

Transformation

THEORY AND PRACTICE OF SOCIAL CHANGE



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TRANSFORMATION IS....

a new magazine that deals concretely with the theory and practice of social change in Canada today. We will continue presenting unsparing criticisms of the liberal radicals as well as the so-called left, and we will continue to offer practical proposals of how to steer an alternative course, how to move towards an authentic and effective Canadian left.

in the last two issues

we have had articles such as, "Towards an authentic Canadian left", "The fallacy of 'community control'", "Organizing 'the poor' - against the working class", "The alienation of radical theatre", "Photography and the powerless", "The house of horrors that Jack built: a look at early childhood literature", "Two miners: interviews with a Canadian and a Swedish miner", and others.

in future issues

we will have articles such as, "Literature and the working class", "How to teach the real history of Canada", "Minority rule: a study of the Canadian ruling class", "Beyond free schools to critical schools", "Crisis and stagnation in the Canadian Women's Liberation Movement", "Keeping the working class illiterate", and many equally relevant topics.

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Transformation

THEORY AND PRACTICE OF SOCIAL CHANGE



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VOL I NO 3

SUMMER 1971

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Letters

[refreshing]

Congratulations! After reading so many left-wing publications which are little more than an uncritical reiteration of Marxist rhetoric, it is refreshing to come across a magazine such as yours. Your second issue surpasses even your first. I can't believe it! Keep up the good work.

S.M., Edmonton, Alta

[loved it]

We hardly ever subscribe to anything because we're always about to move and know that our mail will get lost - and in fact we are about to move again - but we loved your second issue so much we wanted to subscribe right away.

M.T., Mass., U.S.

[original and absorbing]

Congratulations on your second issue. I found it, like the first, both original and absorbing. I'd like to see, in some future issue, Hugh Garner's response to Kathryn Keate's article on Cabbagetown.

B.F., Toronto, Ontario

[pleased with style and method]

We recently saw your first issue and were very pleased at the content, style and method of your paper.

E.P., Tatamagouche, N.S.

[one of the best]

I've just received your first issue of TRANSFORMATION, and I want to say it is a very interesting magazine, one of the best I've seen. Keep up the good work. I agree with you that reality must be brought into our dreams. Too many radicals seem to be victims as much as anyone of the society they find alienates man. We must be brought to our senses.

C.H., Montreal, Quebec

[strikes a chord]

I was pleased with my first copy of TRANSFORMATION. It looks like as if it might live up to its name. I haven't had time to read it all yet, but found your editorial especially interesting. It seemed to strike a chord in me, that is, give me the feeling that this is what I have been looking for but didn't quite realize it or put it into specific words.

G.M., Toronto, Ontario

[telling it like it is]

I was very impressed with your first issue, particularly the article about "community control". It's about time someone started exposing the myths and telling it like it is!

A.B., Wendover, Ontario

[experience made-handy]

I want to thank you for the new issue of TRANSFORMATION, which has got more wisdom and concrete experience made-handy in it than a year's subscription to most movement periodicals.

L.B., New York, U.S.

[big help]

I just read your first issue and was very impressed. TRANSFORMATION is asking and answering the same questions as we are trying to do. How to keep the working class movement working class. The article on "community control" was a big help, as was the whole paper. Keep it coming - you've got a hungry audience.

M.T., Hamilton, Ontario

[thoughtful, analytical and human]

We think your magazine is excellent! It's good to read thoughtful, analytical and human essays like in your first issue and your plans for future articles are really good. Perhaps, sometime, we will be able to contribute in some way to the content of this magazine.

L. and S.W., Toronto, Ont.

[unbiased analysis]

I just bought the first issue of your magazine and was most impressed. I feel that there is a great need for unbiased analyses such as you are publishing.

D.H., Burlington, Ontario

[how to define the working class]

Bravo! A friend lent me her copy of your first issue and I really feel it is sorely needed. Also, I am always glad to see a sister with a really good mind. Question - how do you define the "working class"? Have you got statistics on what proportion of population is 1) on welfare 2) unemployed 3) unionized 4) non-unionized 5) white collar - clerical, service etc. 6) salespeople 7) actual owners of business, small and large. We need a portrait of our society, as the mass media gives us a very middle-class picture of our majority (silent, of course!)

D.H., Montreal, Quebec

[questions about organizing priorities]

The articles in issues 1 and 2 of TRANSFORMATION have gone through the hands of five or six friends already. For sure the hard-core workers of what has till now been called the Union of Unemployed, will be using some of the material for discussion while we are re-evaluating what we have been doing. The articles for some of us removed the feeling that our experiences were unique. (That is very easy,

particularly when there are no precedents for groups such as ours in this area.) Many of the "anti-working class" features which you described we recognized much more clearly.

What I don't clearly understand in your article in #2 is the "basis of organization is the neighbourhood". That seems to contradict your contention that we should organize the working class. You say that only some 30% of workers are organized at the place of work etc. But, in the neighbourhood would it not be difficult to find a common denominator for a significant minority? Would new organizations of those employed in the service industries not do more to organize the working class? Then, working class neighbourhoods tend to be terribly cut up - strung out along highways and major streets and cut up by expressways and office buildings, factories, lumberyards etc. Perhaps you can answer that in some future issue.

Henry Dorst
Union of the Unemployed
St. Catharines, Ontario

[filling a serious need]

Though I have yet to read everything in them I enjoyed very much your first two issues. I believe that you are filling a serious need: a magazine which reminds the left (largely, alas, middle-class intellectuals) about the life of the working class and the poor. On second thought it isn't reminding, it is informing. Also, I found it particularly interesting that you reprinted the Rapoport piece, "On the Line". I can recall reading it in the Wall Street Journal (know the enemy!) and being struck by it; obviously you were as well.

B.P., Peterborough, Ont.,

[a new thrust with a class edge]

I want first to give you my congratulations for one of the most practical, hardhitting first issues of any North American magazine that I've ever seen. Unlike most of the rest of us - and even those who mean well - you seem to know just what you're doing and what you intend. Your editorial really hit a number of familiar notes: against the cultural and political abstentionism of the traditional Left; against the middle-class verbal radicalism of the Heavies; for a new thrust with a class edge. My only hesitation would be the literature project you offered: I'm damned fearful of what Administrators (even progressive administrators) do to indigenous culture. In general, they make it worse, just as the State makes education more difficult. What is the answer to traditional, centuries old stories and fairy tales filled with racist and sexist stereotypes? I don't know, but my recollection is that when there are purges the revolutionaries always lose; and the rationalizers (self-styled Progressives) usually win.

Paul Buhle
Radical America

[deserves second reading]

Last night I reread your article "Organizing the 'poor' against the working class" and was for a second time brought to my senses (by which I do not mean that I agree with it all; I haven't thought it through yet) by the ruthlessly unsentimen-

tal quality of your analysis. Like many other Canadian leftists I indulge myself by reading lots of "radical" magazines and am initially at a loss when I read a scientific Marxist analysis. What I discover is that I have no faculties for theorizing, a kind of progress, perhaps since previously I was only dimly aware of the need for them. Anyway I find your magazine really worth reading. At least twice each issue.

P.G., Saint John, N.B.

[it is still worth organizing "the poor"]

I have just read your March-April issue and would like to subscribe. The issue was excellent - some of the most thoughtful analysis I've seen in this country.

Your article on "Organizing 'the Poor' - Against the Working Class" particularly hit me pretty hard - at least partly a certain sensitivity about some of the criticisms you make. At the same time, let me throw a couple of criticisms back, mostly in the context of my understanding of the Just Society Movement in Toronto.

First off, I don't think you have been very precise in your definition of a lumpenproletariat. Are we discussing a class (or non-class), that is defined by its position outside the system of production - or that is tied to the established institutions of society by dependency ties (social agencies, etc.)? And is the important point about the class/non-class the fact that it has no collective consciousness (as you suggest on page 7)? If the definition used is the second one, then the lack of collective consciousness may not necessarily be a fact. Certainly the working object of the Just Society Movement was to develop a collective consciousness by organizing men and women viz-a-viz the institutions with which they were in contact - such as welfare agencies, public housing, etc.

Secondly, you suggest that "poor people's groups" cannot (or is it do not?) develop a class critique of society. Again, I wonder. The Just Society Movement seemed to be able to do so, building a careful analysis which recognized the economic role of those on welfare and unemployed as the surplus labour force which kept capitalism going.

Is it possible that the lumpenproletariat can be organized collectively in contemporary society because they face common institutions of control and administration (as they did not in Marx's time)? Is the problem perhaps the analysis and strategy of the "poor people's" groups themselves, i.e. can "poor people" not develop a valid class analysis and an appropriate strategy by themselves - given time and practice?

These are questions that are still with me after reading your article. They leave me feeling that it's still a good thing if elements of the lumpenproletariat organize, even if their theory is inevitably inadequate at first; like working class organizations they are bound to work out a more realistic analysis in the fight for social change, and the consequences are likely to be useful, even if in the meantime a lot of failures take place (like the "Poor People's Conference?"). The over-riding problem then becomes what it's always been: how to tie "poor" and "working class" movements for radical change together into an effective force.

S.L., Ottawa, Ontario

(Ed. note: This letter has been partly responded to on page 40, in the review of James Lorimer's Working People.)

Working People

Life in a Downtown City Neighbourhood James Lorimer & Myfanwy Phillips



The poverty of sociology

Sociology, more than any other discipline, is the intellectual field through which capitalist society transmits its values to its educated class. The most popular field of study for university students, it performs its role as the prime mystifier, and is at the root of the colossal confusion as to the nature of capitalist society, to be found among the university educated (the more educated they are, the more confused). To resist this indoctrination is a formidable task for a student to undertake, but it is a necessary task if he is to survive as an intellectual.

Two articles in this issue of TRANSFORMATION are

only the beginning of our attempt to equip the students themselves, as well as the activists and working class militants, to understand the role of bourgeois sociology, as well as other fields of academic study (anthropology, economics, political science, psychology and history) and to struggle with them from the perspective of a scientific class analysis. The first is a comprehensive review of the first study of the Canadian working class, Working People, by James Lorimer and the second one, "Class Conflict in the Work Place", is the first part of Gary Teeple's "Sociology Misconstrues the Working Class", to be continued in the next issue.

A REVIEW OF JAMES LORIMER'S "WORKING PEOPLE"

by Marjaleena Repo

The working class in a capitalist society, where strong socialist movements are lacking, are people without history. A coherent history from the point of view of the Canadian and U.S. working classes does not exist¹ and those fragments of working class history, usually in the form of history of the labour movement or the various socialist movements, pass through the hands of academics and literati only. Denied its history and lacking definition of itself as a class, the working class exists in the present only, and in its presence, in its "here and now", it becomes the subject of study by sociologists, economists, psychologists and anthropologists, trained in the methods of bourgeois social "sciences".

In the United States, the sociological study of the working class, consisting largely of descriptions of working class "life style", "attitudes" and "behaviour" (although often misnamed as "lower class" and "poverty" studies) has accumu-

lated some materials, all of which are equally lacking of historical and class perspective.²

In Canada, the study of the life conditions of the working class is relatively new, largely because our U.S. trained social scientists (whether citizens of U.S. or Canada) have regarded it "provincial" for Canadian students to be interested in investigating their own society (and probably "subversive" to be interested in the history and sociology of the working class.) It is, therefore, an extraordinary proof of the poverty of Canadian sociology, that the first what aspires to be a full-length examination of working class life in this country, James Lorimer's Working People (James, Lewis and Samuel), was published only this year, and that this book incorporates in itself the monumental inability of bourgeois sociology to comprehend working class existence in a capitalist society.

Footnotes 1 & 2, see next page.

The book is a result of Lorimer's (and Myfanwy Phillips', whose photographs constitute the first section of the book), three years physical presence³ in a working class district in Toronto, during which time the author made copious notes on his encounters with "working people" and became actively involved in the Don Vale Residents' Association, a defensive organization of working class homeowners against urban renewal. Lorimer himself was a prominent member of the executive, and the editor of the Residents' Association newsletter, in which capacities he, along with other university professors and professionals, actually determined the politics of the organization.

Working People consists of six chapters dealing with the lives of four families on the street where Lorimer lived, one chapter ("Working People, Poverty and Public Policy"), where Lorimer proposes "solutions" to malfunctioning capitalism as it affects the working class, and more than half of the book consists of bits and pieces, snippets of conversation, transcribed tapes from public meetings, notes from visits to schools and other institutions, gossip, description of objects, etc., all purporting to bring to the middle class reader (for whom the book is written) the "real flavour" of working class life.

Methodologically there are three significant failures about the book, which combine to produce a work that is not worth the paper it is printed on, since it does not present an accurate picture of working class life in Canada today. The first failure is the lack of class analysis in the work, the second one is Lorimer's serious misunderstanding of what "participant observation," the method he claims to have used, actually means, and the third failure is the separation of theory from practice, that is, Lorimer's absolute inability and/or unwillingness to deal with his own role as a community activist. I will examine all these failures in detail.

No class analysis

By far the most striking failure of the book - and the one I will concentrate on - is the lack of class analysis, i.e. an understanding of why there is such a thing as the working class and why the members of that class lead the kinds of lives they do: alienated from society and each other, frustrated, under immense stresses and strains. The lack of class analysis

1. The closest we come in English Canada to a popularly written history from a class perspective, is Stanley Ryerson's Founding of Canada (Progress Books, 1963) and Unequal Union (Progress Books, 1968), although the size of these is an obstacle to popular consumption. In the U.S., nothing has surpassed Leo Huberman's We, the People (Monthly Review, first published in 1932). The model of popular history, for its size and cost (\$1.00), is found in Leandre Bergeron's Petit Manual d'Histoire du Quebec, in the process of being translated into English by New Canada Press.

2. Mirra Komarovsky, The Unemployed Man and His Family, Blue-collar Marriage; R.C. Angell, The Family Encounters the Depression; E.W. Bakke, The Unemployed Worker; E. Chinoy, Automobile Workers and the American Dream; Lee Rainwater, R.P. Coleman and G. Handel, Workingman's Wife; Marc and Phyllis Pilisuk (ed.), Poor Americans: How the White Poor Live. This type of literature will be analysed in the second part of Gary Teeple's "Sociology Misconstrues the Working Class", in the next issue of TRANSFORMATION.

3. The notes cover eighteen months of observation, whereas other materials and comments in the book extend for over three years.

permeates the whole study in its smallest details, and renders its "findings" meaningless, since there is no frame of reference as to how to evaluate the materials gathered.

From the very onset the study is plagued by this lack of class analysis: Lorimer simply cannot present a reason why the study was undertaken in the first place, and for whose benefit. It appears to have been chosen purely as a relief from the boredom created by his graduate work. As Lorimer puts it:

"At that time, I had just finished graduate work in London and had returned to Canada without a job. For some time I had been trying to think of ways to get out of the field in which I had written my thesis, the history of economic thought, and into more contemporary and relevant matters. From nowhere in particular came the idea that I should write some kind of book on poverty in Canada. So I finished an outline I had started in England . . . and as academics usually do, I began looking for an organization with funds to support me as I wrote the book." (p. 2)

The funding agencies, the Centre for Urban and Community Studies at the University of Toronto, and the Laidlaw Foundation, for reasons of their own, apparently were quite satisfied with Lorimer "doing his thing", for with their support Lorimer was let loose on the working class people in Don Vale.

Nowhere in the book does Lorimer define the terms "working class" or "middle class" or "establishment", all of which he uses loosely. Social classes for Lorimer refers to people in different income categories, rather than to the scientifically accurate owners and non-owners of means of production, combined with the relative power and privilege of one's position. Thus the term "low-income" is used frequently and the term "working class", seldom. The term "ruling class" is not used once, whereas there is vague talk about "politicians", "government officials" and "the government" (which are appealed to be "fair" to working people and to give them more income!). To comprehend the nature of the capitalist state (misnamed by Lorimer as "government"), is altogether beyond Lorimer's conceptual framework.

The key to the understanding of the working class in a capitalist society, is to understand wage slavery and alienation of labour, with all the consequences these have on one's life outside the work situation. To be forced to sell one's labour power for wages that often are barely enough to keep body and soul together, to be unable to exert any control over what is being produced and how it is produced, to be prevented from being a creative, intelligent, capable human being for most of one's working hours and for most of one's productive years, is the condition of the working class. Dehumanization, profound mental and physical deprivation in work has dire consequences on human relations outside work, since powerlessness and impotent rage at work is compensated at home, but in a blind and desperate way. Men, reduced to children at work, tamed and constantly intimidated, let loose their frustrations at home, on wives, girlfriends and children; women, under similar conditions at work, likewise take their revenge on children and husbands; both escape in psychosomatic illness. Joylessness, anxiety and fear at work, cannot suddenly, magically, be overcome after working hours, thus the brutalization and impoverishment of human relations, and particularly man-woman relationships. Sexuality is the area where the disturbances blossom, since relaxation, affection and spontaneity, all preconditions for real intimacy with another person, are made impossible by the central experience: alienated labour. Frigidity, marital rape, sexual insensitivity boredom, pornography,

"dirty jokes", and promiscuity become the "normal" manifestations of alienated sexuality.

Nature of work not comprehended

This central experience of work is totally ignored in Lorimer's book, thus leaving all other phenomena (working class behaviour and relationships between people) unexplainable and therefore bizarre. Beyond mentioning that the husbands in the four families work, respectively, as machine tool operator, labourer, cab driver and truck driver, there is practically nothing else said about work. The only actual description of one man's work constitutes 1/4 page in a book of 272 pages! Here it is in its entirety:

[George Andrews, who works as a machine-tool operator at Massey Ferguson] said he works on machines that harden the steel for gears, axles and things like that. He does two kinds of operations. Sometimes he is a button pusher, which means that he lifts up a partly machined part, puts it into his machine, presses the button, and then takes the finished part out of the machine. That goes on for hours at a stretch. The other operation he does is setting up machines for the button-pushing operator. To do this, you go to the back of the machine and arrange a set of electrical connections. It's a specialized job, George said, setting up like this, and even the

people who install the machines don't really know how to set them up for specific jobs they have to perform. Only three guys in the shop know how to do it." (p. 51)

Another reference to work comes a hundred pages later, where Tom King, the cab driver, talks about his work. This is the discussion in its totality:

"Somehow Tom got onto talking about the advantages of the area as a place to live, and then he began talking about his work as a taxi driver. He told us how he'd been attacked by a guy with a revolver, and another time by a guy with a switchblade. The last time someone had tried to rob him had been last Christmas; it was a 16-year-old kid. He apologized to Tom for making him his first victim; Tom took him home and gave him \$2.

He talked about his other jobs too, and the fiddles he'd worked to make more money. He had, for instance, worked in a restaurant once selling drinks and ice cream cones. The owner used an inventory of cups and cones to keep to keep track of how much money should be in a till. What Tom did was re-use paper cups and buy cones from the neighbourhood Loblaws, and pocket the cash he took in for them." (pp. 160-1)

And a few paragraphs later:

"We talked about all sorts of things. Tom described in detail his previous job of driving a dump truck."



Mike Shuster/LNS

The working class will forever remain a riddle to the bourgeois sociologists.

No such description is, however, offered in the book. It wasn't, one gathers, that important.

The experience of unemployment, the other side of the coin of alienated labour (since while the latter constitutes in reality forced labour, the former becomes forced leisure), is equally ignored. The two "comprehensive" statements in the book (which have to be searched, since there is no index) are as follows:

"No doubt his [Mr. Smyrchanski's] unemployment had serious financial effects on the family, effects which we could not observe directly, more important, perhaps, it depressed all the kids and made Mike [the son] quite a different person, morose, withdrawn and silent." (p. 22)

And later,

"Several times we heard accounts of families where the man, unable to find a job, found it depressing and destructive sitting around the house, watching TV and began to drink more than usual. The wife's response was to bug him about the drinking and indirectly about his unemployment and his failure to provide for his family; this led to the man's drinking more, being violent, and eventually leaving home." (p. 38)

Note that the second description is hearsay, and that no discussions took place between Lorimer and the four men about their past experiences of being unemployed. Mr. Smyrchanski, who was unemployed for a considerable period during Lorimer's research, was never interviewed about it.

As a direct consequence of ignoring the nature of work, Lorimer also bypasses the men's experiences with labour unions. George Andrews' membership in the United Auto Workers, an "international" union, instead of being examined in depth, to illuminate the prevalent alienation that rank-and-file workers feel from the union, is dismissed in a casual manner:

"Only George is a member of a strong union, the United Auto Workers, and it is for this reason that he receives relatively generous sick pay when he is off work. George is quite well-informed about the operations of his union and the plant local, but he regards them with the same detachment that most area residents feel about government. In George's eyes, the union is just another bureaucracy which acts in its own interests, where control is completely out of the hands of ordinary members." (p. 97)

Through such flat, overly brief anecdotal descriptions the key element in the lives of the four workers, their working life, is reduced to nothing, just the way the capitalist society reduces them daily, by stating, in most concrete, physical terms: "Your work is not important. Your life does not matter." A sociologist like Lorimer accepts the practice of the dominant class and perpetuates it without raising a question about it. Once again, his own "explanation" as to why he does not investigate the nature of work, illustrates his lack of comprehension of class realities:

"The men we are acquainted with rarely talk about the work they actually do in their jobs, except when it gets them into unusual, dangerous situations. Of the families we know best, only George ever described his work in any detail and then only because I prodded him to do so." (p. 51) (Then follows the description of George Andrews' work, quoted above.) (Emphasis supplied)

At that very moment when it turns out that Lorimer is unable to get information from his working class acquaintances, he proves himself to be a failure even as a bourgeois sociolo-

gist and reveals that he was, at all times, distant from his "subjects". Unperturbed by his inability to obtain information, he turns around and passes the responsibility on the men themselves: since they will not talk without "being prodded", then, obviously to him, the topic cannot be a very important one. And those of us who thought that sociological research of any kind, by its very nature, is "prodding" from beginning to end! And who thought that the fact that people do not eagerly divulge their life experiences to relative strangers, does not mean that these experiences are not important, but that there has to be a reason why they should be discussed. Lorimer has simply failed to provide such a reason.

Work is not a hidden dimension

The experience of work is not a hidden, secret dimension in people's lives, as Lorimer makes it appear. It is easy, extraordinarily easy, to interview working class people about their work lives, if one has more than a nodding acquaintance with them, and it is equally easy to discover how the work experience colours the rest of people's existence.

With the first issue of TRANSFORMATION, we have emphasized the central importance of work in a capitalist society not exclusively in terms of the income it does or does not provide, but in terms of what it does to the life energies, the essential humanity of working men and women. There is no shortage of materials in this respect. Sara Lidman, the Swedish author of a book on mining workers, The Mine, (to be published in English by Transformation Publishers), found no difficulties in interviewing the Swedish workers, the only "difficulty" is created by the abundance of materials, not their lack. A young worker, interviewed by Lidman, expresses so eloquently the universal condition of wage slavery:

"If you could only give vent to your anger some time But all these regulations that a worker has to go by You're surrounded from all sides. It's like you got a large body of water all around you that you cannot get across. You don't feel exactly stupid and you don't feel that work is something degrading. You know that it has valuable sides to it. But all human beings have a need to create something. And you have no opportunity to create anything in a place like this. How eight hours become like years. . . . If you like working at something you never think of time. You may even be angry when your shift is over because you didn't have time to do all the work you wanted to do, perhaps you had wanted to do more work and you look forward to getting back the next day. All you ever think of in this place is: will it ever be Saturday. . . ."

This way of thinking carries over into your spare time, too. You waste it because you sit around troubling. It sounds a lot like complaining but . . . there are days when you're off work . . . well, what happens to those days? Half the time you spend hating the shift you just did. The other half that you ought to be able to use for something sensible you spend fighting the idea that you have to go and do another one."

And look at the testimonies of other workers. This is a factory worker speaking:

"After clocking-in, one starts to work. Starts work that is, if the lavatories are full. In an hourly paid job it pays to attend to the calls of nature in the firm's time. After the visit to the lavatory there is the tea-break to look forward to; after the tea-break



Deborah Patterson

The working class housewife - her solitary labour is essential to the capitalist system. Without her, who would provide the personalized services for the male workers, who would bring up the next generation of wage slaves?

the dinner-break; after the dinner-break the 'knocking-off' time. Work is done between the breaks, but it is done from habit and is given hardly a passing thought. Nothing is gained from the work itself - it has nothing to offer. The criterion is not to do a job well, but to get it over with quickly. Trouble is, one never does get it over with. Either one job is followed by another which is equally boring, or the same job goes on and on for ever: particles of production that stretch into an age of inconsequence. There is never a sense of fulfilment.

Time, rather than content, is the measure of factory life. Time is what the factory worker sells: not labour, not skill, but time, dreary time. Desolate factory time that passes so slowly compared with the fleeting seconds of the weekend. Monday morning starts with a sigh, and the rest of the working week is spent longing for Friday night. Everybody seems to be wishing his life away. And away it goes - sold to the man in the bowler hat." ⁴

And from the account by a clerk:

"... one occupational hazard facing a clerk is always the sense of futility he struggles against, or

4. From "Factory Time", in *Work: Twenty Personal Accounts*, edited by Ronald Fraser, Pelican, pp. 11-12. The articles in the collection appeared originally in *New Left Review*.

is more often overwhelmed by. Unlike even the humblest worker on a production line, he doesn't produce anything. He battles with phantoms, abstracts; runs in a paper chase that goes on year after year, and seems utterly pointless. How can there be anything else other than boredom in it for him? ⁵

An assembly line worker captures the spiritual impoverishment of all alienated labour:

"So there are nine men all told who work on our line, and each one is a character, an individual in his own right. My work comes to me in a completely automatic way, in the gestures of automation. With a rag wrapped round my eyes I could still do it, and could do dozens before I realized that I had done any at all. But underneath this my mind never stops working. It lives by itself. Some call it dreaming, and if so, I am dreaming all day long, five days a week.

The whole bench dreams like this. It is a galley of automatons locked in dreams. . . . I dream I am a painter painting great pictures full of vivid outlandish colours. One day last week I found myself dreaming I was a grave digger, my mind turning up soil and roots while my body was panel-beating

5. From "The Clerk", in the same collection, pp. 57-58.

a hood. Some days I am a hired assassin, or settling all problems in some clockwork and dream-like revolution. Or I am writing a book about the dreams I am dreaming, or about factory thoughts running through my head if I am neither doing one thing nor the other." 6

The interview with two young men working in a bakery, published elsewhere in this issue, covers the width and breadth of work experience, but the quotation below illuminates to my mind brilliantly the interconnection between work and sexuality, which Lorimer does not even dimly grasp:

"Mark: All my life until I worked in the bakery, [both had been students prior to that] seemed to be completely different. For example, the way making love was part of your life before this job; it is now so totally different. You didn't have to make love on schedule, or you didn't have to make love on Saturday and Sunday, the only days of the week you have the inclination. Before, making love was never in a rush and it was never so effected by the world around you, that you started doing it faster than you ever had before. There was a natural rhythm of which making love was a part. But after you've been working in the bakery for a while, you find that all of that is completely destroyed and the person you were before seems to come back vaguely in you memory only on Sunday afternoon. By Sunday afternoon, you're enough rested to begin to remember who you are and to begin to express yourself with a sense of continuity with your past.

Greg: But Sunday evening for me, you're starting to get back into the rut already. You're preparing yourself for work. Partially it's a psychological thing. And partially it's: 'I've got to get ready to go to bed because I've got to get up at seven o'clock.' But I think that even more oppressing is the fact that there is five days ahead of you again. And Sunday evening I was just as incapable as I was on Thursday evening.

Mark: Before when you made love it was a creative part of your life, in the sense that it was completely renewing - you felt afterwards uplifted, recreated. You expressed yourself and re-created yourself and you felt a new joy and a new urge to move on and a renewed assurance that there is really dawn and a hope ahead of you. More of the creative things in life are a real possibility. But after you've worked for awhile, you find that Sunday afternoon finally you have a feeling of wanting to make love again, but it is on schedule and almost never can it be really completed. And after it's finished you have to jerk your breath in and steel you body for another week. And it becomes more and more difficult for me to be sure that I have that undying assurance that I can create a new world in my own life and for everyone that I work and live with. That assurance becomes a little less this week and a little less next week."

Finally, a brief excerpt from Simone Weil,⁷ the French philosopher-social critic, who worked in factories for extended periods of her life in order to understand the life-experience of the average working man and woman:

"The workingman does not know what he produces

and consequently, he experiences the sensation, not of having produced, but of having been drained dry. In the plant he expends - occasionally to the uttermost - what is best in him, his capacity to think, feel, be moved. He squanders it all, since he leaves the plant emptied; and yet he has put nothing of himself in his work, neither thought, feelings, nor even, save in a feeble measure, movements determined by him, ordered to some end. His very life slowly ebbs from him without having left a trace behind him. The factory may create useful objects, but they are not for him; and the pay that, sheep-like, he stands in line for every fortnight that pay impossible to calculate beforehand in the case of piecework, owing to the arbitrary, complicated accounting procedures that it involves, comes to seem more a charitable handout than the price of his hire. The workingman, though indispensable in the productive process, is accounted as practically nothing in it, which is why each physical annoyance needlessly imposed, each show of lack of respect, each brutality, each humiliation, however trivial, appears as a fresh reminder of his alien status."⁸

Alienation of labour — a key concept of Marxian analysis

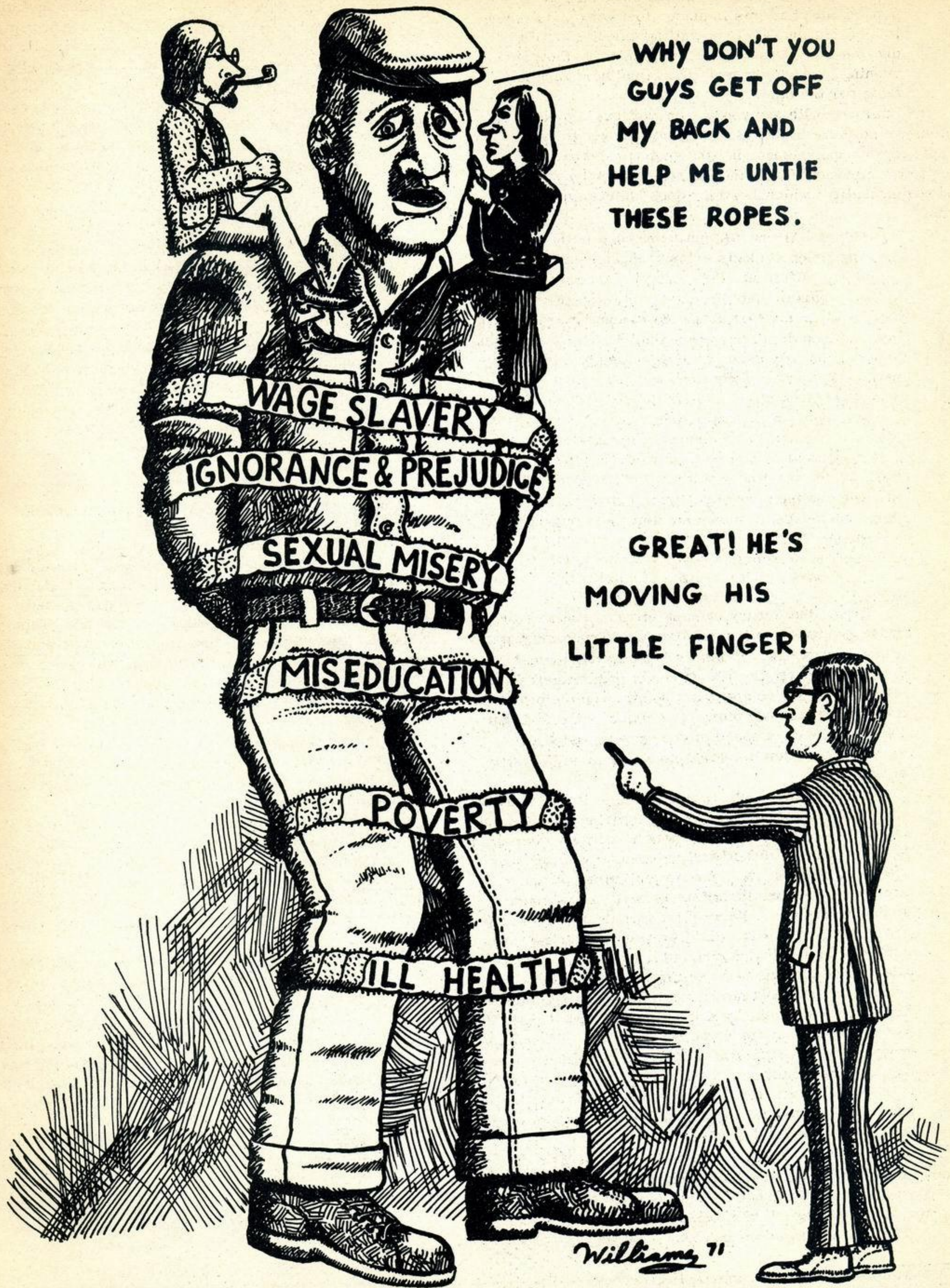
I have quoted at length from various sources to demonstrate to the reader - and to Lorimer and his fellow sociologists - that the work experience (and this includes the work of housewives as well as forced non-work) is, indeed, the key to the understanding of working class life. This is something Marx articulated in 1844 in his Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts, in which the concept "alienation of labour" was introduced as the cornerstone of the Marxian critique of society. (Although this article deals with alienation of labour in a capitalist society, similar alienation is to be found in so-called socialist societies as well. A criteria of a well-functioning, truly communal society is that alienation of labour has been drastically reduced or it no longer exists. An article in a later issue of TRANSFORMATION, "The Alienation of the Working Class", will deal in depth with the concept of alienated labour, with the alienation of the North American working class, and with the consequences that the ignoring of this concept has had on left politics.) The following excerpt from Marx's discussion on alienated labour, summarizes the previous quotations in a concentrated way:

"What constitutes the alienation of labour? First, that the work is external to the worker, that it is not part of his nature; and that, consequently, he does not fulfill himself in his work but denies himself, has a feeling of misery rather than well being, does not develop freely his mental and physical energies but is physically exhausted and mentally debased. The worker therefore feels himself at home only during his leisure time, whereas at work he feels homeless. His work is not voluntary, but imposed, forced labour. It is not voluntary satisfaction of a need, but only a means for satisfying other needs. Its alien character is clearly shown by the fact that as soon as there is no physical or other

6. From "On the Line", in the same collection, pp. 97-98.

7. Simone Weil died in 1943 at the age of 34.

8. From Simone Weil, "Factory Work", in Sigmund Nosow and William H. Form, Man, Work and Society, Basic Books, 1962, p. 457.



WHY DON'T YOU
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THESE ROPES.

GREAT! HE'S
MOVING HIS
LITTLE FINGER!

Williams '71

compulsion it is avoided like the plague. External labour, labour in which man alienates himself, is a labour of self-sacrifice, of mortification. Finally, the external character of work for the worker is shown by the fact that it is not his own work but work for someone else, that in work he does not belong to himself but to another person." 9

And the effects of alienated labour are also spelled out:

"A direct consequence of the alienation of man from the product of his labour, from his life activity and from his species life is that man is alienated from other men. When man confronts himself he also confronts other men. What is true of man's relationship to his work, to the product of his work and to himself, is also true of his relationship to other men, to their labour and to the objects of their labour." 10

In the same piece Marx has occasion to criticize political economy in terms which are totally applicable to the bourgeois sociologists, economists and political scientists of today, 117 years later:

9. From "Alienated Labour", in Erich Fromm's Marx's Concept of Man, pp. 98-9.

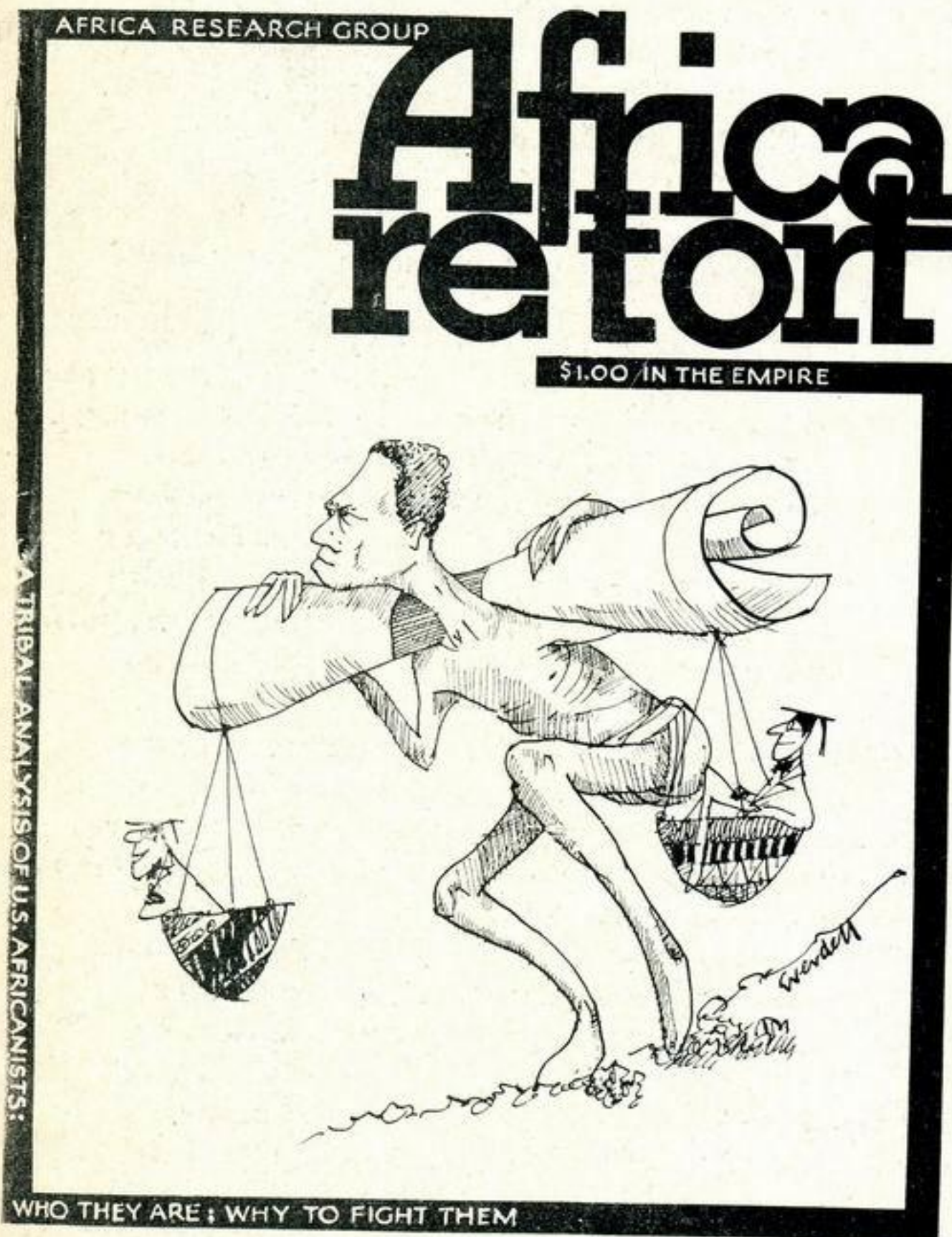
10. *ibid.*, p. 103.

"Political economy conceals the alienation in the nature of labor insofar as it does not examine the direct relationship between the worker (work) and production. Labor certainly produces marvels for the rich but it produces privation for the worker. It produces palaces, but hovels for the worker. It produces beauty, but deformity for the worker. It replaces labor by machinery, but it casts some of the workers back into a barbarous kind of work and turns the others into machines. It produces intelligence, but also stupidity and cretinism for the workers." (p. 97)

This concealing of the alienation of labour is the core feature in Lorimer's Working People, as in all so far published North American sociological studies of the working class. 11 In not understanding the interconnection between work life and life outside work, particularly family life and sexuality, Lorimer is reduced to most superficial ob-

11. It is "dealt with" in numbers of those studies that concentrate on industrial workers, such as autoworkers, but always at a critical point, there is a failure to draw conclusions. A case in point is Robert Blauner's Alienation and Freedom: The Factory Worker and His Industry (University of Chicago Press 1964), which compares the alienation of workers in the

A note on social scientists at work



It has not been possible in this article to deal concretely with the role of social scientists in a capitalist society - this has to be done in a future article. Not every social scientist is an "activist" in the same sense James Lorimer was, but their work always has practical consequences on the lives of the researched, the various oppressed groups. This is, of course, what has to be examined in detail: what the consequences are and who pays for the research and why.

In anthropology some strong voices are heard today, of the "researched" starting to talk back and young scholars themselves turning their skills for the use of the oppressed and against the ruling elements. Perhaps the most hopeful manifestation of this critique of the academic handmaidens of the status quo by the "subject" people, can be found in Vine Deloria, Jr's, Custer Died for Your Sins (Avon Paperback, 1969, \$1.25), in which a chapter is dedicated to "Anthropologists and Other Friends". Writes Vine Deloria, Jr., himself a Sioux:

"The fundamental thesis of the anthropologist is that people are objects for observation, people are then considered objects for experimentation, for manipulation, and for eventual extinction. The anthropologist thus furnishes the justification for treating Indian people like so many chessmen available for anyone to play with." (p. 86)

And on the cost of this game:

"Several years ago an anthropologist stated that over a period of some twenty years he had spent, from all sources, close to ten million dollars studying a tribe of less than a thousand people! Imagine what that amount of money would have meant to that group of people

servations, which lead him (and the reader) to no conclusions at all. The superficiality starts with the moment we are introduced to the four families (in Chapter 2). The brief descriptions of people cut them down in size from which they never recuperate. George Andrews, the machine tool operator, a desperate and often violent man, who regularly beats his wife up and throws her and the children out on the street, is described as follows:

"He is usually outgoing and friendly with people he doesn't know well, but this depends on his mood. He is very moody with his family and varies from extreme good-naturedness through petty strictness to touchy, unreasonable authoritarianism with them." (p. 17) (Emphasis supplied).

And Betty, his thoroughly oppressed wife, is presented in the following way:

"Betty is short, a bit plump, with white hair and light blue eyes. She is talkative, friendly - but

printing, chemical, textile and automobile industry, and ends up calling for an "enlightened public policy" to increase "the worker's opportunity for freedom and dignity." (p.186) The possibility that this "public policy", in order to achieve its aims, would have to consist of workers' control under socialism, is not even entertained by Blauner.

had it been invested in buildings and businesses, There would have been no problems to study!" (p.97)

The role of the "Indian specialist" is likewise examined by Deloria:

"Perhaps we should suspect the real motives of the academic community. They have the Indian field well defined and under control. Their concern is not the ultimate policy that will affect the Indian people, but merely the creation of new slogans and doctrines by which they can climb the university totem pole. Reduction of people to ciphers for purposes of observation appears to be inconsequential to the anthropologist when compared with the immediate benefits he can derive, the production of further prestige, and the chance to appear as the high priest of American society, orienting and manipulating to his heart's desire." (pp. 98-99)

In a similar critical vein, a group of young scholars in the U.S., all involved in African Studies, have recently produced a remarkable, well documented and lucidly written exposé on the "African specialist", working hand-in-glove with the state agencies and the major capitalist foundations, like Rockefeller and Ford Foundation. Titled, African Retort, A Tribal Analysis of U.S. Africanists: Who They Are; Why to Fight Them, the report states:

"We recognize that Africa is an oppressed continent; that the cry of Fanon and the martyrdom of Lumumba illuminate a cancerous reality. In this report we take a brief look at an important if secondary instrument of imperialism: the knowledge industry. Specifically,

usually edgy and nervous. When she is worried - which is quite often - her eyes do not fix on anything but rather jump back and forth sideways. She worries about being a good mother and about whether her kids are growing up properly, about her relationship with George and about ways to keep it even keel. She gossips enthusiastically about other people on the street, but at the same time she is very concerned about respectability and keeping appearances." (p. 17)

More specifically on the Andrews there is later in the book a punch-by-punch account of a fight between the wife and husband ("George's and Betty's Fight", pp. 265-271), and a transcribed taped conversation of George bringing his latest dirty joke over to the Lorimers' ("George Visits While We're Making Supper", pp. 217-220). In the former, only events are revealed of people rushing back and forth, of police coming, of Lorimer feeling "oppressed" by the situation, of the couple vilifying each other; in the latter episode a somewhat drunk George carries on a discussion which is filled with double meanings and sexual references, and generally behaves like a typically repressed and sexually miserable individual.

But the brief, external descriptions of the Andrews and the little excerpts out of their lives, do not explain what

we'll be analyzing America's tribe of Africa experts. These are the people whose research and teaching brought African problems to America's attention. It is their work and contacts which frequently introduced Africans to American policy-makers and businessmen. It has been their counsel and 'information input' which has enabled Washington to forge a sophisticated strategy of manipulative neo-colonialism

You will meet many of them in this report: the scholars, the spies, and the agencies which make them both possible and often indistinguishable. We will introduce you to the interlocking natures of the institutions they've spawned. You'll have a look at the government network and the apparatus it has created to shape and pervert scholarship to its own ends. Finally, we will have something to say about alternatives to this system, and why it must be struggled with and transformed."

The report is a model study, something critical scholars in different fields can easily undertake. It is a public service of first order, and can be obtained from Africa Research Group, P.O. Box 213, Cambridge, Mass. 02138, U.S.A., for \$1.25.

In the field of sociology, the time will come when the conscious elements of the working class as well as other oppressed groups, will in growing numbers start "talking back" to the social scientists, as in the case discussed in the note on "From the Workers: a Practical Critique of Sociology", p. 27 in this issue. Simultaneously, critical social scientists themselves, young and old, have to equip the activists in these oppressed groups with good, concrete studies on the uses of social sciences by the ruling class, and how to combat those uses.

has happened to them, what they used to be, what they hoped for once and how they presently see their lives. They remain unknown and bizarre in their behaviour to the very end. The pathetic attempt of Lorimer to "explain" their "problem" (the anger and "moodyness") of George, falls flat on its face:

"Betty . . . talked a lot about how much she enjoyed being with George and what a good time they had together. I was inclined to take her at her word. Only after we knew them better did I realize that they were in fact generally edgy with each other, mainly because of George's desire for a kid and their failure to have one together." (Emphasis supplied) (p. 34)

Here you only have one superficial appearance ("they are happy together") being replaced by another ("they are unhappy because they cannot have a kid together"), all of which proves that the author was unable to penetrate beyond the surface of the Andrews' visibly brutalized lives. How they actually experience their lives, we will not be able to comprehend from this study.

The other families come out just as flat and peculiar. Tom King, the cab driver, is described for his exaggerated masculinity ("He often wears boots with metal bits that makes them clank every time he takes a step"), and for being "obsessed with sex", since he talks and jokes about it constantly. His wife, who is on the receiving end of a heavy dose of male superiority, is described as "warm, unassuming and gentle". Her life, we are told, "centers on their home, and she is very houseproud." End of description. Mr. Smyrchanski, a labourer who is frequently unemployed, is not described at all, and his wife who is described as being "moody and prone to depression, sickness and complaints which often sound very serious" (and whose nervous breakdown is again "explained" by the author as being caused by her "moodyness intensified") are described as leading a "relatively stable life". When in different contexts it is later revealed that the whole family is depressed, that there simply is never enough money to make ends meet, and that children go without Christmas gifts and make do with Salvation Army second-hand outfits, one cannot make any sense of what is meant with "relatively stable life", unless it means stable, prolonged misery.

The fourth family, Diana and John Moore, he a truck driver, are simply "friendly and outgoing" (she) and "friendly and outgoing, but a little shy" (he). They, we are told later, "have had occasional difficult times, but are obviously very happily married". You better believe it, without asking any questions, since that is all the book will reveal about this particular relationship.

Beyond these stultified descriptions, in which being "outgoing and friendly" and/or "moody" appears to be the key characteristics of the working class, a whole chapter is devoted to "Family and Social Life", in which Lorimer further elaborates on appearances and avoids dealing with essences. "Working class values" in this chapter are summarized as follows:

"What is central to all married life is adherence to form: a proper wedding, a husband who is a breadwinner, home repairman and overall authority, a wife who is housekeeper and mother, faithfulness, and life together whatever it brings as long as this arrangement is maintained. This is doing it right." (p. 39)

Misunderstanding the working class family

This picture of bourgeois bliss is what we are left with, although even while Lorimer was welding the chapter together, it was cracking at the seams: while articulating certain "values", his working people behaved in opposition to them. These values, so carefully described, vanish in thin air when they collide with the realities of working class life. The "proper wedding" more often than not comes too late to cover up the bulging stomach of the pregnant bride; the husband suddenly ceases to be a breadwinner and demoralized by prolonged unemployment, will not be able to function as a repairman and overall authority. The wife, too, is pulled away from her house-keeping and motherly functions, and driven to factories and offices to keep the family going. Left alone, deserted, she often becomes both the father and mother to her brood. With changing circumstances the so-called values also change. Thus the "values" our sociologist so cherishes, which to him indicate the "conservatism" of working class people, are no more than skin deep. They have been elusive since the industrial revolution, which in fact made the working class family a contradiction in terms, by not providing any of the preconditions for harmonious family existence. Today the working class family is often a bitter parody of the bourgeois family, rather than its pale imitation as Lorimer would have it.¹² A far more reliable observer and a participant, Pierre Vallieres, himself a working class son, describes his family from the inside, in his remarkable autobiography, White Niggers of America (McClelland and Stewart, 1971):

"Why, then, had my parents married, if it was not in order to escape together from their condition? They had married at a time when it was almost impossible for working-class families to provide for their basic needs. Hunger left no time for love and pleasure. Earning money, as much money as possible (because there was so little), took all the man's time. While the woman, busy counting pennies, seeing to the meals, cleaning up the kids, scrubbing the floors, always alone (even when her husband, stiff with fatigue was lying by her side), could hardly imagine any way out of her misery other than a long, hard road of relentless, individual labour, beset with uncertainties and threatened time after time by illness or unemployment. A tenacious labour which all the same represented a will to live and prosper, but which did not count on any help from others. A solitary labour which often consisted of going around in circles through the

12. A far more accurate and detailed description of working class family life can be found in Mirra Komarovsky's Blue-Collar Marriage (Vintage Books, 1967), in which the interconnection between work and family life and sexuality is at least dimly perceived. But when it comes to drawing conclusions, this bourgeois sociologist like the rest of them, can only come up with a handful of nothing: "Unless school and society find ways to improve the life chances for all citizens, a proportion of Glenton's [the district where the study was made] children will grow up to live as do their parents, on the fringes of their society." (p. 347) School, peculiarly, stands here outside of society, instead of being described for what it is: another vehicle for class oppression.

daily chores: washing, cooking, cleaning. . . . Which also often became perverted, and degenerated into avarice, selfishness, narrowmindedness, and a hardening of the heart.

The misery created by the system pushed my parents into marriage after a brief acquaintance. This misery did not disappear by virtue of the sacrament. It remained unchanged, heavy, demanding. It separated husband and wife, enclosing them in two different universes. The system shut my father up in the shop and my mother in cramped lodgings. At the shop my father had the fraternity of men working together; the work was hard, but there were many of them doing it, and they all wanted to free themselves from it. At home, on the contrary, my mother was alone with the children, and she was always faced with the same drudgery; she was forbidden by tradition from trying to 'escape her duty' as a Christian-mother-submissive-to-the-will-of-the-Good-Lord." (pp. 83-4)

This is the same kind of working class family that Lorimer could have easily described as "leading a relatively stable life" and "adhering to form". Vallieres, in his treatment of the working class family, rips apart the carefully constructed fantasy of the "conservative" working class family:

"The terrible thing about the working class family is the function imposed on it by the present system, of renewing and perpetuating the supply of slaves, of niggers, of cheap labour to be exploited, alienated and oppressed. And the inhuman thing about a working class childhood is the child's powerlessness to resist the conditioning not only of the system itself, but of all the frustrations of the life around him, frustrations that are generated by the capitalist organization of society and that contaminate him even before he becomes aware of their existence." (p. 85)

And further:

"If the bourgeois family is a social monstrosity, as is scientifically demonstrated by psychoanalysis, psychology, pedagogy, and contemporary sociology, what term shall we use to characterize the working class family, which capitalist religion, capitalist education, capitalist ideology (the state), and capitalist economy have constructed on the model of bourgeois family, while at the same time - by exploiting the labour of the 'head of the family' and often of the mother and children - they deprive it of the economic base of the bourgeoisie? It is an understatement to say that the working class family is a double or quadruple monstrosity." (pp. 86-86)

Not by bread alone....

Since Lorimer has failed to grasp the central experience of the alienation of labour in the working class, he has been forced to look at working class people in terms of their income, in terms of what lack of money does to them. The chapter on "Economic Life" - which overlooks the meaning of work - spends a lot of time dealing with wages of various types of

workers and with the budgets of the working class families under study. This pre-occupation with money alone blooms in Lorimer's "theoretical" chapter, "Working People, Poverty and Public Policy", in which the central solution offered by the author is to, somehow, get more money to working people, this then solving their "problem". After denouncing the guaranteed annual income, because it would make people politically dependent on the government, Lorimer comes up with his formula of establishing an "equitable minimum wage" and full employment. He assures us:

"In terms of the impact on working people, there is absolutely no doubt that an approach concentrating on setting adequate minimum wages and guaranteeing full employment, would be highly regarded by people east of Parliament [Street - the district where the research was done]. It would increase their economical security, make them far less vulnerable to the economic difficulties of unemployment, which often create family problems, and would increase their political independence and freedom of action. This approach would be recognized as being based on a fundamental respect for working people, particularly a respect for their right to work and their right to earn a decent income from their work." (p. 138)

This proposal has two serious flaws about it. First, it repeats the error of ignoring the nature of work in capitalist society, and thus assumes that having a job will by itself abolish the "problems" of the working class. Secondly, it is another dime-in-a-dozen utopian scheme concocted by someone who has no understanding of the basic economic realities of his society.

Work, as I have tried to establish earlier, is far more than being paid "adequately" and having an "adequate" living standard. Money simply does not compensate for wasted life. Let us listen again to the young Swedish worker:

"They can brag and boast as much as they like to the rest of the world about the Swedish welfare state! My apartment is fantastic and I've got a bathroom, separate toilet and refrigerator. But that's not the issue. The fibre glass boat, the freezer and the bar don't add up to a meaningful, worthwhile human existence. The issue is something completely different from 'living standard' and 'promotion'. It's the fact that I, that we, all my buddies and every worker in this country, are locked out from society: we are outside. We are not free. We are ignorant. We are powerless. According to the contract we're not allowed any form of agitation in the work places. What is agitation? Management decides that. You have to eat to be able to live. But food isn't enough for a man to be able to say that his life is worth living." (Sara Lidman, The Mine).

Closer to home, Fortune Magazine, in the July issue of last year examined the problems that the automobile industry has experienced through extensive absenteeism, high turnover, shoddy work and actual sabotage, all resulting from the dissatisfaction of the assembly line workers. Writes the author, Judson Gooding:

"Management has tended to assume that good pay with a good fringe is enough to command worker loyalty and performance. For some, it is. General Motors has issued to all its workers an elaborate

brochure informing them that even its lowest-paid employees are in the top third of the U.S. spectrum. (The average weekly wage at G.M. is \$184.60). But absenteeism continues, and learned theoreticians take issue with the automobile executive about money as a reward, arguing that men work for more than pay and that their other psychological needs must be satisfied. Since pay alone demonstrably does not work, management must study the lessons offered by absenteeism, just as others have had to study the lessons of campus and political dissent among youth." 13

What every worker knows and what Fortune Magazine has been forced to recognize, that work, even well paid, in the present society, is a pain in the neck, escapes Lorimer completely. A little more scholarly in his approach, he might have discovered how "obsolete" Marx grasped this in his early writings:

"An enforced increase in wages, (disregarding the other difficulties, and especially that such an anomaly could only be maintained by force) would be nothing more than a better remuneration of slaves, and would not restore, either to the worker or to the work, their human significance and worth." 14 (Emphasis in the original)

How does Lorimer then propose to establish an "equitable minimum wage" and full employment? Not surprisingly, since he does not comprehend the nature of the capitalist economic order and the capitalist state, he ends up bolstering the former and relying on the latter. For the achievement of full employment he has no specific proposals beyond making the Canadian economy "much more independent of conditions in the United States, which would among other things require isolating the Canadian capital market from the U.S. market and controlling inflows and outflows of capital and certain other forms of payments." "Alternatively," Lorimer continues, "Canadian citizens could organize what political power they have and attempt to put pressure on Washington . . . in order to persuade the U.S. government to adopt policies enabling full employment in Canada." Substitute "Latin America" for "Canada", and the ludicrousness of this proposal is brought home with full force even to those readers who entertain some notions of "special" status of Canada, in which polite lobbying would be about changes in the fundamental policies of the imperial centre. If imperialism would be that receptive to gentle political pressure from an oppressed nation, there would be no problems in the world today.

The equitable minimum wage, on the other hand, according to Lorimer's proposal, will be paid from further subsidies to the already over-subsidized and over-protected industry, 15 subsidies which are collected from increased taxation, not of the capitalist class, but the middle-income wage-earner! Therefore, wage-slavery will be perpetuated and extended, at the expense of the wage-slaves themselves, rather than creating conditions for abolishing it altogether. (This, of course,

13. Judson Gooding, "Blue-collar Blues on the Assembly Line", Fortune Magazine, July 1970, p. 113.

14. From "Alienated Labour", in Fromm's Marx's Concept of Man, p. 107.

15. Some popular information on the privileges of the capitalist class is to be found in Ian Adams' The Poverty Wall, in the chapter "Keeping the Rich That Way", (McClelland and Stewart, 1970), as well as in the latest issue of Last Post, containing a report on poverty in Canada (Summer 1971).

is always the essence of liberalism - to pay lip-service to "changing the system", and then doing the opposite: further strengthening the present rule and its grip over the working class.) As perhaps a worker at one of these subsidized jobs might say: "Why should I and my fellow workers have to pay more taxes so we can keep working at jobs that destroy us and over which we have no control?" I would like to be present, when Lorimer attempts to answer this question.

Participant observation misunderstood

Although Lorimer's book abounds with minute descriptions of objects, of furniture and decorations, of consumer goods, of menus, of items of budget, and so on, the total effect of creating a picture of the lives of these particular people, is flat, bloodless one. Plenty of details cannot compensate for the vacuum in which Lorimer operates. There is a reason for this particular failure on his part, since other bourgeois sociologists have been able to come closer to their subject matter. 16 At the root of Lorimer's inability to create anything but paper cut-outs out of his working class people, is his "methodology" of what he calls "participant observation" Lorimer defines it as "the approach of getting to know, in the normal way, people the researcher is interested in finding out about, living in the same town or the same neighbourhood as they do, and in general being friendly, normal and curious." (p. 3)

Lorimer, unfortunately, has a serious misconception of the process of participant observation, since there is much more to the method than being "friendly, normal and curious" (whatever is meant with "normal"!). Florence Kluckhohn, an American anthropologist, has defined participant observation as "conscious and systematic sharing, insofar as circumstances permit, in the life activities, and on occasion, in the interests and affects of a group of persons [under study]" 17 (emphasis supplied). Another, complementary definition of Arthur Vidich, states that "participant observation enables the research worker to secure his data within the mediums, symbols and experiential worlds which have meaning to the respondents. Its intent is to prevent imposing alien meaning upon the actions of the subjects." 18

On both these accounts Lorimer's "participant observation" falls far off the mark. Take the "conscious and systematic sharing." First of all, Lorimer and Phillips moved in a renovated townhouse in the area, where they paid rent far in excess of the families in the district and for far superior conditions and space. Then, Lorimer's university professor income and additional research grant was far in excess of any of the people he studied and allowed a style of life to the couple which is unknown to the working class. Finally, regarding neighbourhood politics, the author, although he became extremely active in the residents' association, had nothing in common with the working class residents since, for one instance

16. See for instance, William F. Whyte, Streetcorner Society and Oscar Lewis' Five Families, The Children of Sanchez, and La Vida. It should be pointed out, however, that although these works are lively in their descriptions of relationships between people, they also suffer from a lack of class analysis and cannot make sense out of their data.

17. Florence Kluckhohn, "The Participant-observer Technique in Small Communities", American Journal of Sociology, 46, November 1949, p. 331.

18. Arthur Vidich, "Participant Observation and the Collection and Interpretation of Data", American Journal of Sociology, 60, 1955, p. 354.



SOCIOLOGY MISCONSTRUES THE WORKING CLASS

Part I Class conflict in the workplace

by Gary Teeple

Author's note:

"Class Conflict in the Work Place", the first part of two articles on how "Sociology Misconstrues the Working Class", attempts to show how bourgeois sociologists have defined capitalism, how they have perceived the "problems" - the omnipresent class conflict and all pervasive alienation - in the system as a whole. The major elements revealing their bourgeois, i.e. individualistic, status-quo oriented perspective, are traced through several works. Their persistent search for ways to integrate workers into capitalism, is one of these elements. Another lies in their "diagnosis" of and "solution" to class conflict and alienation, in terms of adjusting the indi-

vidual to the system, not in terms of changing the system itself.

The second part, "Class Conflict Outside the Work Place", in the next issue, will show how these sociologists have analyzed the effects of alienated labour in the working class. The whole way of life of the working class, including political and union affiliations, is perceived to be the result of personality "deformations", instincts, or some other individual factor. Where this way of life hinders capitalist production, the recommended solutions lie in the better integration of the working class into more "suitable" life styles.

Sociology, particularly in the United States, has from its earliest development been used to try to smooth over the social conflicts that were and still are part and parcel of the capitalist society. In this article, I will attempt to show how bourgeois sociology has dismissed the scientific Marxian notions of class and class struggle, and how it has dealt with the realities of social classes and class conflict through a bourgeois, individualistic perspective. I will try to demonstrate how this perspective manifests itself in the study of the working class and in the recommended "solutions" to the "problems" arising from the contradictions in the capitalist mode of production.

Because "industrial sociology", the study of the manifestation of class conflict at work - which is the major focus of this paper - is almost non-existent in Canada, most of the literature examined is from American sociology. Most Canadian students, in any case, learn only from American sociology. The assumption is, one supposes, that a "branch-plant" economy can easily accommodate "parent-plant" ideas to deal with "branch-plant" problems.

The "debate with Marx's ghost" is one of the chief characteristics of bourgeois sociology. There have been few attempts, however, to treat Marx's work seriously; the object has been to dismiss Marxian concepts and analysis as inapplicable to the study of society.

A common theme to this dismissal is the notion that in a capitalist society (euphemistically called "industrial society"), the working class no longer exists as a separate entity but now is integrated into the society. Some, of course, would argue that it never was a reality. The proletariat, then, is "de-proletarianized" or denied objective existence in reality, and, it follows, the class struggle is no longer considered (if it ever was) the "moving force of history". Underlying this dismissal is the individualism of bourgeois ideology, the assumption that society is but the sum of its individual members or the sum of numerous little groups. Such a position necessarily opposes the Marxian notion of class and class struggle.

How have sociologists dismissed these concepts? The ways have been numerous, for many "social scientists" have sought to outdo each other in the novelty of their rejection of Marx. To reject, ignore, or distort the question of the ownership of the means of production, however, has been the principal means by which the scientific notion of class is denied.

It is argued that the concentration of power in ownership no longer exists because so many people hold shares or stock in capitalist companies. Everybody, according to this argument, has a share in the power. (This argument is analogous to the bourgeois democratic theory which suggests power resides in the vote.) And since everyone has a share in ownership there are no longer separate classes based on the ownership and non-ownership of the means of production.

Such a vision of capitalist society does not correspond with reality. Only a small minority of the population in any capitalist country holds shares and even fewer hold enough to exercise any control. Control still rests in the hands of a tiny majority who continue to own the means of production. Moreover, regardless of who holds shares, or how many hold them, their interests would lie in increasing profits. And profits can only be increased through automation thus

1. Should any doubt remain on this point, see: Gabriel Kolko, Wealth and Power in America; G.W. Domhoff, Who Rules America?; Paul Sweezy, "The American Ruling Class", in The Present as History; and John Porter, The Vertical Mosaic.

displacing workers or by a fuller and more rapacious exploitation of the working class. The essential class relations of capitalism remain.

An extension of this image of dispersed ownership is the "managerial revolution". This thesis argues that, along with the "people's capitalism" mentioned above, there is a dispersal of control from a capitalist class to a technocratic, managerial strata. This view, too, is incompatible with the facts of the situation. (See references just mentioned.)

Another way of rejecting the Marxian class concept is by defining class in terms other than economic, (i.e. other than in terms of the selling of labour power and the ownership of the means of production) and thereby transforming it and dismissing it. Clark Kerr, an academic and a former President of the University of California who has written much on "labour relations", in his most recent book, Marshall, Marx and Modern Times, (Cambridge University Press, 1969) writes:

"The working class, as a separate class with its own 'consciousness', today is often seen more as representing the past than the future. Clear class distinctions have largely disappeared but infinitely graded status differentials still stand in the way of the classless society." (p. 16)

Kerr suggests here that the existence of the working class has rested on its "consciousness" or "class distinctions" and now that these characteristics appear to have passed away, so has the working class. The existence or non-existence of social classes, however, does not depend on a "consciousness" or certain "distinctions" which imply differences in habits, customs, mannerisms, characteristics and the like. Classes, in the Marxist sense, are defined by economic relationships which may or may not manifest themselves in obvious distinctions of dress and habit.

In pursuing the logic of his argument, Kerr continues:

"Evolution is leading towards an all-pervasive middle class - a middle class that expands its coverage so widely that it is no longer a class at all." (p. 37)

Thus, he argues, that once the "consciousness" or "distinctions" are gone, classes no longer exist - we have a class which is "no longer a class at all". Here is presented a vision of a "mass society",² where only "status differentials stand in the way" of a truly equalitarian society. The individual can be anything he wants, but usually "rising" or "falling" in the social structure according to his "abilities", "talents", "ambitions", "motivations", "drive", and so on.

This view is not new. Kerr has simply rephrased one of the basic assumptions of American Sociology and clarified its anti-scientific role by using it specifically to reject the scientific Marxian notion of class. One of the earliest and most important texts in Industrial Sociology, by W. E. Moore, called Industrial Relations and the Social Order, (Macmillan, Co., 1946) presents a very similar view to Kerr's, though it was written more than twenty years earlier. He defines social class as 'status groups' (p. 481) and argues that an individual's social status is determined by his position along a scale of subjective evaluation of prestige or status.* Classes

* These scales are created by the sociologist and submitted to the "man on the street", for him to rank others by it. They reflect only the prestige given to various occupational groups, but say nothing about the role these particular occupations play in the capitalist order

2. William Kornhauser in his book, The Politics of Mass Society (Free Press, 1959), a much-used book in sociology courses, systematically presents the theory of "mass society", in which individuals and elite groups, but no social classes, exist. The

as objective realities, do not exist for Moore; rather, there is a continuum along which an infinite variety of status positions may be found.

In reducing class to statistical categories, we are presented an image of capitalism which, despite its "problems", is an "open" and "free" society, where the "best" rise to the top and the rest find their own level in the social order, according to their "ambition", "talent", "drive" etc., as mentioned. Such theories of stratification, however, are not simply rejections of the Marxian notion of class. Stratification theory, the ranking of individuals along arbitrarily divided scales, is the major means whereby bourgeois social scientists try to cope with the reality of a class structured capitalist society. In this sense it can be said that bourgeois ideology gave rise to "strata" theories to counter the revolutionary theory of class struggle and class conflict, and to deal in fact with the structural realities of class struggle and its manifestations in terms consistent with the individualistic perspective.

It can be said, then, that the section of so-called "industrial sociology", which deals with "Industrial Relations" is in reality discussing class conflict. The internal contradiction in capitalism between labour and capital gives rise to such phenomena as strikes, labour "unrest", "slowdowns", etc., which are perceived by the sociologists as problems of "poor management", "dissident individual workers", "failure to bargain in good faith", and so on.

The "solution" to all of these "problems" lie in better trained personnel men and managers, interviews with the worker, and more skilled collective bargainers, etc. Labour disputes of all kinds are seen by the bourgeois social scientists as temporary "problems" - not fundamental contradictions - which can be overcome while maintaining the basic relations of production. Where the "solution" is not a question of making concessions it becomes a question of "better integrating" the worker into the mainstream.

The section of this literature that examines the worker as a "family man", as the "bread-winner", as unemployed, as striker, as "underprivileged" and so on, is in reality examining the aspects of alienation that workers experience in capitalist modes of production. We refer here both to the "meaninglessness" or "purposelessness" of work as experienced by the worker, and to the notion of alienation where the worker and his product become separate, unrelated objects or commodities.³

The manifestations of this alienation expressed in the worker's family life, in strikes, in "escapist" or "negative" behaviour and in other aspects of a worker's life are dealt with in studies of the worker, his life and environment. But the bourgeois sociologist sees these phenomena as functions of individual personalities, quirks, instincts, thwarted aspirations, family background, etc. Naturally, if the "problem" is defined in such individualistic terms, the "solution" also is an individualistic one. Consequently, "re-socialization" and better "integration" become the two most commonly suggested "solutions" to these so-defined "problems". There is never any suggestion of changing society from inherently exploitative capitalism to a system where men can determine col-

most obvious weakness in such theory is its inherent static nature, since it does not incorporate in itself any agent of social change. Social change and the need for social change are, therefore, notions incompatible with the theory of "mass society".

3. See Karl Marx, "Alienated Labour", in Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts, T.B. Bottomore. (ed.), McGraw-Hill, 1964.

lectively the direction of their productive powers.

Likewise, a large part of the literature on criminology deals with other manifestations (actions defined as illegal) of the alienation of working class youth. These manifestations are defined, as were the other effects of alienation, largely in terms of individual psychology, and consequently, the "solutions" are similarly framed.

In short, the bourgeois sociologist is confronted with the real, material world and he attempts to analyze it in terms of his ideology, bourgeois individualism, and from the vantage point of those who pay him. An examination of the distortions and the dismissals of the reality of the working class, and of class conflict, alienation, and increasing impoverishment arising from the contradictions of capitalism, form the body of this article.

Working class defined

Before we examine the approaches of American sociology to the study of the working class, a brief discussion of the Marxian concept of class, a dialectical and materialist view is necessary. The following definition, however, is not intended as a thorough examination of the long debate on the question of class in Marxist literature. It is intended to give some understanding of how the term is used in this essay.⁴

The term "working class" includes all those who live by selling their labour-power to the owners of the means of production, the capitalists. In this sense, the working class includes "white-collar" workers and "blue-collar" workers. That is, industrial workers do not form the sole membership of this class, but there are also included clerical, service and sales workers, and indeed most of the occupations usually associated with "white-collars" or the middle class". Bourgeois social scientists are fond of showing how the relative number of "blue-collar" workers has decreased in Western capitalist countries and how the relative and absolute numbers of "white-collar" workers (or the "middle class") has increased.⁵ Their fondness lies in the use of such statistics to prove wrong Marx's theory of the tendency of capitalism to create two basic classes - the workers and the capitalists. Their "middle class", however, has no objective basis in reality. It is a creation of scales of income, education, occupation and so on, arbitrarily divided into convenient categories. The working class, defined in Marxist terms, on the other hand, has an objective basis: labour power sold in return for wages, which defines it in terms of real economic processes of capitalism.

If our major concern was a class analysis of Canada, such a broad definition would necessarily have to be broken down. Sections of the working class would have to be delineated as to their consciousness, real and potential, their degree of alienation, their relative position in relation to the means of production and distribution and also their relation to the ideological apparatus of the Canadian state.

The section of the working class which most sociologists examine are the workers most closely related to the actual production process, i.e. workers on assembly lines, and in extractive industries (mining and lumbering), in fact, most categories of manual workers who work in groups. In the

4. Ed. note: A more extensive discussion of this concept and its application to the study of Canada, will be done in a future article.

5. In the "middle class" they group just about everyone: capitalists, professionals and "affluent" workers; only the most downtrodden, the so-called "poor" are excluded from this category.

main, this literature treats the working class as individuals in an industrial context.

But if this definition - those who sell their labour power for wages - was all that was meant by the term "working class", it might not be so repugnant to bourgeois social scientists. There is, however, another element which must be elucidated. The working class is a revolutionary class, in that its historical development must inevitably lead to a head-on collision with the capitalist order and the total transformation of society.

While the moment for revolution in Canada may be a long way off, there do exist plentiful everyday examples of class conflict and struggle. These are but the manifestations of the basic contradiction between capital and labour which ultimately will become openly antagonistic. It is this contradiction which makes the working class a potentially revolutionary class.

In Canada, there is as well the growing anti-imperialist struggle. The manifestations of this struggle can be found in all the exploited classes and groups in Canada, and they arise from the basic contradiction between imperialism and the demand for independence and self-determination on the part of the colony. Even a cursory survey of the number of strikes, the poverty and alienation in our society, demonstrates the intensifying contradiction between labour and capital, and also between U.S. imperialism and the colony, Canada. It is these manifestations that the bourgeois social scientists so strenuously attempt to cover up in the interest of maintaining the system.

This, then, is the definition of the working class, as understood in this paper. There has been no attempt to discuss the problem of "productive versus non-productive" categories of work, the "revolutionariness" of the present Canadian working class, the consciousness (real and potential) of this class, or its changing structure. Such discussion must be left to forthcoming articles.

Capitalism becomes "industrial society"

The word, capitalism, is seldom used in bourgeois sociology, instead, the term "industrial society" has become the one used to describe the system based on private ownership of the means of production. But what does it describe? The entire question of private property is ignored, as is the exploitation of one class by another, for the purpose of increasing the wealth and power of the dominant class. Within the concept "industrial society", private property and exploitation are understood as the "norm"; they are not to be questioned, but are accepted as the natural order of things. They are taken as given and seldom enter into the bourgeois sociologists' analysis of social relations.

Before examining the more specific areas of "industrial sociology", it is worthwhile to examine some general views of "industrial society" in order to see how and why these sociologists have misconstrued capitalist society.

These "overviews" generally are in fact "microscopic" views, that is, the examination of a single factory presumably suffices for generalizations about the whole society. The internal dynamics of a factory become the dynamics of capitalist society. Workers are analyzed as so many individuals with no clear coherence as a group. And the principal problem these "researchers" feel they face is to find better ways to integrate the worker into the capitalist system. There is rarely an appreciation of the larger dynamics of American capitalism and how they might affect the workings of the single factory.

Prior to the Western Electric Studies,⁶ which mark the beginning of modern sociological and psychological research into "industrial relations", there were several efforts which sought to explain industrial problems "macroscopically", assuming, as did most later studies, that there was not much wrong with American capitalism. That is, at least not much that could not be "patched up". One such book was John Leitch's Man-to-Man, The Story of Industrial Democracy (B.C. Forbes, 1919). (Leitch was one of the earliest "industrial consultants". In 1913, he had successfully "solved" the labour problems in a large piano factory, and in the decade following was to advocate "industrial democracy" as the panacea to all labour "unrest".) The underlying assumption of the book and the basis of his industrial democracy, is found in the title, Man-to-Man. In other words, as he put it:

"Have we not talked rather too much about working people as a class and too little of them as human individuals?" (p. 2)

This is nothing but a rhetorical question, an attempt to set the mood for his dismissal of the notion of class. He mystifies the concept of class in this next passage, and, then later ridicules and dismisses it. Leitch writes:

"'Labor' and 'capital' are convenient terms, but insensibly the terminology leads us into thinking that all people who work for money belong to one species and all people who work with money to another." (p. 3) (Emphasis in the original).

Having clarified for the reader the above "convenient" distinction between labour and capital, he sets about destroying this manufactured "belief" that workers and capitalists are different "species", in the following words:

". . . aside from some differences in clothing, education and money, the capitalist and the laborer are really pretty much alike. In fact, I think, if you stripped any organization [the members of . . .] and turned it out into a field you might have quite a little trouble cutting out the employers from the employees." (p. 4)

These are reassuring words for those who might have felt that capitalism had given rise to two inherently different "species". But they are much more than that for they introduce the notions that in the U.S. all men are equal and whether worker or capitalist, success is immanently possible for any worthy man. These notions are his fundamental assumptions and go far to explain his version of the rise of labour "unrest" in post-World War I America.

Before the war, Leitch argues, the worker knew the "boss" by his first name. It was, one supposes, a "man-to-man" relationship. But then came the waves of immigrants. As he put it:

". . . with a million of these polyglot workers pouring in every year ready to take any jobs at any wages, the whole face of industry changed. It took us a while to find out what really was going on. Then we awoke

6. These are a famous set of studies, often called the Hawthorn Studies, which Elton Mayo and his associates conducted in the 1920's. Mayo, a "human relations" specialist at Harvard, was invited into the Western Electric plant to study the effects of lighting on productivity. He discovered, however, that certain groups of workers when placed in the poorest of light, maintained and even increased their productivity. The results of his work are presented in this article, but what should be noted is that his object in studying workers' productivity, was determined by those who invited him in, that is, the Western Electric Company.

to the fact that between the employer and the employee had been erected a barrier of race and language."

(p. 5)

The reasoning runs as follows: before the arrival of immigrants there flourished social mobility and equality among Americans. Now, in 1919, there was labour unrest, little mobility or equality, and the reason lay in race and language barriers. Leitch's image of capitalism in America, then, is devoid of any contradictions, alienation or "unreasonable" exploitation (profits being the "wages" of capitalists) and the real problems are minor and external, i.e. race and language barriers, and demands for higher wages. (This latter demand was not a result of capitalism, either, he reasoned, rather the increasing wages were "taken as evidence [by the workers] that even higher wages could be paid!") (p. 27)

In sum, problems arose in industrial society when the "man-to-man" relationship between employer and employee broke down. The solution then lay, of course, in re-building this relationship and this was Leitch's notion of "industrial democracy."

"Industrial democracy" will save the system

"Industrial democracy" meant the integration of the workers into the capitalist system. All industries were to have the means whereby the workers could find out "what really was going on and of urging their pleas for what they thought was justice." (p. 27) "Industrial democracy", furthermore, was to enhance the functioning and development of capitalism. He wrote that "industrial democracy . . . increases and develops the control over the investment by causing every member of the organization to see that every portion of capital is conserved and directed along the lines of more business and more profit." (p. 210) Leitch goes on to say:

"I have said enough to show that Industrial Democracy is not a dangerous communistic experiment, that it is an insurance of invested capital, not a speculation. . . It has prevented strikes which would seriously have affected the value of investment. . . [Industrial Democracy] . . . feeds men with constructive thought, gives them more reason for active service to the company, and makes them personally and collectively interested in reducing costs in shop, office, and sales. It pulls them out of hopelessness and builds up a spirit that brings co-operation and hence profit." (p. 209-210) (Emphasis supplied)

It would be difficult to come across a clearer statement of how workers can be and why they should be integrated into the capitalist system. The point of view, of course, is obvious. The rationale of "industrial democracy", to make workers more interested and conscientious in their work and so to increase production, was to become the guiding purpose of much subsequent research.

Leitch's book, Man-to-Man, however, pre-dates the beginning of American sociological research into the contradictions of capitalism. The studies that mark this beginning are the Western Electric Studies done by Elton Mayo and "his Harvard Associates" in the late twenties and early thirties.

Mayo rediscovers alienation

As Marx defined it in the Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844, and so poignantly described in Capital, alienation of man from his fellow man and from the product of his

The early sociologists did their best to explain away both the working class and the class conflict. But the workers always destroyed these theories with their action. In 1919 in Canada, the Winnipeg General Strike created a revolutionary

situation, something sociologists find it hard to explain. Here the Strike Committee of 1919 immortalized.



labour was the malaise of modern capitalism. That capitalism made men and their products into mere commodities to be bought and sold, underlay the immense misery found in the working class. Because bourgeois sociologists have rejected or ignored private ownership as the basis of capitalist social relations, their perception of the ensuing conditions have been necessarily distorted or purely descriptive. Such is the case with Mayo's examination of capitalist society.

"Anomie" was the term he used to describe the condition of modern society. He sees "industrial society" as a system where the old bonds of social cohesion have been broken and life is constantly disrupted by the increasing "division of labour" and the search for work.⁷ And these are the factors which he argues are at the base of the malaise of capitalism, not the real factors of private ownership and exploitation.

These "disruptions" are manifested in the "number of unhappy individuals" and the development of "a confused struggle of pressure groups, power blocs" and so on. (p.8) The reality of the "unhappiness" and "struggle", found in industrial society, cannot, however, be explained in terms of "anomie", for it is but a descriptive term. It is merely a term that refers to the breakdown of social cohesion and increasing disruptions; it does not explain them.

Thus Mayo's vision of "industrial society" and his explanation of the "ills" of such a society rest in his vague conceptualization of a descriptive term, anomie. The essence of this view if expressed succinctly in his conclusion to the discussion of anomie where he writes:

"The modern industrial society . . . moves always in the direction of an ineffective State authority facing a 'disordered dust of individuals'" (p. 9)

It appears here that the concept of anomie has been used to conjure up a vision of a society consisting of nothing but individuals and the "state", a vision that negates the existence of classes. Indeed, this notion of "the disordered dust of individuals" is not superficial but central to his vision of society. In the second chapter, he writes:

"If extreme emergency shatters the routines of co-operation in a specific social group, if no leader appears providentially to devise co-operative means of meeting the crisis, then society will disintegrate temporarily into a horde of individuals each seeking desperately the means of self-preservation." (p.41) (Emphasis supplied)

Clearly, Mayo's image of industrial society is very close to the classical liberal mythologies of individualism. We see a society consisting of a "horde" or "a disordered dust of individuals" and held together by an "authority" or charismatic "leader". The ideology of bourgeois social science is clear: "society is nothing but the sum of its individual members" (Hobbes); as an entity it does not exist.

But how was this ideology reflected in Mayo's research? Of the two "symptoms of social disruption" or anomie, the increasing number of unhappy individuals and the rise of hostile groups in society, Mayo stresses the former almost to the total exclusion of the latter. The result is that the individual and his "problems", rather than the existence of class conflict, become the focal concern.

Thus, having asserted his general image of industrial society as an "ineffective State authority facing 'a disordered dust of individuals'", Mayo presents the role of modern sociology and psychology as devices to discover and ameliorate

7. Elton Mayo, *The Social Problems of an Industrial Civilization*, Harvard University Graduate School of Business Administration, 1945, p. 6 and 7.

the "individual" problems that plague the "horde" in the factories and other work places.

His major "discovery" of how to help workers "adjust" to the alienation of the factory, came accidentally. The . . . Hawthorne studies had discovered that many of the "problems" afflicting the workers related to lack of communication between the workers and management. As Mayo put it:

"Originally designed to study the comfort of workers in their work as a mass of individuals, it has come to clear specification of the relation of working groups to management as one of the fundamental problems of large-scale industry." (p.84) (Emphasis supplied)

Such a finding was quite similar to Leitch's observations and in many ways Mayo's recommendations were parallel to the latter's. Leitch suggested that:

"The problem was to get this polyglot crowd interested in their work, to make them one with the company, to introduce a spirit of cooperation which would reflect higher and happier (sic!) pay for the men and a better product for the company." (Leitch, p.67)

And Mayo stated that:

"It was indeed this study that first enabled us to assert that . . . [one of the 'major preoccupations'] of management must be that of organizing teamwork, that is to say, of developing and sustaining cooperation." (p.87)

While Leitch felt that Industrial Democracy was the way to promote this cooperation Mayo's suggestions were bound to "the interview method" . . . - the only method extant that can contribute reasonably accurate information, or indeed any information, as to the extent of the actual cooperation between workers . . . and beyond this, the extent to which this cooperation includes management policy or is wary of it." (p.86)

How the interview was used to promote "teamwork" was outlined in several steps:

- 1) "... the interview aids the individual to get rid of useless emotional complications and to state his problem clearly."
- 2) "... it aids the individual to associate more easily, more satisfactorily, with other persons..."
- 3) "... it also develops his [the worker's] desire and capacity to work better with management."
- 4) "... interviewing possesses immense importance for the training of administrators..."
- 5) "... the interview has proven to be the source of information of great objective value to management." (p.84-85) (My emphasis).

It is not difficult to draw the conclusions. Mayo is seeking to integrate the workers into capitalism, to make them "happy" where the fatigue, monotony and purposelessness of work has demoralized and depressed them. His discovery, the interview method, is "a method of diagnosis and treatment in particular cases". (p.86) It is a means specifically for management to find out the "problems" of work and thereby to soften the effects of factory tedium. Underlying this interview technique there is the attempt to make the worker feel a part of the company, to give him minor decision-making power and to suggest that his problems at work are personal and not related to the alienation of capitalist production.

The Hawthorne Studies extensively affected the course of "industrial sociology" that followed. Many industrial sociologists accepted Mayo's assumption that "industrialism" had created an "anomic" society and that the destroyed human bonds could be "re-established only within the plant". As a

result of widespread acceptance of this assumption much of industrial sociology has been "in-plant research", and workers' families and communities have been treated as secondary, as mere influences on the "morals and productivity" of the workers.

As the depression stretched into the thirties the number of strikes grew proportionately reaching a peak in 1937. The CIO under militant leadership made great progress from its inception in 1934-5. Indeed, the period from 1935 to the beginning of World War I, saw labour in both Canada and the U.S. organized and swept into the CIO fold in phenomenal numbers. The situation was "cause for concern", and Harvard's School of Business was to meet the challenge with more "in-plant" studies.

How to create the "one big happy family"

T. N. Whitehead, another "Harvard man" wrote Leadership in a Free Society (Harvard University Press, 1944, first published in 1936) shortly after the Hawthorne studies, which like the two preceding works presented a similar "macroscopic" view of industrial society. It was a "macroscopic" view that saw the problems of any particular factory as the problems of capitalism, but ignored the totality of the capitalist order. This book, as Mayo's studies, profoundly influenced later sociological work in industry.

His "overview" is expressed in these lines:

"The human problems of industry are intimately bound up in the distinction between primary and secondary groups" (p. 7)

Primary groups are those which are informal, personal and "immediate", while secondary groups are formal and impersonal. Now, if the real problems of capitalism are tied to the distinction between these two, and primary groups are obviously the more desirable, then, it follows that the task of "leadership in free society" is to encourage the development of such primary groups in industry and resist the coldness of secondary ones.

As Leitch and Mayo, Whitehead sees the "problems" of capitalism stemming from the "lack of communication" between workers and bosses in "secondary groups". If only this "gap" could be filled the "problems" would be largely ended. The phenomena these sociologists are facing is one of class conflict, but their perspective does not allow them to see this conflict as a manifestation of the contradiction between labour and capital. Bourgeois ideology forces them to see the conflict as "superficial", i.e. solvable in the context of capitalism, indeed, in the context of the particular plant, and solvable in terms of personal relations. Here lies the route, according to Whitehead, to reducing labour unrest and promoting production.

Whitehead's assumptions and "macroscopic" view, then, are not far different from Mayo's - colleagues, after all. But his method is closer to Leitch's. The procedure for establishing the desirable "primary groups" is outlined in a chapter entitled, "The Care of Personnel in Industry". Here Whitehead argues that workers should be allowed to have a say in control over some work conditions, that is, there should be "employee representation". (p. 135)

Indeed, there should be, he argues, because such "representation" inhibits growth of the trade unions. Unions, he says, arose in Europe "... resulting from a failure of industry to organize the new proletariat as an integral part of society." The moral is that if American capitalism can institute "employee representation" (or as Leitch calls it, "industrial democracy"), the "problem" of unions will not be great. The



In the 30's, organized labour still encouraged creative forms of collective action. Here Woolworth's saleswomen in a sit-in strike in New York, 1937.

workers will be an "integral part of society." Such a proposal was clearly made in response to the dramatic rise in strikes and unionization during the thirties.

The perspective of these earlier writers was developed in the pre-CIO period. Thus, without the obvious unity of large-scale union representation, the workers appeared to these social "scientists" as so many individuals with personal problems which were "problematic" mainly in the factory. It was consistent, then, with the bourgeois ideology of these researchers that the problems could be alleviated and the workers integrated into the system through the factory. As the CIO was making massive gains in membership in the late thirties and forties, the idea of integrating the workers through "representation" in the plant, came to an end. The personal problems now became "grievances" and had to be settled through the union, not through management/worker interview sessions.

Thus, there was a kind of "employee representation" established through the unions. If, however, the major "problems" had stemmed from lack of communication between workers and managers as they believed and if workers had some sort of representation through the unions, why did the "problems" remain? In 1947, in The Social System of the Modern Factory (Yale University Press, 1947), Warner and Low attempt to answer this dilemma.

There's always room at the top

A major reason for "industrial strife", they state, is the "decreasing hopes of workers to rise in the skill hierarchy". (p.182) Because "social mobility is no longer present and the American worker realizes it", Warner and Low hypothesize that there should be a concomitant rise in class consciousness among the workers. When such consciousness does not arise, they look for "other factors at work in Amer-

ican society". Interestingly enough, they discover "the principal" means for advancing in America - the school system.

"The grammar and high school, the state universities, and land-grant colleges have provided an inexpensive and available ladder for the ambitious. As long as this route remains open to the children of workers and other members of the lower class, their frustrations will not be sufficient to be explosive. (Emphasis supplied.) (p.183)

It is not in the interests of U.S. capitalism to have a class with "explosive" frustrations. The function of this school "route", however, is not only to alleviate the "frustrations" of workers, but also such a "route" makes America a classless society. The picture is one of a "hierarchical social order" where "men and women... continue to strive for the higher rungs in the ladders of status because prestige, power, and greater rewards are always at the top." (p.181) In short, they conclude, "no complex society can escape such ranking and get its work done." (p.188)

Implicit in such an argument is the notion that there are innate differences among individuals and because there always will be such differences, complex societies are and will be ranked according to the merits of individuals - a kind of "meritocracy" if you will.

What stands before us, then, is a picture of a society where no classes exist, rather where individuals earn different amounts and hold different prestige and power. Although job mobility, it is suggested, appears blocked, there still is social mobility for those "ambitious" enough to stay in school. In other words, whatever its problems, the "industrial society" of the U.S. is an "open and free" society where the "best" rise to the top and the rest find their own level in the social order according to their talent, ambition, motivation, drive and so on. In this scheme of things it follows that where people are "blocked" by the capitalist social order they should be helped out - on an individual basis, of course, since it is argued that "they only have themselves to blame."

From these views of industrial society, then, we can single out two major themes. On the one hand, we have a classless society - yet "stratified" according to income, prestige, power etc. Implicitly underlying membership in a "strata", however, are found notions of individual merit, and so on.

On the other hand, built on the view that the U.S. is a classless society, we have a conscious urging for integration of the worker into the "system". Whether it be keeping open the possibility for social mobility or allowing worker "representation" in the plant, the object remains to maintain the status quo. These two go hand-in-hand. The classless society is a necessary postulate to the standard bourgeois individualistic view of industrial "problems". Structural problems in the society as whole are seldom admitted to or studied.

The theme of the classless society is persistent throughout the literature in "Industrial Sociology." The theme of "integration" of the worker into the mainstream of American society is also found throughout the literature, but it is dealt

8. Seldom is it asked if the "strata" are real or in fact creations of the sociologist. For instance, it is not clear why Warner chose a six-layered "class structure" as opposed to two or three or even thirty layers. But Warner's classification has entered common usage and just as no one queries the existence of the "ego", the "middle class", the "lower" and "upper" classes exist because they are so much a part of popular vocabulary. The point is, of course, that such terms ingrain in us a bias against scientific class analysis.

with most fully in the area of "industrial relations."

A new research topic: how to tame the unions

After the rise of the CIO, beginning in 1935, few sociologists made "scientific" recommendations for worker "representation" in the plant as did Leitch and Mayo and Whitehead. Unions had stepped into the arena and sociologists had a new phenomenon to study: union-management relations. But the point of view remained the same as before. Ever conscious of who paid for their "research", these industrial sociologists wrote their books in homage to the "leaders" of industrial society.

One of the earliest books published in this field was by Harbison and Dubin, called Patterns of Union-Management Relations, (Science Research Associates, 1947). In it they attempt to analyze collective bargaining in two major car industries. Should there be doubt as to their point of view in this research, they should be allowed to clarify it. They write:

"The underlying purpose of research in labor-management relations should be to analyze the impact of labor unions on the business system." (p.3)

Moreover, they add:

"Productive efficiency is an important managerial objective. A constructive union-management relationship can contribute toward that goal." (p.220)

In all fairness, they do juxtapose the achievement of this goal with the achievement of job security which is, they feel, the major objective of unions. In terms of maintaining the status quo, however, (i.e. the basic relations of production in capitalist America) one can reasonably doubt that this is a fair juxtaposition. Job security is a minor achievement, better called concession, if management maintains these basic relations of production and even increases production. There is little doubt, then, that Harbison and Dubin accept the basic capitalist relations of production and see collective bargaining as a "corrective device" for labor-management problems, do not take into account a fundamental challenge to such relations.

It is also clear from the above that the "constructive union-management relations", which Harbison and Dubin discuss are in fact the means whereby the workers through their union are made to collaborate with the capitalist. As they state it:

"Constructive union-management relations lead under certain conditions to active collaboration in increasing plant efficiency - in other words to union-management cooperation." (p. 214)

Though Harbison and Dubin were referring to collaboration in wartime, such "cooperation" continued afterwards as part of union and management policy. Thus, in 1951, Whyte in his Patterns for Industrial Peace (Harper and Bros.), could write:

"The functions of a local union, in relation to management, may be roughly divided into two categories: protective and integrative. As protective, we think of those functions which are carried out in holding management to the contract. . . . As integrative, we think of functions in which both parties work toward the same or related goals." (p. 217)

Workers' integration into American capitalism, then, has passed from the idea of urging employers to accept "industrial democracy" to the idea of collaborative union-management relations. The former was pretty much an untried "ideal", the latter is a contemporary reality. Despite the "ideal" of "industrial democracy" put forward by Leitch, Mayo, Whitehead and others, the development of collective bargaining has superseded their dreams of "industrial peace".

The description of collective bargaining that Dubin gives in his Working Union-Management Relations (Prentice-Hall, 1958), states clearly the effect:

"Collective bargaining is a crucial social invention for deciding the power issue between company and union. Through collective bargaining, the decision-making opportunities are allocated to company, or union or shared. But the end result of collective bargaining is always a bargain, the union contract. The union contract spells peace. It stabilizes a power

structure for the period during which it is in force."
(p. 166) (Emphasis supplied)

Thus, power relationships remain largely unchallenged because of the process of collective bargaining. But the effect of this bargaining has been even more profound than stated above. Part of the effect is described in a chapter of Dubin's book, entitled, "Assimilation - the Victory of Management". He explains:

"Management has assimilated unions in the very

continued on page 54



From the workers:

a practical critique of bourgeois sociology

In the early '60's, a British professor of sociology named Goldthorpe made an extensive investigation of Vauxhall workers at Luton. He wanted to find out what class consciousness they had left, how they felt about their work, about wages, about life generally and what chances there were that acute conflicts should break out in a well-managed and advanced big factory. Professor Goldthorpe interviewed about 80% of the Vauxhall workers during a two-year period. His conclusions were optimistic: the Vauxhall workers were completely integrated into the system. They had no deeply felt grudges. They were satisfied with their wages. They neither liked nor disliked their work; they saw it as a rather boring but inevitable part of their lives. Their general attitude towards work, according to Professor Goldthorpe, was to do it so as to get rid of it; they wanted to forget about it at the end of the working day, go home, watch television, grow vegetables in their garden, fiddle around in their homes. Their working lives were marginal to them and what really mattered was their lives at home.

Professor Goldthorpe concluded class consciousness was non-existent at Vauxhall's, the workers were behaving according to middle class patterns and class struggle belonged to the past.

The Goldthorpe report was still at the printers when a few militants got hold of a resumé of his conclusions, mimeographed it and handed out a few hundred copies. A week later, the Daily Mail printed a report about Vauxhall profits. The net profit for that year was about 900 pounds for each worker; this net profit had been sent to General Motors in the U.S.A. This news item was also circulated among the workers. The next day the Times reported:

"Wild rioting has broken out at the Vauxhall car factories in Luton. Thousands of workers streamed out of the shops and gathered on the factory yard. They besieged the management offices, calling for the managers to come out, singing the 'Red Flag' and shouting 'string them up'. Groups attempted to storm the offices and battled the police which had been called to protect them." The rioting lasted two days.

Now this is what happened in a factory where the union was strong and 80% of the workers had been found to lack class consciousness. Goldthorpe made a major mistake: he interviewed each worker separately and found each worker to be individually resigned to, if not reconciled with, his condition. He concluded thousands of individual resignations made for a collective apathy. And then something happened which he had not considered: these workers, who had said individually "that's how life is; nothing can be done about it", started to discuss things among themselves because the conclusions of Mr. Goldthorpe were circulated in the factory. As they discussed things, they found that they all felt alike: apathetic but frustrated. They were apathetic because, as individuals, in their individual isolation and loneliness, no one could do anything to change things. But when people start talking about their loneliness, their frustration, their powerlessness, they cease to be isolated and powerless. Their group holds immeasurably greater power than the added up power of all those who compose it.

(From: Andre Gorz, "Workers' Control is More Than Just That", in Canadian Dimension, vol. 8, no. 1, June 1971, pp. 24-25).



David L. Lovd



Adrian Cave

Children's Play and Official Playgrounds

By Rose-Marie Larsson

The two most important human needs are experience and control over one's experience.

R.D. Laing, Politics of Experience

According to Engels, Fourier was the first to point out that the degree of civilization reached by a particular society can be measured by the status of women in that society.

What if we measured it by the status of children?

Author's preface:

This article has to be viewed from the perspective that in our highly industrialized capitalist society, children and adolescents alike are kept out of all social decision making as well as from participating in the actual production of life's necessities. Children today are not exploited as a source of labour, as was the rule in the earlier stages of industrial capitalism: the development of sophisticated machinery has rendered that unprofitable. What we can witness today is a less blatant form of oppression and way of fitting human beings to the needs of capitalist society, but not a less deliberate and monstrous program once exposed and understood.

Children and adolescents are being constantly prepared for a life of alienation. They come out of schools full of fragmentary (often pure lies, more often half-truths) information about various aspects of life; and without skills, without tools, without the barest knowledge of how to apply the minimum of learning they do possess. There is plenty of evidence to demonstrate just how formidable an instrument of the capitalist state the public education system is: as the saying goes, "the kids are getting their heads screwed."

The area of children's play is not less interfered with. It is important for our society to bring up individuals with a limited scope of life in its totality, with a minimum ability to think critically and creatively as a basis for action. Thus children are encouraged to "play" - an activity which is supposed to be the very opposite of passivity, obedience to authority, uncritical acceptance of limits imposed from above - but they are encouraged only on terms that ensure the perpetration of the alienation necessary to keep the present system going. The official playgrounds are clear, concrete examples of that kind of ideology.

One can envision a society where work, play, learning and love are all incorporated into a way of life for everybody and where the whole idea of separate playgrounds for children will be a thing of the past and only to be found in dictionaries or museums, as it were. The adventure playgrounds advocated in this article must be seen as an intermediary stage between now and the future. It is an attempt to liberate an area of life for the most defenceless though crucial victims of an inhuman system.

When children in the city play without interference from grown-ups, in alley-ways or back yards, the most obvious thing is how they constantly use their constructive imaginations on the things that surround them. Out of old broken pieces of wood, timber and cardboard huts are built, used for secret clubs or built for the pure pleasure of building; old pieces of china are used for plates when they play house (all children play house); sticks and stones become bridges and forts over waterways dug in the mud after a rain; pop cans, boxes, crates are used for playing store, school, fire engine, hospital - innumerable games.

And one activity leads to another: a cardboard box can be many things to playing children. It may start out as a pretend car until someone discovers that by flattening it out it will make a perfect rug for a house, or, bent a certain way it makes a chair, and, broken up into little pieces it can

Two playgrounds. The top picture is from Regent Park Public Housing in Toronto. It is mid-afternoon on a Saturday, and no children come near it. Things are different in a London adventure playground (bottom). No shortage of involvement and children.

be used for food in the store: mixed with mud it makes wonderful cakes, or again, as a box open in both ends it's something that is great to get inside and roll around in.

And naturally, the richer the environment, the more "junk" available, the more interesting and elaborate games are developed. Trees are for climbing and if a rope is available, one can make a swing from the tree, which is essential for any kind of jungle play or dare-devilling. Broken baby-carriages are veritable treasure chests since the wheels can be taken off and used for self-made cars and the carriage itself for a real baby crib, hospital bed or whatever spurs the imagination.

My own children - who are five and three years old - haven't got a back yard but they've got a back roof, and a boy and a girl their age on the roof next to ours. Both roofs are full of junk. I have had my "Ladies Home Journal" and "Beautiful Home" ideas once or twice about turning the roof into a nice outdoor room with flowers growing in antique brass pots and having handmade hardwood armchairs around for friends to sit around and have drinks in. But, I just have never been able to realize any such daydreams. I don't lead that kind of a life, and I'm the kind of person who has junk on the back roof. And by junk I mean old doors, broken pots and pans and kitchen utensils, a couple of wooden table tops and shelves, iron milk crates, broken chairs, two sheets of masonite and a couple of crates.

The children bring all their toys out on the roof and often they don't bring them back inside. As a result there are quite a few reshaped and broken toys all over the place, plus crayons, bits and pieces of rope, dolls and children's clothes etc. And that's where the children play, and love to play and bring friends home who love to play there and who ask to come back to play again. And all kinds of games take place on that back roof, always without adult supervision, since I am the adult and I don't have time for supervision.

It seems the smaller children like to play with the gravel that covers the whole roof. They keep filling and emptying various containers with it, mixing it with water, shovelling it; or else they ride around on the tricycles or play with balls. The older children, like Andrea and Olga who are five and four, are mostly playing hospital and house - either with dolls, or using their younger brothers as patients and babies - very elaborate games, and they are always making full use of the broken furniture, the pots and pans and all the rest of the junk. They wash clothes and hang them up to dry; they play store - most of the time I'm not sure what they're playing, all I can tell is that they look very involved with sticks and pots and pans.

The whole way of playing changes radically when there are a few older kids over - eight to ten years old. Those are the times when boxes are put on wheels and wheeled all around the roof with tremendous speed, the older child pushing a little one; organized hut building takes place, garages and miniature highways are constructed for the toy cars and trucks. And all these games always involve a whole lot of transactions and deal-making between all participants. Children's play is not a smooth process, but vitally full of changes. The building of a hut, for instance, takes place after and during long arguments about what material should be used, about different ideas of how it ought to be done, with kids persuading each other, introducing and discovering new ideas as they go along. Sometimes they start out to build a hut and end up with three racing cars.

The official playgrounds in no way provide for this kind of play. In them the children have no opportunity to change and manipulate the environment according to their needs. The

sterile, stationary steel structures in form of airplanes, jungle-jims or boats can neither be improved nor disassembled by the children, and therefore offer no challenge for creativity, for play. The swings, also mostly made of steel, can seldom be managed by smaller children, consequently their mothers have to stand there and push them - a most boring activity for the mother and no learning process involved at all for the child. The older children find some satisfaction in rolling the swings up around the frame - on my recent tour of Toronto playgrounds, rarely did a playground feature a frame with all the swings down - an activity which is most likely classified as vandalism by the parks department.

The other thing is the fact that the playgrounds are always wide open with few trees or other structures that would create the privacy that children seek to develop their play in peace. More than anything they look like prison yards, and this is particularly noticeable in the areas where old neighborhoods have been torn down and replaced with modern high rise housing-project ghettos (like Harlem in NYC and Regent Park in Toronto). In these areas there are none of the old type back yard or alley ways available for children to retreat to, there are no old fences to climb through or under, no deposits of junk or private corners, nooks or crannies. Instead, box-like housing units are scattered over a desert of asphalt and grass, and the only space provided for the children is the city's playground. In those playgrounds the garbage baskets are chained to the wire fence, and it isn't hard to guess why - a garbage basket could be many things to playing children. In those playgrounds they are expected to spend their childhood years swinging, sliding and climbing on the monkey-bar, day in and day out. They don't do it. That's all.

When observing one of those playgrounds one quickly discovers that if there are any children there at all, they're hardly ever actually swinging on the swings or sliding on the slides or climbing on the monkey-bar. They are fighting over the swings, using them as weapons against each other, fighting on the monkey-bars or hanging around watching fights on the monkey-bar. There is seldom any constructive play: instead, there is boredom, showing off, aggression, vandalism. Since the only organic material there is human beings, that's where the play interest lies. The only other possibility is the water fountain, which, as most parents know, is usually the most popular piece of equipment in the playground - the water can be directed with various finger and stick devices to spray in different directions, great on a hot summer day. However, within the overall structure of boredom and violence the water fountain also becomes the supreme weapon.

The most common argument used to defend the existing playgrounds is usually that "they are safe". That's simply nonsense. They are only safe when constantly supervised by adults - even then the accidents resulting from little children running behind big steel rocking-horse swings, kids tripping and falling on the tall staircase leading up to the slide (particularly when there are many kids all eager to get up there as fast as possible, since only one person can slide at a time), children hurting themselves on glass in the sandbox, are only a few of the more common things going on. And when the kids fall they always hurt themselves badly since everything around them is either made of concrete or steel. Parents know this, and there is not one mother taking her kids to the park who can sit down and relax letting her children play as they like.

The park sessions are exhausting for the mothers (and occasional male parents) who have to be on guard every sec-

ond to be sure their three-year-old won't get his teeth knocked out by a swing or sit down under a see-saw for a brain concussion. And for the children it is not an environment in which they can develop self confidence and judgment of their own ability - they are dependent on their mothers for practically every move they make. As a result most parents don't even bother to let their small children loose by themselves in the park - they lead or carry them up to the swings, push them back and forth for a while, carry them over to the slide, lift them up and catch them as they're sliding down and then they put them in their strollers and wheel them home.

Viewed from the perspective of how children grow and play in environments that allow them to take calculated risks and learn from their own experience how to shape and mold and interact with material, these playgrounds are not at all safe. They are positively dangerous, and moreover, most harmful in the areas where they constitute the only play space, as in the modern "low-income", i.e. working-class housing projects. What kind of people will they be, these children, whose childhood was spent fighting on steel monkey bars on an asphalt desert?

There is a better way of providing play space for children, and that is to start from the needs of the children themselves. That is the idea behind the adventure playground, sometimes called junk playground, in Sweden construction playground, of which there are many at this time in Europe and Scandinavia, but disappointingly few in North America. The originators of this kind of playground argued that since children seem to prefer playing on dumps, back streets and waste land where there's plenty of opportunity for messing around with earth, bricks, water and the thousands of discar-

ded objects that adults abandon and children play with, but where on the other hand the children are a constant threat to private property, in danger of being run over by cars, etc., why not set up special supervised play areas where the children can develop the same kind of play as they would if left alone in those places? That is, fill an empty lot with old timber, gas cans, pipes, barrels, crates and boxes, sand, earth (leave the trees or substitute with brought-in telephone poles), rope, junk, water, used tires, army surplus goods, and let the children create their own playground, aided by a competent and pro-child play leader.

And they proved succesful - succesful at least from the point of view of the children. Many adventure playgrounds have to close because of lack of funds and no support from local authorities and sour "tax payers", but they are always proven right by the children who spend all their free time there, completely involved in constructing and reconstructing swings, huts or whatever, whereas they wouldn't spend five minutes in the city's playgrounds - they'd rather spend the time tying pop cans to the neighbour lady's cat's tail.

It is a most wonderful experience to enter into a busy adventure playground. Last year I visited the Notting Hill Adventure Playground in London, England. It was situated in a densely populated working class district (some call it Rotting Hill), mostly consisting of Irish and West Indian immigrants. There are few parks in the area; before the adventure playground was started the children used to play in the streets. And . . . every time I came back it was the same thing: children, lot of children, busy everywhere building huts, tearing down one huge combined slide-tree house, except it was constructed on top of telephone poles and thick



Erroll Young



Give children a chance, give them natural materials, boxes, water, earth, and give them a chance to play in peace - and

ropes hanging down from various places (to climb up and down on) - all constructed by the children themselves. There were heaps of used tires in one corner of the playground, junk and odd timber everywhere. Hammers and nails were available in one set-aside area.

There was no traditional playground equipment - there were two slides, though, again constructed by the children themselves, one a tunnel slide going from the roof of the brick house situated in the middle of the playground, and covered with multi-coloured wood (in order to get up there one had to climb up a ladder on the wall of that brick house). The other slide was about six feet wide and uncovered, and also suspended from the roof. It had tall walls at the sides and at the bottom and where the slide ended there were two or three old mattresses, the reason for that being that the children didn't use that slide for sliding. They ran down the slide and threw themselves into the soft heap of mattresses (like you do in hay in a barn), or else rolled down. That slide also seemed to serve the purpose of club house or conference room for a group of older boys.

There were also swings around, like a tire on a rope attached to a pole stuck in the ground; and among the hut constructions one ingenious idea: a wooden barrel open in both ends with a pole stuck through it (like beads on a string) which made a lovely rocking tunnel. One part of the playground was set aside for gardening and there grew a multitude of bushes and flowers; they also kept rabbits and pigeons in the same area. And everywhere children were busy playing, talking, hammering or seeking out material for something.

One part of the playground was fenced off to serve especially the children under five (who could play in the other area if they wanted to), who had special volunteer play leaders and a small swimming pool. I was travelling with my children, Andrea and Alan, who at that time were four and two years old, and since they were both used to spending time in a nursery school, I had vaguely hoped that I would be able to leave them in the playground for an afternoon to get some time for myself. They took one look at the playground, got a curious sort of intent look in their eyes, let go of my hands and quickly turned and said, without me even asking them, "Have a nice time", and off they were. That happened on their second day in London.

In Scandinavia where the adventure playground idea



Richard Dattner

they will always make the most of it. The problem in the cities is that natural play is systematically obstructed.

originated - it was first conceived of by a landscape architect, C.T. Sorenson in 1931, and carried out in Emdrup outside Copenhagen in 1943 - and particularly in Sweden, emphasis in the playgrounds has been to encourage co-operative play among the children and on developing playground equipment that requires a co-operative effort in order to well. (Objects such as tractor tire swings that need at least three kids to function, wide slides for many to slide and on at the same time, car inner tube nets for many to climb - since the more climbers there are, the more the net moves and the more challenging it is to climb - heaps of foam mats to roll and jump around in, large hammock type swings, making material and so on. See "Communal play and communal playgrounds" in the list of literature at the end of the article.)

It has been noticed in most adventure playgrounds that at the beginning there is always a fair amount of hoarding of materials by individual children and always in the beginning a whole series of one-man huts being built. But somehow as the play progresses the one-man huts are abandoned for more complicated co-operative constructions, without any form of suggestion or encouragement from the play leaders. The Swedish approach to a new type of playground has been to actively re-educate the children who all come from a society that has deprived them from an early age from experiencing communal and co-operative living and has instead exposed them to a thorough indoctrination of competitive ways and values, and it was found that the children did not automatically free themselves from that kind of conditioning, just because they were given the freedom to do it. Thus in the construction of playgrounds that were being built on a large scale two or three years ago in Stockholm, rules were introduced such as: "Things are not owned here, they are used" and "Nobody can hoard tools". With these two rules it became very easy to solve the unavoidable "I-had-it-first"-fights about hammers and saws. All one had to do was to ask the person standing on a saw while hammering something, "Are you using the saw?", and then the child in question either had to switch activity real fast to be able to say "Yes, I am", or else had to hand over the saw.

Conservative people will always try to stop the development of adventure playgrounds by arguing that they are dangerous for the children or make the neighbourhood messy or that

they are too noisy. It's very peculiar. They will tolerate living in an environment which consists largely of cars that create constant noise, pollute the air and endanger living things (in the city you're constantly about ten feet from getting your flesh and bones splattered all over the asphalt). They will tolerate the noise from construction sites, road repairs, all the loud awful noise from air conditioners, ventilation systems, all the city's industrial noise, the jet air planes, the constant roar from the highways - but they will not tolerate the sound of children laughing and playing. That is suddenly too much to take, too unbearable for human ears. Could it possibly be because the sounds are happy sounds? Perhaps the very idea that a whole bunch of children are enjoying themselves could be a very difficult thing for some people to live with.

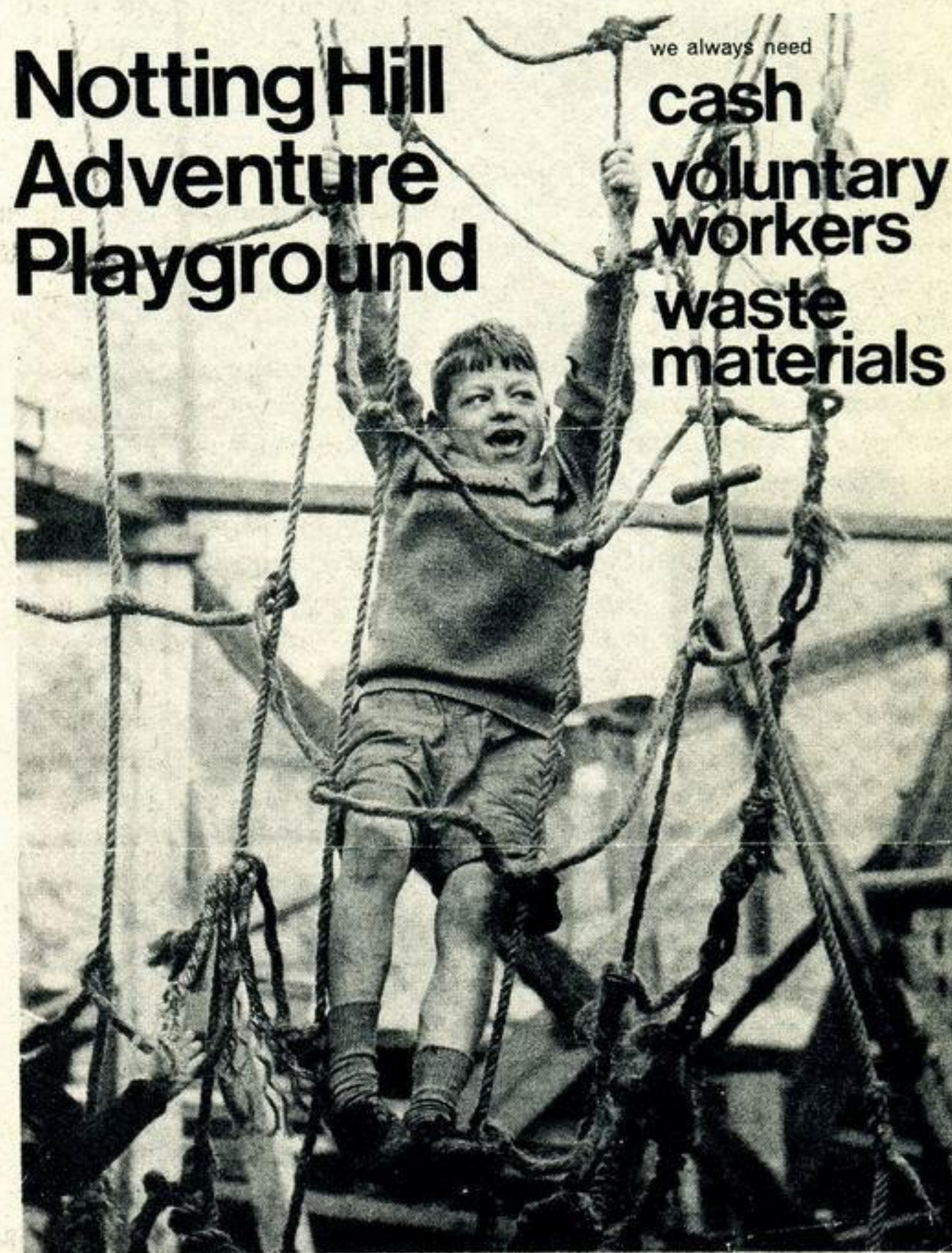
As for the messiness of adventure playgrounds: they are meant for children, whatever is there is an extension of the children's needs. Since they ought to be fenced off for privacy for the children, cleanliness neurotics should simply stay away and mind their own business. And about the danger - experience has shown that there are very seldom any accidents in adventure playgrounds. When children are encouraged to take calculated risks, they take calculated risks. When they build structures, they know how to handle them. Trapeze artists don't fall of the trapeze nor do construction workers as a rule fall off the high rises - a visitor who doesn't know what is going on, might. It is a question of involvement and the awareness rising out of a total commitment. As I discussed earlier, the traditional playgrounds are far more dangerous, not only because of all the steel and concrete, but because the children can find nothing better to do than to fight over the swings, fight on top of the slide, to fight on the monkey bar, and cause accidents because of it.

Much has been written about creative play during the last decade - the most widely read book being Planning for Play by Lady Allen of Hurtwood, an English landscape architect - and most city parks departments are by now quite aware of the inadequacy of the existing playgrounds. That's why one can see more and more of so-called "progressive" playgrounds, mostly situated in new housing projects and where they have substituted an iron monkey bar for a dead tree or put out a couple of concrete pipes here and there or some kind of sculpture like a giant turtle (made of fibre glass, I think). Obviously this is not a solution, it's a cover-up. A dead tree or a giant turtle is just as uninvolved as any regular steel jungle-jim; the children soon tire of the novelty it may afford and after they've discovered that there isn't really very much one can do on a giant turtle, they leave the playground and go back to their own activities.. And a dead tree - sure, if it is big enough and if there's thick rope around, one can hang climbers and swings on it - but one dead tree in a park serving 500 children?

No, the city authorities must be forced to realize that the traditional kind of playground does not serve the needs of the children and that to continue setting them up is educationally unsound, detrimental to the children and a waste of the parents' and everybody else's tax money. The evidence in support of adventure playgrounds keeps getting more impressive every year. The only way to ensure that changes are made is for political organizations and citizens' groups to organize parents and children around this issue and demand change. Particularly in the areas where the playgrounds are most oppressive such as in public housing projects across the country, where there are thousands upon thousands of children in apartment blocks with no access to private back-

yards and alleyways, such organizing is an absolute must.

When one organizes for adventure playgrounds, the most important thing to keep in mind is that unless one ensures funds to keep a permanently employed leader, it is next to impossible to carry on the project. The play leader is the most important person in the organization for adventure playgrounds. He/she is the one who makes sure that there is a steady influx of material to the playground - he does so by staying in touch with house and auto wreckers, contractors of different kinds, etc. (The phone book is full of sources of materials. Last year when I was involved in an - unsuccessful* - organizing effort for an adventure playground in Toronto, all the places I called were most interested in helping out with materials. We got car loads of used tires from auto wreckers, an aircraft manufacturer was willing to supply an airplane tire, a wire company brought over two large wooden wire spools, an army surplus company promised to give us all the boxes and crates we wanted, and the



Notting Hill Adventure Playground

we always need
cash
voluntary
workers
waste
materials

only thing we couldn't get hold of for free was an army enter net, for that they wanted \$15.00). The play leader is also necessary to make sure that the play takes place within the assigned area, since people who are opposed to adventure playgrounds, will always accuse the children of messing up the neighbourhood. In short, he or she has to be the link between the children and the parent organizations on the one hand and the city authorities and the opposition among the adults on the other.

* It was unsuccessful because it involved young, radical, middle-class parents, who liked the idea of an adventure playground, but did not need it sufficiently to realize it.



The play leader must also be able to act as advisor and collaborator in the playground - although never as a supervisor or architect with a whole end-result plan in mind. He or she must have a good understanding of how children learn and play. Beware of the person who "just loves to work with children", who most often are just as incapable of understanding honest, self-regulatory play process as any authoritarian person; usually they are full of delusions of the kind that "children are really stoned, man", and that somehow children are natural pacifists in a perfect conflict-free paradise of their own. These kinds of people are disastrous in tough working class districts, where the children from an early age have learnt never to give a sucker an even break, and he who cannot handle conflict in a sound way will simply be walked right over by the children, and unless he is totally masochistic, will quit the job, exhausted, after one or two weeks.

The play leader must also be someone with some kind of experience in simple carpentry, so if he's asked for advice, he will be able to help out - if the children want to know what size of nails to use for a particular structure or whether this kind of board would be strong enough for what they want, or how to tie a good strong knot on a rope, and things like that. The first adventure playground leader in Emdrup, Denmark, was John Berthelesen, who was a trained nursery school teacher and an ex-seaman. It may be

a good idea to train an adult, young or mature, in the neighbourhood for the job and pay him/her regular wages. It is absolutely essential that the play leader's job is paid so that he or she can make a living on it; no amount of idealism in the world can keep a person happily occupied for long if he has to worry about money for the next week's rent or meals.

Play is a learning process about one's own potential to act and interact with one's environment without interference from authority; play as a continuing development and enlarging of one's experience, make no mistake, is a revolutionary concept, dangerous to the prevalent system which wants no business with people who have learnt to ask the magic WHY NOT? and delight in using their own judgement and all fifty-four senses. When I was last involved in trying to set up an adventure playground, one of the people watching the children play, slowly turned around to me and said: "Jesus, this is no playground, we're training guerillas!" And in a sense it is true. One cannot challenge the way children are brought up without challenging the social system that enforces it. The prison yard steel structure playgrounds must come down, as must all other institutions constricting the freedom and creativity of human beings.

HOW TO ORGANIZE AN ADVENTURE PLAYGROUND IN A WORKING CLASS DISTRICT

The tasks to organize for creative playgrounds that concerned parents, youth, activists, educators and others have to undertake, are relatively simple.

First, there has to be a critical examination of the existing playgrounds in a particular locality. This examination should consist of the following:

a) a description of the existing playgrounds, their facilities, their locations, and the relationships they cultivate among the children, and between adults and children. Examine also features of safety. A photographer is an essential part of this phase, to concretize the descriptions.

b) description of play outside playgrounds, i.e. how do children play in their "natural" environment, whatever that happens to be.

c) finding out what children think of the playgrounds, what they would like to see, what the best playground they have experienced have been like. Talk to children of all ages.

d) what do parents think (as well as other adults) of existing playgrounds and children's play in general, what are their complaints, what are they happy with if anything?

Second, there has to be an examination of the city's (town's) park and recreation policies as well as their budget. This examination should include an investigation of who produces and at what cost the horrible and useless standard equipment on our playgrounds. Locate the specific vested interests that keep our children from playing.

Thirdly, come up with alternatives to the existing playgrounds. Select examples of HOW IT CAN BE, with specific ideas of how to construct these playgrounds and at what cost. Some of these ideas can be found from the booklist at the end. Others will be brought forth by working class parents, the great majority of whom possess a variety of practical skills and have access to interesting and useful materials at their work place.

Fourthly, compile a report with the above ingredients and with specific proposals, to be widely circulated among working class parents and children, among organizations of various kinds, in order to get their endorsement for the proposals, as well as to get the support of parents and children in various neighbourhoods, for the purpose of changing the city's overall policies regarding playgrounds.

Fifthly, after the popularization of the report and after there is concrete and widespread support for the ideas in it, set up a co-ordinating committee, and propose to the city the setting up of three-four adventure playgrounds in different working class districts in the city, as "pilot projects". These "pilot projects" should be such that they can be easily spread and become functional models for people in various parts of the city, and the country. The co-ordinating committee should make sure that children of all ages participate actively in planning of these adventure playgrounds, that they test out the suggestions, and that their opinions and suggestions are listened to.

READING MATERIALS

Prior to undertaking an organizing project, people should familiarize themselves with some good literature on the field:

David Aaron with Bonnie P. Winawer, Child's Play, Harper & Row, 1965.

Lady Allen of Hurtwood, Planning for Play, Thames and Hudson, 1968

Richard Dattner, Design for Play, Van Nostrand Reinhold co., 1969.

Alfred Ledermann and Alfred Trachsel, Creative Playgrounds and Recreation Centres, Praeger, 1959.

Paul M. Friedberg and Ellen B. Berkeley, Play and Interplay, McMillan Co, 1970.

These four books, all quite expensive, should be available from the Boards of Education in all major cities, from Parks and Recreation Departments in some cities, as well as from well-equipped public libraries. Lady Allen's book is the best buy.

Some additional materials:

Big Rock Candy Mountain, Winter 1970, "Resources for Our Education", has a large section on "Educational Environments", which is filled with excellent and practical ideas on how to create that adventure playground. A group should invest \$4.00 (add a quarter for mailing) in this issue. Order from Big Rock Candy Mountain, Portola Institute, Inc., 1115 Merrill Street, Menlo Park, California 94025, U.S.

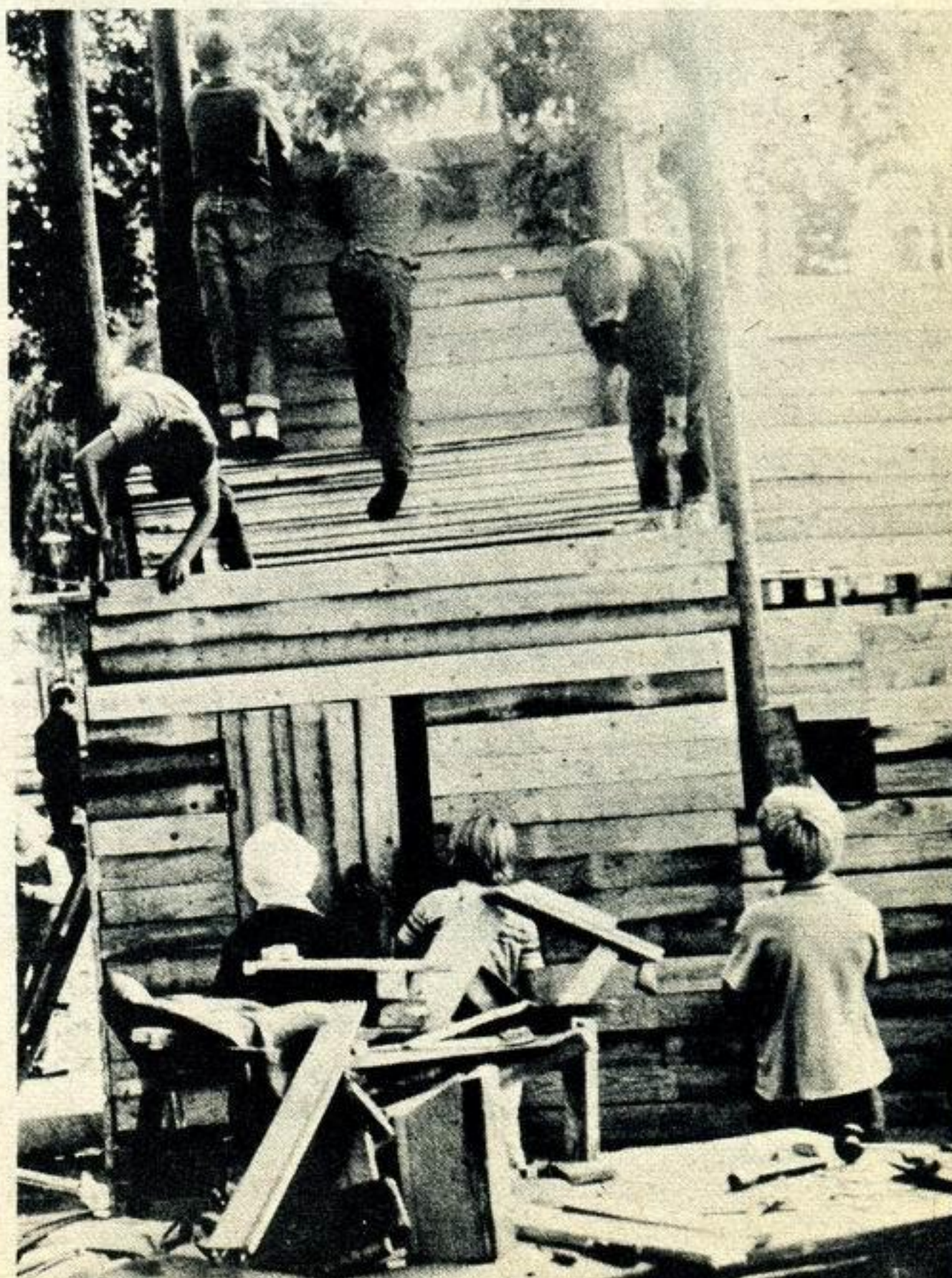
Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation (address: Ottawa 7, Ontario), has reprinted four articles by Polly Hill on "Children and Space", in a booklet. Polly Hill, as many might remember, was the Project Director for a very successful (in children's own terms) children's creative centre at Expo '67. This booklet is free.

We have a pamphlet at TRANSFORMATION, "Communal Play and Communal Playgrounds", which contains a lot of good, practical suggestions, adapted from the Swedish playgrounds. Send a 7 cent stamp and it's yours for free. (We don't have huge amounts, but different groups can mimeograph their own from the copy available from us).

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Big Rock Candy Mountain



**MAKERS
OF OUR
DAILY
BREAD**

**An interview
with two bakery workers**

Introduction

An accurate sociology of the working class in a capitalist society has to be built from scratch, since it presently does not exist. It will be built through interviews with workers of all kinds, in different sectors of the economy. Its task will be to reveal the shackles that hold down the working class, body and mind, since only through understanding these shackles, their nature and substance, can one work to remove them.

The following interview with two bakery workers is an attempt to contribute to such a sociology. The first part of the interview describes the conditions at the place of production. The workers talk about the effects of alienated labour on their bodies (the speed, the constant tension, the accidents), on their relationships with fellow workers (the rivalry, a lack of interest in each other, the generational conflicts among young and old workers, the jealous guarding of skills). They talk about the effect of this labour on their lives outside work, on their relationship to their wives and their sexuality, and they talk about how they are deprived of any creativity and responsibility, since they are rarely allowed to express themselves by the rigid hierarchy of foremen, supervisors and managers. And all this misery is perpetrated to produce what they describe as a nutritionally impoverished product, which has as its purpose not to nourish, but to bring increased profits to a privileged class.

The second part, concentrating on the union, describes the negotiation procedures in a union that is a company union in all but name, a description that is widely applicable to trade unions in Canada. They describe the role of the business agent, which is to protect union funds, to prevent a strike or any other forms of "disruption", and to retard the development of working class political consciousness and collective action, through the absence of working class oriented education - even on basic democratic union procedures. They describe his

ability to manipulate the application of labour legislation to serve the interests of the union bureaucracy and the company, against the interests of the workers.

It becomes clear in this interview, although not directly touched upon, that the existing so-called left has abandoned the working class to flounder and break under these conditions and at the mercy of such "unions" - even while focusing on the narrow issues of economic demands and trade unionism.

A word about the two young workers: both come from relatively affluent middle class, anglo-saxon families and have had a minimum of several years of university education - the effects of which on their position and relationships at work, they describe in the interview. Their backgrounds notwithstanding, they are workers who are subjected to the same conditions, same pressures as their fellow workers who as a rule are immigrants with little formal education. Although at the time when these men started to work in the factory - the one over a year and a half ago, the other almost a year ago - to work in the bakery was a conscious choice, such a choice will not exist in the near future, by the very fact that there will occur, during the next decade, a rapid "proletarianization" of the educated middle class. Jobs which have existed in the recent past for the university educated, have ceased to exist; and the pressures on the previously "safe" professions such as teaching, social work, engineering, et al, will create conditions for wholesale unionization of these professions. Thus the fact, startling to some, that these two workers had university education behind them, will be a common occurrence in the immediate future.

The reasons why they chose to enter a factory in the first place, will not be discussed in this interview. We hope to cover that in an overall discussion on strategies of organizing at the work place, in a later issue. (M.A.C.)

MARK: I start work at 2:30 in the afternoon and always my first job is very physically demanding. It's separating bread pans on a truck or rack and putting them individually on a conveyor belt where they're taken to be greased and the dough which is divided into individual portions is dropped into each pan. There are four loaves of bread in each pan.

The work situation is very hot and the noise level is extremely high. Even in the winter it is hotter than a room should be because of all the ovens. And then in the summer, of course it's much hotter. The temperature in the bakery is generally well over 100 degrees on a summer day. The noise I think is an important factor. It gets into your nerves and into your brain, until everything within you is all a shrieking and a jangle.

In order for me to separate my pans I have to drop a row of them onto the floor of the rack. The rack is metal, the pans are metal and they drop with an ear splitting clang. I drop a whole row which would be fifteen or twenty pans, about 100 pounds, and the more violently I drop them on the floor of the racks, the more likely they are to fall apart. The ones that don't fall apart, I have to grab two of them that are stuck together and force them apart some way or another. And the easiest way to do that is to crack them across the edge of the rack so that the edge hits exactly in between the two pans and at the same time force them down and out so that the pans are jarred apart in some way and that not only makes additional noise but also it is physically very demanding.

I have to keep the conveyor belt full of pans. And at the

same time as I keep supplying myself with floor racks and with pans and as I move empty racks away from myself, I have to keep the man behind me supplied with empty racks and also because his job is so hard - probably the hardest in the plant - I usually try to help him move the full racks into their proper place. This man must load up the empty racks with the empty pans that have gone through the system, with bread put in them, bread taken out of them, and that have come back hot on the conveyor belt to a point just behind me where he packs them into the racks again. These racks are on wheels and when full they weigh about 1,500 pounds. After doing all these service functions I have to run back to my own job, unpack racks, load the pans onto the conveyor belt so that it is full again because I've let it run away to the point of being almost empty.

So I have to run, I'm always on the run the whole day, back to my own job, and separate pans madly and rush to fill up my conveyor belt again, then as soon as it's full and I'm a little bit ahead I then run off and move another rack. All of this done with a pounding din of noise all around. This must be the noisiest part of the factory. People can't talk in that area at all because of the din. You can scream at each other but that's all. So that after I've been on the job on a hard day for a long period of time I'm already speeded up, living, existing at four times the speed that I was when I walked into the job. And almost immediately the boss¹ is saying go and do this and do that. And I'm extremely tense.

And quite often he will give me a disaster job after the bread is finished. "You have to get the wash," which is a

Footnote 1, see page 38.

sugar coating to put on the Danish to make it shine. "You have to have that wash made before the Danish comes out of the oven in twenty minutes. And there has been a mistake and nobody was put on the job in time and so, since you're the graduate, you can create the wash in twenty minutes." So off I run and along the way I'm trying to figure out ways that I can make the process of cooking this wash faster, so I figure that there's someone in the fruit boiling room that I can get to pour that bucket of glucose for me at the same time that I'm off getting the bucket of malt. So maybe in twenty minutes, by hook or by crook, by two or three other people coming in to help me, the wash is created. And as soon as I'm taken off that he says, "Run and get them out of the oven before they burn!"

QUESTION: How do the other men react when you say "Help me with the wash?"

MARK: This is a very common occurrence. It's not only me that is working like this. Everybody works everyday in this way. Everything has become a crisis so to speak and you have ten seconds to solve the crisis. Every job is a crisis because, for example, when you unload one of the smaller ovens with some product, it's all done by hand. You unload a shelf, then you can press a button and the oven moves around to the next shelf. So you have to get to the last shelf before they burn. And it depends, if there's not enough people, if everyone else is doing another job, then you have to do it alone. Normally it's done with two or three people. So you're working at double speed in order to get the work done. And you know that if you try to make your job easier in any way by getting or demanding more people to help you on it, then those people are taken away from other jobs and the long result is that you will have an extra hour of overtime instead of getting out the hour earlier you thought you would because you can't leave until all the product is completed.²

Often you know that you don't have any more people, you don't have any way of making your job easier. The trouble is that working at higher speeds throughout the shift - even if you do get out earlier - you're tired anyway. The whole thing is a vicious circle. The company won't hire more people and yet you know that if they don't hire more people you're going to be nuts. You've gone crazy in three years.

QUESTION: Does this in fact happen?

MARK: I think all of the older people carry a certain

1. Mark uses the term "boss" extensively to refer to foremen and supervisors rather than to those who own and control the bakery. This widespread usage of the term "boss" makes it difficult in practice for workers to deal with the ownership and control of the means of production, and serves rather to focus attention on the elements of the working class that the owners use as their whips in the factories. This usage of "boss" also reflects the division of the working class in the place of production and indicates how difficult it is for workers to deal both with the presently negative role of foremen and supervisors in a capitalist society and with the manner in which the functions of foremen and supervisors will have to be carried out in a socialist society.

2. In the bakery a worker must do overtime if the foreman tells him to, unless he has a very good excuse. The quantity of baked goods ordered has to be produced, wrapped, and shipped, so the key to overtime is the number of employees. The union in this bakery has not fought to have enough workers, to reduce what is, as everyone agrees, excessive overtime. (See footnote 2 page 33 in TRANSFORMATION vol. 1 no. 2 for more details on overtime originally being introduced as a penalty to the company.)

insanity on the job. The main point of the insanity is the lack of interest in what is going on in the world outside the factory, or the lack of interest even in the people that you're working with. The person is completely absorbed in the job and wants to get it done as quickly as possible and without any sort of human values breaking through at any point - working at high speed. And people talk excitedly about irrelevant things in order to escape from work. However from what is really happening, it seems so obvious that they are not escaping, that the work really has absorbed them completely in the manner of their escape, friendships, recreation - everything.

Baking bread now and fifteen years ago

MARK: The older people, in attempting to describe what it was like to work in the same department ten years ago and before that, say that the hours were much longer and that the work was much harder physically. A lot of the hardest, most physically demanding jobs have been replaced by machines. For example, there is the very simple thing of suction cups which draw the bread out of the pans. That simple machine, that should have been technically feasible for a hundred years, has in fact only been in our factory for seven or eight years. Prior to that all the bread was dumped out of the pans by hand. There were four loaves of bread in one pan and one pan weighs a fair amount - especially with the dough - fourteen or fifteen pounds. It comes out of the oven at 450 degrees. And the atmosphere all around the oven is a hundred and something degrees and it has to be dumped by hand on a table. That is you go "smash!", upside down, and then still holding onto this 400 degree pan, pile it with all the other pans.

So you can see from that example that formerly the work was extremely demanding and also that there were many more people working in the department. In the factory as a whole it is said that ten to fifteen years ago there were maybe double the production workers. The old people say that work then was not only sixteen hours a day in the '30's, and after that, and not only so gruelling and physically demanding but also that there were some ways in which it was more enjoyable. There wasn't the pressure to work so fast and there were more people working so that there was more interaction among the people.

The people in my department say that there was more fun, more jokes, more games that they used to play with each other. That there was more hilarity, buffoonery, wildness. People were more given to practical jokes. There were a number of jobs that were extremely tedious, that were all done by hand. For example, hot cross buns were all rolled by hand and placed on the tray so that you would place three dozen on a tray one by one or two by two - you make one in each hand. So you would have fourteen people all around a number of tables working together for fourteen hours in one day in order to make the production of hot cross buns.

Now the bad thing about that kind of work situation was that it was incomprehensible that you could do such a repetitive job for so many hours and get so little made. So that while those were the negative factors, the positive factor was that people were working together, telling jokes and stories, that there was less pressure for production and more interaction between the workers and certainly more enjoyment in that work situation. It may even have been relatively quiet where they worked.

Whereas nowadays, that job is done by machine at high speed and production is more than doubled - to produce the same number of hot cross buns may require say eight hours

at the most with six workers working separately at great speed supplying and operating the machine - no talk, no stories, no fun. And so people don't work together. It's very rare when two people are able to talk together during production, because of the noise of the machines and because you are attending to a more specialized job, and you are therefore physically more separated from your fellow workers. Even though the machine can't run unless you work together, you aren't talking together. You work faster, faster, faster.

QUESTION: Did that happen all over the factory in a similar way?

GREG: Well, certainly in our department there was - I think it was only six years ago - thirteen men working in the receiving department, whereas now there are seven. That's pretty well a 50% cut, by using power trucks instead of unloading skids by hand truck. But I'm not too sure about all this because in my department, except for one person, everybody is under thirty. There is a great turnover in my department and also it's necessary to have younger people, because, just as in Mark's department, all the heavy work is done by the younger people. So I have no older workers to check history with.

In the bakery warehouse

GREG: When I started, I worked in the warehouse and there were three to four people working with me. In the warehouse you deal specifically with such things as the foils that pies go in, boxes that the cakes are put in, cellophane that the bread is wrapped in, cake decorations - a million small things. You spend a lot of time with these small things and not very much time with the big things like flour and sugar. That's pretty simple. As it comes in, most of the material comes downstairs and they will be put in temporary places until a warehouse person can take them and either put them on the shelves and stack them up wherever they belong. As time and space demands you will either be putting it in stock on the shelves or out of stock as it is ordered by the various departments. You weren't really pushed unless there was a lot of material coming down from receiving and you were cramped in terms of space.

This is a freer situation than on the receiving ramp where I worked last. In the warehouse you could choose what you did. I had time to talk with the people that I was working with. And we came to an agreement as to how things should be done and it seemed to work fairly well, we were all quite content with the way things were going. It was like a team. You can be putting more things in stock if you think that's what needs to be done or you can make up orders, or you can be delivering already made-up orders. But on the receiving ramp there's only one thing: receive the trucks and then clear the dock.

In the warehouse you met a large number of different people, because every department needs different assorted raw materials. You meet everyone. Sometimes you'd go to the washroom and have a cigarette together. But you really didn't have too much time to talk with the people in the other departments.

Workers' daily conflicts

GREG: There's a lot of conflict during the day. It really makes you tense. There's conflict between your goal, which is getting the job done quick, and the goal of other departments which is getting their job done quick. And a very large part of the time you will get into a disagreement with another de-

partment about which is the best way to get the job done. A typical situation is Mark's department, where they must have a large number of racks available to them. So in that area, which is just an aisle, there are racks all over the place - it has to be to get their job done. They don't have time to go over here and pull a rack out of a nice neat place. They have just got to keep going because the bread and the pans just keep coming.

Then I have to deliver raw materials to other parts of the bakery so I have to go down that aisle and get through there with my raw materials. So that means I have to start pushing racks and after that they have to run and get racks, and so I'll be shouting at some fellow because he's holding me up and he'll be shouting at me and really makes me tense. Although my foreman isn't right there pushing me around, he's up there in my mind: "Gee, if I'm going to take twenty minutes to deliver this I'm going to get hell when I get back." And that just runs out into your whole week. You go into the supermarket and you get mad at the grocery clerk. Now that I've left the job two weeks ago, I can relate to people a lot better and there's not as much conflict in any of my relationships now.

Pressures and isolation on the receiving ramp

GREG: There is a receiving ramp, with room for two trucks that bring in the goods. On the receiving ramp the materials are unloaded from the truck and stored for a very short period of time, up to four hours. Some materials will be stored over night, but that's two or three different items. Then the materials will be taken down to the warehouse. The ramp is very small. There's a refrigerator for some perishables. There's only a bit of room for other stuff. There's also items that have to be returned to the supplier such as empty skids, empty drums. Some loads come already on skids. You drive the power truck in, take the skid off and temporarily store it or put it right on the elevator that goes down to the warehouse or upstairs for production.

It's a tough job: if you're unloading the flour truck the skids of flour have to be wedged right tight together so that the bags don't fall off, and that means you have to pull it out without breaking the bags because you are responsible also for the floor being clean, the whole appearance of the area. If the bag breaks, it's usually the bottom bag - all you can do is tape it up. If it falls off the top it makes a mess and you have to clean it up. If it happens to you, you get uptight for a couple of minutes and that's all. But then it can become rather humorous. There was one person who took four skids and broke a bag off each! That's a situation where you become happy rather than tense, because everybody jokes about it for the rest of the day.

In the morning particularly, the materials come in and they go right into the doughs. You may have twenty skids of bread flour coming in and there's be ten skids of sugar, five skids of frozen eggs, a couple of skids of lards. And that's more than the receiving ramp can hold. So you have to push the people downstairs to take the stuff and that is a conflict I didn't realize when I took the job. But you just have to say, "Come on, I can't receive anything more!" And I had a lot more pressures from the truck drivers to get their trucks unloaded so they could get out of there and pressures from downstairs, pressures in terms of space. Before there had been conflicts, but I could just take them or leave them.

GREG: When I was working in the warehouse they needed a lead hand on the receiving ramp. What they do in this situa-

tion is put up a sign that says "We have an opening, a position of a lead hand. Give your applications to the foreman." And that's it - it's a very cold thing and no one talks to anybody. Often it is a competitive thing, applicant against applicant, worker against worker, and quite destructive to group morale. It really isn't a position where you have to work any harder, where you have to tell people what to do because they know what to do unless there is a new person and training him is a lead hand's job. It's not a bad job in most cases.

When I applied for this job of lead hand, I hadn't considered the possibilities that I would be isolated and that there would be many more pressures. Those are things that you don't know about. I figured I'd still be with the guys most of the time and I'd be working for them, making their work easier, but it would still be team work. As it turned out it wasn't. I was set off with one other person for eight hours of the day. That was something I couldn't foresee, it was a mistake. And that was probably part of the reason that I left the job. I was becoming less effective and increasingly more isolated.

Routine and rotation, skill and pride

MARK: There is a phenomenon of people having the same job from day to day and then resenting anyone else learning that job and also resenting being moved from that job to another. So that when I first came to the department I often suggested the idea of rotating so that people who had harder jobs would occasionally, every half hour or every hour be moved to an easier job so that the work would be equalized. But as I began to understand our department a little more, I realized that rotation here was very difficult because the worker learn the skills of a certain job, for instance, making a certain kind of Danish. They begin to identify their own character with that particular job. They feel that they have a responsibility and that no one else could do the job as well as they. And it even goes further than that. Someone who prefers to work alone often does have a job where he is working alone, whereas someone who prefers to be talking to other people does have a job that enables him to talk to other people. Character, skills and job are related very intricately in a way that can't be tampered with by some young person with new-fangled ideas.

And uniquely in our department there is an artisan like nature to the job. Working with dough does require experience and the more experience you have the more you are able to deal with it in all its variables. And so you develop skills that you are proud of and that you identify with. Whereas there are many jobs in the factory that are completely uncreative. In our department they want to know what they are going to do that day and they want to know that they have the knowledge to do it. Try to move them and they will be extremely unhappy because they know that they may not be taught properly.

Older workers and younger workers

MARK: The department has an older group of workers from forty to sixty years, and a younger group of people between eighteen and thirty - a group who does the more difficult and demanding jobs. There are few people in the ages in between. The people who are older have achieved a certain security. They have a job which they do every day and which they feel they are responsible for. They have no desire to be a lead hand or a boss, because they are never going to be. They are already fifty years old, on the average. So they go to work and they try to make work as enjoyable as possible. So there is a group of older people whose effect politically is not that they are going to initiate change but that some of

them could support it effectively.

The young people don't have the same sense of working together that the older people have. The younger people could become more conscious of their solidarity with their fellow workers and their need to work together. The older members have, I think, quite a surprising understanding of working together and of the role that the union could play - but has never played in our company - if there were to be unity.

In the eyes of the older people, young workers are falling all over themselves in order to be trained to become a boss, to move ahead in the status world, and the older people in a sense are laughing at the young people because they know - they probably went through that when they were younger. They can see that the young workers have a false relationship with the bosses, that they humour the bosses and relate nicely to them even though they think that bosses are shits. And this is partly because the bosses can have quite an effect on whether you have just a horrible job or just a bearable one. And also they see becoming a boss as being the only way out, of having an easier job, of having some kind of recognition and status. So in working with younger people I feel that you are trying to teach them some of the values of the older people and to increase the relationship between the younger people and the older people so that some kind of understanding of what a boss's job really is, is learned and a more honest relationship with the boss is achieved. Then young workers too will be able to call him a shit when he has demanded or decided a shitty thing.

Enjoyment and fun just naturally happen every day. The older people when they are doing a job will start some jokes and some talking amongst the group trying to make the job slower, more enjoyable, more bearable. The younger people can immediately see that this is good and they will take that whole thing much further, make the situation much livelier and carry it over into buffoonery and throwing dough at each other. They begin to forget the overall pressures of the job situation: to work faster. And they begin to remember that they are human beings.

It is quite hard to be accepted by the older ones because they are essentially laughing at all young workers for not knowing as much about the dough or the oven as they do yet. These young ones put on false airs and want to run everything right away. If the young ones had their way they would give no recognition to experience and would shove their elders in the menial tasks.

So trust from the old ones for the upstarts comes slowly. It seems that we have to create a group of young people who are able to challenge the current way of doing things, the current system. And work towards an alternative in the future while creating some kind of unity with the older people.

Heavy work, monotonous work

MARK: There is the kind of job that is hot and physically demanding, for example, working on an oven putting heavy pans of bread or cookies in and out of the oven at high speed. And there is the other kind of shitty job in the shipping department, preparing the baked goods for shipping, which are jobs where people work alone doing meaningless, repetitive work hour after hour and have no sense of getting anything done. They only want to get out of work at the end of the day.

GREG: Shipping involves a very small bit of competition with yourself to continually outdo yourself and maybe that's all.

MARK: These people quite often work too many hours, more than eight hours a day - simply because the company

won't hire enough people to get the job done in eight hours.

I'm in one of the few departments where there is a sense of people working together and where they have a sense of producing something that they have created - the delicious looking Danish pastry. They see that they are personally part of a creative process and they are quite conscious and proud of their achievement and don't want, for example, to have any new young people taught everything from the beginning.

GREG: I think I know how you feel about that. It was a lot different for me. I didn't get much pride out of what I was doing. For most people at work, the only thing is that the end of the day is the time when they feel good. There's no real contact with the work you do. The worker has no sense of pride unless someone says "You did a good job" - which they never do. So most of your work is just an endless amount of stuff that has to be shipped. This happens day after day and it becomes so alienated from the person.

Authority and alienation

GREG: It seems to me in the authority situation that there are people who decide this has to be done and they don't have to do it. They will say, "Do this" just because it makes them happy to see a person below them jump and do it. This is another situation where a worker becomes really alienated. For example, my foreman was one of these persons who, when the plant manager said something, he jumped; and he told me to do it and I have to go and do it. I'm not allowed to think "Should this or should this not be done?" And in a lot of instances I become really furious because I know that it doesn't have to be done right yet and that there are more important things to be done. But I have to do it because someone above wants to impress his superior and so he has put this job on me. It's another way in which I'm frustrated because I'm not doing what I think is best.

MARK: Most of the decisions that really affected me as a worker seem to have various personal and not any real rational basis. They seem to be on the whim or personal desire of some boss. For example, our foreman spends time every day deciding who is going to do which job for that day. And what it really means is this. He's extremely small minded, and if he for any reason feels hurt by or angry at somebody, he gives them a physically hard job, a demanding job, or an unpleasant job - and he will leave them on this job for hours on end.

It also seems that almost all bosses, foremen, supervisors have got their positions not because of what they know, but because of who they know, because they were in the right place at the right time, and they grabbed at the powerful position. In a lot of cases our foremen were known to have been extremely lazy people before they were ever elevated and now they have powerful positions in which their personal whims, personal feelings, no matter how small minded, these whims hold sway over all the workers. And furthermore those bosses are often German, English or Canadian people who have been able to have a better understanding of the English language and people who have certain physical characteristics and appearance and so they have been able to grasp at this position, in some kind of opportunistic way. Whereas all the workers are Italians, Bulgarians, Polish, Europeans of all nationalities and very few, certainly in this company, Canadians. Anyone who is Black, for example, coming from the West Indies, from India or Pakistan, is invariably a worker. So it seems that the worst kind of people become bosses and the best people are the workers. But it seems that the workers are there for life, because there doesn't seem to be the possibility for any changes

right now.

GREG: Here's just another form of alienation: a person has to sit there and say "Not only do I not like what he is telling me, I don't even like him; and not only that, he doesn't have any reason to tell me anything because I know how to do it just as well as he does."

MARK: In fact, when it comes to running some of the machines, the people who run the machines often know them a lot better than any of the foremen, supervisors or mechanics.

GREG: Right. But these were the ones that are consulted about a certain machine, like whether a new machine would be better and yet the foreman isn't really that aware because he wasn't working for quite a time.

MARK: But still even though that may be true, most of the workers don't see it that way. It is perfectly true that a lot of the workers think that the decisions of the company and the financial position of the company are too difficult for them to understand and which they could not provide a better alternative for.

GREG: I found situations where they will be critical of a foreman's decision, but certainly not of anyone above a foreman. And a lot of people will respect the assistant plant managers.

MARK: There is the idea that the bosses are more intelligent and the workers are physically strong and able to do the physical work but have no intelligence at all. All that is absurd, when you begin to realize who the bosses are and the kind of power, ego trips that constitutes the way they got the job and the way they act out on the job every day of the whole week! Yet in the name of this whole system we produce supposedly the best possible bread for the greatest benefit of the customer.

Ingredients in the "Best possible bread"

GREG: As far as the ingredients are concerned, this bakery has an awful lot of different lines and they try to have high quality expensive ingredients; but in any case, they don't use ingredients that are known to be very good for you. For instance, white bread, cake and pastry flour is milled by high speed process and all the bran and wheat germ is removed from it. Only their whole wheat flour is of any value and that is probably fairly questionable because they do remove the wheat germ from the whole wheat flour and it is also done by high speed process which cooks most of the flavour out and a lot of the B vitamins are destroyed. Now it is called enriched flour, which means that only some of the B vitamins have been put back in. We don't know what else has been lost.

They have special lards - that I've seen advertised in bakery journals - developed by the main animal fat production companies. They will resist hardening or they will prevent mould - they make baked goods seem fresh for a longer period of time. So a person going in and feeling a Danish pastry will think it is fresh and a day or two old, whereas it is really four or five days old because they bake it one day and then they ship it the next.

There is a product called Mouldex - there's no ingredients marked on it - that prevents mould. I don't know what any of these things do to you. I haven't been able to get any of the ingredients. You see, as far as we are concerned, they're just bags.

MARK: The cream department, which makes eclairs and puffs, used to be a very large production line. A few years ago they switched from using real cream to an artificial substitute called Nutrifil. It has none of the goodness of milk in it. It doesn't taste like cream - it only looks like it.

GREG: For cakes they have yellow cake flavour, orange juice flavour. They do put powdered milk in most of the bread and they do use eggs.

MARK: And in a number of doughs in which they use eggs and the doughs are supposed to represent that by the fact that they are yellow, they use an artificial egg yoke colour which gives the bread an appearance of greater nutritive value than it actually has.

I'm attempting right now to determine which chemicals, colourings, preservatives are known to be harmful. But it's very difficult to obtain a list of the ingredients that are used because you are only a worker and you are not supposed to have these things. But we do know that there is very little that is good in any of the bread. Very few vitamins and maybe a large number of additives that could be cancer causing or could affect the gene structure - a lot of things that are potentially very harmful to man but that make the products more saleable.

Accidents and air like thin smoke

QUESTION: Are there a lot of accidents since you work at high speed? I notice that Mark has a cut on his hand and black fingernails.

GREG: I think that in their industry - I'm not sure how broad the definition of the industry is - they have the most accidents in Toronto. There's almost all kinds and it's all due to the short cutting here and there. People do get burned from the hot pans but not too often. I think that Mark has some burns on him.

MARK: I don't consider them serious. A serious injury is when someone is incapacitated to work - back injuries are that kind. A lot of the older workers have parts of fingers missing from the machinery.

QUESTION: How did you get your black fingernails?

MARK: Most of them come from my finger getting caught in between two pans when they snap together. But the worst one was when my finger got caught between two racks when they jammed together. They're so heavy and they move so awkwardly, that at the time they were completely out of control.

GREG: You see, in this situation the company has a rule that you must have your hands inside the racks. There's a bar that you could put your hands on - except when there's pans in there you can't get your hands in between! So the only way that you can move this heavy rack is with your hands on the outside edges which makes them very vulnerable. They are now - after I don't know how many years this bakery has been in operation³ - finally putting handles on so that you will be able to control the rack. But I don't know how long this is going to take because the maintenance department is so pressed that they can't be doing this additional work and still keep up the maintenance of what must be done. You know there have been elevators going down and losing control - just going right down to the basement. People have been disabled because of that. You're just so pressed that you have to do a thing which may be against the rules but you just slough that off for a second in all the pressure of overtime and then the company is not responsible anymore because you broke the rules.

The company has a whole bunch of safety rules that the men don't know about. The company usually provides each

³ In it's present size it is probably about fifteen or twenty years since it has had the business it now has. Before it was just a small speciality bakery.

worker when they are hired with a set of safety rules, but they aren't complete rules and you find out more rules when you start working.

And there are other aspects too. One instance is that many mechanics have stopped going to the company nurse for patching up small cuts and wounds, because one of them discovered that he was now "accident prone" according to her records. Minor cuts are a frequent injury to mechanics, and if a man is labelled accident prone it makes it difficult for him to get a new job. Companies just don't want to take the risk of injuries and paying higher Workmen's Compensation rates. So more mechanics are now keeping bandages in their lockers.

Refined grains impair health

In Denmark, during World War I, grains were not refined. As a result of this improved nutrition the death rate reportedly decreased substantially: cancer, diabetes, high blood pressure and heart diseases dropped sharply, and the general health of the population was greatly improved. Similar improvements in health were observed in England during World War II, when grains were only slightly milled.

(From: William Longwood, Poisons in Your Food, 1969, New York, Pyramid Books, p. 154.)

The deception behind "enriched bread"

. . . most of the pantothenic acid, folic acid, biotin, cholin, inositol, vitamin B6 and E are discarded in the milling. The "airy snow-white loaf" has been further damaged by being bleached. Losses of iron, cobalt, potassium, magnesium, manganese, zinc, copper, and molybdenum range from 50 to 87 per cent. The amounts of vitamins B1, B2, niacin and iron returned to the ridiculously labeled "enriched" flour are far less than the quantity occurring naturally. Adding a few B vitamins can induce deficiencies of the B vitamins not supplied.

(From: Adelle Davis, Let's Get Well, 1965, New York, Harcourt Brace, pp. 423-4.)

Alienated labour and life at home

GREG: In my case, an important time in Jean's life was when I came home. That was a good time, a time to be happy. And then she wanted to do something creative and fulfilling for me, whereas the physical and mental things that had been going on with me at work all day meant that I just wanted to flop on the Chair. It had other aspects too. When I came home I wasn't ready to prepare a meal. I'd be much more happy to sit down and have it put in my place which is very typical of what happens in most houses. I didn't enjoy the meal as much. It was just a function, something that had to be done three times a day.

When I used to help out with the meals before working in the bakery, I enjoyed eating them. After the meal was

The food industry and the state against public health

As far back as April 1919, the U.S. Public Health Service issued a warning that pellagra, beriberi and other deficiency diseases in the South had been traced to the refining of grains. But the millers applied such pressure that six months after . . . the same public health officials backtracked by issuing a "correcting" bulletin, asserting that white bread was wholesome if balanced in the diet by an adequate consumption of the so-called protective foods: fruits, vegetables and dairy products.

This introduced a technique that has been widely used since then by apologists for the food industry. In effect they were saying that it didn't hurt to eat a deficient food if enough other nutritious foods were eaten to compensate for its shortcomings.

The fallacy of the claim is apparent. People don't look upon bread as a frivolous food; they buy it for nutritive values. In many families it is a major part of the diet, especially among lower-income groups who depend upon it for a filler as well as a nutritional base. These people know nothing about protective foods that are supposed to be eaten as a crutch for the ailing white loaf, and the wrapper never carries a warning to that effect. . . .

This technique of misleading the public about the nutritive value of milled grains is still in effect, along with the parallel technique of assailing anyone who attempts to interfere with profits from the sale of impoverished foods.

(William Longwood, Poisons in Your Food, New York, Pyramid Books, 1969, pp. 154-155.)

ished, as far as I was concerned, we could leave the
shes for a half an hour and we'd have a couple of cigarettes
and listen to a couple of records first. Whereas in Jean's
tuation, she'd still have six to eight hours of the day left.
at when I came home from work I was dead. If I did do the
shes, it would take a long time because I just couldn't keep
working as if I was at work. But she usually wanted to get
em done and over with. So it put you right back in the sit-
tion of the typical working or middle class family where
e wife does that sort of stuff and it made me feel a lot less
rt of the house. In financial things for instance, I'd say
ou go out and buy the groceries because this isn't my house
ymore and I don't know where anything is anymore". And
came to the point where I was becoming sick with myself
r being like this because I wasn't feeling a part of anything
all. I suppose that's partly why I left work. She had six-
en to eighteen hours a day that she could be fully productive
t there was less and less of the day that was mine.

MARK: Work certainly does affect my relationship with
rol. After a typical workday, I come home from work and
really need a certain kind of situation in which I can tune
wn or slow my mind and body down a bit and I'm demanding
r to help me survive, to deal with the food so I can have a
le free time. And that arouses the conflict, that I never
ore had to make such demands of her and I'm not even sure
t it's right to make those demands because I feel that she
t my servant and why should she have to do things for me
arbitrarily. These circumstances seem to scrap some of
hopes for changes in men-women relationships and roles.
I am demanding relaxation when she may want to do some-
g completely different.

For me, what it seems that I'm saying to Carol is that
nerly we used to grow and develop as people and learn new
gs and grow together and now it's not possible. When I
e home I'm not able to do too much. Part of the reason
I'm working there is to try and encourage some sort of
tical development at work. So after work I'll go to the
and I'm quite conscious in choosing the people I go with
use I want to talk with them about different things. So
my development and my energy is in and around work and
n't something that Carol is part of.
Before our existence was together, we were quite dependent
each other. We developed together in the same political

situation with the same people. But now we have to do it separ-
ately. And right now that's very hard for her particularly
because she hasn't yet found a situation and the people that
she can be involved with satisfactorily and politically.

It would be best for me if Carol wanted to relax and unwind
at the same time that I did, if she could be involved enough that
somehow we had the same demands at the same time, the same
needs of each other at the same time. So it's a complete change
from university in that sense. This kind of change in our lives
we haven't begun to deal with properly. Somehow we will have
to find new solutions.

Sexuality, too, is affected

MARK: My life, until I worked in the bakery, seemed to
be completely different. For example the way making love was
a part of your way of life before this job; it is now so totally
different. You didn't have to make love on schedule, or you
didn't have to make love on Saturday or Sunday - the only days
of the week that you have the inclination. Before, making
love was never in a rush and it was never so effected by the
world around you that you started doing it faster than you ever
had before. There was a natural rhythm of which making love
was part. But after you've been working in the bakery for a
while, you find that all of that is completely destroyed and the
person what you were before seems to come back vaguely in
your memory only on Sunday afternoon. By Sunday afternoon
you're enough rested to begin to remember who you are and to
begin to express yourself with a sense of continuity with your
past. I never had to live that way before.

GREG: But Sunday evening for me, you're starting to get
back into the rut already. You're preparing yourself for work.
Partially it's a psychological thing - you know, tomorrow. And
partially it's, "I've got to get ready to go to bed because I've
got to get up at seven o'clock". But I think that even more
oppressing is the fact that there is five days ahead of you again.
And Sunday evening I was as incapable as I was on Thursday
evening.

MARK: Before when you made love it was a creative part
of your life, in the sense that it was completely renewing - you
felt afterwards uplifted. You expressed yourself and re-created
yourself and you felt a new joy and a new urge to move on and a
renewed assurance that there is really a dawn and hope ahead

of you. More of the creative things in life are a real possibility. But after you've worked for a while, you find that on Sunday afternoon you finally have a feeling for making love again, but it's on schedule and almost never can it be really completed and after it's finished you have to jerk your breath in and steel your body for another week. And it becomes more and more difficult for me to be sure that I have that undying hope and that undying assurance that I can create a new world in my own life and for everyone I live and work with. That assurance becomes a little less this week and a little less next week. And that's probably why you quit, Greg, after a year and a half, to renew yourself in some way that it wasn't possible to on a weekend that's too short. And you're whole existence is at work. Never before have you been so arbitrarily separated from the people that you're friends with at work and so completely absorbed by the work setting.

Class background and relationships with other workers

MARK: A problem that both you and I have had, Greg, is that we grew up in wealthy middle class homes and have a university education. And there are also the facts, that we're young, good looking, speak English, this is our country - most people at work come from other countries, and feel inferior that they don't understand this country. All of these factors seem to mean that the first people who get to know us are our bosses: the foremen and supervisors. They make a point of getting to know you. And in whatever they do, they are much more conscious of you than of any of the other workers. This builds a separation between you and the people you work with.

It exhibits itself in that the bosses hope that you are going to be the person that will be loyal and will replace them.

QUESTION: Do they say that to you directly?

MARK: No, not directly. Specifically, they are much more willing to teach me all of the fine points about the quality of the dough, how it behaves in different conditions, what the rising process is, the why's of each process. Whereas with the other people for example, two West Indians who came to work in our department - when they were asked to do a job, instead of taking the time to teach them to do the job they would often speed up the machine to the point where it was almost impossible for them to do it the first time. And they'd expect them to be able to do the job immediately without being taught and yet at the same time they had predetermined that they wouldn't be able to do it.

QUESTION: Did they do it with the white people that didn't speak English well?

MARK: Yes. This is not only an example of simple racism. When you're dealing with Black People, it just exaggerates the phenomena of the class system.

Most of the workers have achieved a sort of status quo with the bosses in the sense that the boss is not on their backs all the time. I have not yet succeeded in achieving this.

And the other workers still see me as in training for boss positions and it does mean that the workers aren't fully confident in me and aren't sure just what I'm going to do in the future. And the only thing that I can conclude is that I have to achieve some sort of honest and consistent relationship with the boss, so that I can get on with building and creating what doesn't yet exist amongst the workers.

So, in fact, it is very difficult to achieve a new stage in which I'm not treated as a special person or fall into the trap of boss expectations forcing me into an upwardly mobile situation. I have to consciously avoid learning how to run certain machines and appearing more intelligent than the others when-

ever we talk with the foreman. I'm seeking a new definition of myself every day at work; trying to avoid a heavy disappointment reaction by the foreman, trying to be accepted, in my language, actions, as a young worker. I have even to change my academic English. I'm just trying to do it so I'll not receive too much of the boss's wrath. For any worker's position is very shaky; it is easy for bosses to make work almost unbearable to someone and to find way to fire him or get him to break under the strain of unfair treatment and unfair jobs.

The union

GREG: The union at the bakery is called the Retail Wholesale Bakery and Confectionery Workers Union (RWBCWU) and it is part of a larger union called the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union, which has about 7,000 members in Canada. It is an American Union. In our particular branch the RWBCWU, there's about 2,000 members.

There are three locals in Southern Ontario covering the three different fields of work: bakery, department store and dairy workers. Our local, local 461 RWBCWU, organizes bakeries all across Southern Ontario. It has three staff people who function as business representatives, carrying out negotiations, handling grievances, and organizing additional unions.

When I started work I knew very little about the union and I did not see a union representative, a staff member until preparing for negotiations which was about seven months after I started. The business agents show up at the factory very seldom. Just for negotiations, plus any grievances that the chief steward can't handle. The stewards appear to have a very limited idea of what they are doing. If a steward is to file a grievance, it is only because a worker complains. He has very little written down as to company procedures, rules, policies.

The business agents call the union meetings. And it is very seldom that there ever are union meetings. During negotiations, which happen about every two years, there'd be four general meetings of the membership and committee meetings. After negotiations the only union meeting would be to elect new stewards and a new chief steward. In the year and a half I was there, there was never a union meeting other than the negotiation meetings.

Here is an example that shows how the union has permitted vague policies at the plant. The mechanics were asking for a tool allowance for tools that were stolen or broken during work, because they are the mechanics' own tools. In other companies there is a policy that they will pay up to a certain amount each year. But it looked like we were not going to get this when all of a sudden the personnel manager comes out with a statement that this was already company policy and has been ever since the bakery started twenty-five years ago. We had to push to have it written into the contract so that the workers would know what is happening. There is so little written down. The agreement is perhaps fourteen pages, but it doesn't cover such things as the tool allowance. There's no way for the workers to know.

Here's an example of a grievance which illustrates a lot of things. This happened during negotiations. Two workers had made a mistake when they were shipping by putting a cabinet of baked goods onto the wrong truck so that it didn't get delivered the next day. Consequently they were given one day off without pay which is a warning suspension. That's pretty drastic, it's the next thing to being fired. The usual proce-

cedures are, as far as I can see - there's no policy available to the workers - that people get a warning letter, two warning letters, a day off without pay, three days off without pay and then they are out. This isn't in the contract - it's just the company policy.

They went to their steward and then at the negotiating committees we talked about this with the business representative. And because he thought it was rather unfair (I'm trying to portray that this thing was at his whim: if he didn't think that it was a good idea, the workers wouldn't have carried through with it), they decided to go through the grievance procedures that are set out in the contract.

Unfortunately the two men didn't speak English at all and the grievance had to be written in English. So it was up to the steward who spoke both Italian and English to do the translation. At the third step, the plant manager became fairly strict and threatened them in a very general way. The workers were afraid at that point that if they made another mistake they would be let go. And with the economy as it is, being in a union shop is very important. They became afraid and said that they really hadn't wanted to do this and the steward had forced it upon them and they didn't say the things that were in the paper - it was all the steward's idea. They backed right down and blamed it on him. He was left in a really bad position. I think that it shows the way that the union works and that the workers don't trust in union solidarity and strength to carry through a problem and to be able to handle it.

I don't think that many of the workers in the factory would want to be a steward. They don't trust other workers. They'll say: "You try and help them out and all they do is stab you in the back all the time." So they give up on trying to help other people.

There aren't that many times that you can really discuss anything with the other workers unless you make a specific appointment. They all don't go over to the pub - not even half of them. There's no way we can meet each other in a very simple way. We have to make an arrangement like "Why don't you come over to the house on Sunday?" And the workers are generally not in favour of this - you know their time is their own and they like to be with their families.

MARK: Many immigrant workers haven't even decided in the first place to deal with their work, the company or the society they're in. It's quite a big change in itself to encourage these people to change that idea.

GREG: They have their own culture and the older generation is not very interested in participating in our culture if we have one. They will go to work and that will be what they are taking out of Canada. Many view it that way - the fact of course is that they are being exploited like everybody else. They will derive their living and a lot of money and then they will go back to their own culture and so they are in a position of non-participation, non desire to change work because they are getting from it what they want and the conflicts, which they view as small, are not important in relationship to their culture which is important. In the area where I live many immigrants have big festivals and family reunions and they view that as much more important than their identity at work. Their identity is derived from their home situation, and all they are doing at work is taking from Canada what Canada will give them and that's why they have come over. The cause of all this is partly that they feel that they can't do anything about their work situation anyway.⁴

There's no education done by the union. No talk at all really of union strength, tactics, anything. The business representatives don't see that as part of their job. Their job is really maintaining part of the status quo, to protect their jobs. It means that they are satisfied to go through negotiations every two years and elections of stewards every other year, and collect the union dues and that's about it. The rest of their time they spend as they choose and we have no say in that and very little is brought back to the workers about what they do.

Here's one of the many examples of how the union makes important decisions without even consulting the workers. At the North American conference which happens every five years, it was decided that each local should be giving more money into the main office so they upped the dues rate from \$1.55 to \$2.05 a month. So the local union raised our dues because it couldn't absorb this otherwise. After the general convention which was in June, there was a notice put on the factory bulletin board that as of July 1 the union dues would go up from \$5.00 to \$6.00. The membership in our factory and in another factory were really quite angry that without even having a meeting the business reps had decided to raise the dues. Really, if we are the union, then we are the ones that should be deciding to raise the dues. And I've heard of instances where the membership has voted "no" in other unions. And consequently the dues weren't raised, and that's the way I think a union should be run. They don't decide that here and they have no choice. This was challenged but not effectively at the biannual local conference in August 1970, because they were just concerned about paying more money and not about how the money was being spent.

No strikes — to keep union finances strong!

The main reason I had gone to the bi-annual conference in August 1970 was to see how the finances were, because I was becoming suspicious that the union didn't want to have a strike at our plant and so I went to see what was in the strike fund. The treasurer reported that the union has been in existence for 15 years. During that period we've been going along fine for ten years with no strikes so they would have quite a strike fund. All of a sudden five years ago there was a strike at Hershey's which was a five-week strike and cost them about \$18,000. And then three years later they had a strike at Weston's and this cost them between \$25,000 and \$30,000. It was a seven-week strike. Two hundred employees. He said that because of these two strikes our financial position has eroded and we are now really in debt and what he means is that they have taken out loans

4. The immigration policies of the Canadian state present serious problems for the Canadian working class. It is widely known that the state deliberately brings the least class conscious elements from abroad. A good example is the encouragement of workers immigrating from southern rural Italy (to them the move is a significant advance in their material status), while it discourages immigration of workers from the industrial areas, who formerly constituted a large proportion of Italian immigrants - too many of them had already had enough political and union experience to make them "undesirable" to the capitalist class in this country. The consequence of this conscious policy is that the involvement of the first generation of immigrant workers in union and other working class political activities tends to be minimal.

from the Department Store Union of \$20,000 and from the Dairy Workers \$5,000 and now they are paying this off at \$1,000 a year. The union wasn't really in debt, but they had exhausted the strike fund and the loans they had taken out were approximately the same amount as the bonds that they hold, and the bonds are now gaining a fairly respectable interest so they didn't want to sell them. And as far as I can see no strike funds come in from the U.S.

The important point here is that their strike fund had exhausted when they had only had two strikes in fifteen years. Now I think this leads to a basic challenge to the way the union funds are managed. The amount going into the strike fund - 20¢ per worker per month - is really meager. The union finances should be rearranged to make that something more realistic like \$1. With 20¢ a month, that means that you're only getting \$20 a week maximum if you're on strike, which is itself a deterrent to going on strike. But they will make manipulations. If a person is single they try and talk him out of \$20 and into getting \$10 a week. They will say, "Joe, with six kids really needs the money. . . ." That's how it goes, from discussions I've heard from previous strikes.

The treasurer summed up his remarks by saying that maybe in 4 or 5 years we will be in a much better situation financially as long as we don't have any more strikes. Then he said that now there are certain contracts coming up for renewal such as the one at our bakery. If they can get through their negotiation without having to go on strike then we should be in really good situation. He put it to the workers at our company and the other people that they were responsible to keep the finances in a good situation so that they were to try to not go on strike and this was his attitude, which everybody present accepted.

The business rep in charge of our factory worked at our company for ten years and he was the chief steward when our union started. Then he was appointed as our business rep. That was 15 years ago and things have changed. As things stand now, he is the one that is really responsible for all the negotiations and everything that goes on in our union.

The amendments committee

Now the contract expires near the end of October. So in June they had a general meeting and they appointed the contract amendments committee which is probably made up of about ten people. The committee was to go back to the factory and discuss with the other workers what amendments they want, what demands they are going to make, what changes in the contract. I was on holidays during most of that time. But I was there for one week when the amendments committee was supposed to be doing their work and I never heard from any of the committee members, none of them came up and asked me what amendments I thought would be good, and I didn't see them asking anyone else either. I didn't even know that there was an amendments committee.

At the next general meeting near the end of July, about 60 people out of over 400 workers showed up. And the business rep had drafted together the amendments that we had thought were good. They weren't presented in mimeographed form, he had just one copy which he read out and asked for changes. There was some discussion but few changes so basically they stood as drafted.

How the Negotiating committee was chosen

Then there was the selection of the negotiating committee that would bargain with the company about these amend-

ments.

The business rep suggested that one person be nominated from each of the four different departments - he felt that this would be representative. I knew that I wouldn't get on if that was done, and so I said that we should get the best people for the committee, rather than picking one person in a department because he might be the only person from his department at the meeting. The rest of the workers agreed with that.

The voting was carried on in a rather peculiar way. The business rep would ask if there were any nominations for the committee. So one person would be nominated and they would vote on whether he was accepted or not. No one challenged this procedure.

Here's how it was carried out. The business rep made the first nomination - the chief steward. He said that he knows all of the people in the factory, is able to get around and has experience with the management. He asked if anyone opposed that. No one did, so he went on.

There were five rank and file positions and the chief steward took one. Four other positions were to be filled. There was a nomination and then they would vote on him. Now most people don't really care too much and they vote in favour of him or they won't oppose him anyway, which is important and this person gets on the committee.

First of all there was a friend of someone who was an Englishman. And nobody seemed to oppose him so he was nominated and approved. Then there was a Sicilian who had a lot of friends and was approved.

Now I saw very quickly that I would have to get nominated soon. So I said to someone who I had told before that I would like to be on the committee, "Hey, nominate me right away!" He did, and I was elected.

Then we were down to the last position and the workers seemed to realize that they wanted more people on the committee. And there was just one more position. They wanted tougher people. The workers were caught and they hadn't thought of it before. Not very many go to meetings and they didn't know how the procedure worked. The business rep didn't explain. He just carried it out.

On the last vote there were three people for the one position and they had to choose. One was from Sicily, another was from Italy and the other was an Englishman. They already had an Englishman on the committee and a Sicilian and so they voted for the Italian, even though he was perhaps less militant than the other Sicilian. I don't know if they tried consciously but then ended up with an ethnically representative committee in this way, that was less militant than it could have been.

From what I hear, all of this is typical of elections in our union.

A committee member will seldom serve twice on the negotiating committee, and most would never take an active role in the union again. None of the committee members from the previous negotiation ran or wanted to run this year. Quite a few of them didn't even show up. This is simply because they see it as a very hard and very thankless job in which one is almost powerless because the company and the business rep hold so much power that the members of the committee are just like puppets. The person who nominated me had been on the committee previously and he said that he would never run again, because he felt he was completely powerless to work for more militant demands.

MARK: The contract is almost always a company contract, that is, the company always gets its way.

GREG: The union is so weak that an individual who is militant just finds it hopeless to get the demands that he wants met.

Negotiations begin

The contract expires on October 27, which means that the amendments have to be submitted at least 30 days before the contract expires but not more than 60 days. So around the first of September the amendments were submitted, pretty well as soon as they could have been. Two weeks later, on September 15, there was a meeting between the company and the negotiating committee to discuss the amendments. The representatives for the company were the personnel manager, the plant manager and an industrial consultant hired by the company - all he does is negotiate for companies in southern Ontario. He gets a certain fee from the company for that. He's well versed in contracts and in labour procedures. He's there to counteract the business rep's knowledge of the procedures. At certain times the assistant plant manager shows up as a representative of the company.

The first meeting was really not too important. It was just a formality. All they did was go through the amendments that we had submitted and the company said, "No, we can't give you that," over and over. There wasn't any reason why we should have a meeting just to read them over.

The only thing they did agree on was the pregnancy leave of absence so that a girl can leave the company and still have her job when she has borne the child. And there was some discussion, clarification. For instance, on job and wage classification, a person would feel that he should get more money for his job and so the union explained why they felt that one job was harder than another job where two people were getting the same wage. The company countered with other information and then there would be more research done. So the meeting wasn't totally useless.

After that meeting the negotiating committee stayed for a few minutes and I asked the business rep what the steps were so that we would legally be able to go on strike.⁵

At this point remember the convention, where it had been put to the members that we shouldn't have strikes so that we can build up our funds. So while I was suggesting to the business rep that we have this strike by November 15, I'm sure, in the back of his mind that he didn't want a strike. Also, he had another fear that the workers would get fed up enough to want to change the union, which is really the only way the workers in our union feel they can show their dissatisfaction with the business agent, the procedures, the wages they are getting, what the union is doing, the contracts that are signed - because they don't really see that they have the alternative of going on strike or taking other militant action to combat a poor contract.

Changing unions?

There was considerable amount of talk about changing the union at this time. One person, who was a friend of an orga-

5. For a strike to be legal, one party must apply to the Department of Labour for conciliation. A conciliation officer is appointed, and after meeting with both parties, he reports to the Minister of Labour (he must report within fourteen days of his appointment, unless both parties agree to extend this period.) His report either recommends that a conciliation board be appointed (if the industry is essential) or that no board be appointed (the usual recommendation). In the latter case, fourteen days after the minister notifies both parties that no board will be appointed, the union is free to strike, the company to lock out. Also, for a strike to be legal, the contract must have expired.

nizer for the Bakers' and Confectioners' Union of America, also an American union, had sent around a piece of paper getting the names of people who were interested in changing unions and who would be willing to sign up with the union and pay a nominal \$1.00 initiation fee. The Ontario Labour Relations Board will accept 65% signing up as evidence that a new union is now representing the workers. On the petition they got 325 signatures out of 400 workers, well over 75%. Representations by another union are allowed to be made from a period beginning 60 days before the end of a contract to either the day the contract expires or the day that a conciliation officer or board is appointed in the negotiations, whichever day is later, whichever day gives the new union the longest period of time. Now this can be a fairly quick process and can be done by a small group of workers once they've decided - all that has to be done is to get the names and to submit them.

Word of this got back to the business rep. To him, then, it would be best to get a conciliation officer appointed before October 27 so that the new union would only have 60 days to go through that procedure. Then if they hadn't changed unions by October 27, they would not be able to.⁶

Negotiations continue

The second meeting with the company was held on October 4. We were demanding the company pay 100% of health and hospital insurance, a wage increase of \$1.00 over a two year period, that is 50 cents a year and quite a few other changes or amendments to the agreement that was already in force. The company came back with an offer of 17 cent raise for each year for the men and 14 cents for the women, 50% health and hospital insurance, and very little on the other aspects. We said that this was a ridiculous offer and that the company wasn't serious and we were going to apply to the Ontario Department of Labour for a conciliation officer at that point.

In the first conciliation meeting on October 23, we discussed what had happened so far with the conciliation officer, with the company present. Then the conciliation officer said he wanted to talk with the union, so the company left the room. He told us that since the company has responded to our first set of demands it was our turn to make another set of demands. The conciliation officer left and we discussed what demands could be made more realistic. We dropped some of our demands, for instance that the work week be reduced from 40 hours to 37 1/2, since, as the business rep said, almost all of the other bakeries in Toronto had 40 hours. I was really in favour of a reduced work week. It seemed that the business agent was either leaving it to the other bakeries to take the initiative or just assuming that it somehow would come from some other industry. I felt that we should be the one's taking the initiative at this stage. But this was not a popular demand, so it was dropped. We also reduced our wage demand to 80 cents over two years for both men and women.

6. Although changing unions was a real fear in the business rep's mind, in fact the move to change the union was not well organized. Only one person was involved in the passing of the petition, and he was being guided by the business rep from the Bakers' and Confectioners' Union of America. No one in the plant knew of the procedures or time limits imposed on change of representation, nor did they know that the new union was under the sanction of the Canadian Labour Congress, i.e. it could not raid our plant. And none of their business reps offered this information.

The stalling of negotiations becomes clear

By the time we were able to get back together with a counter proposal it was getting towards 5 o'clock and the company asked for another conciliation meeting. Members of the committee did not know that the conciliation officer was obligated to hand in his report within 14 days of appointment unless both parties agree to extend this period. So by agreeing to have another meeting, we were agreeing to extend conciliation indefinitely, if necessary, and this really surprised me because when I asked the business rep about the schedule of the strike steps, he had not mentioned at all the possibility of two conciliation meetings. This is when I first became suspicious of the business rep's tactics. Another meeting would add at least one week to the proposed deadline when we could have a strike.

After the first meeting, I had tried to push the business rep, to make him have the next meeting soon, as he is the one who sets the meeting in conciliation with the company, and the negotiating committee presently has assumed no say regarding dates of meetings. He said, "We'll have the meeting within a week or ten days at the most, or I'll phone the conciliator and tell him to send in his report because the company is stalling." The meeting was set for November 12, 19 days after the previous meeting and the business rep did not phone the conciliator. The November 12 meeting meant that we couldn't possibly be able to go on strike before November 29.

At the November 12 meeting, the company came back with their counter proposal. Instead of offering us a two year contract, they offered us a wage raise of 39 cents over two years and six months, which was less than their previous offer of 34 cents over two years. This moved the possible strike period out of the Christmas rush which is bigger than the Easter rush, and I opposed this because I am in favour of one year contracts. Once again, they offered the women less than the men, and once again they didn't offer much else on any of the non-monetary demands such as increased holidays, increased leave of absence, seniority, tool allowances, allowances for work boots, etc. So we had to say that their offer was unacceptable.

There was something funny going on at this meeting. The business agent was called out by the industrial consultant and he came back and told us that someone from the company which owns the bakery, had been snooping around and was very critical of the way that the negotiations had been handled, that the company had let us go to conciliation so quickly, and so there was a possibility that the industrial consultant would be let go. This information served really to make the committee feel like they were doing a good job when they really weren't. It illustrates also how helpless we were. The business agent was the one who was let in on the real facts, he was the one who was talking with the industrial consultant, we weren't. We had only the business rep's word about what he was told. As it turned out the industrial consultant stayed on and there was a lot of talk among the rank and file at this point that the union and the company were going together, that the business rep was saying to the company, "Look, you let us get into conciliation by October 27 and then I'll make sure that you don't have a strike vote." This shows the rank and file distrust of the union.

We turned down their second offer made on November 12. At this point I said to the business rep in the negotiating committee meeting, "It's getting late, what's going to happen?" He said, "We'll have to see". The company had requested that we have another meeting before the report is handed in - not with the conciliation officer, but back on the company premises.

The meeting was scheduled for November 19, and then on November 18 it was postponed another week - the industrial consultant was off somewhere and the business rep had decided to make a hospital appointment for that day. And so it was delayed 14 days after the second conciliation meeting.

On November 26 we met and made further modifications to our amendments but did not increase our wage demands and did not accept the idea of the two and a half year contract. Supposedly, after that meeting the business rep phoned the conciliation officer and he mailed in his report which meant that we should be able to go on strike around the middle of December. However, when we met on December 23, neither party had been notified that the report had been received and so no one knew whether we were allowed to strike or not. There was no way we could bring up the issue or try and push it.

At this meeting both sides made unacceptable offers. The company increased their wage offer to 45% over two and a half years and considerably increased the health and hospital coverage to 75%. But it was still a two and a half year contract. Then the negotiating committee knocked our wage demands down to 60 cents for men and women over two years, and we asked for 100% health and hospital insurance not immediately but half way through the contract. In addition, the contract had already expired one month, so we were asking that the wage increases be retroactive and the company was not offering us this.

The only reason I thought that I could knock it down to 60 cents was that my basic desire was to get us even with other companies by the end of the contract and to make sure that each worker in the factory was making \$3.00 an hour immediately.⁷ This meant that we would have to have a 36 cent raise immediately and then 24 cents in the second year. The company was not receptive to the 60 cents. They said, "You have a strike on your hands if that's all you can offer, so you'd better think about it again." So they left the room. It was obvious that the business agent was already convinced that the company was really getting tough. Now a couple of the other members were ready to submit although one of the other members and myself were not.

What will the workers accept?

Another strange dynamic was trying to guess what the workers would accept. We had very little way of knowing what the rank and file felt. There had only been one general meeting, after the negotiations had started and even in that meeting and in the second meeting which followed, there was never any general discussion of what would be acceptable limits of what we would fight for. A lot of people said to me, "Just try and get the best you can." And there was no way of knowing at what figure people would vote - we really had to guess. The business rep was convinced - and I think in some ways he was backed up by quite a few people, that the workers would have accepted the 39 cents over the two and a half years which was the company's second offer and had been bettered. So in our situation where the company says, "We're not going to offer you over 45% an hour over two and a half years", the negotiating committee had two alternatives. One was that the committee does not recommend that we accept this and we'll have a strike. But if the workers vote to accept it, that's what they'll get. The other possibility was that the committee reduce our de-

7. By the old contract, the average wage in the factory was \$2.71 an hour for men and \$2.31, for women. Greg's hourly rate was \$2.68 and Mark's, \$2.65.

hands once more and say to the company, for example, "If you offer us 55 cents over two and a half years, plus 100% health and hospital insurance, we will recommend that to the membership." So I was in a peculiar situation. I had set 60 cents as a limit. I wouldn't go below that and the other members of the negotiating committee were prepared to go below that. Their reasoning was: "Look, they're going to vote to accept 45 cents, why don't we try for 50 or 55 cents and if we get it then we're better off." And I was prepared to say, "I'm not recommending 55 cents because then they will come back and say, after the vote and say, "That's all you got us, 45 cents. You recommended it because it was all you figured you could get. Why didn't you try harder?" Indeed, I did have one person come up and say, "You recommended this 50 cents that we accepted, it's our fault we didn't get more, it's your fault we didn't vote for strike."

The business rep made a proposal that we say to the company 50 cents over two years as well as health and hospital insurance by the end of the contract plus a few other things. I said I wouldn't recommend this. And everyone else decided that they would, because they thought this was the best we could get. I felt that we should vote for a strike and then the company would make a much better offer.

So the company was called back into the meeting and the business rep said he had an offer which the majority on the committee will recommend - he had said before he called them back in that he didn't think that the company would accept a majority recommendation. And the industrial consultant said, "Majority!" in a derogatory sort of way, "I've never heard of that one before!" The business rep said, "It's never happened to me either, we've always had a unanimous committee." The industrial consultant said that there's no way that we will offer that for just a majority recommendation.

I did some talking to a lot of people afterwards and felt that I had put myself in the correct position because the people that had nominated me weren't even satisfied with the 60 cents. I talked with a couple of the members of the negotiating committee and there was only one person who could understand what I had done. We had a fairly lengthy discussion and decided that with the committee the way it was there was not much we could do. We would have to have a much better committee.

We have a strike vote

After the December 23 meeting, the business rep said that we'd call a vote to see if the membership accepted the offer. The vote was called for January 5 - an unrealistic date since the company starts laying off people after Christmas

because the holiday rush is over. The company would not be as financially hurt then.

MARK: And almost all the other sales go down for several weeks after Christmas because buyers have less money for luxury goods which includes a lot of the company's line.

GREG: Whenever I brought up this point about why the strike vote is so late the business rep always said it doesn't really matter when we have the vote, it will hurt the company at any time - although when I first brought it up in the fall, he agreed that it would be better to have a strike before Christmas. But somehow he had a change of mind but didn't tell me about it. I felt what he was now saying wasn't true. This was certainly not the strongest bargaining position possible.

MARK: Also, there were many reasons why the workers wouldn't want to strike. They have less money immediately after Christmas.

GREG: And if they vote to accept the contract which had a retroactive clause in it, it means that in a couple of weeks they would be getting well over one hundred dollars in back pay, which would be really handy in paying all those Christmas bills.

Before the strike vote they had a last ditch meeting on December 30, called by both the company and the business representative. It was just a question of getting together. The company had decided that they would make a better offer if we would recommend it: 50 cents over two years and three months, 100% health and hospital insurance by the end of the contract, plus backpay. Because one other committee member and myself decided that we weren't going to be able to form a hard group against the company with this type of committee, we decided to recommend this to the workers. On January 5 the workers voted 201 to 139 to accept the company offer.

The ballot was written in rather an unclear form. There were just two positions one could take: to vote either to take strike action or to accept the company offer. What wasn't made clear to the workers at any time was that a vote to take strike action didn't necessarily mean that we were going out on strike right away. We would still have to have a meeting to decide when to go on strike. And with a vote to take strike action, then the company would immediately come back with a better offer than they had previously made. This is assuming that the company doesn't want to go on strike which I think is pretty well the case in any industry - especially in a bakery where it is a day-to-day business and you can't stockpile goods. Still I tried to make this as plain as I could to as many workers as I could get to, but with the type of job

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Canadian Bakery Industry

The Canadian bakery industry, which is 14.1 per cent foreign controlled, employs 17,931 production workers out of a total of 32,341 employees in 2,135 establishments. The industry claims to operate on a low profit margin - an average of 2 per cent of the sales for "successful" companies. (1968 figures)

Eight companies (Weston Bakeries Ltd; Canada Bread Co. Ltd; McGavin-toastmaster Ltd; Vachon Inc; Christie, Brown and Co. Ltd; Eastern Bakeries Ltd; Morrison-Lamothe) have 57 per cent of the Canadian market. Their net sales are 249.5 million dollars and they claim profits of 5 million dollars. (Rough yearly averages from 1966-1968 figures.)

Bread now accounts for 55 per cent of the value of bakery products - down from 85 per cent of the value 25 years ago. Cakes, buns, pies, cookies, pastries, etc., make up the remainder of bakery products.

(Based on: "Report on Business", Globe and Mail, October 13, 1970; and "Commercial Bakeries..." Globe and Mail, March 1, 1968.)

being a tenant he could not be expropriated; and furthermore he did not understand the overall interests of the working class in that particular neighbourhood. Consequently Lorimer was able, with other middle class residents, to introduce the kinds of politics which were thoroughly detrimental to the working class and in the end destroyed the possibility (which was also a necessity) of the area becoming a stable working class district.

To put this in even stronger terms: a relatively affluent middle class couple, living in a spacious, beautiful home, not sharing "consciously and systematically" any of the experiences of the working class people in the district, such as arduous and monotonous physical labour and long working hours, fear of layoffs and actual unemployment, resulting in continuous stresses and strains between men and women, adults and children, and the particular oppression of working class women, cannot possibly understand working class life, and definitely cannot call themselves participant observers. Observers they are, all right, and observers at a distance. The magnificent methodology of being "friendly, normal and curious", under these circumstances produces but the shallowest encounters with people and the most superficial speculations about the motives for people's actions, all of which turns the book into several hundred pages of friendly neighbourhood gossip and highly subjective impressions.

As to the other significant aspect of participant observation, of securing the data "within the mediums, symbols and experiential worlds" of the working class people, Lorimer's "methodology" is such that he does not allow his subjects any expression of their own, any articulation of how they see their lives and their present situation. The "friendly neighbour" role has obviously prevented him from actually interviewing the people in the book, since there are no lengthy quotations from any of them, no articulation of their experience. Unlike such studies as Oscar Lewis' Five Families, Children of Sanchez and La Vida, where poverty stricken Mexicans are interviewed on tape over a long period of time (several years) and these tapes are transcribed to read like an autobiographical novel, Lorimer can only offer second-hand, unreliable impressions and speculative assessments as to why people did what they did and why they felt the way they did. The flesh-and-blood people, as these people must have been, become paper cut-outs, void of any essence beyond the appearances recorded by the author.

This method of depriving working people of their own voice, prevents the reader from drawing his/her own conclusions. And the reader who is not familiar with working class life to start with, cannot on the basis of the presentation of this book evaluate whether Lorimer has drawn correct conclusions or not. Lorimer, to the uninitiated, remains in total control of his material from beginning to end.

Lacking class analysis, misunderstanding the real nature of participant observation, and not allowing the working people to be heard, Lorimer completely fails to illuminate working class life. In addition, he absolutely refuses to discuss his own role as an activist - let alone as a sociologist. This failure to deal with his own practice, makes the study even more lopsided. (See "Note on Social Scientists at Work", p. 14.)

Ignores his own role

Lorimer, as I have already indicated, has nowhere dealt with his own practice and the practice of his fellow middle class residents (professors, townplanners, lawyers etc.), who were the dominant element in the Don Vale residents'

association, and who determined the politics of that association. Since I am familiar with the developments in Don Vale from the initial stages of the formation of the association, and since I was vocally critical of the middle class politics of Lorimer et al, I do not offer my criticism from some hindsight.

From the very beginning the middle class residents failed to understand that the only solution to the problems of this working class district, which were a tremendous insecurity about the future of the district and the concomitant deterioration of particularly absentee-owned properties, was to fight off both urban renewal and developers and to stabilize the area as a working class district. Every attempt by the working class homeowners to cut themselves off the whole urban renewal game, was foiled by the middle class residents, to whom urban renewal, far from being a threat to their existence, was a challenge to become "involved" in civic politics. This "involvement" dragged on for several years and eventually produced a plan, Rehabilitation: Outline for a Policy, which I would describe as a purely utopian scheme and which was so regarded by the working class residents themselves. The plan, after kicking around for a while among various officials at the different levels of government, was never implemented - to the great "disappointment" of the middle class activists, but as no surprise to the working class residents.

That, however, was not all that this "plan" did. It prolonged the insecurity and speeded up the deterioration of the area, since while "planning" took place, no significant improvements (street repairs, enforcement of housing standards, etc) would be undertaken by the city. Many resident homeowners, fearing eventual expropriation, for which they would not be adequately compensated (expropriation being just another instance of legalized theft), looked at the developers as a "lesser evil" - at least, they thought, they could sell out for a better price if sell they had to.

The developers, however, were not the only buyers who came around: it was the middle class renovators who in the end benefited from the prolonged instability of the district. Lorimer understands this, although he refuses to see the interconnection between the "plan", i.e. the residents' association politics and the exodus of working class homeowners. This is his description of the events:

"Perhaps because middle-class area residents were active in the local residents' association during the time 1968-69 that the new area plan was being drawn up, many outsiders have taken it for granted that the plan would have speeded up or at least permitted this transformation of the neighbourhood into an area of middle class townhouses. In fact, however, the plan contained measures specifically directed towards stabilizing the area and slowing down or stopping this development. These measures included mortgage financing to encourage existing tenants to purchase their rented properties and become area homeowners, and grants and loans to existing area homeowners for repairs and renovations, if they remained in the area." (p. 103)

This plan, one might add, was of course totally unrealistic, in the light of the fact that most of the rented properties were bought as income properties by absentee owners, who therefore were not interested in selling them, and the fact that the tenants in a large number of cases were on welfare or had incomes that made mortgage payments, combined with the upkeep of the houses quite impossible. Also, Lorimer should know as well as I do that the homeowners, particularly the middle-aged and elderly ones (who were the majority in the district), were not enthusiastic about the

possibility of obtaining grants and loans, since they could not see themselves taking loans which they couldn't pay back, and they were opposed to getting "grants" which would then become liens against their property.

Having stated that the "plan" couldn't be blamed - and ignoring particularly the consequences of the planning process - Lorimer goes on to describe those very consequences:

"Since the plan was not implemented, it is reasonable to expect that by the mid 1970's most of the people east of Parliament will be middle-class families like the people already living on Minster Lane [Lorimer's street], Crestwood Park and similar streets. A few established area homeowners, will refuse to leave and will stay in their homes until they die, but working-class tenants will be forced out by land-lords who sell to a town-house renovator or who renovate themselves to receive the higher rents middle-class tenants will pay." (p. 103)

Lorimer does not explain why the plan was not implemented, and thus leaves the reader wondering about the mysterious forces of nature working at defeating the working class. Instead of an analysis of the failure, he offers this wonderful description of it:

"... most area residents saw the net results of this [residents' association] activity not as a victory for the area or as the development of political power for the neighbourhood, which could be mobilized to deal with other problems. Rather it appeared to them to be at best a stalemate, at worst simply a delay of the day of reckoning. And in the end it confirmed what most residents said from the beginning, that political action is futile because in the end it produces no lasting, concrete, useful results." (p. 104)

The reader would never know that this sense of futility experienced by the working class homeowners is not just some inherent characteristic of working class people (as Lorimer will later attempt to establish) but a direct consequence of Lorimer's own anti-working class politics, not because of his conscious and malicious opposition to the working class, but because of his thorough inability, proven over and over again in his practice and his book, to comprehend working class life. But unlike Kilroy, our Lorimer simply "wasn't there" - and he becomes in this book an innocent, observant and curious by-stander - meanwhile, however, his footprints are everywhere.

This disconnection between his own actions (praxis) and their consequences is displayed boldly further on in the work. In the chapter on "Working Class Attitudes", Lorimer portrays in his usual static and one-dimensional (un-dialectical) way the "conservatism" of the working class people. They manifest this "conservatism" despite the fact that they, in his words, think that "the system is being run for the benefit of the people with the power and wealth to control it" (p. 115). Lorimer goes on to argue that:

"This view does not, however, draw people to an inevitable conclusion that the economic and political status quo, because it does not meet the ideals which it proclaims and which working people assert in judging it, should be radically and fundamentally changed. This constellation of attitudes of working people leads to quite different evaluations than might be expected both of proposals for radical

and economic change and of their advocates. The view that the status quo is so firmly entrenched that any substantial changes in the distribution of power and wealth are highly unlikely makes 'radical' political activity on its face a rather irrelevant and futile activity." (p. 115) (Emphasis supplied).

Without quarreling much with the contention that the working class people Lorimer encountered in Don Vale, were "conservative, i.e. politically uneducated, I am far more interested in the reasons given by Lorimer:

"This distrust of reformists and political radicals has a firm basis both in the past experience of working people and in the real attitudes of the reformers. It is hard to describe as misplaced cynicism about the possibilities of real change in the political and economic status quo for working class people, in the light, for instance, of the policies of NDP provincial governments in Canada or of the Labour Party in power in Britain, or of the changes brought about by advocates of the interests of the workers in Eastern Europe." (pp. 115-6)

Here again, one can agree with the general view that bad politics on the left have alienated the working class, globally, from political participation (although Lorimer fails to specify the contents of these bad politics). Only he makes a serious omission: he does not include among these alienating politics the politics of the liberal-radicals, the "community activists", whose immediate impact in the Don Vale district was far greater than the politics of Eastern Europe or the British Labour Party might have had one the same neighbourhood.

Castigates "middle class interference" — but not his own

Now, Lorimer's blindness to his own role, goes even further. He castigates, in general terms, what he considers "middle class interference" in working class life. In his own words:

"[Also to be considered is the fact that] adoption by middle-class people of what they consider to be left-wing radical political views and greater concern for the interests of working people than the present political system offers does not automatically bring with it an end to the usual middle-class patronizing of working people. Just as common among the new left as among the old is the attitude that the educated and enlightened people should lead, and that the workers, once they have been brought to understand their situation properly, should fall in behind their new leaders." (p. 116)

And this opposition to "interference" is made even more explicit in the concluding paragraphs of the main body of the book:

"Fundamental improvements in the life of working people can be expected only when working people themselves end their isolation from political life and begin to develop both proposals about the way they want to change the world they live in and the political power necessary to bring those changes about. Of course, there may be room in this process for other people sympathetic to their aims to assist, but this is something working people cannot have done for them. Either they will do it themselves or it will not be done. There is no way to predict whether this will happen, though in the past in Cana-

da the protectors of the economic and political status quo have proved resilient and powerful in their efforts at warding off demands for fundamental change. Whether working people will succeed in causing change in the status quo depends too much on decisions ordinary people make about what they think about these issues and what they are going to do about them." (pp. 142-3) (Emphasis supplied)

But, in reality and despite all appearances, Lorimer is not critical of all "middle-class interference". As I have pointed out, he does not offer even the mildest self-criticism. For a man who has spent three years actively "interfering", as a sociologist and an activist, in the lives of working class people, it is somewhat hypocritical to say that real changes can only come about when working people "themselves end their isolation from political life" and start to "develop proposals about the way they want to change the world . . . and the political power necessary to bring those changes about." How is the working class to assert itself against hordes of misleaders and academic parasites on its back? How exactly is it to end its isolation? What is needed for the working class to become capable of asserting itself? These are questions that Lorimer does not raise, let alone answer.

To phrase the question in terms of "middle class interference", in addition to being hypocritical, is to beg the question altogether. One invariably finds that people who are most vocally opposed to "interference", who expound on some vacuous theory of "people themselves" lifting themselves up by their bootstraps, and who sit back and watch and tolerate bad politics, just because these politics have been created by "working people themselves", are actually - up to their necks - involved in these same bad politics. In some cases the "interference" might have the appearance of passivity, but in reality it constitutes an active endorsement of the worst kinds of working class or "poor people's" politics.

Furthermore, those people, like Lorimer, who visualize the working class as being able to exist outside of "interference", do not understand what they are talking about. The working class is continuously interfered with by capitalist society, through wage-slavery, through the effects of alienated labour on their lives, through miserable education, through the media monopolies, through the advertising trap, through religion, and so on. The working class came, historically speaking, into existence through the "interference" of the capitalist mode of production in the feudal order, and the fantasy of the working class in a capitalist society, being able to exist "by itself" is just that - pure fantasy.

The question, therefore, is not whether there should be interference (since there always is), but what kind of interference. Should there be interference by the capitalist class and by our liberal-radicals, who by no stretch of imagination can be said to be oriented towards the working class, but no interference by socialists? That is exactly the conclusion Lorimer arrives at in his argument, when he singles out, in a specific reference, both the "new left" and the old, as committing the cardinal sin of wanting to lead the working class - who, according to Lorimer, is then expected to passively follow.

Too little socialist intervention

I differ in the strongest possible terms. The problem with the left in general has not been that it has wan-

ted to lead the working class and wanted to activate it (and not, as Lorimer claims, to make it passively follow), but that it has been incapable of doing so. There has been too little socialist intervention in the working class, and consequently the class has been left defenseless against capitalist rule and equally vulnerable to those worshippers of working class "spontaneity", which I have called liberal radicals,¹⁹ whose position is, in essence: "If the people want, they will get organized and build a movement. We will then applaud them."

This position was well articulated by one correspondent who felt that the article on "Organizing 'the Poor' - Against the Working Class" (March-April issue of TRANSFORMATION) was altogether too negative on the possibilities of organizing the lumpenized segments of the working class. He wrote:

"Is it possible that the lumpenproletariat can be organized collectively in contemporary society, because they face common institutions of control and administration (as they did not in Marx's time)? Is the problem perhaps the analysis and strategy of poor people's groups, rather than the constitution of the groups themselves, i.e. can 'poor people' develop a valid class analysis and an appropriate strategy by themselves - given time and practice? These are the questions that are still with me after reading your article. They leave me feeling that it's still a good thing if elements of the 'lumpenproletariat' organize, even if their theory is inevitably inadequate at first; like working class organizations, they are bound to work out a more realistic analysis in the fight for social change; and the consequences are likely to be useful - even if meantime a lot of failures take place. . ." (Emphasis supplied).

To this correspondent there are, again, mysterious forces of nature in operation to ensure that "everything will turn all right" - although "time and practice" can work in the opposite direction. Failure tends to accumulate on top of failure, until there is a complete morass and dead-end, as is evidenced increasingly in most of the community organizing efforts, the "poor people's" groups and most recently, public housing tenants organizations in Canada.

The question whether the working class and segments thereof, left alone, will be able to create a revolutionary movement, is hardly a new one. Lenin, in 1904, in his article "What is to be Done?", directed some of his most forceful polemics against the worshippers of working class spontaneity of his times:

"Without a revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement. This thought cannot be insisted upon too strongly at a time when the fashionable preaching of opportunism goes hand in hand with infatuation for the narrowest forms of practical activity."²⁰ (Emphasis supplied)

Is this statement not completely applicable to Canada (and U.S.) of today? The level of theoretical development among the Canadian activists of both "left" and liberal-radical variety, is pathetically low, and people who should know better - having at least had an opportunity to study these ques-

19. Their practice was dealt with in detail in two previous articles, "The Fallacy of 'Community Control'" and "Organizing 'the Poor' - Against the Working Class", in vol 1 no 1 and no 2 of TRANSFORMATION.

20. V.I. Lenin, "What is to be done?", in Selected Works vol. I, part 2, Moscow, 1952, p. 227.

ions, an opportunity which the working class is deprived of - all on their knees in front of the lowest levels, i.e. purely defensive working class self-organizing. The liberal radicals succumb to the "poor people's" groups, tenants organizations and residents' associations, while the "left" tails behind the various kinds of labour union activities, the most prominent of which are strikes. (At strike time, there is a line up of "vanguard" groups, all wanting to "integrate" with the workers - just long enough to sell their newspapers and attempt some recruiting.)*

The opportunism comes in when these efforts, in the case of the liberal radicals, are tied in with state funding, which is the case with the "poor people's" groups, public housing tenants groups and residents' organizations, more and more of which are recipients of generous "grants". A case in point is the Opportunities for Youth Programme in Canada, which has sponsored literally thousands of university and high school students - many of them "radicals" - to perpetuate the worst kinds of politics in working class districts and public housing projects. (This latest strategy of the Canadian state, of what should correctly be called, Youth Pacification and Confusion Programme, will be analysed in depth in a later issue.)

Nothing, likewise, has changed since Lenin wrote in the same article:

"The history of all countries shows that the working class, exclusively by its own effort, is able to develop only trade union consciousness, i.e. the conviction that it is necessary to combine in unions, fight the employers and strive to compel the government to pass necessary labour legislation, etc. The theory of socialism, however, grew out of the philosophic, historical and economic theories, that were elabora-

One particular segment of the left, the Trotskyists, has its own particular brand of spontaneity worshipping. They have become specialists in single issue organizing in which various manifestations of discontent with the capitalist order are dealt with separately rather than being united under one socialist programme into a working class movement. Thus the Trotskyist controlled anti-war movement and the women's movement particularly, advance extremely narrow and therefore liberal and anti-socialist demands, like "End the war", "Bring our boys back" (both in Canada and the U.S.!), "End Canadian complicity"; and the women's movement, "We demand the right to our bodies" and "Abortion on demand". There is, for instance, much more to the question of abortion than "abortion on demand". A socialist movement could put emphasis on advocating the creation of a society where abortions are not needed and where they would be needed only in an extreme emergency. And it would point out that in the present society such conditions of emergency are forced on literally millions of women, who otherwise would not be opposed to giving birth to children.

The Trotskyists, however, will argue that since this is where "people are at", that is, at a low level of political development, they want to be there, too. Within these narrow-conceived, fragmented "movements", no understanding is advanced as to the totality of the problem of capitalism and to the totality of the solution required, i.e. the transfer of power to the working class. In Canada, there is an additional manifestation of this tailguard (as opposite to vanguard) mentality of the Trotskyists, their apparently immutable policy of joining the New Democratic Party, since that is, according to them (and they misunderstand Lenin here to back up their position), where the working class is at.

ted by the educated representatives of the propertied classes, the intellectuals. According to their social status, the founders of modern scientific socialism, Marx and Engels, themselves belonged to the bourgeois intelligentsia. In the very same way, in Russia, the theoretical doctrine of Social-Democracy arose quite independently of the spontaneous growth of the working class movement, it arose as a natural and inevitable outcome of the development of ideas among the revolutionary socialist intelligentsia." (pp. 233-4)

One can hear a chorus of our latter day worshippers of working class spontaneity, exclaim indignantly: "But that's elitism!", or as Lorimer would put it, "You're patronizing the working class!". Of course, these objections can only be raised by people who ignore the conditions of the working class: lack of adequate education, resulting in extraordinary numbers of functional illiterates²¹, physically and mentally exhausting labour, often little leisure time, all of which combined make it a superhuman effort for one to become theoretically and politically self-educated. It can be done - and has been done - by remarkable individuals from the working class through extraordinary efforts, but it cannot be done by the whole working class. This political education, however, is the pre-condition for the members of the working class to rise above the every-day struggles in the neighbourhoods and workplaces, and to move toward a socialist analysis.

The responsibility of the intellectuals

Understanding the conditions of the working class, it is obligatory that we place the responsibility of initiating the building of a socialist movement in Canada (which, despite the claims of our splendid "vanguard" groups, does not exist), on the shoulders of our intellectuals. They are the ones who have to become oriented towards the working class and they have to equip themselves with working class political theory, the scientific socialism of Marx and Engels, founded upon dialectical materialism and historical materialism. The fact that our university educated intellectuals by and large seem singularly incapable of contributing toward the building of such a movement, is another matter, largely explained by the unique ability of bourgeois universities to produce not intellectuals, but committed anti-intellectuals, who habitually deny the validity of adequate theory to base one's practice on. Nevertheless, it is the intellectuals who have to be challenged, who have to be driven out of their cosy, comfortable corners where they presently either watch, at a distance, working class struggles, or participate in them at the lowest possible levels. They have to take an active role in the political education of the working class, but first they have to become politically educated themselves.

The demand that the intellectuals live up to their historical role of bringing those few benefits that they have had through the privilege of becoming somewhat educated, back to the working class, will come as bad news to our liberal radical activists as well as many who consider themselves being "on the left", who have become used to merely app'au-

21. "43% of the Canadian adult population, those of 17 years of age and over, have not as children completed more than elementary education. This level is unique to Canada among Western nations. For example, in the United States the equivalent statistic is 28%." From a brief to the Senate Committee on Poverty, by the Frontier College of Canada, December 16, 1969.

ding various elementary efforts by the working class to defend itself against the most blatant forms of oppression and abuse. If our activists - and that includes the practicing sociologists like Lorimer - have nothing to offer to the working class, in terms of theoretical clarity and long-term perspective, they should stay away and find other preoccupations. Certainly books like Lorimer's Working People, expose the miserable level of understanding that our university educated intellectuals as a rule possess. As a result the book itself can only play a negative role: it will further befog the minds of literally tens of thousands of university students, who are going to have to digest it in their sociology courses, and who will be unable to deal with it critically. As such the book remains an open challenge to our socialist scholars (and there are such people in this country), who have been all too slow in coming up with adequate studies of the working class experience in Canada, that is, studies on the alienation of the working class and the possibilities of disalienation through the total transformation of the present day capitalist society. The task of sociology today, as was the task of philosophy in Marx's time, is not to interpret the world, nor describe or explain it, but to change it.

Recommended readings:

The reader should first thoroughly familiarize him/herself with Marx's original writings on the alienation of labour, to be found (at least) in the following editions:

Erich Fromm, Marx's Concept of Man, Frederick Unger.

Karl Marx, Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts, ed. by Dick Struik, International Publishers.

Karl Marx, Early Writings, ed. by T.B. Bottomore, McGraw.

Secondly it is time that every activist in Canada becomes familiar with Lenin's What is to be Done? and reads over and over again what he has to say about the importance of theoretical struggle, as against mindless activism, about the spontaneity of the masses and the development of socialist consciousness, and about the critical difference between trade union politics and socialist politics.

Sociology misconstrues the working class cont'd from page 27

process of bargaining and sharing decisions with them. Management has made important concessions and unions have won great victories. But management has also won - not by battling, but by assimilating unions to basic management techniques and procedures." (p. 182)

And because of this "assimilation", Dubin concludes:

"A strong and effective union movement has not been antithetical to 'dynamic capitalism'". (p. 187)

Much of the goal of the earlier "industrial democracy" has thus been achieved. Grievances of all sorts are settled in union-management discussions. The principal manifestations, therefore, of the contradictions between labour and capital are dampened - their potential for creating class consciousness is effectively curbed in grievance procedures and collective bargaining. The contradictions and their manifestations, however, remain. The growing "problem" of working class militancy and "wild-cat" strikes are evidence of the failure of unions and management cooperation to end this contradiction between labour and capital.

A more complete description of the effects of collective

bargaining is found in Harbison's article, "Collective Bargaining and American Capitalism". Once again, however, the result of the bargaining process is seen as complementary to the maintenance of capitalism and as an effective means for placating basic conflicts. He writes:

"To the extent that collective bargaining operates successfully as an orderly means of resolving the conflicting economic interests of management and labor and to the extent that it enhances the dignity and work of laborers in their role as factors of production it provides some very substantial support for our system of democratic capitalism. It does this in three ways: first, it provides a drainage channel for the specific dissatisfactions and frustrations which workers experience on the job; second, it helps to 'humanize' the operation of an essentially impersonal price system by making it more generally palatable to workers as a group; and, third, it absorbs the energies and interests of the leaders of labor who might be inclined to work for the overthrow of capitalism if this avenue of activity were lacking." ⁹ (Emphasis supplied)

It would be difficult to find a clearer description of how the workers and their leaders are to be integrated into capitalism. He continues:

"It [collective bargaining] both creates the machinery and provides the rationale for endorsement of capitalism by employers, labor leaders, and workers." (p. 278)

And he concludes:

"... therefore a union movement which emphasizes collective bargaining is inevitably a conservative movement for collective bargaining is inseparable from private enterprise. Thus, through the process of collective bargaining, American unions organize and direct the discontents of labor in such a way as to bolster rather than to upset our system of democratic capitalism.

The widespread acceptance of democratic capitalism in our economy, then, is not hard to explain. For workers it provides a feeling of reaping tangible benefits, and it greatly enhances their status, dignity and importance as members of the labour force. For employers, who might be fearful of open revolt by the working masses, collective bargaining is a lightning rod which effectively grounds any organized efforts to overthrow the existing order." (p. 278)

Little needs to be added to this striking appraisal of the effects of collective bargaining. ¹⁰

One other issue reoccurs frequently in the literature on "industrial relations". It is the personnel man who has become a common fixture in modern industry - a carrier of "rat psychology" into the work-place. His role is clearly consistent with the discussion so far - to solve the "human" and "personal" problems in the plant, and help the worker to adjust to his job.

In the chapter entitled, "The New Role of the Personnel Man", W.F. Whyte outlines the ideal role of such a functionary in his Men at Work (The Dorsay Press, 1961):

"The personnel man seeks to avoid laying blame for the problems he finds on particular individuals. Instead, he seeks to understand the bases of human problems and to interpret this understanding to super-

9. In Industrial Conflict, by Kornhauser, Dubin and Ross, McGraw-Hill, 1954, p. 276.

Footnote 10, see next page.

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visors and managers. His first responsibility is to understand why people behave as they do and to communicate this understanding to those having responsibility for parts of the organization." (p. 523) (Emphasis supplied)

There is little difference between such a job description and Mayo's interview method for sounding out real of potential problems in the factory. Where the union and collective bargaining fails to ameliorate the workers to the job process, there is always the personnel man.

These few studies mentioned are not peculiar in their treatment of "industrial relations"; they are representative of the entire body of such literature. The study of "industrial relations", then, has been the study of the attempt to integrate the worker into American capitalism. But it is more than that, for the sociologist takes a point of view; therefore it is not only a study, but also a recommendation of how to integrate the worker into the system. Consistently, whether implicitly or explicitly, the literature in "industrial relations" takes the position of the manager or capitalist and supports the existing economic order.

10. It is not the union-management bargaining, as such, that has created conditions of co-optation of the trade union movement. It is the union's attitude towards it. The relegation of the bargaining procedure to union "experts" instead of allowing the rank and file to experience it has removed its radicalizing potential. (See section on labour negotiations in "Our Daily Bread", elsewhere in this issue, as well as the interview with a Canadian miner in the March-April issue of TRANSFORMATION.) The rank and file are reduced to a voting body approving or rejecting union-management agreements. Moreover, unions have come to view the collective agreement as an end in itself. Once the "bargain" is agreed upon, the life of the contract is to be passed peacefully (save the occasional grievance) and the union does all it can to preserve that peace. Educational functions are almost non-existent in today's unions, while material benefits have become the major focus of concern and effort. The goal of workers' struggle, socialism, is no longer even discussed in union constitutions.

There are reasons for this capitulation of the trade union movement. The failure of the "old left", particularly the once significant Communist Party, lies at the root of the prevalence of class collaborationist trade union politics. Notwithstanding their initial years of working class militancy, the Communist Parties of North America (taking their direction from the Third International), far from becoming a sustained challenge to trade unionism, pure and simple, became often the practitioners of this same trade unionism, all in the name of "peaceful co-existence" with the capitalist order. When the organized left capitulated, individual militants could not effectively struggle against the anti-working class politics of the unions; these collaborationist politics therefore became the dominant politics in the only existing working class organizations.

APOLOGIES TO MAO TSE-TUNG

Due to typesetter's error, the bibliography of books on Norman Bethune, published at the end of the poem Bethuniverse in the last issue, left out the single most important work on Bethune. That is "In Memory of Comrade Norman Bethune", by Mao Tse-Tung, one of the basic documents of Mao Tse-Tung Thought. Mao Tse-Tung Thought, of course, is not compiled entirely of the thoughts of Mao alone. It is the whole concentrated experience of the Chinese Revolution. In fact Liu Shao-Chi, "The Chinese Khrushchev", contributed significantly to it - before he apparently turned traitor. Another co-creator of Mao Tse-Tung Thought, as "In Memory of Comrade Norman Bethune" makes perfectly clear, was Norman Bethune, a Canadian. In the author's opinion, a better name for Mao Tse-Tung Thought in Canada, would be "Bethune Thought" or "Bethunism".

Bethune, by the way, was quite a writer himself. It is to the shame of Canadian radicalism that his own writings have not been collected.

Milton Acorn

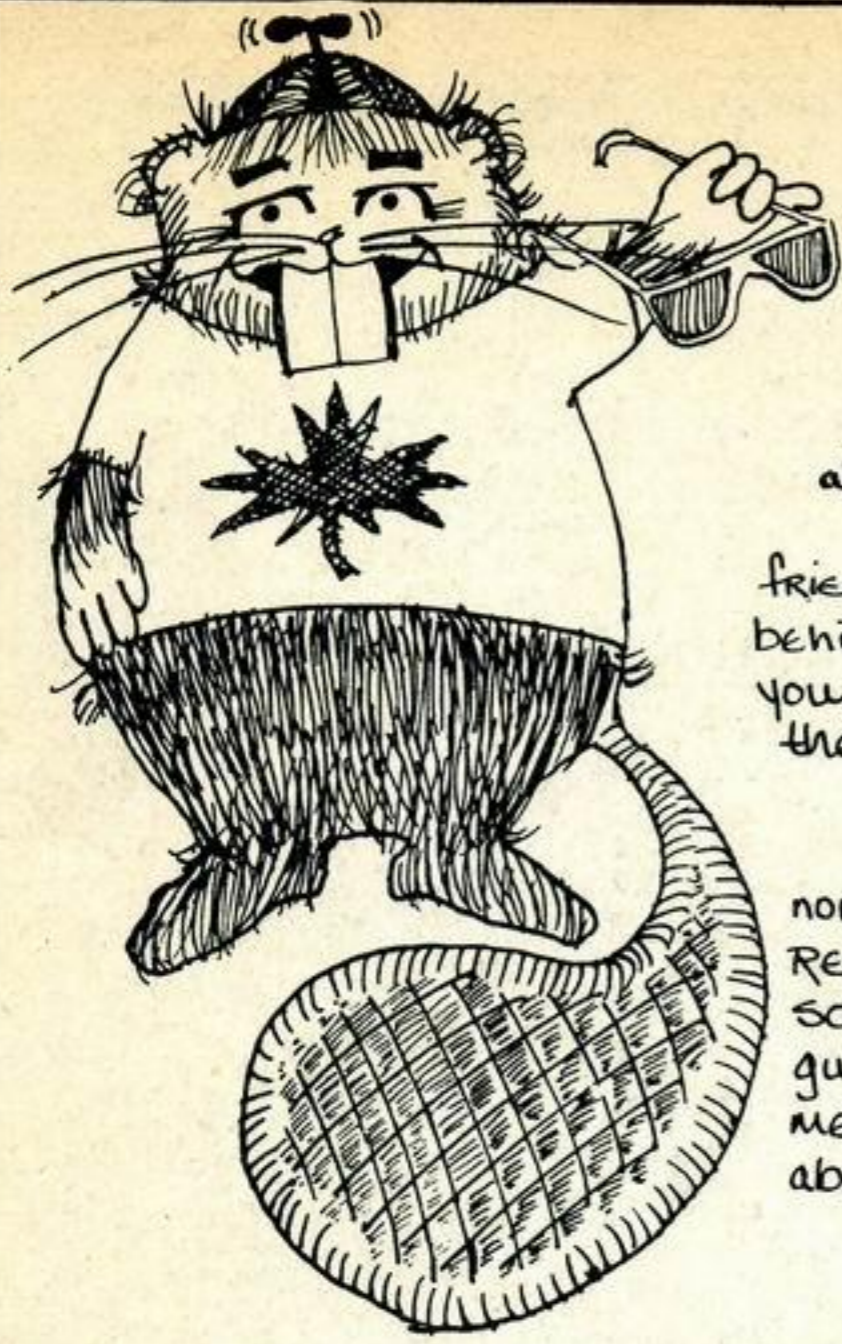
Makers of our daily bread — cont'd from page 49

that I had on the receiving ramp I didn't have the ability to reach all the workers at all times.

Another interesting thing happened at the December 30 meeting. There were very few people, in my mind, who were in favour of taking strike action, so I raised the possibility of a work-to-rule or a slow-down as a form of strike. I told the business rep I thought the workers would be in favour of this because they would get their daily wage and they'd be putting pressure on the company at the same time. He said, "What kind of crazy idea is that. Look, we either take strike action or we don't. None of this half assed fiddling around." I dropped it at that point but I think it shows where the business rep is at. I'm sure he had decided that the workers would vote to accept the contract and that made him happy. He didn't want to delay any more negotiations which could be delayed to a point where again another union would be able to take over our union.⁸

Looking at the strike vote, I was rather surprised that it had come as close as it did. Perhaps I had underestimated the militancy of the workers after all. Trying to figure out some of the reasons why the contract had been accepted, a lot of people said that none of the women - there are 120 of them - would vote for a strike because the women get fairly good wages, because women's wages often go to supplement those of their husbands and so taking home \$80.00 a week is fine. After talking with some women, however, I know that they had voted otherwise.

8. No other union can apply for certification except during certain periods of time. One of these periods is six months after a strike or lock-out began.



(Ahem)
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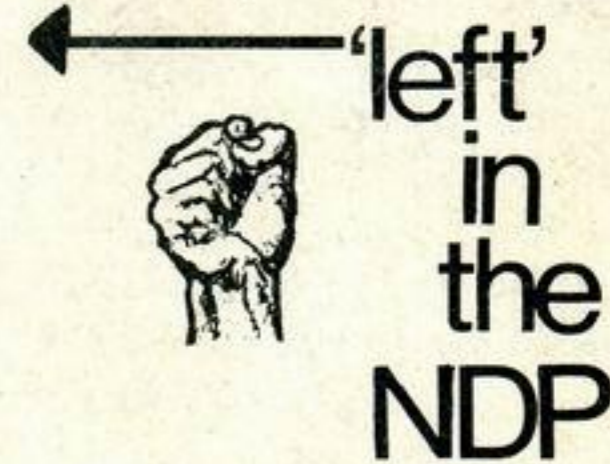
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