

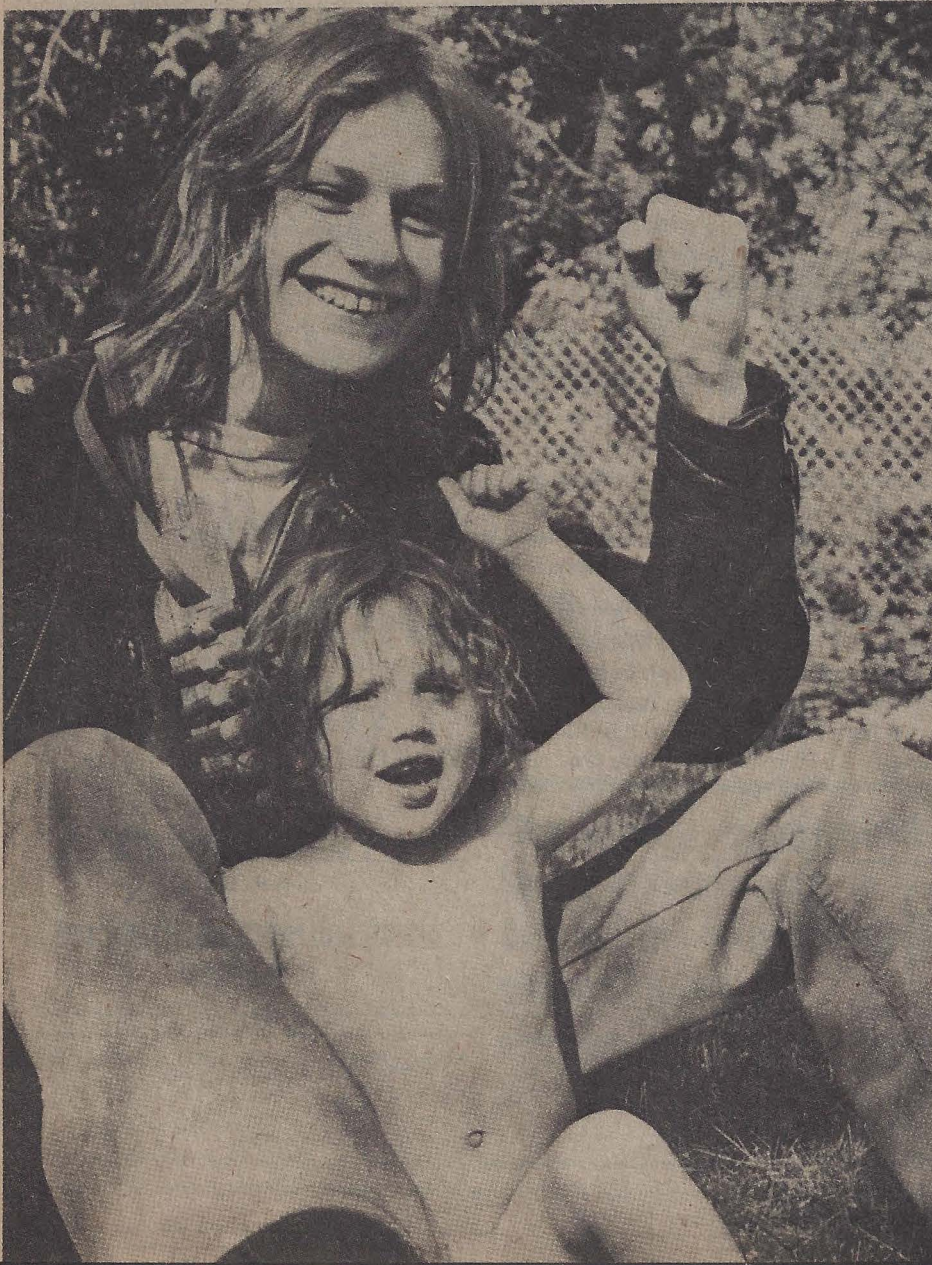
March, 1979

50 cents

Moving On

MONTHLY MAGAZINE OF THE NEW AMERICAN MOVEMENT

International Women's Day



**Pop psych—
the selling of
selfhood**

**Affirmative
action
on trial**

**Corporate
clean-up:
close-down**

Towards a socialist America

Comment

This month I'd like to tell you about an article you won't find in our pages—and why. Everyday the newspapers bring word of intensifying turmoil in Iran. As I write this, it is only a few days since Khomeini returned to that country and the air is heavy with expectation: Can he spark enough opposition to topple the Bahktiar government?

By the time you read this, the answer may already be clear. And it is this discrepancy between our copy deadline and our publication date that prevents us from carrying timely reports on any story—no matter how urgent we feel it to be—that is currently front page news.

As a socialist magazine that defines itself by virtue of its engagement with the world, we sometimes feel ourselves hemmed in by this restriction.

Yet we also know that our schedule limitations are something of a blessing in disguise. They force us to look beyond the news—to analyze events rather than just report on them. And they force us to look beyond current events—to underlying social and political trends that are shaping the way people live and the choices they make.

So, although we couldn't carry an up-to-date account of the Vietnamese incursion into Cambodia, we printed an article as early as last June that shed light on the historical roots of the conflict between those two countries and may have helped our readers make better sense out of recent Southeast Asia headlines.

And, although you won't find an article on events in Iran in this issue, you will find a lively exchange between Barbara Ehrenreich and Ron Aronson on the merits of the pop psychology paperback explosion—a cultural phenomenon that few other left publications have even mentioned in passing.

This doesn't mean that we are not deeply aware of the positive and potentially far-reaching impact of the defeat of the Shah. It simply means that *Moving On* has a unique role that goes beyond today's front page.

Robata Lynch

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION—ROUND TWO

by Richard Guelph

Brian Weber's suit against voluntary affirmative action plans in industry is now before the Supreme Court. The case's outcome could be the most significant setback yet for equal opportunity.

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by Judy MacLean

A new kind of organization—Mujeres Latinas en Accion—is speaking for women who have long been without a voice and changing the complexion of Chicago's largest Latin community.

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by Catherine Christeller and Tom Young

U.S. Steel's plans to close its South Works foundry indicate the depth of corporate resistance to cleaning up the workplace. What effect will its action have on the slowly growing movement to expose and challenge unsafe working conditions?

Correction: Our apologies to Wittenburg Door for neglecting the graphics accompanying the article, "Born Again—Evangelism Hits the Big Time in the February 1979 issue of *Moving On*.

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by Melba Boyd and Michelle Russell



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Comment

LNS Graphics



Unemployment line, New York City.

The courts and affirmative action— round two

**The Weber case could
have far-reaching
impact on employment
opportunities**

by Richard Guelph

BRACE YOURSELF. THE SUPREME COURT is about to strike again in the area of affirmative action. The result could well be the most significant setback to the rights of blacks and other minority peoples since the Supreme Court ushered in Jim Crow in the nineteenth century.

Last December, the Court agreed to decide the case of *Weber v. Kaiser Aluminum and Chemical Corporation and United Steelworkers of America*. The central issue is whether the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, prohibits a company and a union from voluntarily creating an affirmative action program that sets minimum goals for hiring minority workers.

In 1974, Kaiser Aluminum and the Steelworkers signed a nationwide collective bargaining agreement. At the union's insistence, the contract contained a provision for an affirmative action program to boost minority representation in the Trade, Craft and Assigned Maintenance classifications. Applicants for training for the higher-paid, skilled craft jobs would be admitted on the basis of one minority for each white worker. Within the two pools of candidates, whites and nonwhites, the positions would be awarded on the basis of seniority.

Enter Brian F. Weber, a white employee at the company's plant in Gramercy, Louisiana. Weber claimed that he and other white workers unsuccessfully bid for openings in the craft training program during 1974.

Although they had *less* seniority than the successful white applicants, they had *more* seniority than all or most of the successful nonwhite applicants.

Weber filed a class action in federal district court, charging that the company-union program violated Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended. Section 703(d) of the Act prohibits race or sex discrimination in the admission of candidates to employment training programs.

In June, 1976, District Judge Jack M. Gordon ruled in Weber's favor and enjoined Kaiser and the Steelworkers from operating the training program on the basis of race. The case was appealed to the United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit, which upheld the trial court's decision in November 1977.

The Court of Appeals' decision is a masterpiece of misjudgment. The court's logic goes something like this: civil rights belong to all Americans, black and white. Affirmative action programs are sometimes necessary to vindicate the rights of a particular group. However, affirmative action is dangerous because it easily becomes illegal "reverse discrimination." Because of this danger, we will allow affirmative action only where the courts have found a violation of the law.

In *Weber*, no court ever made a finding of discrimination in the company's choice of trainees for its skilled craft programs. The dual seniority system, one black and one white, was thus illegal.

Ignores realities

Sound simple? It is, on paper. Unfortunately, it completely ignores the realities of the situation.

The Gramercy plant where Weber works draws almost all its employees from an area that is 40% black. However, the plant workforce is only 14.8% black, and only 2 or 2-1/2% of the skilled trades employees are black. The bare statistics present a prima facie case of discrimination.

Both Weber and the company played down any evidence of past discrimination at the plant. Weber knew that if the



Dockworker in New Orleans, Louisiana.

court found a history of racist hiring practices, the affirmative action program would be legitimated. The company knew that if it gave evidence of past discrimination, it exposed itself to millions of dollars in backpay liability.

(Although potentially liable for backpay as well, the union still argued to the court that the low number of black employees constituted a prima facie case of discrimination.)

One of the reasons the company and the union agreed to the affirmative action program was the lurking threat of Executive Order 11246. Under that order, all federal government contractors must take affirmative action to employ representative members of women and minority workers. In trying to obey E.O. 11246, the company and the union got whipsawed by the court and found in violation of Title VII.

(The court neatly deals with this problem in the future by holding E.O. 11246 unconstitutional to the extent it requires quotas without a judicial finding of discrimination. Thus does the court cripple a major civil rights law.)

Title VII was designed to promote "voluntary compliance" with the goal of ending employment discrimination. No matter what their motives, Kaiser

and the Steelworkers made an honest effort to boost their number of black skilled crafts people. Now the court says that voluntary action to wipe out the effects of employment discrimination is illegal. You have to wait until a court finds unlawful practices—and then socks you with a big bill for backpay.

Finally, there is an ironic twist in Weber's argument that he would have gotten a training position if only some undeserving black with less seniority hadn't grabbed it. The truth is that before the program was established in 1974, no employee, black or white, had the opportunity to be trained in a skilled craft. Previously, all skilled craft positions had been filled by "off-the-street" hires of persons already trained. The company-union program opened the door of job advancement to whites as well as blacks.

It does not require much imagination to predict how the Supreme Court will decide *Weber*. To put it mildly, this Court—over which the spirit of Richard Nixon still hovers like a vulture in the desert—is not a friend of the oppressed. For the last nine years it has done its best to undo the victories of black people and other minorities, victories reflected in

many progressive laws and court decisions of the 1960's.

Possibly the most crippling recent decision has been *Washington v. Davis* (1976). There, the Court held that a plaintiff must prove that a government body intended to discriminate against minorities. Discrimination that was the product of institutionalized racism could not be remedied, because no culprit could be found. Thus, government job tests which flunk more blacks than whites and result in less black employees are legal as long as the tests are "fair" on their face.

By contrast, the Court's decision in *Regents of the University of California v. Bakke* last year was not as bad as it could have been. The Court, in a bewildering outpouring of individual de-

"It's possible that the Court will uphold the affirmative action plan . . . but not likely."

isions, approved the use of race as a criteria for professional school admissions where the goal was to aid the previously disenfranchised. However, the majority of the Court declared unlawful any system which maintained a dual admissions policy. No seats in the school could be reserved for minorities only; everyone has to have a shot at every slot.

More importantly, Justice Powell, whose decision was the swing vote in *Bakke*, came out strongly against affirmative action quotas. While the courts

sometimes impose racial "goals" to remedy violations of law, private institutions cannot do this. The scope of the remedy must equal the scope of the violation.

Powell's pronouncements in *Bakke* are a relatively minor setback to affirmative action in school admissions. Decisions as to whom to admit have always been wildly subjective, dependent on a large number of factors: grades, test scores, extracurricular activities, hometown, sports ability, intended subject of study, etc. If schools want to consider race in an effort to "diversify" the school population, that's fine with the Court.

In the area of employment, however, *Bakke* could lay the groundwork for disaster. Here, the only important criterion is job seniority, which is seen as the key to fairness with respect to job security, opportunity for advancement, and distribution of benefits. Seniority is a purely objective test. Any consideration of race would thus conflict with a selection system based on seniority. The only way to reconcile the two is to have a dual seniority system, in which certain opportunities for advancement are reserved for the minority workers, who lack overall seniority due to past discrimination. That's exactly what Powell found objectionable in *Bakke*.

While these decisions concern race discrimination, they are equally damaging to women's rights. Sex discrimination historically has been treated lightly by the courts. Now even the remedies which used to be available under Title VII will be sharply limited.

It's possible, of course, that the Court will avoid the crucial issue and decide the *Weber* case on another basis, or waffle as they did in *Bakke*. It's even possible that the Court will uphold the company-union affirmative action plan. But given the Court's recent record, it's not likely.

Popular support

What may influence the Court is the presence of a large, diverse constituency giving vocal support to affirmative

action as a tool to end societal discrimination. During the last year, a number of groups have worked to mobilize such a constituency.

Last summer, a large coalition of civil rights, feminist and progressive legal organizations founded the Affirmative Action Coordinating Committee. One of the Center's first actions was to sponsor a strategy meeting in Washington, D.C., two weeks after the *Bakke* decision was released, to plan a campaign in support of affirmative action.

Located in New York, the Center serves as a major clearinghouse and resource center on affirmative action. The sponsoring organizations include the American Civil Liberties Union, Center for Constitutional Rights, Equal Rights Advocates, La Raza Legal Alliance, and the Mexican-American Legal Defense and Educational Fund.

Also sponsoring the Center are the National Black United Fund, the National Conference of Black Lawyers, the National Organization for Women Legal Defense and Education Fund, the National Lawyers Guild, the Native American Rights Fund, and the People's Alliance.

Among its other activities, the Center has filed a brief *amici curiae* ("friends of the Court") urging reversal of the Court of Appeals' decision in *Weber*.

It has also announced a national conference to take place in the spring. That conference will plan a nationwide program of demonstrations and educational activities urging reversal of *Weber*. The conference will also consider a call for a national demonstration in Washington, D.C., possibly to take place in May (May 17 is the 25th anniversary of *Brown v. Board of Education*).

Many other groups are seeking a reversal of *Weber*. On January 26, the Congressional Black Caucus held a news conference announcing a major effort by some sixty-four organizations to reverse *Weber* in the Supreme Court. The group includes most major labor unions, civil rights and feminist organizations. Each of the groups has filed an

continued on page eleven



photo by Mujeres Latinas en Accion

La mujer despierta— the awakening woman

Changing roles in the Latin community

by Judy MacLean

"IT'S GOOD FOR THE YOUNG girls. They see grown women working here and it gives them some incentive, some good ideas for the future. Many times in this neighborhood you ask girls about their future, they say 'get married.' Mujeres makes them aware there are other things they can do," says Gloria Mendez about Mujeres Latinas en Accion (Latin Women in Action).

Mendez has nothing against marriage. She's married herself, with six children ages 4 months to fourteen years. She works part time at Mujeres, where she and five teenage girls are setting up a food co-op the teenagers will eventually run.

Mujeres Latinas en Accion is an advocacy and service organization in the near southwest Chicago neighborhood of Pilsen. Pilsen is a Latino community of rundown buildings and colorful murals, where underpaid (and sometimes undocumented) workers live and unemployed young people run in gangs on the streets. Although the neighborhood's proximity to the city's downtown Loop has led to a few developers to renovate some buildings and move in young Anglo professionals, the neighborhood remains mostly poor.

In 1973 a group of women held a conference in Pilsen on the theme of La Mujer Depierta (The Awakening Woman.) Afterwards, a small group of women began meeting. "At first we did a lot of ranting and raving about injustices and not much else," recalls Maria Heinz, staff director at Mujeres.

The service agencies and neighborhood centers were staffed by men and run for men and boys. "We knew to get one night in one of the gyms here for women was like pulling teeth," says Heinz. "Men lead the organizations, men kill themselves on 18th Street, so

that's where the emphasis gets put."

"So Mujeres began as a voice for women. We are women and we have needs, we said." The women started out as advocates, pressuring existing agencies to deal with women's problems. They had raffles, dances and other fundraisers to open a storefront referral center staffed by volunteers.

"Eventually we found there are some things we can do better," says Heinz. Mujeres soon became the first community service organization in Pilsen staffed by, run by and existing for women. In fact, it is the only such organization run by Latinas in the midwest. Mujeres would like to see more of them. "We would be interested in talking with any Latinas anywhere who want to start such a center," says Heinz.

Outreach programs

Today they have a bright, two story rehabbed building. (The rehab job was done by a neighborhood agency that hires unemployed youth and teaches them rehab skills; Mujeres fought for, and won, places for two young women on the crew.) A program of classes and workshops includes Mexican folk arts, self-defense, rape victim rights and community law. Interpreters accompany Spanish-speaking people to court and other public institutions. There are women's health classes at three high schools and a mother-infant health project including childbirth classes and counseling.

Mujeres provides summer jobs for young women and has Youth Council that helps set goals and run the center. They've also set up a shelter for runaway girls. "Everyone had gang workers for the boys, no one worried about runaway girls." They were sent out to the Western suburbs "and that just made things worse," says Heinz.

Wanda, age 17, has used the shelter and counseling services. "I was pretty wild, hooked on pills, on the streets with

gangs. They helped me get off," she says. She got pregnant and with the help of the counselors at Mujeres decided to keep her baby and go back to school. She now attends an alternative high school, Latino Youth, and works afternoons at the food co-op. "I feel sorry for the girls out on the street. I recommend them here," she says.

With over half of Pilsen's female population under eighteen years of age, says Heinz, there's a temptation to focus mostly on young women. But they

Mujeres became the first community service organization in the Midwest staffed by, run by, and existing for Latinas.

try to keep a balance. This year they are doing workshops and community education on battered women. "Abuse for many women here is almost an accepted fact of life," says former coordinator Angela Vierta. "We are trying to make women aware they don't have to take it. This goes against the traditions they have known."

"The problems of battered Latinas are pretty much the same as any battered woman. But some women or their husbands may be here without documents. That makes them more reluctant to call the police, they're afraid they'll be deported," according to Heinz.

The group also educates the community on such issues as ERA and the right to choose abortion. "We were low key on pro-choice for many years. Then we decided to come out of the closet a little, make some upfront statements. There are Latin women having abortions. We are not pro-abortion but we say it is an-

Getting Together

other right being taken away—the right to choose,” Heinz explains.

Changing images

The women of Mujeres also speak at colleges and give testimony at public hearings, speaking up for the interests of Latinas. “We’ve at least put some cracks in Latin women’s image,” says Heinz. “We don’t have a reputation as a fighting feminist group, but just the name, Latin Women in Action, is a political statement. We’re supposed to be sweet and docile. The name creates a little confusion in people’s heads.”

Heinz recalls that at first, there was “out and out laughter” from men in the community about Mujeres; today they are widely respected.

Juventino Sanchez, associate director of El Centro de la Causa (Latin American Youth Center) says, “In a Latino community, the dominance of males has a lot to do with what happens in social service agencies. Women’s problems were not recognized. Mujeres had to come about. They’ve helped jolt and move the consciousness of other organizations and people here. And their impact goes beyond Pilsen.”

Elena Sarabia, newly elected chairwoman of Mujeres’ Board of Directors, says “That board is something else. I’ve been on other boards. Everyone just went along with the chairperson. Here, we all question, all voice our opinions. And there are so many opinions!” Like many Mujeres women, she doesn’t call herself a feminist.

“At first I thought it was one of those burn your bra things. I don’t have time for that. But we’re all involved, we’re dedicated, we’re doing something for women because we believe it’s right. And we’re all just growing, we seem to grow every time we meet,” she says.

Probably no cause has more adherents who hesitate to call themselves by the movement’s name than does feminism. Although no bras were ever burned, that’s become a symbol for extreme feminist action. Creating a women’s movement in Pilsen is as creative and daring as any of the early feminist

media actions that are now hazily remembered as bra-burning. The guerilla zap action and the day to day work are both part of the real reshaping of the world of women and men, a process that is long and complicated. Often, to use Marge Piercy’s term, it is a series of small changes.

Some feminists would be impatient with Mujeres’ methods, with their waiting years to strongly advocate a pro-choice position, with their general habit of checking things out with the community first. But Mujeres has taken one of the basic impulses of the women’s movement and translated it. Translated it not simply into Spanish. A group of women got together, defined their own needs and those of women around them, and proceeded to do what they could, large or small, to change things so those needs could be met. There are, of course, limits to how much those needs can be met within such a service context. But it is an essential first step.

Since American feminism reawakened a little over a decade ago with a very particular group of women looking at their needs and those of women around them, such translations are crucial. They can enrich and strengthen feminism, making it more a body of thought and action that can indeed speak to the needs of all women.

Judy MacLean is the Organizational Secretary of the New American Movement.

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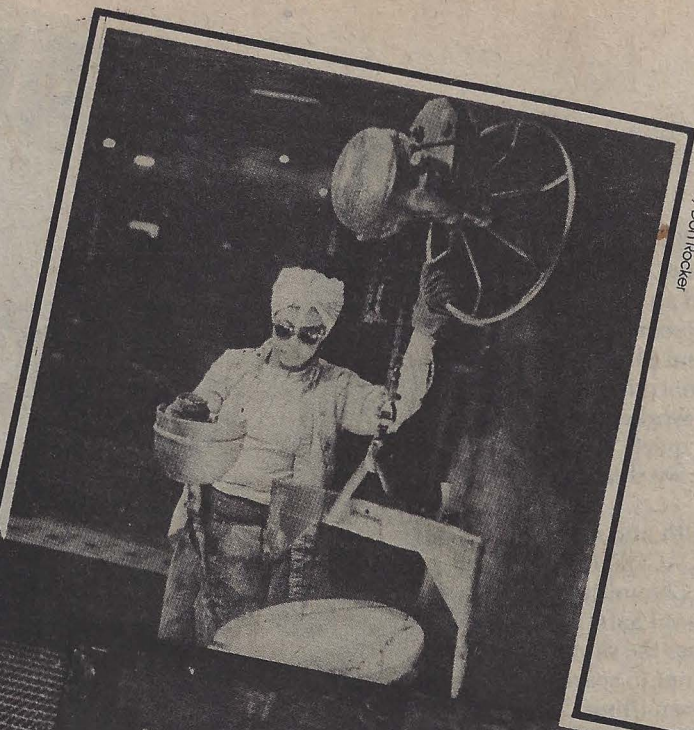


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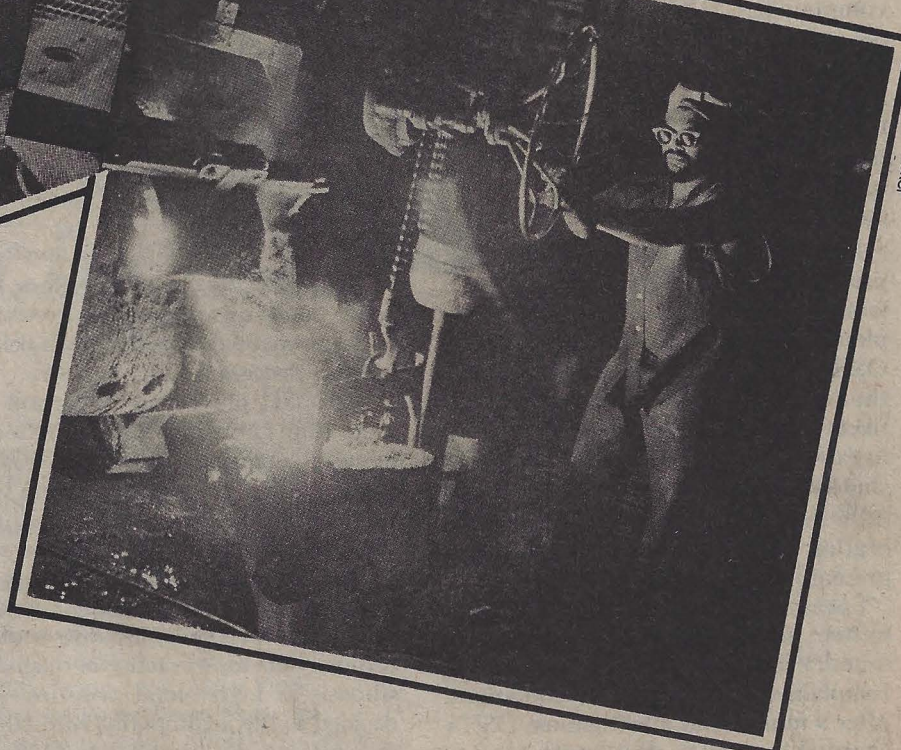


photo by Don Rocker

U.S. Steel— better sorry than safe

by Catherine Christeller
and Tom Young

ON DECEMBER 28TH, 1978 THE U.S. Steel announced the permanent shutdown of its South Works foundry, located in the heart of the Chicago-Gary steel producing area. Over 250 jobs are to be affected. Foundry workers have been promised

transfers to other jobs in the South Works plant, not necessarily at the same pay.

What makes this plant closing different is U.S. Steel was cited by OSHA last year for "willful and serious" violation of federal health and safety regulations. In its statement announcing the closing, the company made clear that it chose to shut down the foundry rather than meet the federal silica standards.

United Steel Worker officials immediately charged that the shutdown was retaliation against the foundry workers for attempting to get their workplace cleaned up. "They're going to use it as a blackjack over the guys who feel they're working in unsafe conditions," according to John Chico, president of Local 65 which represents the plant's workers.

District 31 Director Jim Balanoff

supports Chico's position.

"They had an obligation 30 years ago to clean that place up. They're trying to blackmail workers into keeping quiet: 'You complain, we shut down.'"

The health and safety coalition, CACOSH (Chicago Area Committee on Occupational Safety and Health), sees the shutdown as an attempt to scare off workers from filing OSHA complaints. CACOSH urged the union to publicize the case and to file a discrimination suit. On January 19 Local 65 filed a discrimination charge against U.S. Steel under foundry section 11C of the Occupational Safety and Health Act.

Normally this clause is used to protect the rights of an individual worker who is fired after filing a complaint with OSHA. According to an OSHA regional administrator, this is the only case in the region, and most likely in the country that is attempting to extend the law to include retaliatory shutdowns. Unfortunately, there is very little that can be done to stop a corporation from closing its plant under present laws.


Local 65's health and safety committee first brought OSHA into the foundry in 1977 when several workers complained about the filthy conditions. After a four month investigation, OSHA charged that silica dust levels were as much as 21 times higher than the federal standards, and that medical surveillance for the 300 foundry workers was inadequate. The company was fined \$21,000.

From February to August 1978, OSHA continued with a "wall-to-wall" investigation of the South Works complex. The result was 219 OSHA citations, including 6 willful, 28 repeated and 100 serious citations and a record high fine

of \$215,800. None of the fines have been paid, nor have the conditions been improved during the much delayed appeals process.

CACOSH played an important role in urging Local 65 to take action on foundry conditions. The group was first alerted to the silica dust problem when private physicians diagnosed silicosis in South Works foundry workers. Of particular concern to the workers was their inability to obtain their medical records from the company, and the company doctor's practice of diagnosing silicosis as high blood pressure. They decided to file a complaint with NIOSH in order to get medical tests run on themselves.

NIOSH uncovered 30 workers (out of 70) with lung abnormalities, 17 of these with definite silicosis. Silicosis is an irreversible disease causing shortness of breath and eventual death from permanent lung damage. While NIOSH has no enforcement powers, its tests are irrefutable proof that the foundry is a deadly place to work.



**IF YOU WANT
TO KEEP
your job,
SHUT UP
ABOUT
POLLUTION!**

Foundry dangers

Workers in foundries are exposed to excessive heat, fumes, noise and most dangerous of all, silica dust from the chipping process. Foundry workers have a 47 percent higher death rate from lung and throat cancer, and a 500 percent greater chance of death from fibrosis of the lung, mainly silicosis.

Back in 1977 OSHA recognized the urgency of cleaning up foundries by establishing them as part of a National Emphasis Program. After much fanfare in announcing the program, it was quietly dropped without ever getting off the ground. The official explanation was that it was too ambitious an undertaking to inspect all the foundries in the country. Another factor may have been the corporate legal offensive against OSHA, in this case led by the American Foundryman's Society whose members have been denying access to OSHA inspectors.

Both the discrimination suit and the citation hearings hinge on proof that the foundry at U.S. Steel can meet federal standards through engineering changes and still remain economically profitable. The union's position is supported by Milan Racic, assistant regional

administrator of OSHA. "We intend to show that it is feasible in terms of engineering and economics to put the plant in compliance and to continue a profitable operation."

The economic argument is difficult to assess. The South Works foundry is unusually old and out-dated. It was built in the mid-thirties, and despite modification, remains basically the same. Molten iron is poured into sand molds, and then as it cools the mold and stray bits of iron are chipped off. The in-

"Workers in the mill now say—'those guys never should have pushed so hard.'"

creased use of continuous processing in the mill has reduced the need for the ingot molds produced by the foundry.

The company has not released its cost estimate for rehabilitating the foundry. The feasibility studies done by OSHA will not be publically available until the April hearings before the OSHA Review Commission. The burden of proof is on OSHA to show how its standards can be met, but it will be a moot point if the foundry is already phased out of operation by then. U.S. Steel will be contracting out for the ingot molds needed, and as Racic points out, all that will change is that somebody else's employees will contract silicosis.

Local 65 can also try to fight the move under a "no contracting out" clause in the contract. Ironically, the very foundry where U.S. Steel will go to get the ingots is scheduled for health and safety training with CACOSH'S Foundry Workers Project.

Whether or not the South Works foundry could be cleaned up and still show a profit, U.S. Steel is no doubt happy with the repercussions of its announcement. Workers in the mill are now saying, "Those guys never should have pushed so hard. Look where it got them." Workers are hesitant to fight for a safe and healthy workplace if it could mean losing their jobs in the process. The obsolete condition of most American steel plants makes such job loss even more of a threat.

The U.S. Steel case is vital because it forces OSHA—and by extension the federal government—to confront the basic issue of whether it will do more than make noises when it comes to safeguarding workers' livelihoods—and their lives.

Catherine Christeller is a NAM member in Chicago and an activist in the CACOSH women's project. Tom Young is a Chicago-based free-lance writer.

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Weber

from page five

amicus brief with the Court, according to Congressman John Conyers of Michigan.

Despite the best efforts of progressive organizations, it remains possible that affirmative action will soon be suppressed under the guise of equal treatment under the law. This sabotage of affirmative action represents a judicial counter-revolution in civil rights. The courts have declared that they will only concern themselves with personal discrimination—the intentional "bad acts" of one person or organization.

And when the courts do find race discrimination, they almost always impose a remedy for which white workers pay the cost. The burden of repairing past discrimination is almost never placed on the affluent or the business world. What court, for instance, would order a company to increase its workforce and provide good jobs for both blacks and whites?

What the courts will *not* face is the real problem—institutionalized racism and sex discrimination. These two forces require no conscious action on anyone's part. The injustice is rooted in the very structure of our society, born of centuries of inequality. An effective struggle against these causes of discrimination requires more power and more dedication than the courts possess.

The Affirmative Action Coordinating Center can be reached at 126 West 119th Street, New York, New York 10026. The Center maintains a toll-free Hotline: 800-223-0655.

Richard Guelph is a labor lawyer and longtime member of NAM.

faint violets

she hung inside
the window
wondering when
she had not
changed
or cheated
her smile.
the wind-cold cried
for the broken
butterfly
who helped
the hawks
slice
her wings.

she hung inside
the window
echoing shadows
she could not
save
or erase.
the wind-cold cried
for faint
violets
slipping
from slashes
in the
sky.

Melba Joyce Boyd
cat eyes and dead wood
Fallen Angel Press, 1978

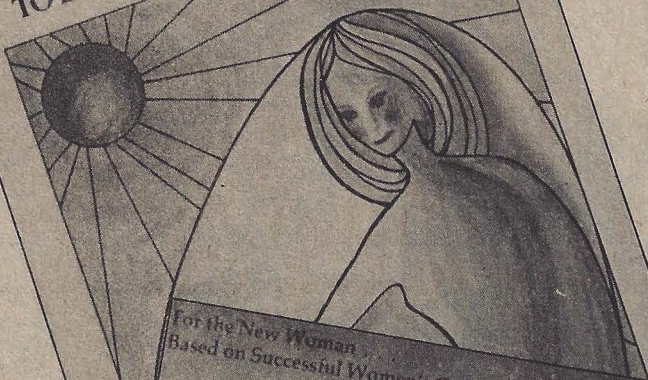


drawing by Michele G. Russell

Looking for America

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It's about repression

by Barbara Ehrenreich

The following article is an edited version of remarks made by Barbara Ehrenreich during a panel discussion at the 1978 New American Movement Convention in Milwaukee, WI.

I WANT TO TALK ABOUT POPULAR psychology as a mass cultural phenomenon. First, just a few comments to impress on you how important this is. In our NAM chapter in Long Island, we have had several casualties over the years to faddish therapies or self-improvement programs. We lost one good person to the Fisher Hoffman process; we lost a terrific working class woman to Silva mind control. We lost someone about six months ago to primal scream. And then one went off to make about \$20,000 a year selling her own form of lesbian matriarchal gestalt transactional analysis.

Worse still, from a personal point of view, last Monday my landlady—who is not a rich woman at all, in fact she is a waitress—popped in and informed me that she had just finished training in est where she learned to “get in touch with her feelings.” Now I don’t know what that course cost her. But it is going to cost me at least \$50 a month in rent. You know perfectly well what those feelings are that she got in touch with.

Over the counter Therapy— the pop psychology boom

There is nothing more frightening than having your landlady or your boss take a course in est. But it's not these forms of therapies that I want to focus on right now. I'd like to talk about a related aspect that reaches out to many more people—and that's the paperback pop-psych industry. It is a multi-million dollar business and a real publishing breakthrough, especially for the paperback book houses. The first book in this nation to come out in three colors, simultaneously, was *How To Be Your Own Best Friend*. And the only book to get nation-wide full-page newspaper ads announcing it was already a best seller two weeks before publication date was *Looking Out for #1*.

My friend Deirdre English and I read about 12 of these books in the course of research for our book, *For Her Own Good*. (Which explains how I am pulling my own strings, I'm at my own controls, and all those kinds of things.) Their ideology is pretty close to the surface. We call it "market-place psychology." The basic idea is that all human relations are mediated by the rules of commercial exchange—the ultimate commodification.

It begins with the notion that you can be what you want to be; there are no objective circumstances compelling people in their lives. You choose what you are, and you act on it. Your appearance, your emotions—everything is something you can choose. Newman and Berkowitz, in *How To Be Your Own Best Friend*, write that you are free when you accept the responsibility for your choices. That is liberation.

The problem in our society, they claim, is that there are people who

"cling to their own chains." You know who those people are—women, minority groups, workers, etc. In pop psych ideology, women are being held back by "a negative mental set." To quote from a current assertiveness training book, "Women don't think of themselves as equal to men, so they don't act equal, consequently employers, relatives and society don't treat them as equal." In other words, it starts with you, it's your own fault.

Enlightened selfishness

The corollary to this idea that you are totally responsible for your own feelings is that you are not responsible for anyone else's. You don't have to live up to anybody's expectations, any of those feelings of obligation or responsibility that you might have. They are attitudes that can be overcome to achieve a kind of enlightened self-centeredness.

Some books actually call it selfishness, with a good accent on that word. The way not to be a victim is to put yourself first in everything. I think that one of the best expressions of this idea of "don't be a victim—get on top" comes out of the human potential movement that pre-dated the pop psychology paperback explosion. That's the gestalt prayer.

You know it. You've seen it on cups, on tee-shirts, plaques on people's walls. I've seen it in a dentist's office. It scares me.

Here is how it goes: "I do my thing, and you do your thing. I am not in this world to live up to your expectations, and you're not in this world to live up

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No false choices

by Ron Aronson

LIKE THOSE HOSPITAL WORK—to whom she spoke, I would applaud selfishness and assertiveness over Barbara Ehrenreich's "evangelical socialism." I mean, if forced to choose, my own children would come before Rhodesian children, and my own well-being would come before the rest of the world. But why should we be forced to choose? Why does Ehrenreich complement the schizoid world view of pop psychology by invoking our socialist "responsibilities"?

Myself or others: for half my life I have been struggling to see past this false choice. This guilt-inducing demand to abandon myself in order to become a "small part of struggle" is what originally turned me off to socialist politics in the 1950s and delayed my entry into the Movement. But while the old socialists and Communists of the Cold War period made no sense to me, the Movement of the sixties spoke to my heart and my mind.

In the early days we talked of concretely struggling to free ourselves and change the world. We new-Left socialists asked about the ways in which a new society would create the conditions for fulfilling our deepest needs and developing our potentialities. My individuality, I slowly learned, was intimately bound

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It's about repression...

from page fifteen

to mine. You are you and I am I and if by chance we find each other, it's beautiful. If not, it can't be helped."

(I have tried the gestalt prayer on my five-year-old son various times. It doesn't work.)

A lot of the paperback pop psychology books are addressed to how you work through human relationships in the framework of these kinds of assumptions. Since you are out to get what you can out of relationships you have, to keep a kind of ledger to be sure things are equal. When you stop getting as much out as you are putting in, then it is time to just cut loose, and go on to another relationship where your investment will pay off. Words like "investment," "buyer," "seller," recur constantly in these books.

One of my favorite passages, on how to run a loving relationship, comes from an assertiveness training book addressed to women; it recommends that couples enter into "behavior exchange contracts." This is where you figure out what kind of behavior you want from the other person, and in exchange you do little bits of behavior that they want from you. Like he always throws his underwear on the floor and you always wear curlers. So you contract to adjust those things. They give you lots of examples of things you might want to negotiate: She should initiate more sex. He should do more housework.

They give you precise rules for managing these contracts, such as "(a) keep track of the target behavior by graphs, charts, diagrams. (b) Avoid disagreements about the contract by writing it out. Put it in a spot where you both can see it easily. Many couples put it on the refrigerator or bedroom door."

This kind of approach is becoming increasingly common. Transactional

analysis, one of the slightly more dignified forms of pop psych which claims to have some roots in Freud, even talks about a whole "economy" of strokes. Strokes are the currency of human exchange.

It is interesting to look at who the authors of these works are. A lot of these people are not psychologists with Ph.Ds at all, (which may not make much difference in terms of how helpful they are), but they are real estate men, market research people, and public relations people. So it is not even one step removed from the capitalist market place.

Now needless to say, there is nothing in the pop psychology ideology to encourage collective action. In fact, Robert Ringer, in *Looking Out for #1*, comes right out with specific instructions to women, black people and handicapped people—people who he thinks may need this kind of advice—and warns them not to identify with others of their kind. It is very important, he says, not to hang out with victims. You should get beyond that.

Est, in some of its popular forms, goes much farther. In fact, it goes to solipsism and literally denies the reality of other human consciousness. It's all you, and if you think that you see other human faces in this room—well, you don't have to think that way. Think of it another way, if you don't like it this way.

These attitudes are extremely hard to buck when you are talking to people politically. For example, a couple of weeks ago, I was speaking to a group of women hospital workers, mostly nurses and low level management people. It was a very lively audience and I gave my usual right-on dynamite socialist feminist rap. I felt I did a good job, and then the next speaker came on.

She had a line that came straight from the pop psychology books. She said, "I'm not a feminist because I don't like whiners. If any of you women aren't making it, it's your fault. If you aren't making it, if you are not successes, you have to look back and see that there is one person you have to blame—you!" She was

a good speaker and the audience loved it. If there was an applause meter, wow, did I lose.

Why now?

Why is pop psychology so popular now? In the sixties there was the human potential movement, concentrated in the upper middle classes—the summer vacation at Eselen, etc. In the seventies the basic constituency remains white upper middle class—people who may actually have some prospect of winning through intimidation without getting fired.

There is a real class difference: if most people tried to be assertive on their jobs, it would be called "insubordination" and out they'd go.

Yet, despite these differing realities, these ideas are becoming increasingly democratized. More and more people of various backgrounds are letting pop psych shape how they think about themselves, their life prospects, everything.

The reasons are similar to those that underlie the rise of the new right, things that we've talked a lot about in NAM. One is what we have now identified as the ongoing turmoil in the personal life: the breakdown of the family and the atomization most people feel.

Pop psychology speaks to their perception of their real situation. But I also think that there is something else to its immense success. This is kind of speculative, but it feels right to me. (Pop psychology allows me to say things like that.) I think it may have something to do with the objective situation of the United States in the world today, as the imperial center of world capitalism.

We have in this country an impoverished segment of the working class, people who are not going to make it with any amount of assertiveness training courses. People who, if they do get hold of a copy of *Looking Out for #1* will realize that probably the most rational course in life is to go out and rip off somebody's tape deck. People who are not going anywhere and for whom things are only getting worse.

Then in the world beyond the boun-



SELF

February 1979

From The Editor

Why SELF? Very simply, because there was no fitness magazine for women until our first issue appeared this January. Your outstandingly enthusiastic response affirms without a doubt that fitness is America's No. 1 is what SELF will focus on.

An extraordinary spirit and energy are emerging in women today. Fitness is the fact. We have acquired a strong appetite for the full experience of life—the exhilaration of the outdoors, the challenge and success of professional work, the honest enjoyment of sex. SELF will be a guide to the quality we need to do all the things we want to do.

All over the world women are exercising, running, hiking, dieting, meditating, exploring their way to fitness—physical, emotional, sexual, mental. Health experts now give the connection between fitness of body and mind top priority in their research. SELF will keep you up to date with their findings and with everything that makes a richer life for you—including people, love and laughter.

SELF is your magazine and it will arrive every month to fill you with the joy of self.

Phyllis Star Wilson
Editor in Chief

daries of the United States, outside of a few other trilateral nations, the U.S. is ringed by increasing numbers of poor countries. Countries which in the eyes of world capitalists are not going anywhere at all. They are populated by what are seen as disposable people. People who are potentially very angry, potentially revolutionary. These countries are ringed by U.S.-sponsored dictatorships, such as Chile, which really represent the administration of terminal malnutrition.

And I suspect that many working class people and middle class people in this country have glimpsed the horror that lies beyond the perimeter of the suburbs. Out there lies Harlem, and beyond that—and equally menacing in the long run—lie Soweto and Santiago and Dakar and Seoul and Singapore. A whole world of people who don't begin to have anything of what a whole lot of Americans accept as minimal in terms of their standard of living.

Given our situation in the world today, it makes perfect sense that the hegemonic view of life is essentially a psychological version of the lifeboat strategy. An attitude that we are going to hold on to our Cuisinarts and our diet dog foods and our massage showers and too bad for the rest of the world. That is the message from these books I have been talking about.

What can socialists do? I don't think that you can combat an ideology or a huge cultural drift with a particular little strategy, or even with a resolution in a plenary session. I will take the risk of saying that perhaps what we need is some sort of "evangelical socialism." One that starts from the understanding that the ideology of pop psychology is not ultimately liberatory for anybody and—and that it's not even freeing in a short term sense. It is in fact repressive of very basic human needs and desires: desires for purposefulness, for meaning, for human solidarity.

We should start with some confidence in that. It is the pop psychology books that are about repression; we are talk-

ing about liberation. We are talking about an evangelical socialism that dares to offer a moral vision of the world, that holds out to people something a little more satisfactory than the loneliness of living as #1 all your life.

We need a kind of politics that can renew a sense of possibility, the possibility of living as agents of history, of living as small parts of a struggle that goes on beyond our individual life span, and gives meaning to those individual lives.

I would like to end with one amendment to the idea of socialist cadre that is often discussed. Certainly NAM should be an organization of cadre. But that ought to mean more than people who know a lot of theory. It ought to mean people who project, through the way we work politically, the way we live, the way we treat people, the way we talk, or the way we have meetings, that a real and possible alternative to the moral desert of capitalism exists. □

No false choices...

from page fifteen

up with, not opposed to, the struggle for socialism.

Then, as the parental and authoritarian voices of the likes of Progressive Labor invaded SDS, the Movement lost its fragile center. We were, the Weatherman line claimed, to sacrifice ourselves to motivate and help the real sufferers. Today the current that calls itself "Marxism-Leninism" is steeped in such guilt and self-denial, while only NAM, of all the organizations rooted in the new Left, has managed to keep alive in its ethos and politics this sense of *our* liberation as connected to our politics.

Ehrenreich's attack on pop psychology is a throwback to these currents of self-abnegation. She fails to see that the new "movement" of self-assertion represents an important response to a society

which denies the self. And she is so hostile to self-assertion that she does not even stop to see the deep needs reflected in, and to some degree positively expressed in, the pop psychology trend.

I am troubled that she doesn't see how deeply rooted is self-renunciation in our society—indeed as part of the psychological basis of American capitalism. I am troubled that she doesn't seem concerned with how little room this society actually offers for the self. I am troubled that she doesn't see the positive side of any current that demands that we assert rather than submit, rationally set our goals rather than drift along.

What does pop psychology have to do with the struggle for socialism? Nothing today, of course. Contracts between lovers are not yet the demand for rational social relations in the society at large; self-assertiveness is not yet demanding that the cancerous environment be transformed. But these trends are part of an important and vital new concern for living well in nontraditional and largely nonacquisitive ways. They will either enter the kind of movement we hope to see develop, or the movement will not happen at all.

I wish Ehrenreich had realized that those hospital workers were hearing something important to them from the other speaker. Perhaps then she might have wondered what was missing in her appeal. Instead, her response is to flatly reject the competing message. In doing this she misses the real point as thoroughly as does pop psychology.

We should show people not their "responsibilities"—haven't we all had enough of that?—but our *links* with each other. We should look not to our "moral" obligation to the rest of the world, but to discover our *real* interconnectedness. We should develop a vision of socialism which is not "evangelical" but directed towards and anchored in each person's deepest sense of self.

What question?

Certainly Ehrenreich is right: socialism is the only answer. But to what question?

For most people the immediate questions are defined and experienced personally. We can grasp the *social* logic to such questions only if we acknowledge them as being real in the first place. Complaints about capitalism will not help me improve my intimate relationships; discussions of the hierarchical nature of American society will not give me the self-confidence I need to stand up to my boss or improve my job.

The best group of working adults I ever taught read a variety of books on freedom, including Mill, Marx, and Sartre. Their overwhelming favorite was the excruciatingly difficult last section of *Being and Nothingness*. Why? Because the message they needed and wanted most to hear was about their own responsibility for their lives. Sartre, like pop psychology, is ultimately wrong in this analysis, but he is, like pop psychology, at least partially—and powerfully—right.

We need not accept our fate, lie down, be passive. It is useless to whine. In some fundamental way we are the author of our experience; the point is to take control over it. Combined with a socialist analysis and vision, this is *the* message we want most to give to people.

What kind of socialism will begin to approach the problems people in our society feel most keenly about? It will not be a socialism of renunciation nor of obedience. Rather, it will have to be an entirely new, a liberatory socialism which we all experience as answering *our own* deepest needs.

It will be a democratic socialism which makes Stalinist abuses of power impossible because it rests on and springs from people who are strong, self-confident, and assertive. Not a nation of sheep, of people who accept their rulers as betters, who believe life to be a time of suffering, but people who hope and demand all that life can offer—for themselves as well as for each other.

To become effective proponents of this view, we need to get beyond false polarities. Ehrenreich reflects these

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polarities as strongly as the pop psychology people: the self versus the collective, individualism versus solidarity, selfishness versus compassion.

But to get beyond them we will have to accept and absorb what is true in pop psychology. We cannot really criticize it for emphasizing our own individual responsibility for our lives, our need for assertion, for a positive attitude, to learn what we want and go after it. Its mistake lies elsewhere. Like the rest of the society, it has a false conception of the world and the self. It misses the deep links, at the heart of each and every one of us, that bind our lives to each other.

In criticizing this limitation, however, Barbara Ehrenreich wrongly suggests that the problem is that there is too much *me* afoot in the United States today. Not at all. The problem is that there is a false view of *me*. The real *me* is not an isolated molecule which can only collide with and dominate others. The real *me* must not be suppressed for the collective to take hold. Rather, every seemingly isolated individual *me* is also a deeply social being.

Already, in this society, I carry inside me the entire world in which I become who I am. At the same time, my every vital activity, from work to child-rearing to play, links me to the rest of the society.

In the most individualistic society in the world, our dependence of each on all the others is as deep as in the most collective society—except that it is hidden, mystified, conjured away by ideology and experience. Still, it remains there beneath the surface, waiting to be seen, waiting to become the real basis for a future socialist movement.

Socialism is the true individualism because it alone can be based on the understanding that to live happily *as an individual* requires the end of exploitation, requires equality, abundance for all, and socialist democracy. Only then will real selfhood be possible—in security, harmony, allowing full and undistorted flowering.

What then is our relationship to pop psychology, as well as to the various currents of psychotherapy? It is certainly empty for us to criticize from the outside, as if we were in business and they were competitors. Ehrenreich speaks worriedly as if we can genuinely "lose" people to these currents, the way one religion loses converts to another. I would rather that we thought entirely

differently about our mission.

First of all, therapy helps. So does assertiveness training. So does a more deliberate approach to personal problems. Which is why pop psychology is so much in vogue. Perhaps we should start by admitting that these forbidden fruits appeal to us. If we all want to become more effective socialists, so do we want to become more effective and

happier human beings. We too want to overcome our own whining, to grow to our full stature. One important path in this direction would be to appropriate personally for ourselves the most significant insights and techniques of these therapies.

Second, only by entering into these currents of pop psychology and psychotherapy can we truly appreciate their limits from the inside, from our own experience. We would begin to be able to talk sense to all those who feel something vaguely to be missing from the new cult of "me."

Third, we might be able to use pop psychology and psychotherapy not only to help our lives, but also to clarify our understanding of social issues. Socialists without psychological awareness are simply limited in thinking about the main issues of our lifetime, from sex roles to why the oppressed sometimes submit and sometimes rebel, from guilt to attitudes towards authority.

And finally, as with any other vital, if ultimately misdirected current, we could struggle in and with pop psychology and psychotherapy to win them over completely to the cause of human liberation. Our friends who are therapists, for example, could be challenged to understand the social meaning of their tremendously important profession, could be encouraged to explore the systemic social roots of the problems they treat.

These are all things we might do if we decided to enter a dialogue on all levels with people absorbed in pop psychology and psychotherapy. To do any of them we would first have to stop throwing stones from the outside.

We would have to listen, in others and perhaps even in ourselves, to those voices of personal turmoil, self-doubt, and pain. We would have to admit the enormous strength, in others and perhaps even in ourselves, of the urge to become happier and more effective human beings. After all, isn't this what our struggle is all about?

Ron Aronson is a member of NAM in Detroit and a professor of philosophy at Wayne State University. His book on Jean Paul Sartre will be published soon.

We get letters...

Jamaica

Some friends and I just came back from a wonderful ten-day vacation in Jamaica.

When we were in Jamaica we contacted the office of tourism to participate in a program called, "Meet the People." This program is an attempt on the part of the Jamaican government to present their island, its people, and its culture as "more than just a beach."

Part of the program involves matching visiting people up with residents according to their interests. We told the people there that we were in a democratic socialist organization and that we wanted to meet people in the PNP, the ruling party that is trying to move the country toward socialism through the electoral process.

What a visit we got! We met with one Frank Pringle, who is a personal friend of Michael Manley's and his advisor for the western half of the island, Montego Bay, where we stayed. He took us to a political meeting which was an executive committee meeting of the Party. People at the meeting included the President of the People's National Party, an ex-head of the Jamaican Teacher's Union and other leadership from the Party.

It was a fascinating meeting, where these people who were the elected representatives from all the chapters in the area (They call chapters "groups.") discussed how to respond to the latest oil price hike from OPEC. Half the leadership there were women, and they really did debate public policy for the government.

It was a great boost to see democratic socialism in operation, and I have come away from the island thinking that it would be very good for NAM to formalize some kind of re-

lationship with the People's National Party.

I'd like to see leftists in this country learn more about what's happening in Jamaica.

Ian Harris
Milwaukee, WI

Old-line churches

"Born Again—Evangelism Hits the Big Time" by Judy MacLean was a good treatment of a subject that the left has overlooked. But she focuses too much on the glamorous TV stars and ignores the impact of the thousands of old-line evangelical churches that have been a part of the American Scene for decades and will continue to be there when the TV ministry peaks (which I believe it will.)

Tad Ingram
Decatur, Ill.

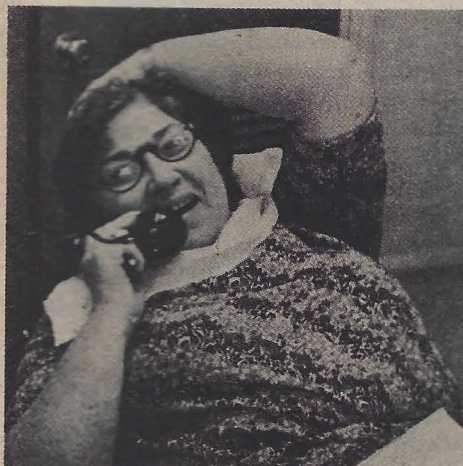
Blind alley

Al Phabar is too pessimistic about the working class. (Capitalism's Bad Apples, Moving On, Feb 79). Sure, maybe reopening the steel plant under worker control is taking some of capitalism's losing enterprises from them. Sure, manufacturing steel is dangerous, whether it is done in this country or by workers elsewhere. But how are we going to get the strength to change these things? By waiting for market mechanisms to weed out less competitive industries?

Taking over a steel plant could be one step toward workers retaking control over many aspects of their lives, including safety aspects of the work they do and the investment decisions that led to steel production being so unproductive and dangerous in the first place. Phabar's strategy leads us down a blind alley.

Kevin Axlerod
Cleveland, Ohio

Double Takes & Toldos



What better occasion than the celebration of International Women's Day to note the field day that the nation's press has had so far this year when it comes to coverage of women. Despite widespread endorsement of the ERA by most major dailies, there is an underlying misogyny that still dominates traditional journalism. And the boys in the business really got a chance to get their licks in with the big stories about Bella Abzug and Greta Rideout.

I'm not saying that these ladies are above criticism. I'm simply talking about the thin line between criticism and contempt. Article after article (not to mention editorial cartoons) went after Bella's "bellicosity," "aggressiveness," "rudeness," etc. And many could not resist putting down her looks ("ugly") and her personal style ("obnoxious").

Greta Rideout, worse than giving lip to the President, dared to charge her husband with rape. Some male journalists nearly popped off the paper in indignation. And such gloating when she went back with him. You couldn't beat this contemporary *Taming of the Shrew* for male ego-boosting.

Teng Hsiao-ping's visit to the United States and Pope John Paul's trip to

Mexico were as good demonstrations of fence straddling as any we've seen in a while. Teng had the difficult task of whipping up U.S. fervor against the Soviet Union and going bananas over American technological achievements while still making clear that he is a communist.

The Pope had the equally hard job of constantly criticizing any attempt to develop an activist theology that places itself on the side of the oppressed while at the same time trying to identify the Church with the concerns of the poor. His confusion was evident in his remark about "the simple joys of the poor."

One American cartoonist responded by showing two peasants talking: "The Pope was right. Anyone who'd enjoy being poor must be pretty simple."



The American judicial system, like the Pope's God, works in some pretty mysterious ways. Patty Hearst, whose bloodlines need no explanation, recently received an executive pardon in time to insure her a shopping spree for her nuptial trousseau.

Meanwhile in Jackson, Mississippi a 14 year old boy was sentenced to 48 years in prison—with no possibility of parole—for his part in an armed robbery. A Department of Corrections spokesperson there says the boy could be out by age 46 if he gets time out for good behavior. He has been placed in a state penitentiary in order to "protect" the children in the juvenile facility where he would normally be assigned.

In response to complaints about the severity of the sentence and place of punishment, the DA insisted, "We're talking about a serious crime." We wonder if he's written Jimmy to protest Patty's release.

In the "really hard to believe" department was black leader Jessie Jackson's response to the death of Nelson Rockefeller. Describing Rockefeller as a "man of vision," Jackson went on to reassure that there would be others like him to take his place. Remembering the long list of Nelson's victims, one can only hope that another like him doesn't come along too soon—and that his vision is buried with him.

Italy's sinking Christian Democratic Party has found another life preserver to hang on to. A little-known Italian law allows citizens of other countries who were born in Italy to retain their right to vote there, even if they are not Italian citizens and have no residence in the country. The DCI is reportedly planning to send organizers to New York City to begin work among Italian-Americans—whom they consider a likely base for their policies in Italy.

Roberta Lynch

All the news...

Moving and Shaking

•Working in a coalition of citizen groups called People Against Winter Utility Cutoffs, **Baltimore NAM** is campaigning for a total moratorium on winter gas and electric shutoffs. Last year, the group won a one-year moratorium on shutoffs. The chapter has also successfully worked to get service restored for those shut off during warmer weather . . . **NAM** joined the Black Congressional Caucus and over 60 other organizations in filing an amicus curia (friend of the court) brief in the Brian Weber case. The brief argues that affirmative action is necessary, since discrimination against minorities and women is still rampant . . . **NAM's** second highest leadership body, the **Expanded National Interim Committee**, will meet in Chicago March 16-18. Topics of debate include new directions in labor work movement, electoral politics and the Middle East . . . **California NAM** chapters formed a statewide organization in January. Work around budget cutbacks in the wake of Proposition 13 and statewide cooperation to defeat the anti-gay Briggs initiative last fall led the eight chapters to form **NAM's** first statewide structure.

Sing Out

Detroit NAM members are bringing the Chilean folk group *Quilapayun* for a concert in Detroit March 6. The group is touring the U.S. to promote human rights in Chile and to pay tribute to Victor Jara, Chilean folksinger who was executed by the military regime in 1973. . . . Holly Near will sing at a concert sponsored by **Blazing Star NAM** in Chicago April 6. Near's latest album is *Imagine My Surprise* and can be or-

dered from Redwood Records, P.O. Box 40400, San Francisco, CA 94140.

Travelling On

•A special fundraising campaign among **NAM** members has created a fund to hire a travelling organizer. Jacquie Brown, formerly of **Lansing NAM**, begins travelling in the midwest this month. Brown has been active in her local union, helped win acquittal in the Francine Hughes case (Hughes was a battered woman accused of murdering her husband), served on the chapter steering committee and the **NAM** Industrial Heartland Regional Council, and represented her region on **NAM's** Expanded National Interim Committee.

Labor

•**NAM's Labor Commission** is developing a new perspective on socialist participation in the labor movement. A discussion draft of the proposed document, written by Labor Commission chair Stanley Aronowitz, appears in the latest Discussion Bulletin (#25). Responses appear in the forthcoming Bulletin, available mid-March. The Commission is also publishing a newsletter for labor activists, holding regional weekend schools on socialist labor strategy, and setting up the **NAM** Hiring Hall to help beginners get started on workplace activism. To contact the Labor Commission: Stanley Aronowitz, 625 Seaview, Laguna Beach, CA 92651.

Convention

•**NAM's** 1979 National Convention will be held in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 8-12. The convention will include

discussion of a new perspective on labor as well as our approach to electoral politics. There will be sessions on themes of feminism, community organizing, anti-racism, health issues, energy and culture. A major concert and screenings of outstanding political films of the year will also be included, plus parties, informal caucusing, late-night mimeographing of last-minute resolutions and reunions with old friends. Mark your calendars.

Writing

•Dean Pappas of **Baltimore NAM** writes a biweekly column, "From the Left," in Baltimore's *The City Paper*. Pappas plans to discuss issues confronting Baltimore and the U.S.. "It is the present lack of meaning and creativity in daily aspects of our lives, as well as our inability to feel any control over the events that confront us, that ultimately fuel our desire for social change," wrote Pappas in his opening column. He is a member of **NAM's National Interim Committee**. **Los Angeles NAM** member Kathie Sheldon just completed *A Guide to Social Science Resources in Women's Studies* with co-author Elizabeth H. Oakes.

Resources

•The latest issue of *The Struggle Against Racism*, published by **NAM's Anti-Racism Commission**, contains several articles on Hispanics and the struggles of undocumented workers. Other articles include an analysis of the effect of the energy crisis on black America, and resolutions from **NAM's** 1978 convention. Copies are available for 25¢ from the **NAM** National Office.

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 than can carry out these tasks, as well as to the growth of the most strong and progressive possible popular organizations.

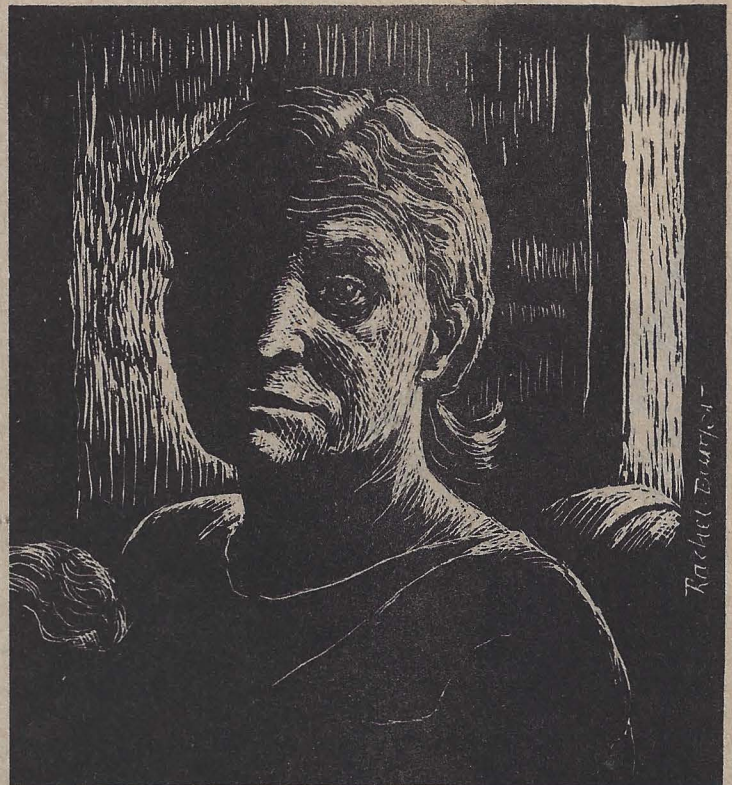
- Democracy is central to the process of building a movement for socialism. Only as working people become active, organized and begin to take control over their lives can a new society take shape.

- 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.



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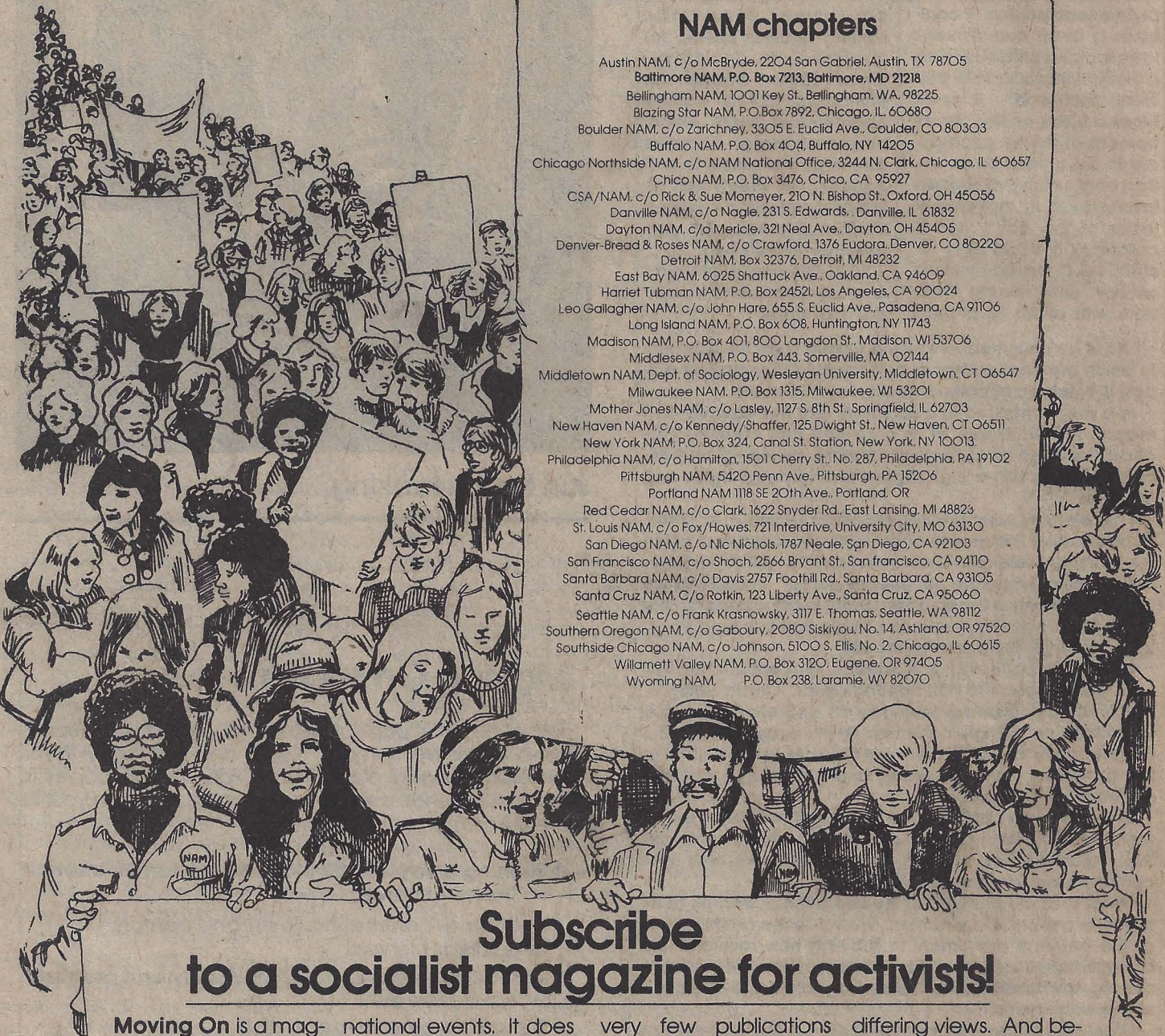
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