it is a mistake to conclude that nothing in popular TV has changed during that span. A fundamental cynicism has crept into many of the country's favorite shows - from "Kojak" to "Mary Hartman". M. J. Arlen argues persuasively that the common denominator in Norman Lear's string of successful comedies is an amorphous, non-stimulus-related anger. Sanford and Archie are just basically furious; the "provocations" they suffer are merely convenient story pegs and are recognized by viewers as such.⁽¹⁸⁾ From this perspective, these modern choleric are a far cry from (or a significant development of) Ralph Crumden's (Jackie Gleason's) attempts - usually unsuccessful - to be

confident and happy. Analogously, a show like "MASH", with its theme of "making the best of a bad situation", is significantly different from the "it's a great life if you get the breaks" theme of "Sergeant Bilko" or the "we shall overcome" doggedness of the sixties' "Hogan's Heroes".

Finally, the artists and videofreex who have explored TV's technological frontiers represent a resource for the left, to the extent that they are formally, if not consciously, in opposition to capitalist TV.

Strategy: An Approach

The following approach rests on two basic premises. First, TV is central to the reproduction of consciousness in this country; thus the left must develop a strategy for working with TV.⁽¹⁹⁾ Second, socialist media workers must stop asking to be judged exclusively in terms of their media's internal content, but must accept the context of overall political effect. Socialists must begin thinking in terms of cultural strategy rather than in terms of isolated cultural productions. Leftist cultural workers

typically invest themselves mightily in their individual cultural works - and then leave it up to the "movement" to make whatever use it pleases of these works. The movement being as inchoate as it is, this "use" is usually non-existent or minimal, and the cultural workers bemoan their wasted or unappreciated effort. What leftist cultural workers do not typically do is invest themselves as thoroughly in organizational commitment as they do in their cultural work. Some avowedly leftist cultural workers even persist in accepting the "art for art's sake" capitalist myth, without recognizing that a truly oppositional cultural strategy must encompass both content and form, motive and effect. Thus, a progressive film whose distributors accept the logic of marketplace economics legitimates in its form (of distribution) the very system its content attacks. Understanding the trade-off involved requires coherent political analysis. But such an analysis is rarely possessed by those leftist cultural workers who eschew organizational contamination of their individual purity - and thereby ensure that their work will never truly transcend and oppose the bourgeois air it breathes.

Other leftist cultural workers retreat into propaganda-producing collectives, emerging occasionally with cultural offering in hand, but declining to function as more than propagandists. Fruchter points out the problem with this approach: "Almost all propaganda work is a way of doing political work without directly facing or confronting a constituency."⁽²⁰⁾

Socialist cultural workers must cut through the false dichotomy that defines the options as only individualism ("artistic integrity") or stifling socialist realism. They must find a middle ground that permits varied and daring forms of creative expression within a commitment to understanding the total effects of cultural productions. They must accept the responsibility for these effects, a responsibility that will tend to force cultural workers out of the comfortable individualistic reservation that capitalism has allocated to its creative spirits.

All of this is not to say that socialist cultural workers should bear the burden alone. Socialist organizations are all too vulnerable to the questions R. G. Davis

poses: "How come you don't have any cultural theory? How come you have an organization and no cultural line? How come you have a cultural theory which is reactionary? How come you have a cultural theory which is limited to agitation and propaganda?"⁽²¹⁾

A socialist TV strategy might involve the following steps:

Step 1: Understand the Needs People Bring to the TV-watching Experience. To understand what people think, feel, and fantasize about, and to analyze the relationship of these thoughts, feelings, and fantasies to TV-present and TV-future, could be an overwhelming task.

But there is no real reason to be overwhelmed. Socialists have hardly been guilty of under-analysis of psychological currents. The task, then, is for socialist groups to begin converting this data (and data provided by one's own everyday life) into a currency acceptable to the First National Bank of Consciousness Reproduction, i.e., popular TV.

For example, a body of socialist analysis concerns the psychosocial evolution of the nuclear family.⁽²²⁾ This analysis argues that at the present time workers - particularly male workers - are in the untenable position of submerging their individuality at the workplace in the mistaken belief/hope that they will thus "earn" the right to assert individuality and authority at home, within the family. What does a man - for example - enmeshed in the contradiction seek when he follows the capitalist way of washing away one's problems in "leisure time"? What types of TV images and themes would be responsive both to his need to feel entertained and to his need to understand and surmount his problems?⁺ Other areas for

⁺ Can these needs coexist? There is a left tendency to define "consciousness-raising" as something which only happens in situations explicitly labeled as "consciousness-raising" and detached from everyday life. Stanley Aronowitz (in *False Promises* [New York: McGraw-Hill, 1974]) describes this tendency well: "It is as if working class people lived in a different world of economic necessity... Factory workers and Black people obviously are unable to afford the luxury of self-examination and can only be 'reached' with bread and butter appeals, according to this view".

investigation would be class and historical analyses of TV audiences. The aim here is to begin filling in the blank that currently exists on the far side of the manipulation equation (the "manipulated").

Step 2: Understand the Sources of TV's Appeal and the Overlap between That Appeal and People's Needs. Why do people watch TV rather than go to the movies or talk to each other? Why do people watch one show and not another, one private eye and not another? What are the purposes of, and needs served by, serial formats and stereotyped characterizations? Socialist groups could watch and discuss popular TV in terms of the insights gained through Step 1 and in terms of the considerable content and formal analysis that has already been performed on TV. Eventually, the group could begin to distinguish between the potentially progressive elements of current popular TV (specifically, the *most* popular current TV) and the reactionary elements. "The Waltons", for example, presents an idealized family life as the "solution" to the problems of Depression-era America (and, by implication, of today's depressed America). Clearly, this idealization is reactionary. But, on another level, the program reaffirms the possibility of enduring personal bonds; socialist popular TV could affirm that possibility while linking the affirmation with the establishment of a different social order. As Enzensberger writes:

The attractive power of mass consumption is based not on the dictates of false needs, but on the falsification and exploitation of quite real and legitimate ones without which the parasitic process of advertising would be redundant. A socialist movement ought not to denounce these needs, but take them seriously, investigate them, and make them more politically productive. (23)

The task here is to distinguish between the explicit roles portrayed in popular TV characterizations (Kojak as cop; Fonzie as juvenile delinquent) and the "existential" stances of these characters (Kojak as warm cynic; Fonzie as small but tough, bad but good, homely but sexy, totally lacking self-doubt). What needs are met through identification with these stances? What elements of these stances are potentially

progressive?(24) Analogously, the "common sense" notion that serials and their stereotypes are purely reactionary may prove specious.(25)

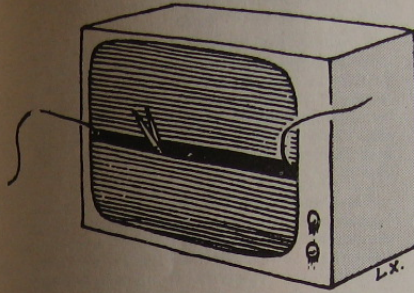
Step 3: Write and Produce Scripts (through which "the social laws under which people are acting spring into light";(26) and which meet the entertainment criteria that people bring to the act of TV-watching). This step is best introduced through a series of questions: What do people expect when they sit down in front of a TV? What tried-and-true elements of popular TV can be integrated into socialist programming? What elements of the American experience are not being dealt with by current popular TV? How can social laws be illuminated in a format that satisfies people's TV-expectations?

These four questions are intertwined; to answer even three misses the point, but to answer all four offers a marvelous opportunity. These (too simple) answers are a starting point:

- People expect to be entertained.
- Affirmation of the worth of human relationships is one popular element of current programming that could be integrated into socialist programming.
- Current programming does not deal with the contradictions between the ideal of the nuclear family and the societal pressures upon nuclear families. (A case can be made that numerous shows - "All in the Family" springs to mind - deal in a comic manner with this contradiction, and "Mary Hartman" deals with it in a cynical, hopeless manner, but no serious treatment has appeared. I would argue that this omission exists because the contradiction is too central to capitalism, not because it is impossible - or even difficult - to treat the contradiction in terms that would meet entertainment expectations.)

- A serial "family" show could affirm human relationships while demonstrating that this affirmation occurs despite, rather than because of, the current relationship of families to society.

Consider the following working hypothesis: Many, if not most, of the popular TV elements which viewers experience as



"real", "exciting", "dramatic", and "involving", are precisely those elements which refer to the circumstances and pressures of everyday life. In addition to these elements, popular TV offers an additional set of elements that have little relation to everyday life and are, in fact, intended to offer an escape. In this latter category would be included the bulk of the comic and adventurist content elements of popular TV, as well as formal elements (fragmentation, commodification, and passification).

The question facing socialists is: How much of the second, "escapist", category is necessary for entertaining TV? Or, to put it another way: Can entertaining programs be developed that offer release by unfolding the possibilities for change latent in everyday reality?

I suspect that the last questions can be answered affirmatively. A fascinating article by Theresa Mack in *Televisions* (27) entitled "Real-Live Soap Opera: Kids Produce Themselves", describes how a group of grade-school girls wrote and produced an engrossing soap opera called "How to Live without a Father", which dealt with a divorce.

The thrust of Mack's article accords with my own brief experience in a script-writing group composed mainly of "non-writers": real-life themes, plots and dialogue are dormant within ourselves. Or, to put it another way, the situations we live out and the comments we make every day are certainly different from the "entertaining" situations and dialogue TV presents to us,

but are not intrinsically less interesting. On the contrary! Consider the type of joke a TV character would make about an unsatisfactory boss: "He's so stingy that he makes his wife sew his wallet shut each morning" (canned laughter). Consider the kind of jokes people *actually* make about unsatisfactory employers. More savage and bitter than TV jokes? Of course. Less funny? Hardly.

In general, there is an unexplored vein of workplace - including housework - culture. Similarly ripe for depiction is the gulf between people's conscious ideology (what they think they believe) and the ideological implications of people's culture (how people actually act). Further, for those of us who have spent a significant amount of time in front of the tube, the "tricks" of TV serial construction are close to second nature. People with professional writing and directing skills can aid with plot ideas and construction techniques, but the raw material is widely present.**

Step 4: Integration of Popular TV Work within a Political Movement. The earlier this step occurs the better. I have listed it last only because it depends on the involvement of a large number of people, while the earlier steps could be accomplished by small groups.

The content changes discussed under the first three steps must be seen in relation to TV's current and potential form. What good is socialist programming if no one sees it? Further, if socialist programming is (somehow) offered to a mass audience, but in the same physically and emotionally isolating format utilized by commercial TV, what is gained? Clearly, changes in TV's

** A suggested theme for a socialist serial: A nuclear family in which the husband is on unemployment and the wife is working. The husband's (and children's) basic stance is of "liberated" magnanimity towards the wife's plight. They are full of willingness to cook, clean, etc. Dramatic tension stems from the fact that "understanding is not enough": no amount of niceties can outweigh the fact that the woman works in a job she hates and has to bring that alienated experience back to the family. In other words, tension (and humor) derive from the contradiction between expectations about the ameliorative power of good will and the reality of the negative power of the alienating work experience.

content must be accompanied by a change in form, but this latter change can occur only through TV work by socialist political organizations.

It is up to the left - and that can only mean organizations on the left - to accept the challenge of exploring the potential that lies in this direction. Socialist videomakers who combine technological experimentation, creative innovation, and an active effort at demystification (equipment sharing, teaching) can help catalyze a popular renewal of TV.

Some amplification seems useful here. The "conk out" escapist attitude toward TV is certainly widespread, and the fact that TV provides significant entertainment return for minimal energy investment in your own home can hardly be ignored. On the other hand, it is a common observation (backed up by surveys of viewers' evaluation of TV's trustworthiness, etc.) that many people watch TV without loving it. It's around, it's more attractive than whatever's in second place, but it's not ideal, would seem a fair assessment of a common attitude.

There is something inherent in the leisure-time situation under capitalism that is neatly suited to home entertainment. I would also suggest that the left's basic approach to people's use of the leisure time is: don't be mesmerized - organize. In other words, the left ignores the appetites people bring to leisure time and instead offers activities which are highly active, often arduous, emotionally involving - in short, activities that are the opposite of what people typically do with their leisure.

What if the alternative weren't so radically different. What if people had a middle choice between watching "Little House on the Prairie" and going to a meeting about rent control? What if there were a neighbourhood meeting that featured alternative, engrossing, TV in a relaxed atmosphere? What if the meeting had a hands-on hardware component, and was publicized as an activity for the entire family - thereby dealing with such problems as child care and children's TV fare?† In short, what if there were a social occasion - a regular social occasion - that the sponsoring political organization could gradually orient toward political activity from a base of shared

perception, shared geography, and shared leisure experience?

I believe the steps I have outlined are possible, but my basic argument is for a process - one that does not exist now - whereby socialist cultural workers would commit themselves to strategic politics, and socialist organizations would make commitments to cultural politics at this period.

TV viewing, as it now occurs, is the ultimate bourgeois entertainment. It is conducive to total separation of work and leisure, productive activity and nonrebellious passivity. To address popular TV seriously is to attack this split, and to perform a crucial task in building a socialist movement.

Developing a cultural strategy involving both the form and content of popular TV is an arduous process. Can the left afford any more delay?

† The national anxiety over children's TV represents a kind of apotheosis of manipulation theory. Responding to the popular concern about children's TV are establishment leaders and their media who say, in effect: "Yes, you're right, children's TV is bad. In fact, it's the main thing that's bad - with children, with all of us, with America." This diabolism, of course, deflects attention from root causes, from the nature of a society which would permit its children to be huckstered to while the sun shone and their parents make a living (or slept on Saturday morning). See "What TV Does to Kids", the cover story of *Newsweek*, 21 February 1977, which states, "It would be preposterous, of course, to suggest that television alone is responsible for everything that is wrong with America's young", after six pages of suggesting exactly that.

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3. Bob Jacobson, "Video at the Crossroads: The Dance of the Electrons - Ballet or Burlesque?" *Jump Cut*, May-June 1974.
4. Herbert Schiller, *The Mind Managers* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1974), pp. 1-31.

The Journal of Communications 24 (1974) contains a number of analyses of these influences.

6. Gene Youngblood, *Expanded Cinema* (New York: Dutton, 1970), pp. 59, 78.

7. For those interested in further exploration of this area, I suggest the Winter 1976 issue of *La Mamelle* (video issue: available for \$2.00 from P. O. Box 3123, San Francisco, CA 94119). Eleanor Antin's remarks (pp. 22-23) are of particular interest for their uncharacteristic emphasis on "narrative and more narrative". Also see: David Antin, "Television: Video's Frightful Parent, Part I", *Artforum*, December 1975.

8. Jerry Mander, "The Case for the Elimination of Television", *City of San Francisco*, 3 August 1975.

9. Larry Gelbart (writer and co-producer of "MASH"), quoted in "You Should See What You're Missing", excerpts from PBS show of same name printed in *In These Times*, 29 November 1976.

10. In *The Mind Managers*, p. 6, Schiller writes, "It should be noted that this familiarity [with the mechanics of mind management] can, under certain auspices, be harmful to your (mental) health". (Schiller's parenthesized "mental") Imagine the same statement being made about familiarity with the mechanics of the Vietnam war. As Enzensberger ("Constituents of the Theory of the Media") notes, "Subjectively speaking, behind the tendency to go on the defensive lies a sense of impotence... The manipulation thesis also serves to exculpate oneself. To cast the enemy in the role of the devil is to conceal the weakness and lack of perspective in one's own agitation".

11. This essay is also contained in *The Consciousness Industry*.

12. Richard Lichtman, "Marx's Theory of Ideology", *Socialist Revolution* 23 (April 1975), pp. 52-53.

13. *Ibid.*, p. 64.

14. Tom Nairn, "McLuhanism: The Myth of Our Time", in Raymond Rosenthal, ed., *McLuhan: Pro & Con* (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1968).

15. Political activists who bank on "media exposure" are just as vulnerable to co-optation as are apolitical McLuhanoids. In an excellent piece in *Liberation*, May 1971, called "Movement Propaganda and the Culture of the Spectacle", Norman Fruchter argues that

the new left's strategy of "using" the media meant that "a new set of potentially troublesome opponents had consented to appear as performers". Also see: Todd Gitlin, "Spotlights and Shadows: Television and the Culture of Politics", *College English*, April 1977.

16. See the interview with filmmakers and NAM members Julia Reichert and Jim Klein (*Growing Up Female, Methadone, and Union Maids*) in *Jump Cut*, January-February 1975).

17. Enzensberger, "Theory of the Media".

18. M. J. Arlen, "The Media Dramas of Norman Lear", in Newcomb, ed., *Television: The Critical View*.

19. How central is TV? Those on the left who compete with each other for "most years without a TV in the house" are in a distinct minority: 95 per cent of American households had at least one TV set in 1972 according to L. A. Lo-Sciuto, "A National Inventory of Television Viewing Behavior", in E. A. Rubinstein, G. A. Comstock, and J. P. Murray, eds., *Television and Social Behavior*, vol. 4 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1972).

A wealth of research literature testifies to the dominance of TV as a cultural form. The Committee on Children's Television, 1511 Masonic Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94117, has a library containing much of this literature, and also makes a good selection of articles on the subject available by mail at nominal cost.

20. Fruchter, "Movement Propaganda".

21. R. G. Davis, interviewed in *Toward Revolutionary Art*, vol. 3, no. 1 (1976).

22. Eg., Eli Zaretsky, "Capitalism, the Family, and Personal Life", *Socialist Revolution* 13/14 and 15.

23. Enzensberger, "Theory of the Media".

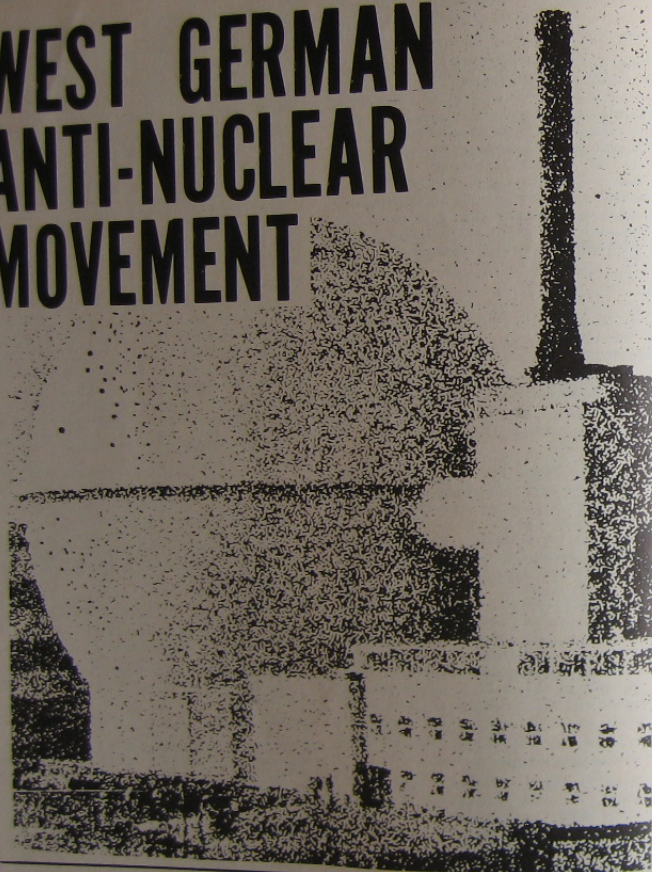
24. Cf. Phil Wander's excellent analysis of "All in the Family", entitled "Counters in the Social Drama", in Newcomb, ed., *Television: The Critical View*.

25. The dismissal of serials is well-challenged by Fred E. H. Schroeder ("Video Aesthetics and Serial Art") and T. W. Adorno ("Television and the Patterns of Mass Culture"), both of whose essays may be found in Newcomb, ed., *Television: The Critical View*.

26. Bertolt Brecht, "Epic Theatre", in Maynard Solomon, ed., *Marxism and Art* (New York: Random House, 1974).

27. Theresa Mack, "Real-Life Soap Opera: Kids Produce Themselves", *Televisions*, October-November 1975.

WEST GERMAN ANTI-NUCLEAR MOVEMENT



The following is an abridged version of an article by a West German socialist about the anti-nuclear power movement in that country. It shows both the size of the movement there and the repressive actions of the state against it. This repression is a clear outline of what the future nuclear society will be like should atomic power become the main source of energy for the industrialised world.

The Federal Republic of Germany is the second biggest exporter of atomic power generating stations (the United States being the largest). Firms operating in the industry here are broadly similar to those in the United States. But the FRG has virtually no uranium of its own and, because Australia is one of the countries capable of exporting uranium (along with South Africa, Canada, Brazil and the USSR), the Australian government has shown considerable interest.

The Australian government wants to do business and the German firms want to ensure supplies of raw materials for their atomic technology. The decision of the Australian government to lift the ban on future uranium exports is, therefore, inextricably bound up with the interests of West German capital.

There are three important aspects about the nuclear industry in West Germany:

- a) More than all other capitalist countries (except Japan) the FRG is geared to export. But competition in this field in the world market has become much harder in the last 2-3 years. This is why there is greater export of atomic energy technology by Siemens, and why weapons export has become such a great issue. This is also shown in the gigantic orders already achieved this year: 12 milliard Deutsch marks worth of atomic plants will be supplied to Brazil and 20 milliard Deutsch marks to Iran. Atomic co-operation could also move in the same direction with South Africa.
- b) A further aspect of atomic technology in the FRG is the production of large quantities of plutonium - the basis of atomic weapons. The growing war danger consequent upon the acquisition of atomic weapons by increasing numbers of countries (e.g., Israel, South Africa, Brazil and Iran) is well known to most active atomic weapons opponents, but this is not a dominant factor in the movement.
- c) The FRG is one-fiftieth the size of Australia and has more than four times the population. An accident in one of the

many buildings or plants near big cities threatens the lives of large numbers of people. A deathroll of 1 million could result from an atomic catastrophe. Government plans for coping with catastrophes are already known, from which it is clear that this problem, like others, will be solved at the cost of the working people. The stricken area will be cordoned off by the military and attempts to flee will be prevented.

Despite this sort of prospect, popular unrest is still relatively limited. This is because, while the risk of great accidents has certainly increased, major accidents have not occurred. Also, it is well known that damage hitherto caused is extremely difficult to prove later.



WYHL TO KALKAR - PEOPLE'S INITIATIVES

When the first big nuclear reactor was built in 1963 almost everybody regarded it as a pointer to future technology. Only with the successful peasant protests at Wyhl, Breisach and Fessenheim (France) did a broadening out of anti-nuclear protest begin. Previously the highlight had been the occupation of the building site near Wyhl on February 23, 1975 by a demonstration of 28,000.

The majority consisted of village people, winegrowers, workers, small business people, etc. A month later a court at Freiburg ordered a preliminary building control. The fight of the people around Wyhl in the extreme south western district of the FRG was a model for future resistance against nuclear technology. But so far there has not been a comparable broad participation.

The storming of the nuclear plant near Brokdorf, 70 km west of Hamburg, has great significance because, after two big demonstrations during late 1976 and early 1977, everywhere in the FRG, especially in the northern areas, small People's Initiatives (PI Groups) took place. (In Wyhl the conflict

remained limited to the district. Yet the people could continue to harass the plants, the place was still in the hands of the PI Groups. In Brokdorf, however, the state authorities had also learnt.)

Before resistance in the fairly thinly populated district could solidify (about 200 members of PI Groups had existed in villages for three years), the building sites were fenced off with barbed wire surrounded by a great posse of police. The site had been transformed into a military camp. On October 30, 1976, in the face of massive police measures, the first great action by the PI Groups took place. About 8,000 protesters moved to the site. A number of them succeeded in occupying part of it temporarily but were shortly afterwards driven off. Many were injured.

The next day the PI Groups called the village folk to a silent march from Wewelsfleth to Brokdorf. 3,000 to 4,000 protesters came together in a few hours. The site had been further militarily fortified. The moat had been widened to 8 metres. A 4-metre high reinforced-concrete wall topped with iron bars and barbed wire had been erected. A strong police and Federal defence garrison enclosed by an asphalted path provided for the quick entry of water cannon.

On November 13, 1970 the PI Groups called for a great protest. Over 30,000 came from Hamburg and other big cities. Many of the demonstrators tried to storm the building site and broke through in three places. Helicopters threw teargas down into the crowds. At nightfall an orderly withdrawal was called for. Then came a brutal police attack and about 500 demonstrators were arrested.

A few days later a new demonstration at the site was decided for the beginning of February. But in the following weeks massive attempts began to dampen the protest, to criminalise it, to attribute it to the work of communists. At the end of January 1977, there were signs that, under the heavy pressure of advocates of the atomic energy industry, sections of the protesters were no longer prepared to demonstrate directly at the building site for fear of being dubbed aggressors, violent criminals and so on. The others did not want to completely abandon free assembly and the right to protest against the danger to humanity from atomic plants.

The demonstration in Itzehoe, somewhat further from the building site, was supported by the left social democrats and the Communist Party, while most of the small left groups supported the protest against the site in the neighbourhood of Wilster. There were solidarity declarations between the two demonstrations, to each of which 30,000 people came.

The press worked up enormous agitation against the demonstration in Wilster. It was forbidden twice and then permitted. "The anarchists seek confrontation with the state", they cried. About 15,000 heavily armed police and defence garrison soldiers stood prepared. They only awaited an opportunity to move against the protesters who, however, were careful and did not allow themselves to be provoked. At the first big police roadblock, they moved a few "hotheads" back. They then decided to march back to Wilster. Those who expected attacks from the right and from atomic energy supporters stayed away.

On the return march there were only a few police provocations, so the demonstrators' peacefulness made the gigantic police exercise appear ridiculous. The other demonstration at Itzehoe was also peaceful, but many participants were dissatisfied because those in front had drawn back from the powerful roadblock. The previous evening, Reich Chancellor Schmidt had requested all citizens not to take part in the demonstration in the vicinity of the building site, and others stressed legal aspects.

The heart of the atomic program of the FRG is the reprocessing plant for burnt-out combustible elements. The only plant of this kind operating at the present time is in Cap La Hague in France. The treatment of light water reactors has still not been undertaken. In the meantime, the Federal government has decided to build on the Gorleben site, which is enclosed on three sides by the German Democratic Republic (with prevailing east winds). First tests should begin shortly.

In March 1977 the first big demonstration against the proposed site took place with about 15,000 people. The local PI Group (about 200 members) had to contend with many difficulties in this extremely conservative district. Most of the inhabitants thought nothing could be done

about it. The authorities, the provincial government of Lower Saxony, tried again and again by negotiation and seemingly friendly pleas to weaken opposition by stressing the hope of a "realistic", peaceful and "technical" solution. This led to new doubts and divisions within the movement.

Just after the two Brokdorf demonstrations there was a growth of PI Groups. In addition to preparations for these protests, their information kiosks were maintained, with projects demonstrating solar and wind power; a children's play centre in Gorleben built anti-atom villages and celebrated city festivals; scientific groups worked on further itemising dangers which have been published from time to time by the atomic energy industry (AEI) advocates, and energy alternatives. Many groups have theatre and music groups and dozens of new songs.

The movement has been characterised by many successes. It has also brought to many a lessening of long-standing personal isolation. Through the success at Wyhl and the encouraging broadening of the autumn movement in Brokdorf, sections of AEI opponents prepared to occupy a building site at Grohnde on the Weser. They apparently ignored the possibility that the overwhelming majority of the people would not understand this. Over 15,000 anti-nuclear protesters moved to the site on March 19, 1977. At the site occupation in Wyhl, there were only a few rolls of wire and a wooden fence to overcome. Brokdorf was fortified for the first time. In Grohnde measures were undertaken for protection of the private property of the owners. Each time this costs many millions of Deutsch marks.

To foil the attempts of the protesters, 5,000 police moved in. Dozens were arrested and some manhandled. Several hundreds were injured - some seriously. According to official reports, 230 injured police were receiving hospital treatment for two days afterwards. The local people remained largely passive and did not show solidarity with the city demonstrators.

The Grohnde demonstration showed many protesters that they could not carry out a propaganda campaign without activating a large section of the people. But this became more difficult in succeeding months. The media used the attack on the Grohnde

building site to stamp them as violent and criminal terrorists. In the summer months of 1977 the movement declined almost everywhere. Often, those who had regarded the anti-nuclear struggle as an expression of the necessity to change the system, withdrew. Despite this, the majority of the groups remained intact.

The relative strength of the movement vis-a-vis the overwhelming strength of a police state opposing a movement not yet supported by the working masses has been clearly demonstrated by recent protests. For example, there is a "fast breeder" of about 1,000 megawatts at Kalkar on Niederrhein near the German-Netherlands frontier, but activity by people in the neighbourhood of the plant (as also in Grohnde, Brokdorf and other sites) has now become relatively small.

In connection with the Kalkar demonstration, one of the biggest police actions in the history of the FRG took place. Almost all the state police apparatus and sections of the defence force were involved. A belt had been drawn around all the big cities in order to confine the anti-nuclear protesters to their local areas. Many had to submit to intensive searches of their cars at ten control points. 5,000 protective helmets, hundreds of protective spectacles (against teargas), benzine canisters, iron stakes and dozens of other weapons could be seen. Thousands left disappointed after hours of night watching. Motorways were closed, trains were held up and searched a la Wild West, by military police. In Hamburg and Hanover there were protests by demonstrators who had been prevented from protesting. On the frontiers with Denmark, the Netherlands, France and Switzerland, thousands of anti-nuclear protesters were at first not allowed into the FRG. Those who were identified as anti-AEIs were seized and recorded on central computer cards.

Then in Kalkar about 55,000 people met and carried out a disciplined and peaceful demonstration. Over 10,000 were dispersed and hindered from participating in the biggest anti-nuclear protest ever held in the FRG. 146,900 people and 74,485 motor vehicles were searched in a few hours. These police actions were clearly preparatory measures to ensure future identification of political "unrest" amongst the people. They have completely tabulated the origins and constitution of the groups.

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In the mainly thinly populated areas surrounding the atomic plants live peasants and priests, teachers, small business owners, young workers and apprentices. In the cities the predominating elements in most actions are people with socialist leanings, but in many city actions these socialists are admittedly very isolated.

To understand the current political situation from which the environmental groups have developed, one must keep in mind the development of both FRG capital and the working class.

The FRG is a product of the occupation politics of the victorious powers of the Second World War. During the western powers' occupation, while all acted in the interests of rejuvenating German capital (e.g., Marshall Plan), the Soviet Union, in its zone, worked for an economic plan which it controlled. The Federal Republic has been built up as one of the most important show window states facing the Soviet-influenced zone. The occupying western powers hindered the German people from coming to terms with nazism. For instance, they restored the old trade union leadership which, even before 1933, and the victory of fascism, no longer enjoyed any authority with the workers; they took under their wing the big enterprises which had supported the fascist movement and spoke of the collective guilt of all Germans for fascism.

For the western part of Germany they decreed "free democracy" and a capitalist economy - the society which had brought fascism to power, and said the people had to be protected against the "totalitarianism" of the right (fascism) and left (communism). Their ideologies fell on fruitful soil.

The FRG made the mistake, in the first years after 1945, of accepting the western powers' version of bourgeois democracy. In some provinces, for instance, they appointed as ministers members of the then ruling government. As capitalist foundations and development were assured and permanent control began, the Communist Party of Germany was banned. In 1955, the rearmament of the FRG began. Meanwhile the Federal armed forces had become the fourth strongest in the world. The FRG had also risen to be the strongest industrial and economic power in Europe.

The development of the working class in the FRG has been determined by the long-lasting period of the so-called "economic miracle". Between World Wars 1 and 2, the German working class movement was very advanced, and the German Communist Party was the second biggest party after the Soviet Communist Party. The decline of this movement and this party had a very demoralising effect. With the advent of fascism, a large proportion of active, class-conscious workers simply died out, were rooted out or intimidated, with the exception of a few illegally functioning groups. The FRG was hailed as the capitalist country with the least number of strikes per year.

One individual consumer dream after another could be fulfilled even if often through working overtime. With blue and white collar workers and also with some other sections satisfaction of this dream often means considerable inroads into savings, more than one breadwinner in the family and so on. Politics was left almost entirely to professional politicians. From being class parties, political parties became coalitions, so-called people's parties; the trade unions became insurance associations for periodical peacefully attainable wage increases. Unemployment disappeared for a few years during the period of capitalist growth. Against this background, individualism spread. Even the political organisation of the big concerns for a time, contrary to their image, allowed the undisturbed establishment of individual businesses.

The workers' movement of the FRG had to start again. The first great strike wave occurred in September 1969. After the first short economic crisis (for the first time over 500,000 unemployed), over 100,000 workers, mostly from the metal industry and without leadership from the trade unions, demanded a bigger share of the economic recovery. In the summer of 1973, the industrialists ignored most of these demands.

Parallel with, and similar to, other advanced capitalist countries there began, at the end of the sixties, a political movement among students caused inter alia by strife with fascism, with the "middle ages" structure of the universities which opposed the democratic demands, and the aggression of the US in Vietnam - in short, the

contradiction between the democratic bourgeois image and bourgeois reality.

Today the state and the capitalists are trying to take precautions against the looming crisis. Some investment programs of billions of Deutsch marks - presents from the state - have not been able to set the economy going. Export of capital is growing strongly, unemployment has remained and is tending to rise.

While the working class has no leadership for these new problems, unrest in the ruling class deepens. Through a whole range of laws against an eventual emergency, against crime and against terrorists, it is preparing for future class conflicts.

The People's Initiatives movement is part of the growing contradictions of FRG capitalism. At the end of the fifties, after the rearmament of the FRG had been completed (with the support of the social democrats) and the Federal government tried to acquire atomic weapons, there came into being an anti-atom movement which, however, did not oppose the '58-'61 rearmament. But this political peace movement soon broke up because it did not penetrate all sections of society.

Today things are different. Together with fear of the danger of accidents threatened by atomic energy technology, particularly among young people, and a universal fear for the economic and political future of our society, the time of quiet economic growth has passed; rationalisation under capitalism (e.g., with the help of computer technology) threatens the livelihoods of white and blue collar workers alike and the tendency towards a police state is strengthened. So although the anti-atomic energy movement appears narrowed in its effectiveness, the activists remain tenaciously together and are discussing other social problems. In their helplessness, for all bourgeois parties, including the Socialist Party of Germany and the trade union leadership, are integrated into the building of atomic energy, some groups are turning towards communal and country life.

In their confusion over the social tasks of the workers' movement and its class consciousness, the small PI Groups have a concept of a party embracing all parties in the FRG, while the Socialist Party and the Christian Democrats, as people's parties,

seek to solve all the problems of society through their professional politicians. In the beginning, when circumstances were favourable, formerly passive people were beginning to be concerned about social issues. With this experience went a quick learning process in which the participants began to understand the insoluble problems of the capitalist system.

Just as blue and white collar workers were disappointed by the social democratic trade union leadership, so they were in the PI Groups, though these people were seldom in a majority. Despite the PI Groups' recognition of this weakness they remained isolated from the masses of the trade union membership and from the reality of the workshops. The PI Groups tried mainly with new forms of information and explanation, to broaden consciousness of the anti-atomic movement among the population. Yet the readiness of the people to come to the groups has declined since the summer of 1977. For workers, there were other more pressing problems with which they were more directly confronted (pressure of jobs, wages, rents, etc.). The anti-nuclear movement is now on the verge of current possibilities in the FRG. The bourgeois parties and the state have applied themselves to the problem. The Socialist Party no longer opposes the building of atomic plants. Certainly a small number of active SP members and atomic energy opponents are becoming more and more alienated from their own party but they have not yet left it.

Within the framework of the terrorist hunt, some democratic rights were further eroded in autumn 1977 and discussion on the reintroduction of the death penalty has once again hotbed up, as well as a general campaign against so-called "sympathisers" of the terrorists. This campaign aims at all those who look for causes of the social crisis in the FRG, especially against liberal intellectuals like Heinrich Boell, Gollwitzer, Luise Rinser and many university professors, but also against the anti-nuclear movement.

The PI Groups were blamed for threatening jobs in the atomic and allied industries and for the economic crisis. They were also slated as advocates of force and terrorism because of their occupation of building sites and because they worked against the state.

Within the Unidad Popular there were different interpretations of this strategy: "Some envisaged the passage from the phase of the "institutional democracy" to the phase of the "new popular state" as occurring through the growth of popular dual power, independent of and outside the existing apparatus of the state; they foresaw a gradual transfer of sovereignty to representative workers' bodies, until a confrontation ... became inevitable.

"This was the strategy of the Socialist Party and the left wing of the Unidad Popular. Others envisaged that passage occurring through a weakening of the economic and financial potential of the rich, monopolist bourgeoisie, the neutralisation and even gradual absorption of the middle classes, until an absolute electoral majority ensured the emergence of a unified Chamber by plebiscite. This was the strategy of the Communist Party and the right wing of the Unidad Popular.

"Advance in order to consolidate" characterised the first, "Consolidate in order to advance", the second.

Neither, it seems, could fix another problem:

At the beginning of 1972 it became apparent that the success of the UP's economic offensive was not being matched by any comparable political activity. That its economic successes were converted into difficulties and failures was precisely because the way was blocked politically. A dislocation of the capitalist economy which is not accompanied by an equivalent dislocation of the capitalist state seems to end in the paralysis of both.

If there is no effective centralisation of economic resources or proper planning, the capitalist discipline of work disappears and there is no proletarian discipline to take its place.

Allende himself pointed to this: "We have none of the advantages inherent in these systems, but we have the disadvantages of both."

A lesson of Debray to which I attach much importance is "Crisis is the only solution".

The revolutionary process (one might even say "politics") is not a linear one. A transition to socialism is a jagged broken line.

"... the successive phases of a fierce class struggle are not articulated mechanically, but dialectically. At every fresh turning-point there is a more intense crisis, until the break comes — the moment of radical dilemma when all one can do is leap either forwards or backwards, in a violent swing either to left or right ... it is like a staircase where to move from one landing to the next, you have to jump over the missing steps ... always a risky proceeding ..."

History insists on playing double or quits, says Debray sardonically.

In many ways, the Chilean process couldn't have gone any other way, says Debray. The circumstances were not possible for a breakthrough in Chile.

This pessimism is sad. And it seems to contradict other statements in *A Critique of Arms: ... the Chilean process was to come to more than one fork in the road; there was probably three that were decisive, and in each case the UP turned right ...*

Yet we all know that humans can shape history (i.e. we're not fatalists). One chain of events may lead to quite a different conclusion than another chain of events if both start from the same fork in the road.

The UP gradually merged a policy of reform with a reformist concept, he implies.

"The arming of the proletariat, or the squaring of the circle" is one appropriate chapter heading. He poses the dilemma of how to defend the revolution against the armed might of the state.

He suggests sarcastically to the "experts" who pronounced their sermons while Allende's body was still warm, that perhaps they'd like to place textile workers in Hawker Hunter cockpits, asks them how long they suggest for training others in tanks, artillery and seamanship.

The problem was to know whether, and to what extent, it was possible, materially and politically, for it to become armed at all without precipitating the direct military intervention which it was precisely its object to prevent.

One aspect he doesn't take up is the possibility of "diluting" the ranks of the armed forces by mass conscription. As well, he doesn't discuss the problems or possibilities of politicising or neutralising the armed forces by means of the Presidential/executive power.

These experiments are being, and will be, tried in Western Europe in the next decade. So it's perhaps appropriate to end with Debray's final question.

(The problem is) how a popular government which has come to power by "reformist" means (i.e. within the framework of the bourgeois state, and precisely because the state was so healthy) can gradually become "revolutionary" (i.e. break out of the framework which gave it birth and legitimacy at first, but rapidly became stifling); how it can be in a position to confront the inevitable and terrifying counter-attack of the bourgeoisie, who still hold all the instruments of State power that has not changed.

In Chile it was unable to achieve the necessary step up, or leap, or breakthrough. Would the same be true where historical conditions are incomparably more favorable — in Western Europe?

— David McKnight.

— Continued from Page 25.

lesson of how to create something out of nothing every few years — as soon as the last sharemarket crash has been forgotten!

In Lenin's example above, I = 40 million marks, r, the rate of profit expected from the investment following the initial 12 per cent dividend is 12 per cent, while C is 170 per cent of I, that is 68 million marks. From this we can conclude the rate of interest must have been about 7 per cent, since 68 million marks = $\frac{12 \text{ per cent}}{7 \text{ per cent}} \times 40 \text{ million marks}$.

The "cream which the promoters "earned" was: (12 per cent - 7 per cent) \times 40 million marks
7 per cent
= 28 million marks.

Civilisation at the Crossroads: social and human implications of the scientific and technological revolution, \$4.50 (300 pp.), 1969.

Some copies of this very important pioneering work are still available. Published by ALR in 1969, the book is the work of a Czechoslovak interdisciplinary research team headed by Radovan Richta. It appeared late in 1967 in Czechoslovakia and undoubtedly resulted from the deep concern with the crisis in economy, politics and ideology which came to a head there at that time.

Its findings in turn provided the theoretical basis for the Action Program developed by the Czechoslovak Communist Party to meet that crisis.

These national aspects do not, however, detract from the universality of the problems dealt with. The book is a first-class piece of research and analysis about issues confronting all advanced industrial societies, as apt today as it was when published. Over 300 pages of text are supplemented by extensive tables and references. At today's prices, it is selling cheaply.

* *

Antonio Gramsci: The Man, His Ideas, by Alastair Davidson (100 pp.), 1969. \$2.

This short book was one of the first works published in English about the life and work of the Italian marxist thinker and communist leader. It is still a valuable reference for those interested in Gramsci's contribution to marxist thought and socialist politics.

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We ask that all manuscripts be typed, double-spaced, on paper no larger than quarto size.

We ask those authors who do not hear from us about publication of their articles in a reasonable time to recognise that this is purely due to pressure of other work on our small collective. Usually we have not forgotten you.



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Remaining gaps in our stock of back numbers have now been filled with the exception of numbers 36 and 38. We make a special appeal to readers who might have copies of these two issues which they no longer require for these two issues which requests for them can be met. In addition, we would still be grateful for copies of numbers 29, 32 and 41, as numbers of these held by us are still small.

