

# Moving On

MAGAZINE OF THE NEW AMERICAN MOVEMENT

## The Assault on Black Equality



**Shopping Malls—American Dream or Nightmare?**

**Gay in Moscow    Reproductive Rights and the Workplace**

## Towards a socialist America

We very much regret to announce the resignation of Roberta Lynch as Managing Editor of MOVING ON. Roberta has been Managing Editor of MO since its inception. She has established a deserved national reputation as perhaps the finest socialist political editor in the U.S. Her unique insights and provocative perceptions, her skillful artistry and technical wizardry have made MO the most politically integrated magazine around. Roberta's ability to integrate theory with practice, analysis with strategy, to make intelligible, readable and entertaining the most complex events of this period has turned MO into a genuinely popularized and popular text. Though Roberta will continue to play numerous roles as a NAM national leader, her role with MO will not be easily replaced. In the meantime, NAM's Political Secretary, Bill Barclay, will temporarily take on the additional task of Managing Editor.

In a not unrelated vein, many of our readers have noticed that we are now publishing only six times a year, as opposed to the previous ten. We are doing this for a number of reasons. As NAM continues to grow and develops a more varied constituency, we have found it necessary to develop a greater diversity of publications. So we are placing additional resources into these additional publications. We also will expand on the number of pages of each MO. This will not only allow us to print more in-depth articles, but also give us greater flexibility with shorter ones. A bigger MO will also increase its commercial viability.

People with subs to MO will continue to receive the same number of issues, but spread out over a longer time frame.

*Halli Lehrer*  
*Rick Kunnes*  
*Bill Barclay*

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by Manning Marable

**T**HE DECADE OF THE 1970'S IS FINALLY coming to a close. Black unemployment today is over twice the figure it was a decade ago. Black wages, when adjusted to the rate of inflation, are at least 20% lower than they were a decade ago. The militant Black Power organizations of the late 1960s and early 1970s—the Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee, the League of Revolutionary Black Workers, the African Liberation Support Committee, the Congress of African People, and many others—have disintegrated, self-destructed or were deliberately destroyed by the police and federal government. Black middle-class politicians, professional bureaucrats and educators seem to have become even more conservative on political and economic issues affecting millions of Black folk. Ninety-three percent of the Black votes cast for President went to Jimmy Carter in 1976; three years later, his administration has proven to be the most conservative and disastrous period of Democratic rule since the racist administration of Woodrow Wilson.

A general consensus has emerged during the last twelve months that cuts across every political tendency in Black America. It is the double realization that the achievements of the previous decade of the 1960s are being lost, and that the objective material, social and political condition of the majority of Black people has not been worse since the Great Depression. In March, 1979, Black historian Lerone Bennett described this recent period as "the most serious since the Civil War." In the 1979 Annual Report of the Urban League, Vernon Jordan declared that Black America is currently at "the brink of disaster." Writing in *Black Books Bulletin*, Black nationalist activist Oba T'Shaka stated recently that there was a profound

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## The War Against Black Equality

"lull in our movement." This was the direct "result of [the] errors made by the Black liberation struggle," as well as "the result of intense attack, and absorption into the system of a large section of the various [Black] mass movements." We have reached a new nadir, a low point, in the struggle for Black liberation; our organizations are in disarray; many of our leaders have been assassinated, arrested, bought off or subtly silenced.

From the vantage point of grassroots Black America, the reasons for the failures of the 1970s become clearer. The war against Black equality has been waged on all possible fronts: intellectual, judicial, cultural, educational, economic and even spiritual. Since this racial oppression simultaneously cre-

ates and reinforces the unique structures of America's economic system, the net impact of the 1970s has been the suppression of Blacks on both racial and economic grounds. The decline of this country's economic system and the series of recessions in 1969-70, 1973-75 and 1979-80 has helped to produce a growing dynamic to oppress Blacks in both economics and politics. The crisis of race is thus tied directly to the crisis of economics.

The elements of this white attack against Black equality are both varied and complex. Some of the leaders of the new white supremacy movement are simply our old historic enemies, like the Ku Klux Klan. Others are liberal politicians, white intellectuals and former friends of the Civil Rights Movement.



Many are white students and youth who fear being replaced by Blacks in the job market or in academic work. Generally, we can isolate at least ten separate factors or reasons which contributed to the assault against Black people during the 1970s.

### **White Intellectual Assault**

Prior to the Civil War, there was a great amount of literature published by Southern whites which defended the racial status quo and the necessity of the "peculiar institution" of Black slavery. Apologists like George Fitzhugh argued that the slave was psychologically, mentally and morally unfit for freedom. Today, pseudo-scientific theorists and intellectuals have picked up from Fitzhugh in an attempt to turn back the clock of history to the age of Jim Crow and absolute racial inferiority.

The new white intellectual assault against Black equality includes at least three major trends. First, the work of geneticists and social scientists like Jensen and Shockley, which attempted to prove that Blacks are intellectual inferior to whites because of biological and/or genetic reasons. Second, the re-writing of Black history and the entire Black experience by white social scientists to negate the more revolutionary and militant aspects of the heritage of the Black struggle for freedom and self-determination. Until about thirty years ago, white historians refused to recognize even the existence of an Afro-American or African history. Today, white historians like Fogel and Engerman are eagerly informing Black youth that slavery wasn't so bad after all.

Third, and most critically, many white intellectuals have joined forces with the New Right to oppose affirmative action and the general desegregation of white cultural and intellectual institutions. White academicians claim to oppose the use of racial quotas in admitting Black students to graduate schools and colleges on grounds of "principle."

The attack on affirmative action is an assault upon Black social, cultural and economic advancement since the 1960s.

### **Black Academic Institutions**

This attack is basically a reaction in political terms to the real gains Blacks achieved in the field of education during the period 1960-75. During these years, the statistics of overall Black educational advancement were impressive. The percentage of Black adults over the age of 25 who completed high school rose from 20 to 43 percent. The median school years completed for Black young adults went from 9.3 years to 12.3 years. Black college enrollment increased over 300 percent. Hundreds of formerly segregated white institutions were forced to recruit Black students and to hire Black faculty and staff. The desegregation of white centers for higher education was so profound that an anti-Black reaction was virtually inevitable.

First, there has been an attack against Black Studies programs, faculty and students in most major white universities. After an initial boom during the late 1960s, the number of Black Studies departments declined sharply. Black faculty were hired often on non-tenure track contracts, and were quietly released after the Black student unrest disappeared. Semi-competent Black instructors were sometimes hired to downgrade the academic quality of Black Studies. Noted Black intellectuals like University of California-Berkeley sociologist Harry Edwards were denied tenure.

Second, there has been an attack against Black colleges, especially those traditional, all-Black Southern schools. White faculty demanded that these institutions conform to desegregation guidelines. Federal judges forced colleges like Alabama State to rehire white faculty and pay back wages because of "reverse discrimination."

Third, there is the use of desegregation as a weapon against the Black community's public educational institutions. According to Harry Edwards, approximately two thousand Black high school coaches and sports advisers lost their jobs when school desegregation occurred during the past fifteen years.

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**Both the Nazi Party and the Klan represent that omnipresent factor in white American politics which would sanction the complete annihilation of Black people from this society.**

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Hundreds of Black principals and superintendents were demoted or fired when white school systems were consolidated with Black systems. Many blacks who were hired into formerly all-white school systems did not receive the same salary as their white counterparts. In many school desegregation plans, the idea of Black community control of neighborhood elementary and high schools was completely ignored, or deliberately suppressed.

### **Anti-Black Mass Movements**

Racism has suddenly acquired new respectability and an almost "chic appeal" among broad sectors of the white youth at all income levels.

This racism is manifested in individual assaults against Black youth, and in the creation of specifically all-white organizations to foster white special privileges. The most blatant example of this occurred this spring at the University of San Francisco. About sixty white undergraduate students formed an organization called the Society for White Students, whose sole purpose was "to preserve and to defend white culture." The Society for White Students declared that white pupils, not Blacks, were the largest and most discriminated "minority group." They demanded and received several thousand dollars in student activities funds for the promotion of "white culture." Simultaneously, Black student leaders were



verbally assaulted with the accusation of "reverse racism," and posters for Black political and cultural events were defaced with racist slogans.

Elsewhere, white youth have been active in throwing rocks at Black children who attend desegregated schools. Recently in Boston, three white youths were arrested for shooting a Black football player, paralyzing him from the neck down. In several urban high schools several years ago, white youths attacked Blacks after the televised showing of "Roots."

### White Supremacy Organizations

Since its brief decline in the early 1970s, the Klan has returned as a national force of significant political importance. This new version of the Klan parallels the Klan of the 1920s, when the organization broadened its basically anti-Black platform to include attacks against other ethnic and religious minorities.

In 1977, the Klan made headlines by running vigilante patrols along the U.S.-Mexican border, in an attempt to keep undocumented Mexican laborers from entering the country. In 1978, the Klan mounted a major political offensive in northern Mississippi against the United League, a progressive coalition of Black residents. This year, the Klan has been active in the U.S. Navy yards in Norfolk, Virginia, distributing racist literature and attempting to incite riots between Black and white sailors. The

Klan has firebombed houses in Atlanta, and burned crosses in New York. Working closely with anti-busing forces, the organization is a major force in some cities in the mass movement against school desegregation.

The Nazi Party has been less successful than the Klan in raising new members, but nevertheless remains a small but potentially disruptive force in Black life. Both groups represent that omnipresent factor in white American politics which would sanction the complete and total annihilation of Black people from this society.

### Police Violence and Repression

The past decade has produced at least two outstanding examples of police violence and terror, the cases of the Wilmington Ten and Joanne Little. In the Wilmington Ten case, ten Black and white community organizers were sentenced to over 300 years in North Carolina prisons on the most superficial and contrived evidence. Joanne Little was forced to flee a North Carolina jail when she killed a white guard who was attempting to rape her. Like the Scottsboro boys of the 1930s and the celebrated case of Emmett Till in 1955, both the Wilmington Ten and Joanne Little aroused the national outrage of the Black community.

What is always ignored by the white media, however, is that such instances of police terror against Black folks re-

veal a deliberate and systematic pattern of political oppression. For each Joanne Little, there are a thousand other Black women who are raped and physically assaulted by police and prison guards who attract absolutely no publicity. For every Rev. Ben Chavis, Chavis there are a thousand other Black men who are attacked and arrested without just cause.

### Destruction of Public Service Programs

One of the principle legacies of Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal was the idea that the federal government should play an active role within the economic life of the nation. Until the late sixties, Democratic Presidents generally followed the practice of creating jobs programs at the expense of a balanced federal budget. Since the bulk of Democratic voters tended to be the sectors of the economy that suffered most from unemployment—blue collar workers, unskilled labor, Blacks—this policy made sound political as well as economic sense.

The economic crisis of the 1970s changed all this. White upper and middle class America was plagued by increasing taxes at local, state and federal levels, and suffered through a steady rise of the rate of inflation. Wage increases no longer kept pace with the cost of living. An explosion in private debt occurred, as the great majority of whites began to live on credit. The political reaction against inflation and high taxes culminated in two distinctly related movements, the local revolts to cut property taxes, and the national movement to balance the federal budget. By the mid-1970s even liberal Democrats were advocating massive tax cuts and called for a new Constitutional Convention to mandate a balanced national fiscal policy. Simultaneously, the leaders of this tax revolt also tended to be fervent anti-Communists. They called for greater federal expenditures for defense and pushed for various programs, such as the B-1 bomber and the neutron bomb.



There are only so many ways to cut a shrinking fiscal pie. If the great majority of whites desired both a reduction in overall federal expenditures and an increased allocation for national defense, something had to be sacrificed. Despite President Carter's 1976 campaign promises to cut defense spending by five to seven billion dollars, he capitulated to the demands of the New Right. The sacrificial lambs were public service jobs, welfare and job training programs—all of which have a direct impact upon millions of black families. In October, 1979, 150,000 federal employees were fired from positions created by CETA, the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act. It is estimated that about 300,000 CETA employees in all will lose their jobs by late 1980. And according to the President's 1980 budget, \$727 million was slashed from all federal employment initiatives. At local and state levels, white politicians have made it much more difficult in recent years for the unemployed and physically handicapped to collect assistance. In the process, hundreds of thousands of Black men, women and children will be faced with utter destitution and have no prospects for relief.

### **Permanent Black Unemployment**

In the mid and late-1960s, Black workers made tremendous gains in the job market. The official percentage of Black income to white income rose from 51 percent in 1958 to about 63 percent in 1969. Official unemployment figures for Black married men with families dropped to 2.5 percent in 1969. Overall Black unemployment was officially below seven percent.

Once again, the 1970s changed all this. A shrinking capitalist economy plus massive federal cutbacks in jobs

## **Black youth unemployment ranges from about 35 to 60%. Some neighborhoods in Harlem and Bedford-Stuyvesant recorded Black youth unemployment rates of 85% this summer.**

programs threw thousands of Black workers into poverty. Official Black unemployment rates have jumped between 8 to 14 percent, always twice the level of white unemployment for Black workers in factories, in nonskilled labor or service positions, the level of unemployment has been particularly devastating. In 1975, for example, Black nonfarm laborers experienced an unemployment rate of 20 percent. Black youth unemployment ranges from about 35 percent nationwide to 60 percent in most urban centers. Some neighborhoods in Harlem and Bedford-Stuyvesant recorded Black youth unemployment rates of 85 percent this summer.

The Humphrey-Hawkins law passed by Congress commits the Carter Administration to an unemployment goal of 4 percent by 1983, provided that the federal budget is balanced. Since the second proposition voids the first, the law is a worthless piece of paper. Its purpose is not to create jobs for Blacks, but simply to placate the Black electorate.

### **The Retreat of White Liberals**

Examples of white liberal politicians who have catered to the racist trend

are almost too numerous to mention. Two mayors deserve special comment, however—Boston's Kevin White and New York's Edward Koch. Despite his "progressive credentials," White has seldom attempted to respond in even a half-hearted way toward his Black constituents in Roxbury. Since 1974 he has actively catered to the anti-school desegregation forces of all-white South Boston. In 1978, he even appointed an avowedly racist, antibusing activist to a \$40,000 city post. White has been silent when White racists have assaulted Black children, but openly protests whenever the Black community organizes marches and rallies in its own self-defense. During Koch's single term in office, he has gone out of his way to encourage police violence against the Black community. Koch has attacked the city's Black leaders on the "grounds" of anti-Semitism, and criticized the integrity of progressive Black judges like Bruce Wright and officials who oppose police violence. When Harlem residents complained about the lack of adequate city sanitation service, Koch had the nerve to tell them that sanitation workers were already being paid too much, and that he could do nothing about their problems!

Even white liberal politicians elected with overwhelming Black support are turning the fiscal axe against programs which affect Black interests. Jane Byrne, for example, was elected Mayor of Chicago against the Daley Machine's candidate with critical support from the Black South Side. In late September, 1979, Byrne announced the closing of twenty-six day care centers, affecting thousands of Black children. Byrne's decision, which is now being opposed by Black community groups, would also cut out 900 jobs and over eight million dollars in salaries earned by parents of children enrolled in the program.

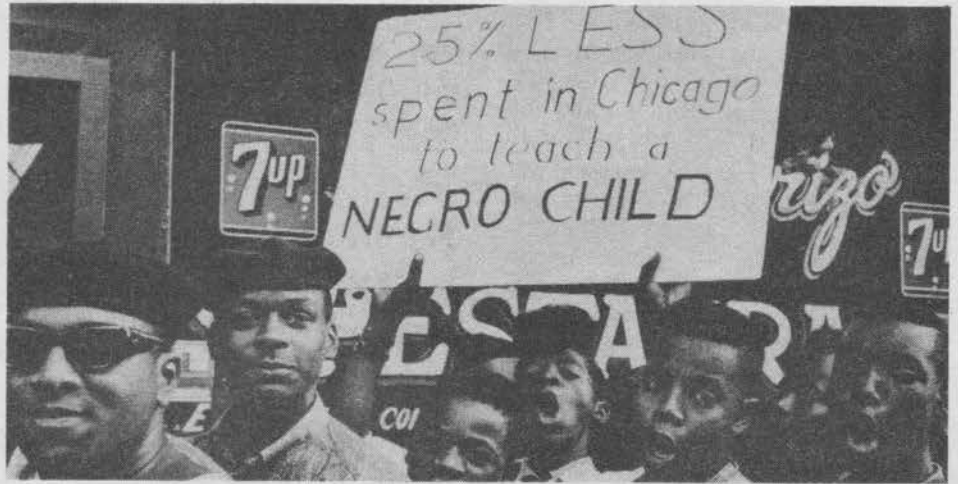
## Divisions within the Black Community

Fifteen years ago it was feasible to talk about a unified Black community, without emphasizing great distinctions based on income or the accumulation of private wealth. As E. Franklin Frazier observed, the "Black bourgeoisie" was a pseudo-class. Blacks working for the post office or in the public school system were the "privileged few." The economic distance between rural Blacks engaged in agriculture, urban Black factory workers and Black college professors was relatively small.

This no longer remains true. Between 1960 and 1970, for instance, the number of Black primary and secondary teachers rose from 122,163 to 235,436; during these same years, the number of Black physicians increased from 4,706 to 6,106. In the Census of 1970, about 150,000 Blacks were classified as administrators and nonfarm managers. Another 600,000 Blacks were classified as professional or technical workers, about 8 percent of the total Black workforce.

The top 5 percent of all Black employees earn a median income of \$34,000 annually, about three-fourths the median salary of the top 5 percent of white employees. This contrasts with a median income of under \$12,000 for all Black workers. This Black 5 percent at the top earn 16 percent of the aggregate Black income. The top 20 percent of Black wage earners receive almost half the total Black income.

It cannot be over-emphasized that this newly affluent, college-educated Black elite does not comprise a separate class in technical terms. However, this upper income stratum has developed distinctly different economic interests from the majority of Black working class people. Let us use the example



of home ownership: about 60 percent of all Black families rent their homes, and have no mortgages. About 90 percent of Black upper-income groups own their homes. The majority of Black people would favor the end to the deduction of interest payments on home mortgages from federal income taxes, since this could mean a reduction in overall federal taxes paid by lower income groups. Black home owners with salaries above \$40,000 would obviously be opposed to this. In this way, we can observe the economic basis for growing political conservatism on the part of many Black white collar employees and professionals—doctors, dentists, lawyers, college professors, bankers, business executives and politicians.

Most Black elected officials are part of this new Black professional elite; so are the leaders of the NAACP and Urban League. In terms of pure self-interest they have an economic stake in the unequal status quo. On both economic and political grounds, they have advocated public policies which work against the long-term interest of the Black working class and the unemployed.

## The Failure of Black Nationalists and Activists

The chief failure of the 1970s in Black politics was the inability to learn from the heritage of Black struggle since Reconstruction. Rival Black political organizations competed with each other for leadership of the movement to the point of self-destruction. Some prominent Black nationalist spokespersons began to "ego-trip" off their new-found prominence. Blacks with hidden political agendas disrupted Black conferences aimed at building mass-based unity. Despite the sacrifices of thousands of gifted and dedicated Black women and men, organizations like the African Liberation Support Committee were torn apart by senseless rivalry, intense polemics and rhetorical posturing. Some Black intellectuals began to confuse the meaning of our liberation movement with the lessons of someone else's revolution—in China, the Soviet Union or Cuba. Political extremism on the left and political opportunism on the right combined to negate the progressive potential of Black nationalism. Polemics triumphed over Black common sense.



# REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS & THE WORKPLACE

by David Dollar

**L**AST YEAR, FOUR WOMEN WORKERS at the American Cyanamid plant in Willow Island, West Virginia, were presented with a choice: undergo surgical sterilization or lose their jobs. The company had decided to bar all women able to bear children from parts of the plant where lead levels constituted a threat to developing fetuses. The ban covered all the higher-paying jobs recently opened to women. The four women, new at their jobs and low in seniority, faced demotion to janitorial work and substantial pay cuts.

The personnel director told the women that the only way they could keep their jobs was to have their tubes "tied" or get a hysterectomy. He assured them that the surgery was safe. Frightened for their jobs, the women complied—and lost forever the ability to give birth.

Reproductive hazards on the job are not a new problem, but have not gotten much attention. For the first time the incident at American Cyanamid has focused national attention on the problem and brought a response from

health activists and unions. According to Tony Mazzocchi, health and safety director for the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers, which represents the women who were sterilized, "If American Cyanamid and others can get away with removing women of child-bearing age from these jobs, we will have established the principle of altering the worker to the configuration of the workplace instead of altering the configuration of the workplace to protect the worker. Eventually, thousands upon thousands of jobs would require that workers of child-bearing capacity be excluded. You then end up with an entire class of neutered workers."

To fight the policies of American Cyanamid and other companies, OCAW established the Coalition for the Reproductive Rights of Workers. The coalition has brought together labor unions, occupational health advocates, and activists from the Reproductive Rights National Network, a federation of local groups that was initiated by NAM. Organizing around workplace hazards to reproduction is providing an opportunity for activists from the women's movement and the labor movement to work together on an issue of common concern and create concrete links between the two that strengthen both.

### Reproductive Hazards on the Job

Medical studies have shown that workplace hazards to reproduction are wide-

spread, affecting many occupations. Hospital workers are exposed to radiation, anesthetic gases, and infectious agents. Office workers are exposed to microwaves from cathode ray (video display) terminals. Workers in chemical or metal plants handle a wide variety of hazardous substances, including lead, vinyl chloride, and assorted proven carcinogenic dyes, pesticides, and other chemicals.

Many substances have an adverse effect even before conception, causing menstrual disorders in women, decreased interest or ability to engage in sex, and lowered fertility or sterility in women and men. Genetic damage to sperm or egg cells is caused by substances called mutagens. These changes can result in disease or birth defects, or cause miscarriages or stillbirth. Many mutagens are also cancer-causing agents.

Many factors that may not affect a non-pregnant woman may have an adverse effect on a pregnant woman because of the physiological demands of pregnancy. Of particular concern are substances called teratogens, which cause harm to the fetus. Viruses, chemicals, and certain drugs can cross the placenta and reach the fetus, causing disease, birth defects, marriages, or stillbirth. Some teratogens, like radiation, directly affect and damage the fetus.

Reproductive hazards don't stop after delivery because substances can affect an infant if the mother is breast-

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*David Dollar is a member of the Committee for Abortion Rights and Against Sterilization Abuse and a member of New York NAM.*





*These women were sterilized in order to keep their jobs at an American Cyanamid plant in West Virginia.*

feeding while exposed to a hazard. A child's development is also affected by substances brought home on parents' workclothes.

### **The Industry Response**

Different industries have had different responses to these hazards. When several studies documented that operating room personnel had higher than average rates of spontaneous abortion and miscarriage caused by exposure to anesthetic gases, hospitals made no moves to remove women nurses from operating rooms. To do so would have been too costly and inconvenient. Instead, many hospitals installed systems to reduce the accumulation of gases, making the workplace safer for all workers.

But in traditionally male industries, like metals and chemicals, where women have just begun to have fairer repre-

sentation in better paying jobs, many employers are responding to the dangers by trying to alter the workers rather than the workplace.

The sterilization of the women at American Cyanamid is not the only such case that has come to light. At the Bunker Hill Smelter in Kellogg, Idaho, and the St. Joe's Mineral Corporation smelter in Monaca, Pennsylvania, a total of 54 fertile women working in "high lead" areas were transferred from their jobs, all to lower paying positions. Four women had hysterectomies or tubal sterilizations in order to get their jobs back. At the Allied Chemical plant in Danville, Illinois, two laid-off women had themselves sterilized in order to regain their jobs. Later management decided that the chemical involved, fluorocarbon 22, was not a threat to the fetus at all—bitter irony for the women, who would never give birth again.

These policies which "protect" only fertile women are discriminatory in two ways—women are denied jobs and men are denied protection. There's no medical reason to single out women for "protective discrimination"—men are also susceptible to cell damage from toxic substances. In the case of lead, the father's exposure "is just as dangerous to the fetus" as the mother's, according to the expert who prepared the Occupational Safety and Health Administration lead exposure standards. "What this is really about is that employers are trying to save themselves from expensive lawsuits," argues Sue Nelson, director of the office of policy analysis for OSHA. "It is easier for a woman worker than a man to bring a lawsuit against a company on behalf of a fetus."

## Pressuring OSHA

Since its founding, the Coalition for the Reproductive Rights of Workers has concentrated mostly on legal work and lobbying federal agencies, particularly the Occupational Safety and Health Administration. This pressure resulted in October in an OSHA citation ordering American Cyanamid to end the health hazards threatening the reproductive capacity of its workers and fining the company \$10,000 for violating health and safety standards. The decision was hailed as a landmark by Tony Mazzocchi: "This is the first time that the Federal Government has said that the workers' right to conceive is backed by the law."

Important as the decision is, it's only the beginning of the fight. OSHA was able to rule in this case because standards have already been set for lead. But there are thousands of commercially available substances for which standards haven't been established. At the present rate at which OSHA is researching and setting permissible exposure levels, it will be over a century before standards are set just for substances already known to be toxic.

The process takes so long partly because corporations obstruct as much as possible the procedures for gathering information and setting standards. The attitude of the business community is reflected in American Cyanamid's response to the OSHA citation against it. The company's medical director attacked the decision, saying that if the company had to reduce the lead level to the required standard, "expenditures would be outrageously high. ...American business must make a profit. We must consider cost-benefit ratios when making these decisions." At DuPont, the medical director's response to the case was that, "first of all it is not technically and economically feasible to clean up the workplace to a safe level. And, second, we don't have the data to know what a safe level is."

Reproductive rights activists see the problem differently. "First we have to research and set safe standards," says Marilyn Katz, a coordinator of the Reproductive Rights National Network. "Then we have to make the companies comply. That's a political problem,

## **OSHA alone cannot eliminate occupational threats to reproductive capacity. Constant, on-site monitoring of working conditions can only be carried out by workplace health and safety committees.**

not just an economic or technical one." The network is involved in both aspects of this fight. The Coalition for the Medical Rights of Women, the network affiliate in San Francisco, participated in the original OSHA hearings on the lead standard, where its information helped broaden OSHA's concerns to include reproductive issues. On the political front the network has participated in CRROW and helped lobby OSHA. It is also trying to organize more active support from women's organizations for health and safety legislation and enforcement.

### Health and Safety Committees

Even functioning optimally, though, OSHA alone cannot eliminate occupational threats to reproductive capacity. Constant, on-site monitoring of working conditions can only be carried out by health and safety committees right in the workplace. In many areas health activists have organized Committees on Occupational Safety and Health to work with unions in developing health and safety programs. The Reproductive Rights National Network has begun to work with these committees and individual unions to inform workers about hazards to reproduction and help them organize to inspect their own workplaces and enforce health standards.

Last April, the Committee for Abortion Rights and Against Sterilization Abuse, the RRNN affiliate in New York, joined with the Committee for Occupational Safety and Health and the Coalition of Labor Union Women to organ-

ize a conference on occupational health and reproductive rights. The conference brought together over 200 people from labor, the women's movement, and occupational health groups. Some of the leading experts in the field spoke, including Drs. Wendy Chavkin and Vilma Hunt, both authorities on reproductive issues; Odessa Komer, vice-president of the United Auto Workers and co-chair of CRROW; and Dr. Helen Rodriguez, a pediatrician and founding member of the Committee to End Sterilization Abuse. The conference led to a follow-up course with sessions on the reproductive system and how it works, identifying dangers in your workplace, and organizing a safety committee to eliminate the dangers.

In Chicago, as part of Abortion Rights Action Week, the RRNN group Women Organized for Reproductive Choice worked together with the women's caucus of District 31 of the Steelworkers and the Chicago Area COSH to organize a forum on occupational threats to reproductive rights. The forum focussed on the hazards in hospitals and steel mills, the largest workplaces in the area.

### Connecting with Other Issues

The cooperation between the Reproductive Rights National Network and the labor movement around the issue of reproductive hazards in the workplace is still in the beginning stages. There are enormous possibilities for expanding the work—on the coalition level, in the COSHs and in particular unions. Many of the other issues that the network is committed to, particularly day care and pregnancy disability benefits, are also union concerns, and may provide an opportunity for enlarging the scope of joint work.

The fact that the network has taken a leading role in organizing around occupational hazards to reproductive rights has also made it possible to get more support from unions for abortion rights, an issue that is still controversial in the labor movement. The Coalition of Labor Union Women has had a good position on abortion since its founding, but has never been active in the abortion rights movement. Partly as a result of its work with CARASA, the

*continued on page 20...*



by Fred Pfeil

THERE WAS ONCE A TIME WHEN people bought and exchanged goods within a community. The ancient Greek market building was part of the complex that formed the city square, the center of public life. Commerce thus took its place along with governance, the administration of justice, and the observance of religious rites. Similarly, in the city squares of medieval and renaissance Europe, markets took colorful shape beneath towering structures of Town Hall and the Cathedral, still in the shadow of administration and faith. Even today, in countless American small towns like the one in northwest Pennsylvania where I grew up, the existence of a town square surrounded by stores, churches, city hall and the fire-house, testifies to the human desire for a public center in which commerce is integrated with the other, more valuable beliefs and practices that create and structure public life in a common, shared world. In each of these cases, the exchange relations of the market are embedded in the social interaction of daily life.

It would be easy, and dangerous, to take these images as complete representations of the societies they came from, and to yearn for the return of what never was. We forget at our peril that, as the brilliant marxist historian Perry Anderson puts it, "The classical polis was based on the new conceptual discovery of liberty, entrained by the systematic institution of slavery," and that the necessary (if contradictory) complement to the medieval town was the feudal estate to which hordes of serfs were fastened to grind out their lives for their lords. And in those small towns, if you walk too far down the wrong cross-street you will find the grey factory by the river. If the town is lucky, if the plant has not yet been closed down or

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## *Center of the Dream Mass Culture in the Shopping Mall*



*Opening Day at Mondawmin Shopping Center, Baltimore, Maryland.*

moved to the Third World, you will see the men and women shuffling in and out of it, lunchpails swinging their arms.

But the point I want to make here is this: the marketplace as part of a public life, as one of the ways people come together in a community, is all but gone. My mother, who has grown up and lived her life in that small town in Pennsylvania, does not shop there any more. Nor does she shop in the downtown stores of the nearest middle-sized town, Olean, New York, just across the state-line from us. She drives past the downtown in Olean, down State Street to the mall at the far edge of town, and does her shopping there.

I know she does because I have been there with her. I have watched her strolling down the arcade, stepping through the entrance of one store or another, walking through the subdued light, beneath the smooth muzak, past the fountains and plants. It is a comparatively small mall, not more than 300,000 square feet inside, and it was a weekday morning, between 9 and 11, yet there were lots of people there, moving around. We saw some other folks from our home town, and said hello to them, but not much more. When we got to the large department store that is one of the mall's "anchors," my mother began to move even more slowly, pausing often to touch something—a blouse, a couch, a cooking dish. As we drove back through downtown, past the empty windows and boarded storefronts, she shook her head sadly at how far "downhill" the old business district had gone, and made a clucking sound back in her throat, as though that was just the way life goes.

### The Mall of America

I tell this story about my mother and the Olean mall because it seems almost a kind of parable of the emergence of mass culture and the destruction of public life in America. For we did not always buy this way, in these places; and the extent that we all do so now is a direct measure of how atomized we have all become, just as the story of how shopping centers happened is a

model of how mass culture is produced and marketed generally.

No one, to my knowledge, has yet attempted such a history of the shopping center. Yet the history is there, in the market surveys, case histories, and handbooks of the ICSC, the International Council of Shopping Centers, in self-approving, rhapsodic tomes by the designers and architects, in the industry's trade magazine, *Chain Store Age Executive* and in scattered articles in business magazines and newspapers.

And one of the first myths these sources dispel is that shopping centers sprung up overnight. The first shopping center, in the sense of a grouped cluster of stores alongside an automobile highway (a cluster now known in the trade as a "strip center") went up in Baltimore in 1907. The first large shopping center catering to car traffic was Country Club Plaza, erected in south Kansas City in 1923.

Business writers whose specialty is shopping centers love to trot out these facts and dates as evidence of the shopping center as an American "tradition." But the more interesting and significant truth is that even in the mid-50's, when shopping centers were sprouting up all over the country to serve the new suburban sprawl, there was considerable uncertainty as to whether they could succeed in replacing downtown areas as the central place to shop. A research monograph published in 1955 comparing shopping center trade to downtown trade in Houston, Seattle, and Columbus, Ohio, found that most people, both city dwellers and suburbanites, still preferred to shop downtown, in spite of the real material conveniences centers offered: no parking problems, less walking for parents and kids, "weatherless" enclosed space, and a shorter distance from home. A close analysis of the data revealed that the primary reason why downtown still led the field was that downtown shopping areas offered a greater variety of goods. This fact, not surprisingly, was more important to "upper income groups" than to "lower," who tended to shop wherever the goods were cheapest. But urban and

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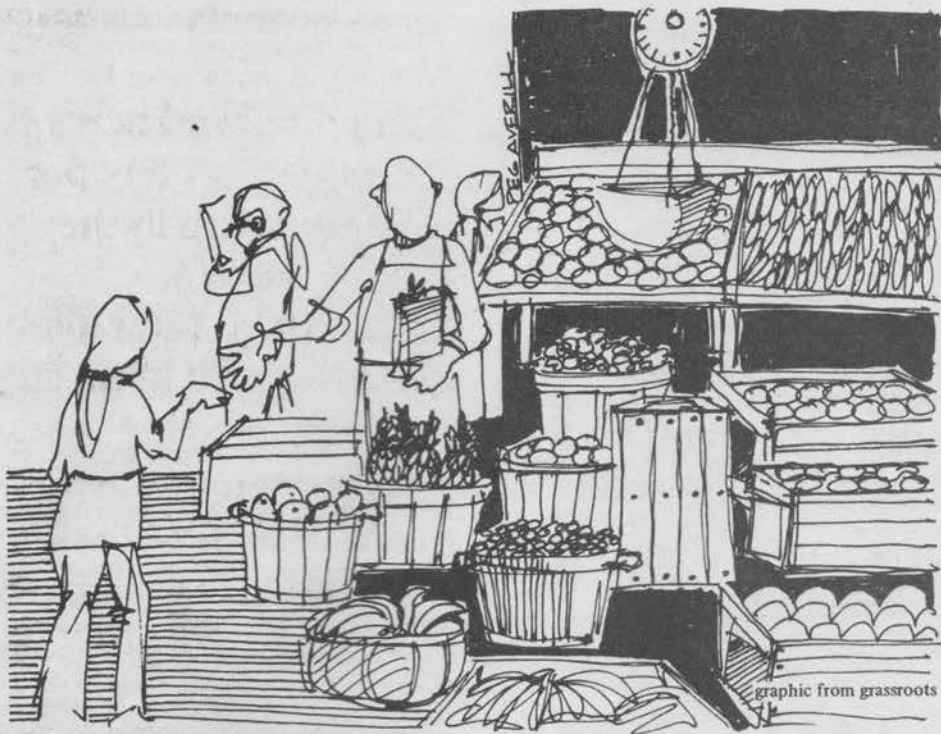
**One thousand new shopping centers per year went up in the years 1967-73. As of 1976, \$60 billion was invested in these centers, which accounted for 49 per cent of all retail sales, excluding building or automotive products.**

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suburban populations across all class lines were still culturally diverse enough to require a diversity of goods that only downtown areas supplied. "The suburban shopping center," the researcher concluded, "if it is to supplant downtown, must approach that area's variety and selection..."

So speaks the wisdom of 1955, when there were roughly 2,000 shopping centers in the country. Today, there are at least 18,000. One thousand new centers *per year* went up in the years 1967-73. As of 1976, \$60 billion was invested in these centers, which accounted for 49% of all retail sales, excluding building or automotive products. Profits from the largest shopping centers, the "regionals" with two or three "anchor" stores apiece were at last measure still hitting in, despite the recession, at between 8 and 8½% *after inflation*. So it appears that the shopping centers, their developers and tenants and financiers, must have put some variety in their stores, must have followed our researcher's advice. They are certainly winning, after all, and downtowns everywhere are just as surely going to hell.





And yet our researcher was wrong, as anyone who has spent time in a mall knows. You so not find variety in Macy's or K-Marts or Brentano's Book Stores; you find quantity, and a certain selection, but no real diversity. And the illusion of variety evaporates completely for those who have walked through more than one mall. There are differences between what's on the racks at I. Magnin's and Penney's, of course; but if you stick to the centers that have been designed to serve your class (or "income group," as the euphemism goes), you'll find the difference between corresponding stores exactly as great as the difference between Sears and Montgomery Ward, NBC and ABC, GM and Ford, Tweedledum and Tweedledee.

If this is so, then the triumph of shopping malls stems from a far more concerted corporate effort, and a far more general social effect: *large numbers of us all must have come to want the same things.* Fixed in our identical suburban homes, watching the television whose product is our attention fastened to the desires it manufactures for us, locked in our cars with the radios on,

divorced from neighborhood and ethnicity (poverty may well not be the only reason there are so few shopping centers for blacks), overwhelmingly convinced that we are each of us members of the middle class, we have become consumer units, identical as any Newtonian particles, and our social behavior has become reducible to Newtonian commercial rules.

The largest, most representative, and most successful shopping centers, those regional malls that average 600,000 sq. ft. of surface area and have three large "anchor" stores apiece, are built and financed by shopping center developers who calculate our behavior according to such "laws." If the results of their calculations look promising, they may approach an investment corporation like Corporate Property Investors, in which Rockefeller and Agnelli-Fiat moneys play a large role, or an insurance company like Connecticut General, which as of 1976 had \$1 billion worth of loans out to developers for malls. They will certainly approach the large department store chains, and some other prospective chain outlets as well. (In-

dividual retail establishments are, of course, the least profitable and influential establishments, with the slightest capacity for creating and calculating our desires; they will be notified later, accordingly, when the plan is set, if there is additional space.)

And these institutions—the investment corporations, the banks and insurance companies, the chain stores—will all make calculations of their own, in "pulling power," square feet, advertising budget, market area and composition, all of which, along with the developer's equations, will be forwarded to the architect, who will plan accordingly. To them we are units in the equation, stable objects that can be depended on to move when pushed, the homogenized pulp they will process into dollars if their calculations are correct.

But here is Edward J. DeBartolo, the king of shopping malls, putting it far better than I can as he looks down at a new mall of his from a helicopter far above:

*"Now look up here, north of Orlando. There's Altamonte, our northside mall. See that development just beyond it? See that immense growth? My God, that's beautiful. All those people down there... That community will have maybe 15, 20 thousand people when it's done. That's not big enough for a mall... And there, those growths further out...they won't be big enough either. But between them all—why you got all that new money down there, new homes, they'll need furniture, appliance sales, all that stuff. And there we are, sitting right there with Searts! Penney's! Jordan Marsh!—and with that Interstate weaving right through there, nice road, no tolls...Boom! We got 'em! We can write our own ticket down here."*

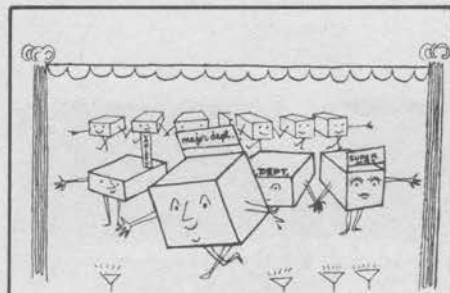
Our cultural emptiness is the stuff of his dreams, the great achievement of his lifetime, and the hope of the future for him: "I would like to know," he told the *New York Times* journalist, "that what I'm doing could go on endlessly."

## A Dream of Community

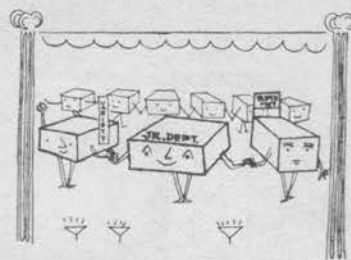
Suzanne Langer has suggested that the mode of perception that film issues from is the dream, with its discontinuous ability to leap through space and time, its intense credibility and vividness, which we experience privately, helplessly, viscerally, as we do when we are asleep. Yet film is ironically also the most collective and technological of art forms, requiring actors, directors, camera operators and crews, various other technicians, and a regalia of advanced tools from cameras and editing machines to the projector that shows us a copy of the final print.

If, as Stanley Aronowitz argues, film is thus the model art form of late capitalism, with its simultaneous use and repression of technology and a collective mode of production, and its overwhelming power to introject itself into our private isolations, then the shopping mall must be the model architectural form of our time. For the mall itself is an arrested dream, a dream created by people and machines we consumers must never see when we are there. Victor Gruen, one of the chief architects of the huge regionals of the boom 50's and 60's, insists that unfinished or incomplete "spaces" must be "attractively enclosed." All sources are agreed that, in the unfortunate event that the mall is incomplete on Opening Day and thereafter, the work of completion must take place as surreptitiously as possible. Likewise, truck roads must be tunneled beneath the mall or otherwise directed to "well-shielded truck courts," so that delivery of goods to the stores is invisible; the clothes simply appear on the racks. Likewise, the dump ground out back or down below should seem nonexistent; the pipes must be hidden; the mechanical plant must remain forever secret too.

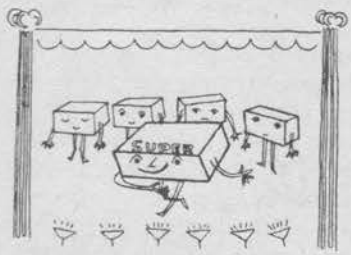
The net effect of all these separate suppressions, and of the skillful use of space, lighting, decor and Muzak, is a magic shadowland in which goods—the jeans in the window, the record display—have come from nowhere, yet present themselves as the "realist" things that are. Here, quite literally, "the commodity bathes in an unholy light," in Walter Benjamin's poetic phrase. Gruen tells would-be developers and tenants



In the regional shopping center, the major department store is the star of the show.



In the intermediate center, the junior department store shares the limelight with the variety store and the supermarket.



In the neighborhood shopping center, the supermarket is the star of the show.

that "the show windows of the stores should be the brightest areas," and urges designers to arrange "all commercial facilities in a compact grouping" which "encourages walking" and "offers the possibility of uninterrupted window shopping." Outside, from the parking lot or the freeway, the mall may look like a heap of blocks surrounded by cars—like another industrial complex, in fact, which is what it is. Inside, one must be able to escape from these brutal realities of cars, stark rubble, and sprawl. Inside all distances must seem possible and inviting, there must be color, and festive sound, the air must be clean, there must be sculpture and plants, and theatres and pleasant res-

taurants, and kiosks with announcements of things to buy and do. Inside must be the place where you can live a common, beautiful life.

This is the positive content of the dream that is the shopping mall: the promised fulfillment of our desire for community, for a public space. And the people who finance, design, and own shopping malls know it. Gruen is capable, in fact, of self-deceptive raptures on the subject in his *Shopping Towns U.S.A.* The shopping center, he says, can be "a place that not only provides suburbanites with their physical living requirements, but simultaneously serves their civic, cultural and social community needs," and he encourages designers to study "market scenes in the market squares of Central European cities...to understand the contribution to community life the open spaces in our new shopping towns can make."

Thus the decor of malls (those malls, that is, whose clientele has a high enough income to rate decor) is commonly full of allusions to communities long gone. Some, like Eastridge in San Jose, use hard materials, sharp angles, bright colors, and large expanses of space to conjure up the memory of an active, vigorous urban downtown. Old Orchard in Skokie, an unenclosed center, was landscaped in "rambling, informal lines" to create a "village-like atmosphere," as historian Neil Harris glowingly describes it in the pages of *The New Republic*. There are countless malls and centers which use pillars, columns, statues and names ("The Forum") to evoke the sense of community and dignity we associate with ancient Greece and Rome. And in every shopping mall and center, no matter how lowly its clientele, there will be various "festivals"—the Fall Festival Sale, the Boat Show, etc.—sponsored and funded by the tenants association as a good promotional hook. *Shopping Center Strategy*, a publication of the ICSC, recommends holding sixty promotional events a year—an average of one every five days.

What all these gestures, effects, and events add up to is, of course, not a community, not any more than your dream of a dead grandfather brings him back to life. Likewise, just as the grandfather's vivid presence in your dream may

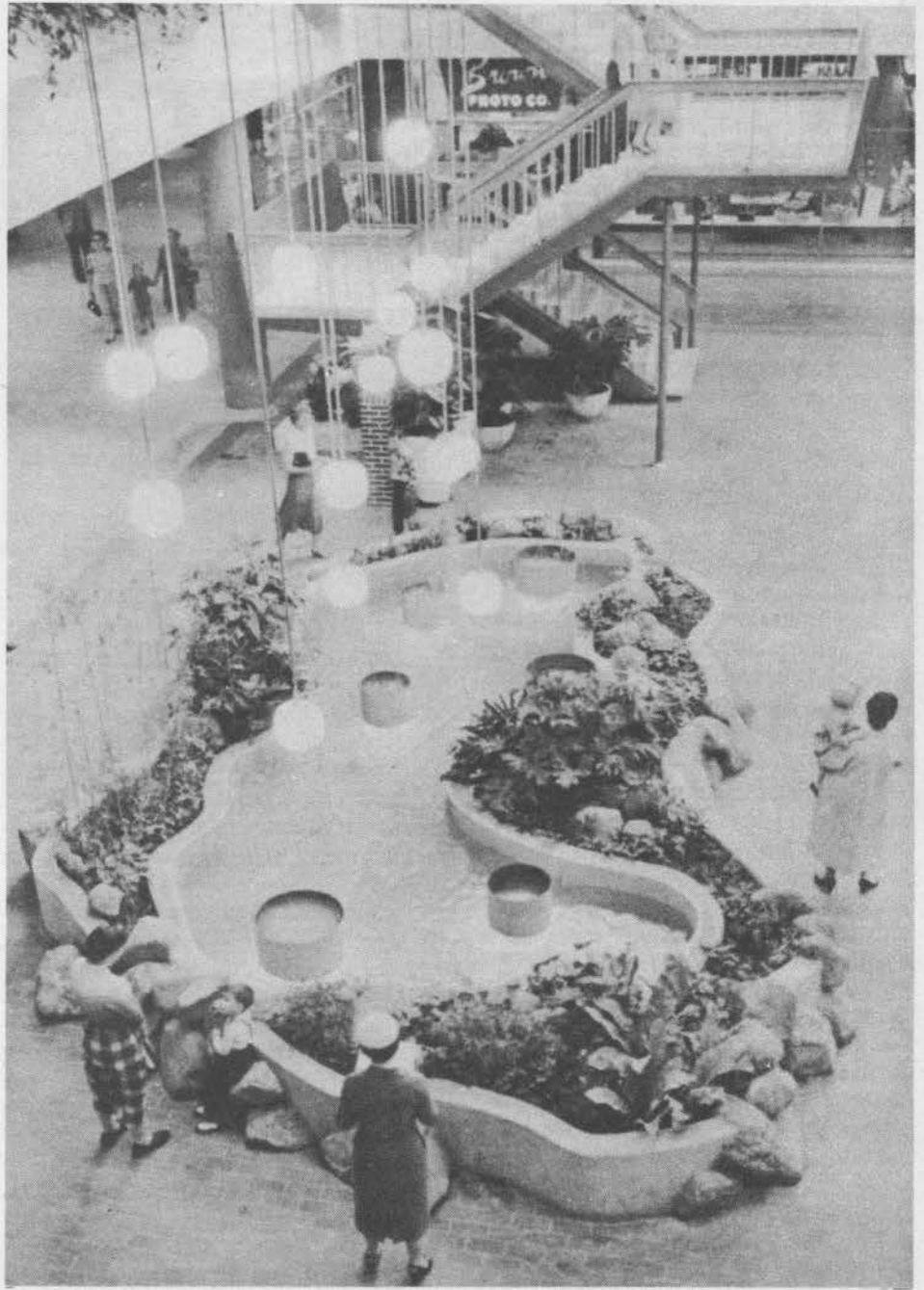


mystify the dream's real meaning as much as it reveals it, just as the gut-wrenching scenes of *Apocalypse Now* or *The Deer Hunter* distract our consciousness from the neo-fascist ideology they convey, so shopping centers distract us with the mirage of habitable public space so that the commodity will shine in on us all the more piercingly from the display window, so that we will hardly notice we are buying, at least until we reach the register. This communal space is an illusion, for it must be extended so far towards reality and no more. Edgar Lion, author of *Shopping Centers: Planning, Development, and Administration*, notes with concern "that in some centers, older people gather on the benches and spend a good part of the day there," and goes on to recommend some "subtle (sic) method to discourage unlimited use of the seating facilities":

*The simplest way is not to make the seats too comfortable. Benches can be constructed with slat seats, which become tiring after a while; they can be built without backrests and spaced away from walls.*

The true community, the public place, is what we see above, below, ahead of us, or what we sense around the next corner of the mall walkway. It recedes as we walk towards it, moving toward the "anchor" store, pausing occasionally to dip inside a "secondary traffic attractor"—a Baskin-Robbins, a Levi's store—to see if it is there. The language of the architects and designers expresses half of what is going on here by speaking of the huge "anchor" stores at the ends of the walkways as "magnets" pulling us—if skillfully located—"from one magnet to the other, past the doors of the tenants who fall into the category of traffic users...dependent upon the foot traffic generated by the primary and secondary traffic attractors..."

Half the truth, in other words, is that we are charged particles in a machine whose purpose is to soak up some, but not all, of the charge before we smash into the magnet and stick to it. The other half, the lived experience, is the kind of feverish, half-conscious hope no one else describes as well as Joyce Carol Oates' Doreen, the teen-age heroine of "Years of Wonders":



*Twenty-eight entrances, all equal in size. The "Main Entrance" is no different from the others—a double Thermopane door that opens automatically when you approach it. It faces Seaway Avenue and the "A" parking lot. But it is no larger than the twenty-seven other entrances. So the way you choose to enter is just an accident, but it can change your life.*

It is, you might say, not quite your feeling; but it is the feeling you get. This is the experience of what Sartre calls "seriality": the experience of a "structured multiplicity," identical to but separate from one another, and ordered from above by a unity that is "ever present but always elsewhere." For serialized individuals in mass culture, this unifying force will be a mirage of communal life and public action: we all go

*continued on page 20...*

# Seducing the Viewer

by Peter Rose

THE SEDUCTION OF JOE TYNAN  
directed by Jerry Schatzberg  
written by Alan Alda

THE PUBLIC OPINION POLLS OF the post-Watergate era show conservatives, liberals, radicals and "apoliticals" all agree about one thing: politicians can't be trusted. The polls also show an extraordinary longing for Teddy Kennedy to be president—even among those who say they don't believe his version of Chappaquiddic. This longing for Kennedy is also in obvious contradiction with the evidence of polls showing that the public has repudiated Kennedy's brand of liberalism—buying off the rage of the unemployed poor with handouts paid for by the working poor. This seeming paradox suggests on the one hand, the desperate nostalgia of people for the last time they believed in a major political figure, John Kennedy, and on the other, their deeper realization that the whole American political/economic system—including all the Kennedys and whatever solutions they have offered—is incurably corrupt.

*The Seduction of Joe Tynan* is not just a simple reflection of this double vision of the American people about the Kennedys. Nor is it cynical propaganda ground out by the active Kennedy machine. But the film is deeply enmeshed in this hesitation between despairing acknowledgement of the

*Peter Rose is a member of Santa Cruz NAM while on leave from a teaching job at Miami University (Ohio). He reviews films for the Westside Story, a community newsletter from which this story is reprinted.*

truth and self-deceiving wish-fulfillment. Senator Joe Tynan (Alan Alda) is a kind of idealized composite of the various Kennedy images—a vigorous and attractive young senator from the Northeast with a sincere concern for the "disadvantaged," a devoted family man with a distinct vulnerability to extramarital involvement, a voraciously ambitious aspirant to the White House with the staff of bright, unscrupulous manipulators to guide him through the dirty realities of Washington politics. The Kennedy stamp is set squarely on him by Tynan himself at a key point in his "seduction." About to make his move on a bright Louisiana lawyer named Karen Traynor (Meryl Streep) with whom he has joined forces in opposing a racist Supreme Court nominee, Tynan tells her: "You remind me of John F. Kennedy—just behind the eyes I can see the same wit, intelligence and compassion."

The seduction is however not simply sexual. The film offers its own mystified version of the relation of the "personal" and the "political." By making the Streep character an integral part of the Senate fight over the Supreme Court nominee, the film fuses Tynan's fall from ideal family man into cheating swinger with his fall from idealistic do-gooder into the cynical presidency-seeker. As he neglects his embittered children and deceives his intelligent and loving wife, we also see him begin lying to his Senate colleagues, betray a political friendship to further his career, then compose an idealistic sounding letter with the specific issues to be added by the computer for different sorts of supporters—"whatever we have them coded for."

The complete fusion of the two seductions is underlined in the cinematically most ambition portion of the film. The

camera cuts rapidly between scenes of the machine build-up of Tynan after his political triumph over the Supreme Court nominee (we see quick flashes of mechanically written signatures for mass mailings, TV talk shows and speeches, analysis of his image by a media expert) and scenes of Tynan and Streep in bed. The dreary media advisor's admonitions slide into sexual puns in the bedroom. A curious result of this consistent fusion is that despite Streep's presentation as a thoroughly intelligent and sympathetic character, her relationship to Tynan lacks any personal depth. Apart from the brief pathos of its break-up, that relationship is strictly fun-and-games, analogous to the joys of winning at any price in the political arena. All emotional complexity—frustration, guilt, anger, passion of any kind—is reserved for Tynan's interactions with his daughter and wife (the son gets rather short shrift). Implicitly then the film sustains the division of male and female spheres by simply incorporating the Streep character into the male sphere. Tenderness and integrity are strictly virtues for the home; shared political work is incompatible with human passion.

At the same time both seductions are so engineered that we, the manipulated audience, want both to succeed. Streep is so attractive, so obviously drawn to Tynan ("I think you are the most exciting political figure in America. When I think about the splash you could make ...I get weak in the knees!"); her husband is so obviously boring ("Didn't my girl send your girl my itinerary? Probably couldn't believe it was our only means of communication"); and she and Tynan have such obviously joyful times in bed that the viewer is seduced too. And despite the spurious pathos of the



old senator whom Tynan betrays and destroys, despite the shifty-eyed and unctuous manipulating by Tynan's chief assistant Francis, we still want Tynan to defeat the racist Louisiana judge, and we want Tynan or someone like him to be president because the only alternatives we see in the film are so much worse.

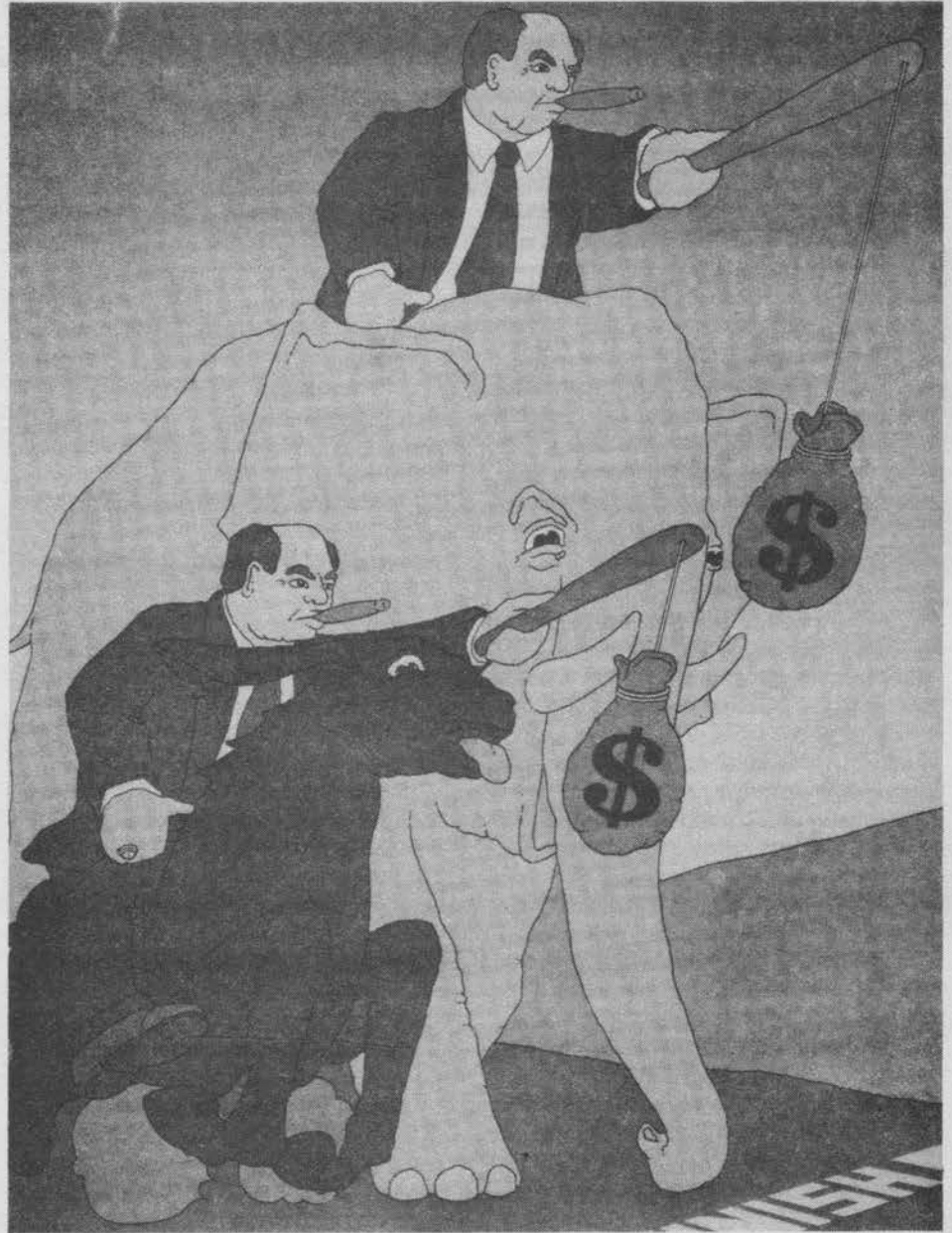
Politics which is reduced to electoral politics—and that only at the Washington level—is inherently mystified politics. The only “issues” we are allowed to glimpse are presented in terms of a choice between the allegedly humane “concern” of a well-off East Coast suburbanite and the blind opposition of the senile Southern reactionaries. The opening credits are flashed over cute little black kids singing “Land where my fathers died... let freedom ring” as they ride in a school bus past the monuments of American power. Besides racial discrimination, seen exclusively in terms of schools and busing, we hear of “ten million people not able to put bread on the table, and candidate Tynan asks, with carefully coached concern, “Why should an 85 year old woman freeze to death?” The film offers no analysis for racism, chronic unemployment or the grim plight of the aged poor. The only solution, it strongly suggests, is to repress your disgust at the clearly inevitable movement of Tynan toward his goal of total immersion in Washington corruption and, like his conflict-ridden, weeping wife, nod in grudging assent with those mindless idiots at the nominating convention shouting “We want Tynan”.

What is completely suppressed from the film are meaningful alternatives to the irrelevant ideologies of bankrupt liberalism and the already defunct suburban family which the film chooses to celebrate. We never see the actual victims of these ideologies—blacks, the unemployed, the underpaid, women, children, older people—working together to find solutions to their problems and fight the whole rotten system that leaves them literally out of the picture.

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*The film is deeply enmeshed in this hesitation between despairing acknowledgement of the truth and self-deceiving wish-fulfillment.*

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## Being Gay in Moscow

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*[The "sexual revolution" of the 60s in the West has been rejected in Eastern Europe as decadent and bourgeois. This is not because they appreciate its oppressive aspects but because their own views are still shaped by old-fashioned moral codes and stereotypes. Gay people are typically seen as sick and deviant, and the interview with a gay man in Moscow shows the difficulties this can bring. Rape, prostitution and violence against women still exist, despite official silence on the subject.]*

**This interview took place in Moscow during the summer of 1977. Phillip is interviewing Sasha, who is 26 and who works as an engineer for the City Council.**

**When did you first become aware that you were gay?**

Very late, really. When I was 21, I suppose about six months after I had got married.

**So late?**

Yes. You see, I'm not exclusively homosexual and I've always felt a certain attraction towards women, but it was only after I got married that I realized that my main sexual interest was in men.

**Had you had any sexual experience with men prior to your marriage?**

No. I'd been in love with men and been physically very close to men, but I'd never had sex with a man.

**When did you have sex for the first time?**

In the summer of 1972, while I was on the Black Sea. My marriage was on the

rocks and I took a month's holiday to sort myself out. It was while I was playing football on the beach one day that I met a 16-year-old boy who was to become my lover.

**How did you feel the first time you slept with him?**

I don't really know. I remember that even after I had slept with him several times, I still refused to admit that I was homosexual. After all, Russian men are very physical towards one another, and I kept saying to myself that sleeping with another man was nothing unusual.

**How do people regard homosexuality?**

Generally, in a very negative way. At best as a sickness or a psychological disorder, and at worst as a symptom of bourgeois degeneracy or as a crime.

**Homosexual activity is punishable by law, isn't it?**

Yes. Homosexual men—though not women—can be jailed for up to five years; eight, if one of the partners is under 18.

**This is the law which Stalin introduced in 1934, isn't it?**

Yes. You know, most gay people have no idea that between the Revolution of 1917 and 1934 homosexuality activity was perfectly legal.

**But is the law frequently applied? I mean, do you personally live in fear of imprisonment?**

Well, obviously, I'm careful. A certain amount of discretion is essential. But only one person I know has ever been done for homosexuality, and that was because he was a bit of a dissident. The police used a homosexuality charge because it was convenient. The same thing happened recently to a Leningrad poet.

**How much do the police harass gays?**

Generally, I reckon the police are prepared to turn a blind eye, providing we don't get out of hand. For instance, a certain amount of cottaging goes on, which the police seem to tolerate.

**Is that where most gay men meet—in public toilets?**

Oh no. There are various places one can meet other gays. In Moscow, for instance, a lot of gay men meet around the Bolshoi Theatre and lesbians sometimes meet around Mayakovsky Square.

**But there are no pubs, are there?**

None whatever. Hardly any social facilities exist for anyone—gay or straight. In the past there have been one or two cafes where gay people have met, but as soon as one gets a reputation, the police step in. I personally tend to meet gay friends at home, but then I'm lucky, because I have a flat. If I didn't, I'd do what everyone else does and spend my time just strolling around the city with friends, which isn't so bad on summer evenings, but gets horrific in winter.

**You just said you were lucky to have your own flat. Why is that?**

The housing situation is desperate, par-

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*"Being Gay in Moscow" is reprinted from a special issue on women of Labour Focus on Eastern Europe, an independent socialist journal from England. Annual subscriptions (4 issues) are available for \$10.00 surface rate, \$15.00 air mail from Labour Focus, Bottom Flat, 116 Cazenove Rd., London, N.16, England.*



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**Firstly, we don't have even the limited gay subculture which exists in the West, and so it's very difficult for us to develop any sense of common identity, still less a consciousness of our oppression.**

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ticularly in big cities like Moscow and Leningrad. Married couples have to wait for ages to get a state flat or else pay exorbitant rent for a room which has been sublet.

**Can gay couples get flats together?**

In no way. Not even single people qualify for a state flat. The vast majority of my friends either live with their parents or else they get married—either way, any sex life is ruled out.

**Do a lot of gays get married?**

Oh yes. As you know, marriages of convenience are a real industry here. Because of the laws relating to residence, if you want to live in a big city, you must either have been born there, or get special permission to live there because of your job, or else marry someone who is a registered citizen. Few people want to live in some provincial backwater, especially if they are gay—because outside of big cities like Moscow, Leningrad or Odessa, it's virtually impossible to live a homosexual lifestyle. And so gays try to get married to someone registered in a particular city. That way they might be able to get a flat and stand a chance of living as a gay.

**But doesn't that kind of fictitious marriage make for all kinds of dishonesty—for example, men deceiving women into marriage, or men getting married and leading double lives?**

Oh yes, absolutely. The whole situation is terrible. Of course, money helps.

If you are fairly well off, you might be able to buy a flat as a single person through a co-operative scheme, but it's expensive.

**Is the situation much the same for lesbians?**

I've a couple of lesbian friends who are lovers, but they live with their respective parents. Generally, I guess, lesbians have a worse time than gay men. At least gay men are recognized. And there are even one or two environments—the theatre or ballet being obvious examples—where homosexuality is accepted. But people simply refuse to believe that lesbians exist.

**So if, for example, a woman were discovered to be a lesbian, it would be very unlikely that she would be allowed to keep her children?**

Certainly.

**My impression, after living here for some time, is that attitudes towards women in general are very bad. I mean women do full time jobs, run homes and look after children and still get incredibly patronised by men.**

Well, as you know, for a long time, I just couldn't understand what you meant by "sexism"—I mean we don't have any such concept in Russian—and though I still think that you underestimate the real degree of equality for women which has been achieved in the Soviet Union, I am beginning to notice some of the ways in which men do oppress women.

**One of the things we have tried to do in the gay movement in the West is challenge sexism and sexual stereotyping among gay men. Do gay men in the Soviet Union define themselves as butch or femme or behave accordingly?**

Yes. And as you might expect, effeminate men get shit not only from hets, but from other gay men too. It's quite easy for someone like me to pass as straight, so I often forget how prejudiced people's attitudes are. But I once had a boyfriend who was very effeminate, and the abuse and so on which he got was quite incredible. It's interesting that in regions like Armenia, it's only passive homosexuality which is regarded as abnormal.

**Did you know that in Stalin's prison camps, according to Marchenko's *My Testimony*, although homosexual activity was rampant, only men who played a passive role were punished?**

Yes, that confirms what I was saying.

**Have you ever considered "coming out"?**

Absolutely not. What would be the point? People would think I was either sick or crazy; I'd almost certainly lose my job, and I might end up in a psychiatric hospital or even in prison.

**So there's no possibility of a gay movement emerging in the USSR?**

Definitely not in the foreseeable future. Firstly, we don't have even the limited gay subculture which exists in the West, and so it's very difficult for us to develop any sense of common identity, still less a consciousness of our oppression. And secondly, even if we did have a group solidarity, it would be impossible to organize, given the repressive political situation. The state definitely has the upper hand in the USSR at present, in a way which perhaps it does not have in countries like Poland. And just as a workers' movement committed to democratic socialism is more likely to emerge in Poland before it emerges here, so I'd expect any movement concerned with sexual politics to emerge first in one of the other East European countries.

# Shopping Malls—

continued from page 15...

to the mall "together" in the same sense that we all watch the Super Bowl "together," yell "Charge" in response to the organ and the electric scoreboard at the baseball game at the proper moment, on cue. Each one of us "freely chooses" to be "like the Others" in the absence of any genuine community or cultural ground of our own, in the desperate, scarcely-conscious hope that there is some community, some public out there which we, by sheer dint of imagination, may someday magically find and join. Perhaps it is just down the walkway, past the fountains and columns, through the bright-lit, wide open door to the anchor store. And perhaps all my mother actually is thinking as she moves toward that doorway is that maybe she will find whatever it is she wants in there.

## Going Out of Business?

The shopping center, of course, and American mass culture generally arose from a distinct set of material circumstances: the rise in spending power through the 50's and 60's, the flight from the cities, the growth and consolidation of advertising, mass media, and of American corporate power generally. And only as new material forces appear and align themselves into new situations will mass culture and the experience of atomized seriality give way or grow. But writing this article has made me more keenly aware than ever before of the danger that perhaps even Marx himself did not foresee, when he wrote, somewhat gleefully, in *The Communist Manifesto* that the capitalist bourgeoisie "has pitilessly torn asunder the motley feudal ties that bound man to his 'natural superiors,' and has left remaining no other nexus between man and man than naked self-interest, than callous 'cash payment'."

Marx's hope was that, with previous ties of fealty and servitude cancelled out, workers under the oppression of the capitalist system would come to-

gether to act in a concerted, conscious way in their own interest, guided by the Communist vanguard. But the history of the last quarter century in America shows that other outcomes are possible, at least in the short-term. When there are no bonds left but the cash nexus, there is no common culture, no public, communal life, no community; and mass culture, a mirage of community manufactured by capitalists for corporate profits, can be introduced directly into the void left behind.

Yet *Chain Store Age Executive*, the trade magazine for shopping center owners, managers, and tenants, is officially worried today. A recent advertising survey suggests that, thanks to the energy crisis and the high cost of gasoline, "a monthly mall trip will eventually replace the traditional two to four, and it will be a much more destination-oriented excursion." I would imagine that it's this last phrase, the "destination-oriented excursion," that sends the sharpest chill down the backs of this magazine's capitalist clientele. If the customers know what they want, then they will simply get it—or not get it—and leave. If they stop coming for Doreen's bittersweet, addictive taste of hope, if they stop wandering like ordered particles down those artful corridors in search of public life, then the mall is in trouble, and not just because sales would drop off.

Customers might start looking elsewhere for a taste of community, and who knows? If they meet up with the wrong people at the wrong time—people working together for a future without nukes or energy corporations, for some rank-and-file power in the unions, for sexual liberty and equality, or even (god forbid) for democratic socialism—why you never know what might happen if they get a chance to take a real taste of the real thing. Why, they might never come around again.

And the truth is, it can happen, anytime. It may even have already begun.

# Reproductive Rights—

continued from page 10...

New York chapter has taken up the issue in a more serious way. It brought a resolution endorsing Abortion Rights Action Week to the national CLUW convention and got it passed. It also co-sponsored a forum for the week with CARASA.

As a result of CLUW's participation, several unions supported the forum. District 1199 hosted the event. An AF-SCME local and a local of the Communications Workers printed leaflets. And many people in the labor movement helped publicize it.

Breakthroughs like this will come slowly. The labor movement isn't going to change its stance on abortion overnight. But by working together first on issues of mutual concern, particularly workplace hazards to reproduction, the reproductive rights movement and the labor movement will make ties that lead more and more to joint work on other issues. "This is the real strength of the reproductive rights perspective," says Marilyn Katz. "By linking up the different issues we increase the base of support for them all."

*Some of the material in this article appeared first in an article in WIN magazine by Ruthann Evanoff, and is reprinted with her permission.*

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# We Get Letters...

## First experience

I've been an associate member of NAM for the past year and want you to know that I strongly support and appreciate MOVING ON. As a matter of fact, though I'd been hearing of NAM for years, it was MOVING ON that gave me my first direct experience of what the hell NAM was about. The "NAM in Brief" on the back page sounded too good to be true, and I resolved to join as soon as I found some kindred spirits to form a chapter with. The search was temporarily fruitless, so I joined anyway.

MO serves as a relatively pleasant and certainly not threatening introduction to a perspective on life that needs more exposure, not less. Improve, Si...Do Away With, No!

Please keep up the much appreciated good work.

**Frank Scott  
San Rafael, CA**

## Meaningful debate

I am responding to the issue of MOVING ON's publication. It is true that much of what is printed in MOVING ON can be found elsewhere, however, internal discussion of issues concerning NAM and of the facts surrounding these issues should have a public airing. Although I am not a NAM member I do like to keep abreast of NAM's national activities, and, since NAM is one of the few organizations that engages in meaningful debate, this too should have a public forum. The hard news and opinion could be left out.

**Robert Leventer  
Los Angeles, CA**

## Appreciative of MO

I enjoy MO a lot. Primarily this is because it fills a decided gap for cultural and analytic journalism created by sectarian newspapers on the one hand and academic journals on the other. I do not always concur with the analyses I find in MO articles (locating myself, I guess, in the left flank of NAM), but this isn't a problem for me; that is, I don't expect MO to reflect a single line, and I almost always find information useful in one way or another. But I mainly appreciate it for its function, its accessibility, with non-socialist friends. Living where I do, in a non-cosmopolitan and non-academic area, I have found that many peers are anti-ideological out of fear and bad stereotypes. Often, their college experiences soured them to socialist thought and organization (having been intimidated, confused by ultra-leftists of the sixties). They are people who have every reason to embrace a progressive ideology, but see no sensible hands extended to them from the Left. When I make copies of MO available to them, the response is nearly always very positive; the journalism makes sense to them, allows them to begin making their own next steps.

In this same category of people there is a trend I'm seeing which suggests attention in MO: It seems that I know a lot of middle class, thirtyish people—non-political in any self-conscious sense—in public and/or private non-profit social service jobs, who are beginning to see profound contradictions in capitalism. This appears to be coming about not because of "world events" but because the evidence of their own ineffectiveness in their jobs is driving them crazy. The strategy of advanced capitalism to divert members

of the middle-class by giving them well-paid, "socially useful" jobs worked well in former decades.

Now, however, with the inexorable growth of bureaucracy (which infuriates its own front line workers), with the undeniable deepening of social decay, this same middle class segment is ceasing to be diverted. I have seen over the last year, in at least a dozen of my friends, some basic veil being torn away: a slow, very personal recognition dawning that there is a colossal, monstrous strategy at work trying to keep them very busy and very ineffective.

As particular examples of articles which I think MO could consider for this group, I'd suggest: Personal reflections of day care operators who find themselves spending all their time securing grants, finding CETA and other "free" workers to make staffing possible, warding off assaults by the legislative budget writers... only to realize that despite their enormous efforts, miniscule numbers of people are receiving day care services; accounts of social welfare workers who have watched, over the last five years, their client populations become more and more narrowly identified while their own hours behind the desk, filling in standardized forms, have ballooned; stories of public school teachers who have had their gains of smaller classes, in-school planning time, free lunch hours, etc., eroded in the name of fiscal efficiency—while having to watch literacy rates decline. I would recommend primarily anecdotal, rather than empirical stories along this line. I think the audience for them would be new (to NAM) and very attentive.

**Ellen David  
Chelsea, VT**

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# All the News

## MOVING AND SHAKING

Baltimore NAM and San Francisco NAM were very active in referendum campaigns for rent control, culminating in a surprise win for Baltimore, and a surprise defeat in San Francisco. The Baltimore Rent Control Campaign and San Franciscans for Affordable Housing coalitions both battled the same consulting firm (Solem Associates), which specializes in defeating citizen initiatives. Despite questionable tactics and vast sums of money spent by a "Keep Baltimore Best" committee (which hired Solem) to defeat rent control, some 72,000 Baltimoreans turned out to vote for Question K on the ballot and the initiative carried by 5,000 votes. Question K established a roll-back in rents coupled with a 4-7% ceiling on increases, provided landlords are not guilty of any housing code violations. Surprising to San Francisco activists, voters in that city turned down rent control 51/49%. San Franciscans have vowed to continue to work for affordable housing, while Baltimore activists face a court decision declaring the rent control vote unconstitutional.....A decision from the Illinois Commerce Commission now forces utilities in that state to allow deferred payment with no deposit for customers who are unable to pay their full balance; in the past, service had simply been shut off. In the harsh winter climates of the midwest and east, this sometimes led to death for elderly people. This decision is largely the result of an intensified year-long grassroots campaign by the Illinois Public Action Council (in which members of the Champaign, Blazing Star, and Chicago Northside NAM chapters have been active) and its affiliates. The battle may have been won, but the struggle goes on. Peoples' Gas has taken the decision to court. ....Philadelphia NAM was one of several NAM chapters to take part in the many activities during Abortion Rights Action Week. As part of the Philadelphia ARAW coalition, NAM co-sponsored a candle-light vigil, a rally at city hall, and also produced an adaptation of the Willamette Valley NAM slideshow. The slideshow was

shown at a number of places during the week, where it was as well received as it was in the northwest.....NAM chapters in Chicago, San Francisco, Philadelphia, and elsewhere took part in "Take Back the Night" rallies this fall, focussing media attention on women's intentions to fight back against harassment.....Westside Neighbors, a community organization founded by Santa Cruz NAM was recently pleased by the news that \$4,000 has been allocated by the local Community Action Board to hire health planners for its neighborhood health clinic. The clinic began as a store-front operation, and is now self-supporting. In the future, Westside Neighbors intend to try to get funding from the federal Housing and Community Development Fund. These funds, intended to be used to benefit low and moderate income residents, are frequently used for business projects. Westside Neighbors expect a battle, since over \$600,000 in funds is available altogether. ....Santa Barbara NAM was one of many NAM chapters nationwide participating in Human Rights Day on October 14, held in conjunction with the National March on Washington for Gay and Lesbian Rights. Two chapter members, Charles Zekan and Ed Laing (representing the ACLU), spoke at the local rally. Chapter members credit their work in the Briggs fight with helping establish their credibility in this area... ..The march on Washington drew over 75,000 people, including NAM members from Baltimore, Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, Washington, DC, Boston, New Haven chapters and elsewhere.

## NEW CHAPTERS

We are pleased to report that new NAM chapters have been organized in Colorado Springs, Seattle, and Somerville (MA). Colorado Springs NAM is active in strike support for an IBEW local, and anti-Klan work...Rainier NAM (Seattle) members are primarily community activists, and are planning their first project as a chapter...Members of Somerville NAM work on the Somerville Community News, an English-Spanish neighborhood paper which has been publishing for the past four years. Welcome!

## NAME CHANGES

•Middlesex NAM has changed its name to Boston Area NAM. The original Seattle NAM has changed its name to Rising Tide NAM. See back cover for changes of address.

## JOURNALISM

The "National Health Insurance: Why It Will Fail" story in Health Activist Digest vol. 2, number 2, will be read by over 1 million people in southern California since it will be featured in an edition of one of the nation's largest papers, the Los Angeles Times. If you don't get the LA Times, you can read this story and others by sending \$1.50 to the NAM National Office, or to Health Activists' Digest, P.O. Box 67426, Los Angeles, CA 90067. Subscriptions are \$6.00 per year (4 issues)...

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...Congratulations to Bob Master, New York NAM, for receiving the 1979 Max Steinbock Award. This award, named for the late president of the International Labor Press Association, honors "the best journalistic effort which exemplifies a humanistic spirit." Bob's fine piece in the September 1978 issue of *Labor Unity* (publication of the Clothing and Textile Workers), "The Human Toll at Stevens," won this award.

## CONFERENCES

Midwest Union for Radical Political Economics will hold its annual Regional Conference in Indianapolis on the weekend of April 4-5, 1980. The principal theme of the conference will be "Cities in Crisis." Co-sponsors will include the Caucus for a New Political Science and the Association for Self-

Management. For more information contact: Political Science Dept., IUPUI, 925 W. Michigan St., Indianapolis, IN 46202.

## RESOURCES

The efforts of Richard Christopher and Steve Askin of Chicago Northside NAM, along with Paul Becker, member-at-large from West Virginia, have produced the nation's first "Index to Articles on Occupational Safety and Health." This index includes union papers, professional and technical journals, the Wall Street Bureau of National Affairs, and more. It will be published twice yearly, and is available through the NAM National Office. The first six-month edition will be available at the end of February (covering July-December 1979), and will include the contents of the 2-month special edition which some of

you may have seen at the APHA Convention in November. The first issue may be ordered in advance. Samples will be sent to those requesting them. If you know any labor or health activists who might be interested, see that they receive a sample. The six-month issue will be \$5, the yearly cumulative will be \$10, or \$15 for both.

NAM's Energy Commission has come out with the first issue of its newsletter. This issue and those in the future will contain information on utilities organizing, anti-nuclear work, solar power, and energy-related topics, as well as serving as the commission's bulletin. To contribute or subscribe, contact: John Cameron, 203 S. Fourth St., Champaign, IL 61820.

## NAM in Brief

The New American Movement combines a Marxist analysis with careful attention to the current realities of American politics. It combines a deep commitment to its socialist principles with a tactical flexibility in its political approach. It combines a focus on the development of theory appropriate to our times with an activist orientation that stresses involvement in the crucial issues of the day. And it combines a vision of a socialist future based on democracy and human freedom with efforts to project

in our work elements of that future.

NAM has over 35 chapters involved in organizing for labor union democracy, against nuclear power, for abortion rights, against violence against women, for affirmative action, against apartheid in South Africa, and much more. Chapters also organize cultural and educational events that attempt to present a new and challenging socialist perspective on our world.

All of this work is informed and united by certain basic political ideas:

- NAM is committed to working toward a socialist society in which material resources and the decision-making process are democratically controlled by all people.

- We are committed to a socialism that has equality and respect for all people at its core—one that carefully balances the need for collective planning, ownership, and decision-making with a high regard for individual rights and freedom.

- The development of a movement for socialism in America will require the growth of socialist consciousness within

the working class—all those who have to sell their labor power (even if they are not directly paid) in order to survive. For it is only a broad-based movement representative of the diversity of the American people that can fundamentally challenge the power of capital.

- American capitalism is a powerful and entrenched system. Yet it is also rife with contradictions. Organization is key to changing power relationships and exposing these contradictions. We are committed to the development of a socialist party that can carry out these tasks, as well as to the growth of the most strong and progressive possible popular organizations.

- Democracy is central to the process of building a movement for socialism. Only as working people become active, organized and begin to take control over their lives can a new society take shape.

- NAM sees the struggle for the liberation of women as integral to a socialist movement. We value the contributions of the women's movement in showing how revolutionary change must deal with all aspects of people's lives. And we defend now, and in the socialism we project, the liberation of gay women and men.

- Racism cripples national life—it denies the humanity of minorities and thwarts the potential of the working class as a whole. NAM is committed to fighting against racism and national oppression in all forms.

- The fate of socialism in the United States is tied to the rest of the world. We support struggles for national liberation and human freedom wherever they occur.

- NAM supports the positive achievements of the existing socialist countries. However, we are also critical of various aspects of their policies, and see no one of them as a model for our own efforts.

## NAM chapters

Austin NAM, c/o McBryde, 2204 San Gabriel, Austin, TX 78705  
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Chicago Northside NAM, c/o NAM National Office, 3244 N. Clark, Chicago, IL 60657  
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