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“RADICAL FEMINISM”
a critique



IN THIS ISSUE...

The Women's Liberation Movement is at a crossroads. Behind it lies a period of growth, enthusiasm, of ever-increasing influence on the rest of society including some impact on the working class -- both the unions and the ALP. But enthusiasm as a motive force is not enough, and the movement has been going through a questioning period: "Who are we? Where are we going?" Women in the movement have felt the need to develop a theory and out of that a strategy that can actually achieve the liberation of women.

Radical feminism attempts to do this. In our main article in this issue, Janey Stone analyses radical feminist ideology. It is the first part of a two-part article. In the forthcoming second part, she will develop an alternative to the dead end of Radical Feminism, and outline a strategy for the Women's Liberation movement.

The impact of women's liberation on the American working class is evidenced by the formation of the Coalition of Labor Union Women. In a survey article, Dilys Kovan discusses this organisation, and points out the problems caused by bureaucratic control by female union leaders.

Notes:

No issue appeared of Front Line in July owing to the immense amount of work involved in preparing for our second annual conference. One conference decision was to move toward the publication of a regular newspaper. Front Line will continue to appear, but probably not on a monthly basis.

In issue no 2 the word "not" was omitted from a sentence in an article by Ron Flaherty reviewing an article by Pat Vort-Ronald. The sentence should read that Australia's inflation is not primarily caused by Australian public spending.

CORRECTION: in the first survey article, "Labor's One Two Punch, two words were omitted from the third last sentence of the first page. The sentence should read: "...the equivalent of 5 percent of (say) a plumber's wage..."

Survey

LABOR'S ONE-TWO PUNCH

We wrote last time that Labor intended to cope with inflation by deliberately creating an economic slump, and while the recent "mini-budget" was pretty weak in this regard, there is still no doubt that the slump is coming. Clyde Cameron sees the coming downturn as a golden opportunity to discipline a trade union movement that was becoming very aggressive, and to draw the unions into a fancy indexation and arbitration scheme which will tie their hands.

He has said, in essence:

1. "There is going to be unemployment which will weaken your bargaining position" and
2. "You had better get involved in my schemes for class collaboration while your bargaining power is still high"...and he moved the proposed conference of employers, unions and the government forward to August.

The conference, in turn, is meant to adopt the following scheme for restraining the unions:

1. A "cost-of-living" adjustment will be made in all awards each quarter. If prices rise by 5 percent, each worker will get a pay increase of 5 percent of the minimum wage. Thus the real wages of workers on the minimum wage will keep up with prices, but those of higher paid workers will fall behind. Those earni

below the minimum wage will get ahead. The idea is to play off more poorly paid workers against the best organised workers whose wages are higher.

2. Except for increases to match increased productivity, the cost-of-living adjustments will be the ceiling for wage rises. Workers are to abandon their struggle to increase their share of the national income.

It all amounts to a demographic proposal to cash in on the desire for cost-of-living adjustments while actually freezing wages in real terms. Socialists should be busily exposing Cameron's slick

move. For starters, the

cost-of-living adjustment should certainly be a flat rate, but it should be pegged to the highest wage rather than the lowest. If prices go up 5 percent, the equivalent of (say) a plumber's wage should be paid to all workers. This will reduce inequalities of pay in the work force without hurting anyone. Second, the cost-of-living adjustment should be a floor below which wages can't fall, but above which workers are free to fight for additional improvements.

In addition, the unions need to take the lead in proposing ways in which inflation can be fought without the working class paying the price for it.

Another move by Cameron which needs to be exposed is his re-training schemes, which are supposed to cope with the unemployment caused by tariff cuts. In reality, according to his own press release (8/7/74) the National Employment and Training system (NEAT) will benefit about 15,000 persons, less than double the current figure of people being retrained. It is unlikely that this is enough to cover all workers who lose their jobs because of the direct and indirect effects of tariff cuts, and does nothing for those thrown out of work by credit squeezes, dollar revaluations and whatever else Whitlam will use to slow down the economy.

That the threat of unemployment is hitting home to people is shown by the strains developing in the Labor caucus. Those strains will soon be developing in various other layers of the ALP, and even producing major conflicts. Perhaps the Socialist Left can even be revitalised around them.

STOP PRESS

Jim Cairns' paper on economic strategy was published as the above article was being typed. Two conclusions can be drawn immediately. First, the Labor government is much sobered by the angry

response of unions to its rather blatant attempts to create unemployment. Cairns, the "representative of Caucus" is the logical person to attempt to modify this economic policy. Second, many ministers believe that the credit squeeze has "done its job", and that measures must be taken to make sure the economy is not overly contracted.

Clearly Cairns and others have used the angry union response to force Whitlam to integrate some of their ideas into government economic policy. That they can be integrated reflects the fact that the Whitlam government was always looking only for a mild economic downturn, and is already looking beyond it to the next expansion. Australian politics being what they are, Whitlam may nevertheless not survive even that mild slump. Workers in this country will not accept even a small increase in unemployment.

- Ron Flaherty

CYPRUS: BASE MOTIVES...

Greek Cypriots are feeling pretty friendless nowadays. In the current imperialist and small power shuffling they have been used as pawns and sold out by just about everyone. The current round of lethal Levantine chess began when the Greek junta, lacking support, began a last desperate gamble. It appears that the Generals who replaced the Colonels after the worker/student uprising late last year never really re-estab-

lished any basis of support amongst the Greek population. As a result of this they began to lose confidence within the army itself and support within the American strategic establishment.

The overthrow of Makarios by the (mainland) Greek-led Civil Guard was planned in Athens and appears to have had little support amongst Greek-Cypriots. Its main effect was to provide an excuse for a Turkish attack on Cyprus -- which has been a probability since British imperialism first planned withdrawal from Cyprus in the fifties. Its most positive effect was to topple the Greek junta.

The key to the continuing tragedy in Greece and Cyprus over the whole post-war period has been the military needs of NATO (i.e. U.S. imperialism) in the eastern Mediterranean. The makers of the coup of 1967 used NATO facilities because NATO's planners feared that a Papandreou government would withdraw from NATO and perhaps even threaten British NATO bases on Cyprus. The current Turkish conquest of part of Cyprus, while probably launched without consultation with the US government, has nevertheless received the tacit support of Kissinger and the State Department to preserve said bases.

The new Greek government's position is more confused. The army handed power to the most right-wing group of democratic exiles & could

find. One assumes that Kissinger approves of them. Karamanlis' actions since accepting government have been contradictory. On the one hand he has withdrawn from NATO (using the Gaullist formula of full political support but no military participation) and blamed the US for the Turkish invasion. On the other hand he has refused to defend the Greek Cypriots exactly as the US would have wished. Whether this is an example of full political support or an illustration of the collapse of the post-junta Greek army is a subject for speculation. Either way the Greek Cypriots have been ill-served by the right-wing Greek junta which used them as pawns and by the right-wing democratic succession which then abandoned them. Meanwhile, Britain as an alleged guarantor of the territorial integrity of its former colony washes its hands, as is customary for governors at crucifixions.

The Turkish justification for partition of Cyprus is the defense of the Turkish Cypriot community. Like the Protestants in Ireland, left-overs of imperialism provide an excellent rationalisation for future imperialism. Apart from the fact that Turkey is claiming 30% of the island for 17% of the population, a cantonal system of government is of doubtful economic and political viability. As with the British in Ulster permanent partition of Cyprus requires a permanent presence of troops to maintain it. In any real sense the Turkish portion of Cyprus would have to be in-

corporated into Turkey. This is no solution for the problems of Cypriots whatever advantages it may have for NATO. It is up to the Cypriots to solve the problems of Cyprus. Socialists should be demanding the withdrawal of all foreign troops from the island -- including the British forces.

-- Dave Nadel.

U.S. UNION WOMEN ORGANIZE

In Chicago on March 23-24 the founding convention of the Coalition of Labor Union Women took place. One of the most significant events since the start of the women's liberation movement in the sixties, it could be the first step in building a movement of working women -- specifically oriented to their rights and needs. However, if the large number (3200 plus) of women who attended the initial conference are not to be left stranded a lot needs to be done in CLUW.

Right from the start the convenors, a small group of women trade union leaders found themselves landed with certain problems - not the least being a greater response than expected. And it now seems that this is going to be one of the major issues in CLUW. In order to retain control, the leadership will probably have to dampen rank and file activity as much as possible.

Even before the conference,

disagreement arose over support for the United Farm Workers (UFW). This union is leading the struggle to organize the unorganized (an issue of prime importance to women who constitute nearly 40 percent of the American workforce, yet are only 12 percent organized). The leadership tried very hard to pass a motion saying: "National CLUW and area CLUW chapters shall not be involved in issues or activities which a union involved identifies as related to a jurisdictional dispute" (WF, NO. 95).

If this motion had been passed (it was defeated), confrontation would have been avoided between the UFW and the notorious Teamsters Union. Although the way was opened for a support motion for the UFW from CLUW, no motion was actually passed. This was due to an amazing sleight of hand trick by CLUW chair-woman Olga Madarf (Vice-President of the United Auto Workers) who managed to confuse several of the speakers so much that they found themselves sitting down without the support motion being passed. Various organisational "bungles" (were they deliberate?) overloaded the delegates, so that they didn't have time to do very much.

The problem of bureaucratic control continues. The women involved at the conference left Chicago to go back to hometowns and start organizing -- only to meet up with all sorts

of problems. The formal requirements for membership and for establishing CLUW chapters are so rigid as to exclude a vast number of women. In the first place, women have to be members of a "bona fide" trade union -- ie those holding collective bargaining agreements somewhere. The situation has arisen where a member of a state union (Clerical and Allied Services Employees -- CASE in California) is not eligible for membership of CLUW despite the work CASE has done in organising the predominantly female state clerical workers.

Three meetings are required before a chapter can be set up -- and these meetings have to be run in a certain manner. Moves like this only serve to entrench the leadership -- the few women in the trade union hierarchy -- by making sure everything is under control.

However, if CLUW is going to be of any use to working women, and not just a platform for aspiring women bureaucrats, a lot needs to be done. The rank and file will need to push for changed membership requirements to cater for the women not covered by "bona fide" unions and women not yet organized (38 percent of working women). Also the structure will have to be made more democratic to enable rank and file women to control the organisation.

The American group, the International Socialists, are involved in CLUW, and

they see the next few months as being crucial. Only by building the organisation and developing a strong rank and file can CLUW be prevented from becoming a female arm of the Labor Union Bureaucracies.

(Sources: Workers' Power, no. 93, nos. 95 - 101.)

--Dilys Keven.

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Janey Stone

Radical Feminism - a critique

Radical Feminism, a comparatively recent trend in the Women's Liberation Movement in Australia, is based on the theory that women's oppression is the fundamental political oppression, that women are a class and that they are "engaged in a power struggle with men". Furthermore, according to ideas of Radical Feminism, the purpose of male chauvinism is primarily to obtain psychological ego satisfaction (1) and is only secondarily found in economic relationships.

This article will attempt to show that defining women as a class brings the Radical Feminists back to affirming the one thing all women do have in common -- the female role; that the ahistorical approach of personal politics is part of this female role; and that the lack of a strategy has meant the movement has reverted to those activities traditionally open to women -- for example "self-help" which is no more than charity dressed up.

ALLENATION AND POWERLESSNESS

After the initial stages of consciousness raising, after the first rage had died down, the Women's Liberation Movement had begun to question, to ask where the oppression had come from, and try to work out the way forward. Radical in its belief that a new society was necessary, the movement was strongly influenced by the New Left with its emphasis on conscious and experience. The social group of which the New Left was composed -- white, middle class, students and the intellectually inclined -- had weighed the "affluent society" in the balance and found it wanting. The housewife epitomised this affluent world of gadgets, and in fact was one herself. As Betty Friedan put it, she found herself with a vague, inexplicable feeling of "Is this all?" (2). Alienation and feelings of powerlessness provided the impetus for the growth of the Women's Liberation Movement.

Consciousness raising groups were therefore the first tasks of the movement. Women came to understand that personal feelings of inadequacy and helplessness were shared, that they were related to the social situation of women. Alienation was discovered to be a result of lack of control over the conditions of your life. In Women's Liberation terms this meant no abortion or childcare centres, restricted job opportunities and low wages, and above all the role expectation that whatever the individual propensities or talents, all women must become wives, mothers and housewives.

Betty Friedan's organization, N.O.W., had little trouble establishing a strategy consistent with its limited aims of improved status for women within the system, and followed the standard pressure group tactics. However the Women's Libera-

tion Movement, with its aim fundamental change, required a strategy broader in scope. When the momentum of the movement slowed after the initial burst of enthusiasm, the movement had to face its own lack of social power, which is essential change. In the absence of a strong and clearly radical working class movement, the movement turned inwards.

RADICAL FEMINISM AND THE FEMALE ROLE

The movement at this stage had an extremely emotional, tense atmosphere. Many women, discovering the oppressive nature of the role with which they had always identified, suffered an identity crisis, and sought support and identity in the movement, in sisterhood. Many turned to the movement as if to a lover, seeking from this new relationship the fulfillment promised but never provided by the traditional role. In its inability to find a strategy, the movement rallied its one obvious strength -- unity. This took on the nature of an obsession:

"As the Female Liberation Movement must cut across all (male-imposed) class, race and national lines, any false identification of women with privileges that are really male (such as whiteness or class etc.) will be fatal to our movement." (3)

Radical feminism grew out of this search for a theory to unite all women, a search for a "female" culture to replace the "male" culture which was seen as being the main enemy. All those social realities which do divide women were ignored by the simple expediency of relegating them to the male domain, whereby they were made unimportant.*

From the beginning, the movement had argued that many "female" characteristics such as emotions were in fact good and necessary for all humans. This gave way now to an advocacy of the female culture, which in turn amounts to the only thing that does cut across all class, race and national lines for women; the female role. Moreover, it is the role as perceived by white, middle class, Western, young, 20th Century women:

"For me female culture is my 84 year old grandmother serving tea, Charlotte Bronte, Elizabeth Arden make-up, lace underpants, Anais Nin and Tampax...I want to dig for identity within the culture. I don't exist at all in male culture, so it would be useless for me to dig there." (4)

"Female culture is the art of the everyday, the arrangement of personal beauty, of home, of environment and

*This technique is not, of course, invented by the Radical Feminists. Men have practised it on women for centuries.

of relationships." (4)

As Radical Feminism has grown and developed it has retreated more and more into the female role. Women are described in depressingly familiar terms:

"Women are organic...Feminists are natural ecologists." (5)

"Women don't declare or fight in offensive wars. War is a male institution." (6)

"Women don't get decision making jobs: we'd make different decisions." (7)

"Women have kept more in touch with the idea that all energy is sexual, and that sexual doesn't mean genital." (8)

Just as so many men have told us in the past, Radical Feminists now tell us that women are earthy, unaggressive creatures, who think differently and whose sexuality is different -- more diffuse and romantic. They see women as mainly interested in the personal:

"We regard our personal experience, and our feelings about that experience, as the basis for an analysis of our common situation." (9)

Thus the constant pressure in the movement to be "sisterly", to have no disagreements, and to relate totally to everybody. Articles are written attacking thought and theory as "male". Women, "suddenly" develop an interest in crafts, particularly those not exactly traditionally regarded as unsuitable for females, e.g. weaving or crocheting.* When an action is not completely successful the response of many Women's Liberationists is to blame themselves. ("What went wrong? We must need more consciousness-raising.")

In Radical Feminist articles the low participation rate of women in external society is exaggerated to conclude that no woman ever participates. Those that do are either ignored (not an original trick) or dismissed as not real women (i.e. taken in by male values):

"No one will deny that it's the men who control all areas of our society, who determine its nature. Men invest capital...men govern all institutions...men determine international relations, economic policies; men settle their differences in war. Equally men dominate the (male) Revolution; men run trade unions and socialist organisations...Exceptional women may participate in these spheres -- they are exceptions without substantial power." (10)

*Off Our Backs last year had a three-part series on quilting.

{Women in radical organizations): "Their line is dictated from above." (11)

"Until Virginia Johnson (of the Masters and Johnson report) it was almost exclusively men who told us what sexuality was." (12)

It is extraordinary that Radical Feminist women, while complaining that males have written women out of history, will unflinchingly make these generalizations. To ignore politically powerful (and warlike) women such as Srimavo Bandaranaike, Indira Gandhi and Golda Meir; or the many well-known revolutionary women from Alexandra Kollontai, Rosa Luxemburg* to Simone de Beauvoir and Bernadette Devlin; or even the hundreds of women psychologists and sociologists who have studied sexuality -- among them Margaret Sanger, Helene Deutsch, Margaret Mead; to ignore these women is to deny that women do have a history.

Furthermore, to maintain that women have been successfully and totally suppressed to the point where they have been completely unable to participate is to accept the idea that women are passive; and it is to deny that women have repeatedly been able to overcome their conditioning so far as to break through to real activity.

The exceptionally elitist attitudes to their less famous contemporaries who participate in "male dominated" left organizations is not only insulting; it is inconsistent with any ideas of sisterhood to have such contempt for the sincerely held beliefs of socialist women.

The reaffirmation of the female role is taken to its logical conclusion by Jane Alpert (13). Her theory that women should rule and be worshipped by virtue of their potential motherhood brings us full circle, back to the gilded cage from which we have so desperately been trying to escape. But this time the purpose of the bars is not to keep women inside -- instead the radical feminists want to keep the world out.

THE SEARCH FOR SOCIAL POWER

The Radical Feminists have contributed important insights into what is wrong with capitalism. One of the most sophisticated Radical Feminist writers, Shulamith Firestone, analyzed important questions such as love, children, and the relationship between sex and racism. But Firestone, as do all the others, continued to suffer from the lack of a strategy. They had no idea of what to do. In the search for something

*Not only did Luxemburg possess "substantial power" -- she excessively dominated her organization, the German Spartakist League.

to do, for social power, Radical Feminism looks towards models in past societies, where women ruled, or female groupings were powerful. Alternatively, the "key" is thought to lie in lesbianism, vegetarianism, or the occult.

In "The First Sex" by Elizabeth Gould Davis, the idea of the "noble savage is given a new twist. This book very popular with Radical Feminists, advances the theory that the prehistoric matriarchies were ruled by physically and psychically superior, vegetarian women. Unfortunately, meat-eating, lustful men took over, and today we see the consequences. After Armageddon, women will again rule:

"She who was revered and worshipped by early man because of her power to see the unseen will again be the pivot -- not as sex but a divine woman -- about whom the next civilization will, as of old, revolve." (14)

Medieval (and modern) witches and midwives, are idealized, with their "great healing powers or skill in midwifery....(they) obtained skills through inborn psychic gifts, generations of experimentation...or perhaps being attuned to their natural instincts by living a quiet life in the woods." (15)

Again we find the Radical Feminists arguing that women are closer to nature!

Even in that "bastion of male supremacy, the Victorian family, the Radical Feminists find a model for female power:

"Women may have been excluded from activities in the world outside the home, but inside it they were powerful and in a majority...Married or single, women collectively controlled and dominated domestic rituals and supervised the dramas of life and death..." (16)

The hand that rocks the cradle rules the world!

Short cut theories, proposing a single universal key to open the door to feminist heaven, abound.

Last year the key was Lesbianism. A large number of Radical Feminists became lesbians, not out of sexual interest, but as a point of political principle. It was argued simply that "feminism is the theory, lesbianism is the practice." Lesbians maintained that they were the real revolutionaries, being women who had refused to submit to the female role. The realization was, however, not long in coming that relating to a woman can still be highly role-defined.

This year the key is fashion has been the question of

health, nature healing/vegetarianism. Alienation, or lack of harmony between mind, emotions and body can be overcome by the amazing healing qualities of food. Furthermore, "Meat-eating and male violence seemed locked together." (17). Institutional medicine will be superseded by astrological birth control, female nature healers and the healing crisis (or in more female terms, suffering).

The theories of matriarchy and witches, of lesbianism and nature healing lead naturally into an ideology enjoying growing popularity -- female superiority. This is a very convenient solution to the search for power, since it suggests women are in fact powerful now.

Initially the argument was merely that women were "more human" since they weren't caught up in the rat race:

"Only by men becoming sensitive, loving, caring, non-aggressive, etc. like women can real progress be made toward a better world... It is my belief that the nature of the human animal is good, that women are the best expression of it..." (18)

More recently, female superiority is advocated quite openly. One writer has only minor reservations "about saying straight out that there are important innate differences between men and women, that biology is destiny, and that biology has made women infinitely superior to men." (19)

"...let yourself trust your feelings completely to be the basis of all your actions. This seems to bring me back to stereotypical notions of women as emotional sensuous creatures unable to understand the higher academic world. Essentially I would agree with this, except that I would regard the male, academic, intellectual world as incomparably lower than that of the natural sphere of women." (20)

The advocates of female superiority tend to hesitate because of one consequence -- if men are naturally inferior, it gives them a cop-out -- they can't help being bastards. However there are more serious political implications than this. Advocacy of female superiority is no less sexist or potentially oppressive than male chauvinism. It is authoritarian, elitist and reactionary. Furthermore, one logical conclusion is inescapable: if the female role epitomises all that is good in human nature, and females are superior to males, then women are not oppressed. How long will it be before we see an article pushing this line?

PERSONAL POLITICS AND THE FAMILY

Before the industrial revolution, the family's economic function was conspicuously productive. The family farm was

was the fundamental unit for production of basic necessities. But with the industrial revolution, the point of production was moved to the factory, and the family, at least in urban areas, lost any obvious productive function. The only remaining one, the production of labour power (the production and maintenance of the worker him or herself) is invisible, disguised as a personal service a wife does out of love for her husband. The function of the family, apart from the economic one of consumption, became mainly political. Training in authoritarian attitudes and sexual repression, socialization of children into the competitive, super-individualistic psychology of capitalism -- that is the major task of the family.

Based on the apparent divorce of the family from economic production, the myth grew of the family as "outside" society, as a refuge, where personal life is carried on and where the man may recuperate from the pressures of the world. Despite the large numbers of women (and children) who worked, this theory was developed particularly during the Victorian period. The Englishman's home was his castle -- his wife, in her peaceful sanctuary, formed the basis for capitalism's version of a woman's place.

Thus women's oppression today is based on the role of woman as the centre and lynchpin of the family. The apparently personal nature of the family, separate from society, has meant that women tend to see their problems in a personal, particularist way. During its early stages, the Women's Liberation movement concentrated on breaking down this false consciousness and through consciousness-raising groups helped women to perceive the social nature of their oppression. Thus the concept: "the personal is political".

Radical feminism has distorted the original meaning of this phrase:

"We tried to analyse how far the movement has come in the last 12 months. We envisaged that we could write about things or events that the Women's movement as a whole had accomplished... However we realized that every one of us is the movement. So any attempts to reflect upon the achievements of the last 12 months can only be expressed in subjective terms." (21)

The catchword now amounts to: "the political is personal". Everything must be looked at in a personal subjective way.

The problem here is that the Radical Feminists fail to see that the personal, subjective approach is a historically conditioned part of the female role; instead they regard it as inherently female. This ahistorical approach traps them into acceptance of the essentially bourgeois ideology that

the family, and consequently women, are "outside society". This idea lies at the base of the Radical Feminist argument that women have always been deprived of the external world, and have therefore remained outside the system, untarnished and pure:

"Women, without any investment in competition, are capable of seeing each other as real human beings, unclouded by the expectations and lies in the female role, in any role." (22)

No doubt such enthusiastic protagonists of women's liberation as John Ruskin would unhesitatingly agree with a theory that women remain untarnished by not being exposed to the world!

Seeing the family as outside society leads to the frequent attempts to change family and sexual relations by sheer will-power. Thus the Radical Feminist communes such as Amazon Acres. Thus statements such as:

"We express our belief in what we say only by doing it. 'Destroy the nuclear family!' How?--you simply leave if that is what is necessary to your freedom." (23)

We find that Radical Feminism is yet another "change your head" theory:

"Internal change is the only change that is real. External change, the male kind, is superficial and has nothing to do with people. Internal change -- feminist consciousness -- is revolution and from it external change occurs naturally." (24)

The Radical Feminists think no strategy is necessary, we can do anything we want to. If people don't, then it must just be because they don't want to:

"And since this is total revolution, there's no question of how to start and what would be the best action." (25)

"We can do anything we want to right now." (26)

"I can only assume that individuals involved at every level refuse to recognize this because they do not wish to." (27)

Where do We go from Here?

Twist and turn as they might, Radical Feminists like everyone else are still unable to avoid the pressing question: "What do we do now?" The answer usually given is simply do what you want.

"Smash capitalism! How--by changing governments? by working and giving away the products of your labour." (28)

= "Like all change-your-head theories, Radical Feminism is voluntarist and utopian. It upholds a vision of a new society, of fundamental change, "a female world based on love, trust, freedom and humanity." (29) But this world remains a distant dream.

Radical Feminism either declares this world will spontaneously arise, or that if we try hard enough we'll get it. Voluntarism, the idea you can do anything you want right now, is in the long run demoralizing when disillusionment sets in. In the short run, the lack of a strategy condemns a movement to activity only around short term objectives. A strategy, an understanding of how to build the movement and to bridge the gap between immediate actions and the eventually massive social change -- this is an essential concept. Radical Feminism is lacking such a concept.

The movement, under the influence of Radical Feminism, has largely reverted to those immediately actionable activities traditionally open to women -- good works. The present movement around self-help is little more than charity. Setting up child care centres, halfway houses, health centres and rape crisis groups -- while these may be necessary and useful, they do not help to build a movement capable of changing the nature of society. In fact, as charity organizations usually do, they excuse the government and the whole society from taking the responsibility. And an isolated such institution can even be co-opted into the governmental structure. This is evident from the dependence of the Women's Health Clinic in Sydney and the Women's Centre in Berkeley, California on government grants.

This is not to say we should not act around short-term objectives. However while doing so we need to develop an understanding of how to build, a strategy that takes us towards our ultimate goals.

We need to really understand consciousness, which the Radical Feminists for all their obsession with it clearly do not. Consciousness is changed in the process of people struggling to change society...and themselves.

Notes

1. Politics of the ego: A manifesto for New York Radical Feminists. Notes from the Second Year, p. 124
2. Betty Friedan, The Feminine Mystique, Penguin, p. 13
3. Barbara Burris et al., 4th World Manifesto. Notes from

4. Frances Pilot-Goodstein and Marie Oommen. Female culture is us. Women: A Journal of Liberation, Vol. 3 No.2 p. 124 (both quotes)
5. Jenny, "What's the Alternative?", Melbourne Feminist Collection, p. 48.
6. Barbara Burris, op cit. p. 104.
7. Jenny, op cit, p. 47.
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REVIEWS

Catley and McFarlane --
"From Tweedledum to
Tweedledee -- the new
Labor Government in
Australia"
ANZ Book Company, Sydney,
1974.

The problem of how to approach social democracy is something which faces revolutionaries in almost every capitalist country. In fact, the strategies adopted by left groupings define a very large area of their politics. But what is necessary for a correct application of one's method is an understanding of what it is being applied to. The authors of this book have attempted to analyse "technocratic labor" and its plan for modifying capitalism.

When Catley and McFarlane see Labor in office as a "preparation for 1985" (title of chapter one) -- is a socially-engineered utopia, they have identified the totalitarian essence of "democratic socialism," an elitist philosophy where well-

meaning intellectuals and pressure-groups alter society according to their blueprint, rather than through active participation by the masses in creating and controlling (not participating in) their own institutions.

The book's central thesis is that Labor has "a plan" which is heavily influenced by the enlightened-capitalist thinkers of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). As a description of the plans that are in the heads of the more sophisticated Cabinet ministers and top bureaucrats, the book is excellent. But because of the authors' familiarity with the Canberra-academia-journalist milieu, it is not hard for them to become fearful of plots hatched behind closed doors and inflicted on an unwitting Australian public. We are marching towards 1984 under the "pink" banner of ultra-Keynesianism, while "destroying class politics" (title of chapter

four).

While Australia becomes a springboard for local and foreign imperialism in Asia, and the economy is rationalised through tariff cuts, reduction of rural subsidies and a flexible exchange policy, the working class is gently lulled into apathy through class-collaborationist schemes like profit-sharing, workers' participation and national superannuation schemes. This perspective facilitates the conclusion that women's liberation ("libbers who 'preach sex war'") is a plot to split the working class while increasing capitalism's labor force. (For an excellent critique of the authors on this point, see Pat Vort-Ronald's review in Australian Left Review, no. 44.)

What the book fails to do is to prove that the general thrust of these plans can be easily projected on to Australian society. (Union pressure on the tariff issue, and blanket rejection of an incomes policy in the December 1973 referendum indicate the opposite). The other relevant factor here is whether the "social infrastructure" will be built up as Labor realises that the imminent recession that the world is sliding into will one day hit Australia.

Increasingly, all talk of expensive superannuation schemes, wages for housework, retraining schemes

will disappear out the window, while the ruling class reacts to short-term considerations. The current level of self-confidence of workers and the strength of their organisations indicates that the technocratic laborites will have problems pursuing their "managed" society".

The authors' fascination with Ministerial speeches, press releases etc., blinds them to the conflict of class forces that takes place -- between sections of the membership and parliamentary leadership, between trade unions and the Party. The wide range of other conflicts -- caucus versus Cabinet/ML, Federal versus State -- means that Labor's policies in government are more than the sum total of Ministerial statements.

Lastly, it would have helped the authors' analysis considerably to have a strategy towards the ALP. The conclusions of the Tweedledum/Dec approach are that both parties are distinguishable only in style -- Liberal/CP ad hocism to Labor's more insidious "plan". The abstentionist conclusions to be drawn are not only depressing, but also wrong.

It is not surprising that the authors see Labor's 1972 win as being due to a swing from the "small capitalists and conservative

petty-bourgeois". What the elections showed was a move by outer-suburban white collar workers towards a Party which was popularly identified with "socialism", Horatoria and the blue collar working class. However tenuous that alignment is, it augurs well for the working class movement.

The important difference is that the workers and oppressed minorities who look to the ALP for defence from the ruling class can only have their illusions shattered by having labor in office. This implies strategic reasons for seeing the Labor Party as a "different class of party", rather than the reformist reasons put forward by some sections of the Left: they'll spend more on pensions and education, or the workers will get a better deal.

Such an orientation offers no clues for the demands and issues that will discredit social-democracy in the eyes of militants and radicalising sections of the population. Only then will the prospects for transition to a workers' state come closer to the top of the agenda.

-- Kevin Bain.

Alan Price --
Between Today and Yesterday

One of the differences between American and British

society can be seen in its music. Since the middle sixties when lyrics first became important in "rock" music, certain very clear differences have emerged.

In Britain, where there is a very strong labor movement and Labour Party, a militant trade union movement given to left rhetoric, and capitalism in severe trouble, class plays a major role in the lyrics of all sorts of records, many of which are far from explicitly political. The Kinks and Jethro Tull are two of the more explicit groups in this category, but class is implicit in even groups as apolitical as Slade.

American pop-lyricists are often into a "revolution" trip, but the revolution is at best a race question (as with much soul music). Usually it's a youth antiwar thing (Chicago, Crosby Stills et al.). The American youth rock revolution being so removed from the real world very soon followed the student revolution it reflected into a mystical oblivion. The only musical evidence of a white working class being found in country music, Kristofferson and John Price being the most youth-culture oriented examples, Merle Haggard and Johnny Cash being far more to the point. There is certainly a class orientation in

their lyrics but it's a pretty reactionary Southern-Democrat leaning class consciousness.

There were British musicians who also went into the youth-revolution gestures of the late sixties, such as the Stones, Eric Burden, John Lennon and the Sweet (who appear unaware that 1968 is six years ago) but they are international musicians well removed from their roots in British society. Mention of Eric Burden brings me to the subject of this review which is Alan Price's new album "Between Today and Yesterday" (released by Warner Brothers). In 1964 the first English group to follow the Beatles to the top of the American charts were a group of Geordies from the Tyneside (Newcastle) called the Animals. They played a gutsy rhythm and blues and most of the guts were provided by the organist and arranger Alan Price, the best white blues organist in the world. When Alan Price left the Animals in 1965 the guts went out of their music although Eric Burden kept the group's name alive for four years of increasingly directionless gestures. Price went on to form the Alan Price Set which released a series of records with superb backing and curious lyrics, such as "The House that Jack Built" and "Simon Smith and the Amazing Dancing Bear". He teamed

up with ace British jazz-blues singer Georgie Fame for a television series called The Price of Fame (ouch!) and spent two years producing the score of "O Lucky Man" -- which along with his performance of same was probably the best thing in the whole movie.

In "Between Today and Yesterday" Price has returned to his roots. Musically the album has a heavy blues and jazz influence although there is clever background orchestration and brass present as well. But the real return is in the lyrics. The album is a unified whole rather than a collection of songs. The first side is called yesterday and is set in depression Tyneside, and presents a bitter and finally angry vision of the position of workers at the time:

"Left over people, how
will they cope
Living on dreams living
on hope
Left over people down
on their luck
All that they know is
that living is tough."

The first side connects with the second at two places. The second side is set in London today and is a comment on the vicious and brittle possibility of success -- where friends and love are determined by money. The whole album is explicitly autobiographical. The connecting theme "Between today and yesterday" appears on both sides and details growing old in

a world where success is ephemeral and the things a man believes in prove false. Price makes the same words appropriate for an unemployed worker (side one) and a disillusioned pop star (side two):

"Between today and yesterday
Is like a million years
And the only truthful man he's seen
Was standing there in tears"

But the vision is not as hopeless. The second connecting theme is one of revolt. It presents the basic statement of the record, is explicitly political and explicitly personal and is also the reason I bought this record. It's called The Jarrow Song and appears at the end of Side One. It begins by making statements from the marchers in the Jarrow marches of 1935 -- Mass marches of the unemployed from Tyneside to London:

"My name is little Billy White
and I know what's wrong
and what's right
and the wife says,
'Geordie go to London Town
and if they don't give us a couple of bob
Won't even give you a decent job
Then Geordie, with my blessings, burn them down'"

(chorus)
Come on follow the Geordie boys
They'll fill your heart with joy
They're marching for their freedom now
Come on follow the Jarrow lads
They'll make your heart feel glad
They singing: now, right now, is the hour."

The song goes on to bring the scene up to date:

"I can see them
I can feel them
And I'm thinking nothings changed much today"

And finally Price makes his own statement identifying himself with his past:

"My name is little Alen Price
and I've tried to be nice all my life
But I'm afraid that up to date it doesn't work
Because when you lay some money down
The people try to put you down
How where do I stand,
either side or not?
Come on, follow this Geordie lad"

The second side explains what Price means by "People trying to put you down", skates very close to suggesting love as a solution to personal problems but avoids the implicit cop-out by returning to his earlier theme. As a political statement the record doesn't provide

revolutionary answers but that isn't really it's aim. What makes it important is that both musically and lyrically it has to be one of the most honest records produced in a sub-culture that is not known for being honest with itself. In a sense by asking the question of which side he is on, Price has answered it.

- Dave Nadel

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