

U.S.G.

NEWSLETTER

Union of Socialist Geographers

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ABOUT THE U.S.G.

The Union of Socialist Geographers was organised in Toronto in May 1974. The consensus of those gathered in Toronto was that an organisation - the USG - be formed to improve communication among those geographers who agree with the principles in the organisation's aims:

The purpose of our union is to work for the radical restructuring of our societies in accord with the principles of social justice. As geographers and as people we will contribute to this process in two complementary ways:

1. organising and working for radical change in our communities, and
2. developing geographic theory to contribute to revolutionary struggle.

Thus we subscribe to the principle: from each according to ability, to each according to need. We declare that the development of a humane, non-alienating society requires, as its most fundamental step, socialization of the ownership of the means of production.

The USG currently has members in Africa, Europe, Asia and Latin America as well as North America. Several active groups exist in both Canada and the United States, including academic and non-academic geographers, and non-geographers. An active section of the USG in Britain and Ireland plans to hold annual meetings at the time and place of the IBG annual meetings. The USG publishes a Newsletter several times a year and holds an annual meeting (in North America) in April or May each year.

The USG welcomes inquiries and new members. For further information, and the names of people to contact in your vicinity, write to:

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or write to one of the regional contact persons listed with the AGM minutes in this issue of the Newsletter.

To become a member (except if you're in Britain or Ireland) send your name, address and \$6 to:

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Minneapolis, MN 55455 USA

Membership includes receipt of the Newsletter. Individual Newsletter subscriptions are \$6; institutional subscriptions, \$12 per year.

PLEASE SEND MONEY !

The Minnesota contingent is proud, and relieved, to announce completion of volume 5 of the USG Newsletter. In fact this issue, another double issue reflecting the (belated) enthusiasm of our contributors, also constitutes the first one of volume 6. The back cover is thus a different color; a preview of volume 6. We are particularly pleased that the Kingston group has been able to put a lot of more practical material in this issue. Remember that Bryan Higgins is trying to collect a full issue on praxis (organising, community work etc.) hopefully to be published as vol 6 #3. See the last issue for details. So far the response has been nil. Does this mean that there are no USG members out there in the real world who want to start a discussion of issues that interest them? Or none that have a sense of humor? We hope this is not the case. All contributions on these or other topics are welcomed from anyone.

Marx tells us that any organization has to be able to reproduce its means and relations of production. Unfortunately, as regards the former of these the USG is failing dismally. After many revisionist quantitative, multivariate statistical analyses we have determined that of our 180 North American members only 28% are paid up through the 1978-1979 year. Or to put it otherwise, 72% had their subscriptions run out in May 1979 or before. And only 8% have paid up to May 1981. At present we do not have enough money to pay for production of this issue. According to our esteemed treasurer, of the \$500 plus necessary to print and mail this we have only \$443. We do not want to cut off members who are unemployed and/or have no money, but we find it hard to believe that there are 78% of you unemployed even with the current economic crisis. When vol 6 #2 appears we may well not be able to send it to any of the 72%. So be warned: unless payments are received, or unless you write and explain to us why you cannot afford to pay at this time, in all probability you will not be receiving any more issues.

The expiration date of your subscription is given on the top right hand side of your mailing label so please check. If you are behind please pay for all the years you have missed up to and including the 1980-1981 year. Subscriptions are \$6 per year (four issues of the Newsletter) for low income members and students. For the increasing number of USG people who are gaining respectability and making decent wages (lets say \$14,000 p.a., or more), please remember that dues are \$12 a year. Without these high income subscriptions we cannot subsidise dues for low income or unemployed people, both of which are necessary if the Newsletter is to be distributed to each according to her/his needs.

And with respect to those who, horror of horrors, have not paid for 2 or 3 years or more, remember BJLB's stories of the USG secret police: We know!

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EDITORIAL COMMENT

This issue of the Newsletter has been produced by a group of USG members and friends in Kingston, Ontario. We apologize for the delay in its production and would like to stress that the delay is in no way attributable to the Minnesota Collective. The major cause of the delay was the fact that by the December deadline for the submission of material for this issue of the Newsletter, only one item had been submitted from outside Kingston. Consequently, a small number of people in Kingston were faced with both producing and reproducing virtually all of the material for this issue at a time when many of us were already overcommitted and heavily burdened with work. We wish to emphasize that it is not by our design that this issue of the Newsletter has become a 'local' issue emphasizing the work and interests of people in geography at Queen's and contains precious little USG 'news'. In fact, we feel strongly that there must be a real effort made to reestablish the Newsletter as a forum primarily for the exchange of information and news as well as an outlet for short essays in which people can try out ideas and receive feedback.

In the context of what follows it is worth mentioning that we at Queen's have never viewed ourselves as a USG local. Since at least 1974 there has been an identifiable socialist group working within a broadly Marxist framework within the geography department at Queen's. The work of members of this group has focused on the political economy of Canadian development, the analysis of state intervention with respect to cities and regions in Canada and Britain, aspects of the political economy of late nineteenth century Kingston, the reproduction of labour power in post war Kingston and the political economy of development in Ghana, Uganda and Southern Africa. We have always had considerable contact with marxists in other departments at Queen's and particularly with people in Political Studies. This latter fact, coupled with our membership in more interdisciplinary academic groups such as the CSE and URPE, has meant that our intellectual and political interests have developed within an interdisciplinary context and rarely have we been concerned with the need to 'fit' into the bourgeois division of knowledge by developing a distinctly 'geographical marxism' (or 'marxist geography'). A good deal of our political activity over the past five years has centered around an organisation known as Kingston Socialists, one aim of which was to 'organize and work for radical change'. More about this later.

Our first formal contacts with the USG came in 1977 at the Regina CAG meetings. A couple of months later there was an informal discussion group on the urban question held in Kingston and attended by socialist geographers from Toronto, McGill and Queen's. As a result of these contacts several of us became members of the USG. However, the USG has never been important as an organization entity at Queen's. Our activities (both academic and political) have continued to be centred around Kingston Socialists and informal reading and study groups made up of people drawn from both within and outside of

the geography department rather than around a "USG local"!

In the light of these comments and those made in the editorial to the recent British Newsletter, is it time to review the purpose, nature and organizational structure of the USG and, particularly the role of the 'local', as they pertain to the future production of the Newsletter.?

This Newsletter is divided into three main sections. The first section is devoted to discussions of experiences gained through attempts at collective socialist organisation. The first article chronicles the history of Kingston Socialists (to which a number of us belonged at some time or other - Sophie Bissonette, Richard Harris, John Holmes, Fran Klodawsky, Greg Levine, Ray Schmidt and Carol Town) within the general context of the politics of the 70's in Canada. Then there follows a series of short notes concerning particular experiences with attempts at collective organization. The second section contains short research reports, notes on research interests and more general comments and critiques which reflect some of the current interests of people in the geography department of Queen's. (It should be noted that although their sympathies are with the left, not all of the contributors to this section are USG or KS members). The third section contains feedback on items published in previous newsletters.

John Holmes
for the Kingston Group
John Campling, Richard Harris,
John Holmes, Fran Klodawsky,
Greg Levine, Ray Schmidt.

The Whig-Standard / SCIENCE

KINGSTON, ONTARIO, WEDNESDAY, JULY 9, 1980

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Scientists believe

lefties are smarter,

PART 1: COLLECTIVE ACTION AND SOCIALIST ORGANIZATION

INTELLECTUALS AND THE CLASS STRUGGLE: POLITICAL ACTIVITIES IN KINGSTON IN THE 1970's.

RAY SCHMIDT, GEOGRAPHY DEPARTMENT, QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY, KINGSTON

While the U.S.G. has certainly been a success in terms of providing a vehicle for discussion among socialist geographers, it has been markedly less successful as a forum for discussion of its own principal goals:

- "1. organizing and working for radical change in our communities and,
2. developing geographic theory to contribute to revolutionary struggle."

The first part of this issue of the U.S.G Newsletter is designed primarily as a contribution to a dialogue on the first of these two major goals. I will have little to say on the second objective, beyond pointing out that it appears to be a misplaced concern which reflects the political immaturity of our radicalization at the point of formation of the U.S.G in 1974.

Perhaps it is a peculiar blindness on my part, or perhaps it is a function of the incapacities of the geographers with which I have been politically associated, but I must confess that I have never noted a distinct geographical theoretical contribution to our political practice although, of course, our specific expertise in certain fields may be useful. We in Kingston have, I think, reached an implicit consensus not to worry overly much about career choices made many years ago. A revolutionary geographic theory appears no less (or more) silly than a "revolutionary political science theory" or a "revolutionary sociological theory". I am willing to leave it to others to rehash the sterile debate. The problem of the construction of revolutionary theory within the context of Marxist political economy appears more pertinent.

What we have suggested is that, as socialist geographers with declared revolutionary pretensions, we should consciously define our questions in terms of the development of the class struggle at a particular conjuncture, and not by the traditionally established scope of the discipline. I think that many radical geographers still remain more concerned with the radical restructuring of the discipline than

with the declared "purpose of our union ...(which is)... to work for the radical restructuring of our societies..."

Having said all of this, primarily as a justification for what I am sure will appear to be a rather "ungeographic" geographic Newsletter, I must confess that I have no ready prescriptions for "What is to be Done". I can only hope that my comments will be taken in the spirit of a true dialogue.

In the preparation of this Newsletter, I was delegated to provide a brief discussion of our political activities in Kingston over the past several years. Most of this activity took place within the context of a local group called the Kingston Socialists (KS), a group in which most of those responsible for the preparation of this Newsletter were members at one time or another over the past five years. I shall briefly discuss the history of our experiences with this group and attempt to sum up this experience within the general context of the politics of the 70's.

From its founding in 1975 to its "fading away" in 1980, the Kingston Socialists was the only consistent non-social democratic left presence in Kingston. We began as a broadly based coalition of socialists designed to "embrace a variety of socialist perspectives" (which included both Communist Party and Trotskyist group members at particular times). The rather naive non-specificity of goals and the frank acceptance of heterogeneity was perhaps a reflection of the political immaturity of the initial membership. The conception of this form of organization was closely related to a proposal by individuals centered around the Canadian Dimension, an independent left magazine published out of Winnipeg. Much of our initial leadership had been closely associated with the recently defunct Waffle section of the New Democratic Party. A May 19, 1975 Dimension circular suggested:

a network of socialist centres that are actively engaged in support, educational, and propaganda work with working people in their communities. These centres could be as few as ten and as many as thirty. As to content, no specific "line" is contemplated. It is presumed that the leadership in each centre is Marxist and that discussions and activity will be so framed. It is thought that within this framework a non-exclusivist policy seems best at this time. The nature of this project is to provide a basis for serious activists to sink roots among working people in their areas. This might be done through support and service activity for workers and for unions; and through "educational" activity, insofar as "education" is understood in the broad sense of relating Marxist ideas to the concrete activity and the existing realities of working people.

For us the scheme foundered on the problem of performing "educational" activity without a developed political "line", or in fact seriously initiating any activity that did not act as a forum for the several competing tendencies in the organization. In fact, as an organization we were virtually immobilized by our diversity. Further,

our membership was drawn almost exclusively from the academic community which was, moreover, relatively new to Kingston. "Sinking roots among working people" was no mean task for a group in which the majority of the membership resided in a student ghetto within 10 minutes walk of Queen's University.

Nevertheless, by the end of 1975 we had sponsored various forums, some featuring discussions between tendencies on the left, engaged in militant worker support activity, and made initial contacts with local unions that led to a jointly sponsored forum on wage controls.

KS had adopted a committee structure consisting of three divisions: an educational committee, a political economy of Kingston study committee and a labour committee. The last committee included most of the experienced activists within the group and was really the only section that ever got beyond the stage of making proposals. In fact, the labour committee was responsible for all activities in the first 8 months. This meant perhaps one-quarter or less of the membership actually participated in concrete activities. This has been the pattern for the entire life of the organization. Activity has always depended upon the initiative of a handful of individuals rather than arising from the directives of the group. The majority of the membership were at varying degrees of political experience and gravitated to KS primarily as an educational experience. As a broad coalition of "developed tendencies" and "the uninitiated", a "directed" education was not a function that we were particularly well equipped to provide. Membership in the group was largely incidental to the activities which were actually engaged in, except insofar as KS acted as a focus for like-minded individuals and a resource pool.

By the fall of 1976 the activities of the group had been largely suspended. Many of the most active students had formed a campus based organization to engage in student politics, and their energies were directed in that area. During the attempt to re-form in the fall, of 1976, discussions were dominated by feminism and the problem of intragroup dynamics. Some of the geographers in KS also attempted to initiate a dialogue on Community vs Workplace political activity. These efforts were related in that both were directed at the male dominated and rather orthodox conception of political organization and political activity held by the acknowledged leadership of the group. To the extent that the discussion was political, its politics were based on the perception by many members that the intellectual leadership of the group was insensitive to feminist issues and, in general, to most "community" issues which were not directed at the organized working class. On a more personal level the dissenters also felt that their ideas were treated with an arrogant and paternalistic contempt by the more articulate and experienced members of the group. By early 1977 our meetings had degenerated into a process of personalized invective.

The "debate" was complicated by the fact that it was paralleled by an effort to reject the "umbrella group" status of KS, which we felt had immobilized us, and to adopt a more cohesive group structure.

Since we had never reached agreement on fundamental political positions, this discussion was primarily an attempt to define ourselves organizationally, and negatively through exclusion of alternate established political tendencies. The breaking point arose over the expulsion of a KS member who was also a member of a Trotskyist group. The core of dissent centered around what was in fact a group within a group. It was composed primarily of undergraduates whose cohesion, and aversion to "authoritarianism", was a product of their organization as a separate group in student politics. This group included KS's Trot. On the other side was ranked a somewhat older contingent primarily of students and faculty at Queen's. Most of the geography students remained somewhat outside of either faction. (By this time we had lost most of what little non-academic participation we had once had).

In brief, the Trotskyist was expelled by a narrow vote and the victors celebrated their victory by promptly resigning, citing irreconcilable, but unspecified, political differences, and founding a separate group. (This group disappeared in less than a year. Some of those who left were later to rejoin). The "geography contingent", which had straddled both factions in terms of support of specific issues, remained in KS.

On the whole the split was beneficial. It was generally perceived as a challenge in that most of those who had been looked to for leadership had left. The organizational directives which had been vigorously debated over the past several months, were now whole-heartedly accepted, and for the first time in our history we undertook a series of political discussions resulting in an initial statement of principles in Aug. 1977.

The statement viewed charitably, can best be described as an attempt to assert our "Marxist purity" over charges of New Left anarchism" to those who had left. It was drawn partly from our own discussion, but as a whole was an eclectic agglomeration of plagiarized sections modeled upon earlier statements by other Socialist Centers with which we retained contact. It was a contradictory document that rejected the vanguardist model, but in fact implicitly reasserted it in terms of the practical orientation of our group to the class struggle. Strangely enough, after all the discussion surrounding issues such as feminism and community struggles, the tactical pre-eminence of an orientation towards the organized working class was reasserted. We also explicitly turned our back on student politics.

For a time we were willing to leave unresolved the problem of how a group that was essentially student-based could make any contribution in the arena of labour struggles. This "orientation" to organized labour was limited to periodic forums on labour questions such as wage controls (to which attracting a half dozen workers was deemed a resounding success), infrequent strike support activities (which were immediately successful but temporary), and occasional mailings of leaflets to unions (to which we never received a single response).

In late 1977 we began organization of the unemployed. This was to prove to be our most successful initiative. By now several of our members had graduated and joined the ranks of the unemployed or underemployed. They could legitimately speak from the "inside" - a novelty in terms of most of the activities in which we engaged in the past.

The unemployment movement is worthy of a separate discussion in its own right. I will not attempt a detailed analysis at this point. I wish only to note that, to some extent the unemployed organization generated a leadership which was not exclusively drawn from KS, and that some aspects of the organization we helped to build are still in operation, financed by the local Kingston union movement. Our input has virtually ceased.

Intimate day to day experience with the "real world" drastically altered our political style and rhetoric. An extract from a pamphlet which we produced on unemployment prior to beginning organization illustrates this point.

"The only way to assure...essential social services and the right of every individual to be an equal member of of society is through the ending of the capitalist economic system. The existing Canadian parties are committed to maintaining such a system. Only through the building of a new socialist party, committed to achieving workers control and planned economic development, can the long term needs and aspirations of Canadians be met."

In other words, at that point we still subordinated the specific needs of a particular section of the working class, and the possibilities of a specific organizing impetus, to the illusory goal of building the revolutionary party.

This exhortitive style might be compared to the following quotation from a Special Election Issue Newsletter of the Kingston Committee of the Unemployed prepared for the May 1979 Canadian election. It represented, not a watering down of our revolutionary aspirations (it was in any case the broad consensus of opinion of the Committee of the Unemployed Membership), but a breath of realism.

"Unemployment is the major political issue in Canada today. History shows that it is not a temporary problem but a permanent feature of an economy where periods of growth are necessarily followed by severe recessions and depressions. While the structural weakness of a resource-based economy such as Canada's serves to aggravate the impact of recessions, the ultimate cause of unemployment is an economic system geared to maximizing profits rather than to satisfying human needs. So long as profits come before people, so long as the interests of "investors" take precedence over the interests of working people, so long as private corporations rather than social organisations continue to make economic decisions for society, unemployment will be a characteristic of Canadian society.

None of the major political parties have fully addressed the issue in these terms. This does not mean, however, that it does not matter who is elected. Government action can influence the level of unemployment. The policies adopted by the next government will crucially affect the lives of not only those who are unemployed but of all working people in this country. To help clarify the issues, we offer this analysis of the platforms of the various parties, and would remind you that THE ONLY WASTED VOTE IS A VOTE AGAINST YOUR OWN INTERESTS."

The essential shift in our political focus was from that of party building to the recognition of the validity and integrity of militant mass struggles as important in their own right and as an essential aspect of the building of socialism. We saw our goal less in terms of leading and directing these movements towards explicitly revolutionary aims - or what we in the abstract had come to think as 'pure' revolutionary aims - than as a process of struggle in which our role was not so much 'leadership' as communication. In this sense our overall strategy was to bring together the struggle of employed and unemployed workers. This was seen as both a practical measure (we recognized that the long term organization of the unemployed as a separate group was impossible), and an ideological measure (that is, that the employed and unemployed both see themselves as workers with common interests).

In this regard, the regular Newsletter distributed by the Committee of the Unemployed was a most valuable tool. Distribution was primarily through weekly handouts at the local Unemployment Insurance and Manpower offices, but increasingly through a mailing list to individuals and various organizations.

KS did not disband - it periodically dissolved and like a mythical pheonix rose again from the ashes. By early 1978 official meetings virtually discontinued as most of our energies were channeled into the unemployment organization. It experienced a half-hearted revival later in the year and even a return of some of the members who had left in the split. However, we never again really functioned as an organization which was more than a contact base. Those of us engaged in ongoing activities maintained them and reported dutifully back to the group, but seldom as a source of advise or directives. The plain fact was that those of us who were activity oriented had by now established roots in the community and were not seeking additional outlets for our political energies. The point at which KS ceased to function as an organization was also the busiest and most politically productive period for its nominal members.

Political Organization in the 70's

"Welcome to the 1980's".

With these words Pierre Trudeau greeted the Liberal party faithful and the national T.V. audience on the night of his Feb. 1980 Canadian election victory. A friend of mine, who is 26 years old,

observed caustically that she had spent one-half of her life under the "Trudeau regime" - a despondent but succinct comment on the Canadian political process. I think these years can best be characterized as the period when something never quite happened - a recession that never quite became a depression; Quebec separatism that became "sovereignty association", that became a "renegotiated federalism" (?); an idealistic youth movement that has degenerated into apathy; a military grass-roots union movement suppressed by a self-aggrandizing leaderships' commitment to the principle of tripartitism; a splintered and disorganized sectarian left that still appears genetically incapable of defining the principle enemy; and an intellectual rebirth of Marxism which remains almost completely divorced from the working class movement - what Frank Parkin has irreverently designated as "professorial Marxism".

Hardly exciting times, at least if one is to compare them with the sense of urgency, excitement and movement that characterized radical politics in the 60's. Pessimistically, it is possible to perceive the 70's as a retreat and a re-entrenchment of conservatism; optimistically, as a temporary lull in the movement and a time of regroupment. "Pessimism of the intellect, optimism of the will" - a useful dictum that rescues us from the extremes of optimism and despair.

Yet, for those of us who remain committed to the Marxism of praxis (and I am not really interested in a dialogue here with any others), it is time for introspection and reassessment. If I were asked to distill the lessons of 5 years of activity in Kingston into a few words, I would say that it is crystalized in the recognition of the distinction between participation in radical political practice, and participation in a movement. The former is something we found we could learn and do well. The latter, I think, cannot be forced - it is not an act of will. For all our committment to a philosophy of praxis, Parkin's cynical assessment of western Marxism remains too apt - we are at best academics by day and activists by night.

This is a frustrating and demoralizing conclusion; frustrating because our activities are usually specific and limited, and the long range political and ideological effects indiscernable. Frustrating too, it seems to be, because, in the absence of attachment to a political movement, the parameters of our theoretical and intellectual development remain perpetually bounded by our critique of, and debate with, bourgeois social science. It is only the real political questions posed by an ongoing movement that can rescue us from this impasse.

We can, of course, pretend that this is not the case, as sectarian groups do, and live "The Life of Brian". We can live, and have lived, the latter illusion - that of the vanguard "movement" lecturing socialism to the masses. And, if we remain busy enough by concentrating on being "pure" enough, there is little time to realize or care that we are only talking to ourselves.

But I do not think that this is in itself a particularly useful conclusion for it does not provide an alternative. In Kingston, our rejection of the vanguardist model of political organization has meant no organization at all. When we rid ourselves of these pretensions we also dissolved as a coherent group. What we do on an ongoing basis we do as individuals, forming together in loose temporary coalitions for specific actions. In this sense there is an identifiable "left" in the Kingston community - a left that can be effectively mobilized around short term issues. It has roots, tenuous though they may be, in the broader non-academic community. We can take little credit for creating this however - we only discovered it. It is not so much a movement as a community of militant sympathy. If it can be said that we have found some niche, it is that of providing a channel inter-linking this community. But this still remains more of an aspiration than a reality.

What then have been our concrete accomplishments? We can of course, point to many individual actions which have achieved varying degrees of success - at the least, they have provided an alternative perspective, a voice in the wilderness. At best, we can claim to have constituted something of a catalyst for activities. Some have continued beyond our active participation in a leadership capacity, notable, the unemployment movement in Kingston. Others have provided a focus for individual radicalization and political development.

This is scarcely earth shattering, but I do not see our activities as failures. If we appear to have been treading water, at least we have not drowned. There is a Marxist socialist movement in Canada today (the growing number of MarxistLenninists groupings notwithstanding), but there is a significant body of opinion which lies outside of both social democracy and the secretarian far left, and I believe that it is larger, more representative, and intellectually more sophisticated than it was ten years ago. It has no readily identifiable ideological core and no strategic focus and this produces a tendency for it to gravitate to the left wing of the social democratic New Democratic Party. However, it is a body of opinion whose aims are restricted, not by its ideology, but by its deep pessimism with regard to what is possible. Ultimately, I think this is the meaning of the "conservatism" of the 70's.

If there is one single axiom that can be drawn out of our experiences, it is that political consciousness is concretized only through practical struggle; that is, the concrete recognition of one's own capability to fight and to win even though our victories are ephemeral or only moral. In other words, the practical realization of one's own capability as a social being. I do not believe in "intellectual radicalization". We can teach people to talk like Marxists in our classes, but they always end up acting like the bourgeoisie in their private life. At this particular point in time there appears to be little utility in talking of grand political strategies for making the revolution. What we can do is to painstakingly push against the boundaries of what was formerly conceived as the realm of the possible. These boundaries cannot be expanded merely by abstractions, whether they originate in the

exhortations of the various sects or in textbooks.

I see the present role of intellectuals, not so much as instructors, but as mediators of communication. Most Marxist intellectuals labour under the misapprehension that a bourgeois ideological consensus permeates the working class, and that this is the most important barrier to socialist progress. I see no generalized faith or optimism in the future of the capitalist system. There is a fear of the unknown, but we cannot merely fight ideology with ideology. Human beings are quite naturally practical risk averters. What we can do for the present is to communicate what does work and help to share and make common the scattered experiences of specific struggles. If we see socialism in terms of the democratization of society, and not simply as the "socialization of the ownership of the means of production" (state capitalism?), then we should treat its creation as a social experience and a process.

COMMUNITY ACTION AND CLASS STRUGGLE IN KINGSTON *

RICHARD HARRIS, GEOGRAPHY DEPARTMENT, QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY,
KINGSTON.

My membership of the Kingston Socialists (KS) began in the fall of 1976. In the subsequent two years, as Ray Schmidt has already indicated, one of the most persistent and divisive issues which was raised in the weekly meetings of KS concerned the political significance of 'community' struggles. On this question, the debate rapidly polarised. In general terms, this polarisation may be understood as that between an 'old left' and a 'new left'. From the former perspective it was argued that the central concern of any socialist group -- such as KS -- must be the development of workers' consciousness and organisation within the workplace. It was argued that to accept a Marxist analysis, however broadly defined, was to accept the primacy of class struggle; class is defined in the workplace; ergo, workplace issues are of primary significance.

On the other side, a number of us argued (and at times simply asserted) that "community" issues are felt to be important by the working class. They affect peoples' daily lives. They help to raise political consciousness. While such issues do not involve the direct confrontation of labour and capital, they are somehow important for the development of the class struggle.

Once polarised, the political debate within KS never really advanced beyond the assertion, and re-assertion, of these positions. The main reason for this was the failure, on either side, to define what was meant by "community". In practise, there seemed to be a general agreement that "community" issues included housing, welfare, education and, perhaps, unemployment; in fact, the "community" came to be defined by default as comprising anything that fell outside the workplace (implicitly, the capitalist workplace). In theoretical

terms, then, "community" was a residual category, into which a whole range of issues and conflicts could be thrown. No clear relation among these issues could be defined; furthermore, no-one was able to show how community issues might be related to workplace struggles. In consequence, debate ground to a halt.

This theoretical failure had immediate significance for the political activity of KS. The failure to define community led to a failure to define the importance of community struggles, and a reluctance to engage, as a group, in these struggles.

These debates over "community action" are not merely of parochial concern, however, and it is for this reason that I raise them here. The failure of KS to define the "community", and its political consequences, was part of a wider failure. Indeed it still is. During the sixties, there was a resurgence of political activity and political consciousness within North America, and indeed within most of the advanced capitalist world. Within the workplace, this was manifested in steadily rising union militancy, combined with the progressive unionisation of many 'white collar' workers. Even more dramatically, however, outside the workplace the sixties saw the blossoming of a variety of civil rights organisations, and groups organised to defend the rights of welfare recipients, tenants, the underprivileged and the poor.

On the whole, Marxists were not notably successful in understanding and bringing into relation these new, non-workplace issues and struggles. Faced with housing, welfare, education or transportation issues, many Marxists in the 'old' left backed off. They dismissed such issues as belonging to the sphere of 'consumption' or the 'community'. As Marxists, the old left 'knew' that the class struggle was of central importance to the comprehension and transformation of capitalism; it knew that class was defined in terms of the capitalist workplace; it therefore knew that class struggle within the workplace took theoretical and organisational precedence over community issues. At best the old left was sympathetic to these latter issues and their associated struggles. At worst, they saw community struggles as a competitor with class struggles, and hence condemned the former in the name of the latter. For the old left, then, the question which was raised by non-workplace activity was that of "Community or Class struggle" [1]

In the absence of leadership, of interest and even of understanding from the old left, the participants in the non-workplace struggles of the sixties developed their own rationalisations and understanding of the issues involved. As a social movement, and as a loose body of thought, these struggles thus gave rise to a 'new' left. This new left 'knew' that housing and welfare issues were important, and were legitimate and significant arenas of social struggle. Unfortunately the new left was usually unable to specify the hows and whys of this importance.

By and large, the new left rejected the brand of marxism which was available in the old left, and replaced this with a melange of

anarchism and radical populism. For the new left, community struggles were not class struggles, but attempts to seize power on the part of (or on behalf of) the 'people'. When, in 1969 and 1970, the people (and especially the students) failed to seize power, the ensuing despair was one of unmitigated failure: a failure which had not been predicted, and which could not even be adequately comprehended, within the frame of reference of populist thought. This intellectual failure and this despair coloured the seventies and is with us today [2].

In my own research, I have been trying to come to terms with these theoretical and political failures in two ways. In the first place, I have been concerned with developing a theoretical basis from which we may define, interpret and participate in "community" struggles. Secondly, I have been developing this framework through a study of the "community" struggles that developed in Kingston in the sixties and early seventies. The following is a summary of my argument and findings to date [3].

Community Action and the Production of Labour Power

I believe that, within Marxist thought, community struggles may be understood as class struggles. In particular, I believe that it is necessary to interpret community conflicts as struggles over the production of labour power as a class relation. Labour power -- labour in the commodity form -- is the definitive production relation of capitalism. It is central to the class struggle. Indeed, that struggle may be understood as being about the production of labour in its commodity form : about how labour power is produced (conditions and consciousness) and, at the limit, about whether labour power will be produced [4].

Labour power is realised in the workplace, that is to say the capitalist workplace. The production of labour power, however, on both a daily and an inter-generational basis, occurs chiefly outside the workplace, within what has been called the sphere of social production (Tronti, 1973; Cleaver, 1979). It occurs within the labour market, and in commodity markets in general. It occurs within the family, through the performance of unpaid work and through what is usually termed commodity consumption (rather than labour power production). It occurs at the level of the state, in terms of the provision of welfare payments, unemployment insurance, local government services and so on.

Finally, I would argue that the production of labour power occurs within the local voluntary community : through the various informal activities that comprise neighboring, charities, self-help and co-operative organisations and so on. These activities are voluntary in a way that participation in the state (through taxation, the respect for property and so on) is not. As members of a state we are all subject to taxation, all bound (on penalty) to respect the laws of property ownership and so on. Voluntary communities never (or very rarely) are able to impose universal constraints of those kinds.

Furthermore, voluntary community activities are collective in character, in distinction from the essentially private forms of social production that develop within the family. Finally, the voluntary community may be distinguished from the market in terms of the differing purposes of activity within each institution. Within the market, the criteria is profit. Within the voluntary community the ostensible criteria may be more various.

Each of these social spheres beyond the workplace, then, may be seen to play important, and ever-changing roles in the production of labour power as a class relation [5].

This holistic view of the manner in which labour power is produced is important. It enables us to see community activity within its wider context. It enables us to identify the particular character and particular significance of such activity. In this view, there is an arena of class struggle, the sphere of social production, which may be identified as lying outside the workplace, beyond the direct domination and control of capital. This broad sphere corresponds with some traditional usages of the term 'community'. (I do not wish to get into a review of all the possible uses of this term). Within this context, voluntary community activity, as I define the term, is that form of class struggle over social production which develops outside the workplace, the family, the state and the market. Commonly, although not invariably, it is directed towards the state, and in particular the local state. Its significance is felt through its effects on the conditions under which labour power is being produced as a class relation.

In this regard community struggles that develop within these different institutions are of vital significance to the production of labour power. Such struggles affect the conditions under which labour power is produced; they affect the price of labour, and they affect the consciousness of those who live by selling their labour power, the working class. In this manner community activity has direct and potentially wide-ranging effects upon the overall development of the class struggle. As such, it cannot be dismissed as somehow peripheral to, or alternative to, workplace struggles. Community struggles are integral to the class struggle; they are forms of class struggle. They cannot be dismissed. What, however, is their significance?

This question cannot be answered a priori. The significance of community activity depends upon the time and the place, upon the form which struggle takes, upon the relation of community struggles to workplace struggles, and upon their joint effects. What, then, were the particular characteristics and effects of community activity in Kingston in the sixties and early seventies?

Community Activity in Kingston, 1961-1976

In the sixties and early seventies, Kingston was in many ways an interesting laboratory within which these wider arguments might be

evaluated. Throughout the period, the working class of the city, as a whole, experienced a general and clear rise in real incomes. The average annual income of fully-employed hourly rated workers in the city rose from \$4350 in 1961 to \$6500 in 1976 [6].

In large part, this increase in standard of living was bought at the expense of the family : in particular, there is clear evidence of a marked increase in the workforce participation of women, and of an increase in single person households and single parent families. Between 1961 and 1976, for example, the participation rate for women rose from 36.4% to 48.5% [7]. These trends lay behind a local movement for day care facilities, and are associated with the marked increase over the period in the numbers of single women on welfare.

Behind this general trend in family incomes are particular deviations. In the latter years of the sixties, the unemployment rate increased and, an associated phenomenon, the numbers of 'employable' people dependent upon welfare rose very markedly. Unemployment statistics are unavailable for Kingston except for census years. In 1971 Kingston's unemployment rate was over 7% according to the Census. In Ontario as a whole, unemployment rose from a trough of 2.5% in 1965 to an interim peak of 5.3% in 1971 [8]. These trends are paralleled by the welfare statistics. Between 1965 and 1971, the proportion of Kingston's total population (including children) who were dependent directly upon General Welfare Assistance rose from 1.5% to almost 4.5%. This increase was due primarily to an increasing number of people who got on to the welfare rolls because, although capable of working, they were unable to find work and failed to qualify for unemployment insurance assistance. 'Employables', as a proportion of all recipients of General Welfare Assistance in Kingston, rose from 42% in 1966 to over 65% in 1972 [9].

Furthermore, in the late sixties and early seventies a housing shortage of truly crisis proportions forced rental costs to rise at an unprecedented rate. The newspapers were filled with accounts of tenant families being forced out onto the street because they could not pay the rent increases that landlords were demanding. For these reasons, therefore, and despite the general increase in employment incomes, from 1965 onwards a progressively increasing number of working class households came under new, and (for many) unacceptable, kinds of pressure.

In the context of these developments in the conditions under which labour power was being produced outside the workplace, Kingston shared the recrudescence of political activity and consciousness which characterised Canadian culture as a whole in the period. Indeed in this period Kingston became quite a lively place [10]. In 1965, the Kingston Community Project was set up as one of a handful of community organising projects of the emerging Canadian new left [11]. The members sought, with some success, to help the poor of Kingstons' north end slums to organise themselves. From 1965 onwards, then, there was a rising tide of community action in the city. It began with the self-organisation of coffee houses and semi-underground clubs

by Kingston's youth. Soon it expanded to comprise a number of tenants and residents associations, a group of welfare recipients, a number of womens' groups, and a community information centre. The latter was originally set up under the auspices of the NDP but its volunteer staff soon turned to more radical forms of extra-parliamentary activity than the local NDP riding association could stomach. A community newspaper, "This Paper Belongs to the People", was set up and was distributed on the street for almost two years. Within the university, a number of new left clubs and organisations developed, some of which sought to establish links with the largely autonomous radical community activity.

All of this activity came to climax in 1969/1970. The most important of the tenants' organisations, the Association for Tenants' Action, Kingston, (ATAK), had succeeded in getting its President, Joan Newman, elected to city council in December 1968 as the representative for the north-end St. Lawrence ward. In 1969, with Joan Newman on council, and with the support of John Meister, a union representative on council, ATAK was pressing the city to implement rent controls, and as the debate warmed, council meetings were actively disrupted. At the same time, another tenants organisation developed in opposition to the activities of a particular slum landlord; high school students were beginning to organise; on the campus, the Free Socialist Movement fought Queen's administration over what became the nationally notorious Edward's case; also on campus, a group of academics were coalescing to form an important part of the "waffle" left caucus to the national NDP. The welfare administration was being fought by a group of welfare recipients with the aid of the community information centre. Everywhere, it seemed, there was ferment and struggle.

The Character and Effects of Community Action

What were the character and the effects of this political ferment? In terms of its character, the community activity of the time was both populist and inclusive. What does this mean?

The most obvious fact about this community activity was its collective character. As such it provided an experience of group action and struggle which was unique for the individuals involved. But it was a particular kind of collective struggle. For the community groups themselves, even at their most radical, the consciousness of struggle rarely went beyond a populist form. There were exceptions, of course. The Waffle group attempted to develop an analysis of Canadian society which drew much of its inspiration from the Canadian socialist tradition. A number of local women began to draw directly on Marxist thought. They saw the the family as an institution through which labour power was produced as a class relation. In the late sixties, this kind of insight and argument was presented by these women to the community at large through the medium of the local "people's paper": "This Paper Belongs to the People", By and large, however, the slogan of the time, and the one which "This Paper" espoused, was "Power to the People". It was in such terms that

the radical tenants' and welfare organisations defined their activities and in such terms that these struggles were presented to the population at large.

The strength of this populist consciousness was its inclusiveness: the 'people' could include workers, housewives, the unemployed, tenants ... whatever. Thus we find collected under the populist banner a whole range of struggles, both beyond and within the workplace. Indeed, because populist slogans were acceptable to both workers and non-workers, they provided a modus operandi for joint struggles. Thus ATAK and other community groups gave support to the United Electrical Workers in their strike of the locomotive works in 1968; in 1969 the same organisations picketed Proctor-Silex and joined the union-initiated boycott of California lettuce and grapes. Conversely, local unions gave support, financial and moral, to the community groups. Furthermore, local union leaders, notably John Meister, became involved in community struggles over day care facilities and housing. In this manner, populist consciousness was able to bridge the gulf that separated home and work, community struggles from workplace struggles.

In terms of the effects of these populist community struggles, from my research it is apparent that these effects went beyond Kingston. For the present, however, I will focus upon the effects that were felt within the city itself. Here, community struggles had an important impact upon the conditions and forms of social consciousness through which labour power was being produced. In terms of consciousness, and at the simplest level, the struggles of women, welfare recipients and poorer tenants brought home the fact of poverty to the population at large. On the evidence provided by the official local daily newspaper, for many people this revelation came as a real shock. As such, it was sufficient for the mobilisation of some liberal opinion.

With the (mixed) benefits of hindsight, it is possible to see other effects of community struggles upon social consciousness. In terms of individuals, it is clear that the community struggles of the sixties had a radicalising effect that endured. It is important not to overstate this point. From my research on Kingston, it is evident that most of those who were active in the community in the period have subsequently retired to more private pursuits. Some despaired, some lapsed, many have gone 'back' to the land, some have joined the voluntary service community, some have gone on to write of their experience, some have found work and are active in the union movement, many (perhaps most) have rejoined the mainstream. Some, however, have continued to be active politically, but now within a socialist rather than a populist framework. Such a person is Joan Newman Kuyek, whose account of the organisation of miners' wives in support of the recent INCO strike in Sudbury appears elsewhere in this newsletter.

The local effects of the community action of the sixties must be understood not only in terms of the transformation of social consciousness, a consciousness borne of struggle, but also in terms of the actual effects of such activity upon the conditions of life of the

working class. The struggles over housing and rents, for example, although they failed to achieve their goal (rent controls), were important in forcing city council to initiate a number of public housing schemes which were completed in the early and mid-seventies. The worst slums were removed, and many families were re-housed. The worst slumlords were forced, in limited fashion, to clean up their act. Furthermore, struggles against the local public housing authority and against the local welfare administration created a limited form of democratisation within the administration of local state policy. Public housing tenants, for example, secured representation on the Board of the local Housing Authority.

Local workplace struggles brought about a restructuring of capital. The larger corporate employers, ALCAN, Dupont and CIL, were able to absorb demands for higher wages. Smaller, local industries, such as the infamous David Tannery and the locomotive works, could not, and therefore went under. To the extent that such workplace struggles were supported and strengthened by the community organisations of the time -- and we should not overlook the importance of this support -- community struggles helped to bring about this local restructuring.

Conclusions

These community activities were modest in their effects. They fall very far short of a direct challenge to capitalist production relations in general, and in particular to the production of labour power as a class relation. Modest as such struggles were, however, they were important. They provided an experience of collective struggles. It is an experience which has not been forgotten and which, for some, is still a source of inspiration. Furthermore, the experience became a crucible in which new insights and forms of consciousness were forged and tempered. For all its limitations the populism of the sixties was comprehensive: it sensed not only the importance but also the interrelation of the various forms of social conflict. It saw that the personal was political. It saw that workplace and community must be seen as a whole. The only question remained, how? How are the struggles interrelated? In what way is the personal, political? How can we see workplace and community as a whole? By returning with open minds to the socialist and Marxist tradition, some parts of the new left, and in particular the women's movement, were able to begin to suggest answers to these questions. It is only on the basis of their insights and struggles that the development of the present argument is possible.

As I have also tried to indicate, however, the community struggles which developed in Kingston in the sixties and early seventies had a discernible effect upon the conditions under which labour power was produced as a class relation. Some of the poorest people in the working class made real gains in living conditions. This is important in itself. It is also important, however, because it was felt at the level of the state and in terms of local wage

demands: it put pressure on capital. Such struggles were developing nationally and indeed internationally. Seen in this wider context, the community struggles of the sixties became an important dimension of the emerging global capitalist crisis in which we find ourselves today. In some part, through their effects upon the price and the conditions of production of labour power, community struggles brought on that crisis. In some part, therefore, such struggles must be part of present socialist strategy. The sixties, then, taught us that community struggles cannot be ignored. Community struggle is class struggle.

NOTES

- * The present article is based on a paper, "Community Action and the Production of Labour Power, Kingston, Ontario, 1961-1976", which was presented at the May 1980 meetings of the Canadian Association of Geographers in Montreal.
- 1. This is the title of a collection of articles which seek to establish the validity of community struggles! See Cowley (1976). The 'old' left position also surfaces, for example, in Harvey (1975; 1976).
- 2. On the American new left I have found O'Brien (1972) and Gitlin (1972) to be useful. The best work on the Canadian new left appears to be unpublished. See Maeots (1967) and Hyde (undated), and contemporary issues of Our Generation. See also Daly (1973) on the Company of Young Canadians and, on the Canadian women's movement, the collection published by the Canadian Women's Press as Women Unite!. In the latter, the article by Peggy Morton is especially interesting, both for its theoretical insights and as an early attempt to terms with women's particular situation in Canadian society. (Morton, 1972). Morton was active in the new left in Kingston 1964-1966. If anyone is familiar with published (or unpublished) work on the Canadian new left as a whole, work which I overlooked, please write to me c/o Geography Dept, Queen's Univ.
- 3. The argument and findings are based on work I am doing for my PhD in Geography at Queen's. In my thesis, I am concerned with the particular relation of community activity to class segregation, and to the more general interpretation of the significance of segregation in terms of the production of labour power as a class relation.
- 4. Hitherto, to my knowledge, the centrality of the production of labour power for the development of the class struggle has not been argued in these terms. Apart from the specific references cited in footnote [5], I have found Tronti (1973), Cleaver (1979) and Lazonick (1978) to be useful in developing my argument. See also Pentland's seminal work on Canada (Pentland, 1960).
- 5. This paragraph is a very compressed summary of an argument which

I developed in a paper, "The reproduction and development of class relations through urban residential segregation", which was presented at the annual AAG meetings in Louisville, 1980. Past work has focussed upon the production of labour power in particular institutions, rather than seeing the process as a whole. For specific and related arguments concerning the state, see Brunhoff (1976), Aumeeruddy et al (1978) and Gough (1979). On the local state see Cockburn (1977). There is now a huge body of work which looks at the role of the family in the production of labour power. See Vogel for an early statement and Landes for an already dated review (Vogel, 1972; Landes, 1977/8). The Armstrongs have pulled together a great deal of useful evidence for Canadian women (Armstrong and Armstrong, 1978).

6. Measured in constant \$ 1961. Figures have been calculated by applying the national consumer price index for cities of between 30,000 and 99,999 to data reported in D.B.S. and Statistics Canada, Labour Division, Review of Man-Hours and Hourly Earnings (Cat. 72-202)
7. Source : D.B.S. and Statistics Canada, Census, 1961 and 1976.
8. Source : Statistics Canada, The Labour Force. Census and Labour Force statistics on unemployment are not directly comparable.
9. Sources : Ontario, Department of Social and Family Services, Annual Reports, and City of Kingston, Dept. of Social Services, Minutes.
10. The following is based on : a selective review of the official local daily newspaper for the period, the Whig-Standard; conversations & interviews with people who were politically active in the city; city council records, and the records of local community groups.
11. For a review of the activities of the Kingston Community Project in the summer of 1965, see Kingston Community Project (1965), Special Report, 'Meeting Poverty' series, Special Planning Secretariat, Ottawa. (copy available in Queen's University Library, Special Collections).

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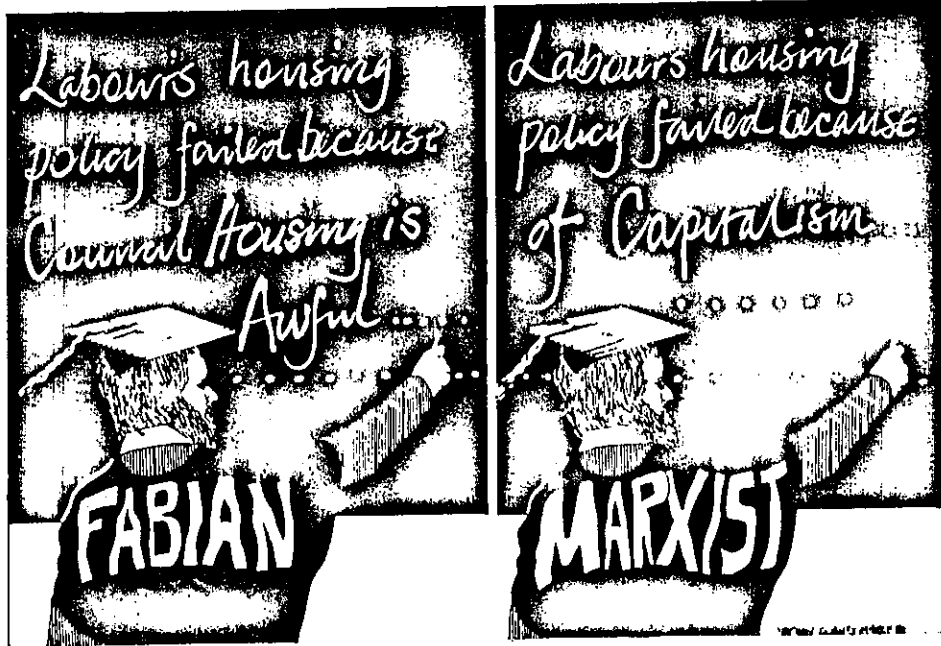
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SOCIAL BENEFITS OF HOME OWNERSHIP

- People who own homes feel a greater stake in the community and the country in which they live.
- A society in which a major proportion of the population owns its own homes is likely to be a more stable, settled and productive society.
- People who own homes have a real incentive to ensure that they earn enough to pay for it - an incentive to work five days a week.

OPPOSING LANDLORD PROFITS A STEP TOWARDS COMMUNISM

Sir: "Creeping Communism" is the only way to categorize the attitudes expressed by those quoted in your story, "Council, board out to get landlords who wreck neighborhoods for profit" (Whig, Nov. 22).

But it goes much further than this: both the headline and the style of reporting indicate that our traditional free enterprise values are now being attacked from within the free enterprise system.

The Russian Revolution was only successful because of the long, continued erosion of traditional values which came to be mindlessly accepted at all levels of Russian society.

When our property owners, who are doing nothing more than using their property holdings for financial gain in accordance with long accepted traditions of our society, are denigrated as "greedy landlords," a long, long step toward communism in Canada has been taken.

Ivan Groves

Kingston Whig Standard
November 1979

From: Election Campaign Pamphlet,
Progressive Conservative Party
of Canada, 1979 Federal Election

QUEEN'S SOCIALIST STUDY GROUP

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In the fall of 1979 a group of people who were associated with Queen's through studies or employment formed a socialist study group. They did this in order to consider in an introductory and easy-going manner Marxian concepts and social issues from a Marxian perspective. I shall attempt to outline some of the reasons for starting such a group, some of its activities and some of its problems.

The Socialist Study Group, which started with about 15 people and had a usual attendance of approximately 7, was started at the urging of members of Kingston Socialists, Queen's Socialist Union, and myself. We encouraged this group for several reasons. The first was that it was felt that having a "non-academic", non-grades oriented forum for discussing socialist issues would be a welcome addition to Queen's. Secondly it was believed that such a group would be part of the maintenance of an active socialist voice on campus. For me it was also a way of maintaining a socialist "practice". I had left Kingston Socialists for personal reasons several months earlier and welcomed the chance "to do something".

The group's primary activity was to meet to discuss readings which were agreed upon by the members. These readings could be divided into two sections: introductory material on Marxism as a world view and practice and Marxian views of various socio-political questions. In the first section readings by Marx and Engels such as The Communist Manifesto and the German Ideology were discussed. In the second section various topics including alienation, women in capitalist society, anarchism, the revolutionary party, and imperialism were considered. Readings from several authors such as Ollman, Rowbotham, Bakunin, and Lenin were used. One can readily appreciate that such a diverse set of topics led to a cursory view of each. Nonetheless the readings, while introductory and while the coverage was not intensive, were an important stimulus for discussion. The discussions, I feel, were important learning experiences for both beginners and more widely read socialists.

While a major benefit of the study group was the introduction of an important literature to some and a sharpening of some basics for others, this little group was also important for the growth of personal relationships and for the dissemination of information about progressive issues and actions. Contacts which permitted a greater awareness of Queen's and which facilitated interaction of "progressive" people were made.

While there were benefits to the group's practice there were also problems. One major problem was that the group for much of the eight month period that it ran depended too much on one person to

coordinate its actions and to lead discussion. Such dependency may in the long run prove detrimental and ultimately stifling although in the short run the effects are probably not so horrid. Another problem was the fluctuating population of the group. There was a flow through of people which in part presented problems related to coordination of the group and to group interaction. However there was a core of people who came steadily and this provided a necessary continuity and allowed at least some to get to know each other. Given campus life, a fluctuating population is likely to occur. The group also faced the problem of people not having time to do the readings or not showing up to lead a discussion. While this was inconvenient sometimes the group was casual and flexible enough to adapt.

In closing I would say that the group provided a forum for discussion and did allow a moderate and casual socialist presence at Queen's. As a group member I found it a beneficial experience both because of the intellectual stimulus it provided and because of the contacts and friendships that were made through involvement in it.

SOCIALIST FEMINIST POLITICS IN KINGSTON: A PERSONAL LOOK AT THE STATE OF THE ART

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KINGSTON.

In the last year, a vaguely socialist-feminist "network" seems to have come into its own in the Kingston community. Many of its participants have lived in the city for a number of years and been actively involved in various projects of concern to both socialists and feminists. Only now however has a broad base of women who are like-minded on a wide range of issues, come to know and be willing to work with, one another.

The reasons for this are not entirely clear. The women to whom I am referring come from a variety of backgrounds including former sixties activists, intellectual Marxists and community minded women of a much more bourgeois orientation.

For me, the lessons learned in K.S. (Kingston Socialists-- see article by Ray Schmidt) provided the impetus to turn away from the vanguard orientation that had been so much a part of that group, to participation of a more immediate nature. If only to illustrate the presentations by Ray Schmidt and Carol Town, the following work will provide a description of this change in perspective.

In the summer of '79 I and a woman who I had met at a "Socialist Study Group" which had been organized at Queen's by another former K.S. member, began to speak of forming a socialist-feminist study group. This came out of a feeling that some of the concerns of special significance to us as women were not shared by the men in the group. This woman was an important link for me since she was a worker and not a student and her links in Kingston were largely with other non-students.

She informed me about two groups of women whose political activity seemed quite significant. One was the Kingston Women's Action Committee (KWAC). It consisted a small group of women who worked mainly in the social services in Kingston. Their self-declared mandate was:

- 1) to devise projects of significance to women in Kingston and
- 2) to be a support group for local women working in the community.

The other group, which consisted of some of the same women, was organized around a specific project which was to set up a "Neighbourhood Centre" for women isolated in their homes with their children, to come together to talk and to give their children a chance to play together. The women they wished to attract were from the lower income "North End" of the city.

Both of these groups were quite attractive to me for a number of reasons. Firstly, both were composed largely of nonQueen's people. Although some of them did have indirect links with the university, most were non-students who considered themselves permanent residents of Kingston. This was a marked and welcome contrast to the membership of K.S.

Secondly, although the women in these groups were very far from being professed socialists, most were quite critical of the institutional aids available to women, especially poor women, and were willing to work outside "the system" to improve conditions for these women and to help them learn how to improve conditions for themselves.

Quite a few of the women from these groups expressed interest in a socialist-feminist reading group. At our first meeting about 17 of us were present, an extremely impressive showing in Kingston for anything with the word socialist in it. Attendance quickly dwindled to about eight, partially because we had a bad start under the influence of a woman who was neither a socialist nor a feminist.

Beyond this, however, more basic problems began to crop up. What we should read and what we should do with the readings became part of the discussion at almost every meeting. Very little time was spent in actually discussing the readings and very few "lessons" or "messages" were gleaned from them. In addition, examination of such questions as whether or not housework produced surplus value were met with frustration and exasperation. No one could understand the relevance of such issues to themselves.

Gradually we have moved away from such academic topics to issues much more clearly relevant to our personal lives. The reading of certain novels with vaguely "feminist" messages has been greeted with more enthusiasm. So too have non-fiction books with feminist but not significantly socialist messages (e.g. Women and Madness by P. Chessler).

On its own then, this reading group could easily be dismissed insofar as its value to socialist politics in Kingston. However, two

important characteristics prevent this dismissal from being a fair interpretation of the group's significance. Firstly, the personal links which have developed among the women in the reading group have been a positive force for all concerned. Somehow, the knowledge that there are other women who possess a similar outlook and to whom one can talk on a variety of topics, has been extremely invigorating to all concerned. It has given us a certain confidence to tackle political issues, which stems from knowing that a core group of support exists.

It is in fact important to note that all of the women who have remained in the reading group have also become involved in various political events in the Kingston community. Moreover, they have been able to inform a broader based of women than they would have without these meetings.

The Bell Workers Strike Support Committee was one such example. So too was an ad hoc committee set up to influence the composition of the International Women's Day celebrations for Kingston. As a result of our efforts we were able to supplement the previously planned workshops such as "Your own Business --Dream or Reality" with movies such as Salt of the Earth and a workshop in which "Women on Strike at Bell Tell Their Story".

Beyond the small victories which these events signify in themselves, more important lessons have been learned in terms of our capacity to organize and carry out political projects. Adverse reaction to the "radical" content of our International Women's Day events gave us an important message. So too, however, did the breadth of support we were able to muster for the Bell Workers Strike Support Committee.

And while the observation by Carol Town is true, that the reading group did no evaluation of its efforts around the strike, I would have to disagree that this implies a stagnation in the group's political potential.

The group seems to me to still be defining itself in terms of its politics. One positive event which occurred recently was a discussion of the financial problems which certain single mothers have been facing when they try to take advantage of a new job retraining program being offered by the province, and what can be done to remedy this situation. As a result of this discussion, KWAC is seriously considering this situation as the suitable focus for their next project. Other members have also talked about possible strategies and are now discussing the possibility of linking this group with related projects in order to muster a broader base of support.

In terms of the discussion group itself, we have been able to focus on the question of what rationales governments have when they set up projects such as these.

Again, all of these constitute small victories or even more tenuously, the hope of small future victories. Nevertheless, I think one can argue that the struggle continues!

WIVES SUPPORTING THE STRIKE

JOAN NEWMAN KUYEK, SUDBURY, ONTARIO*

During the INCO strike of 1978-9, the wives of miners and smelterworkers played a very important part in ensuring the victory of the union over the company. Through their organisation, Wives Supporting the Strike, they built morale and helped materially : through fundraising, theatre, clothing depots, potluck suppers and social events. The strike resulted in the most man-hours lost in Canadian labour history, and was a milestone in the women's movement in northern Ontario.

The situation of women in Sudbury is typical in some respects of that of women in most resource towns in Canada. Because there is one major resource-extractive industry, there are few job opportunities for women : most work in schools, offices, stores, banks and hospitals. When the strike was called in September 1978, there were 11,700 hourly-rated workers at INCO of whom 35 were women.

The place of most Sudbury women is in the home where, as one of the Wives pamphlets reads "You work for INCO too". The women provide good shift workers by keeping their husbands and sons well-fed and happy. In a community where the Catholic church is very strong, it is considered the wife's responsibility to keep families together by providing emotional support for men who come home from work exhausted, angry and frustrated. Working conditions are dangerous and unhealthy, and most wives worry constantly if their husbands are late home from work. Before the strike, men qualified for full pension only after age 65, and widows to only one-half the basic pension. Pensioners lived for so short a time that the company couldn't even spend the interest on the pension fund.

Strikes are incredibly demanding for the wives of industrial workers. It takes a lot of energy and inventiveness to manage on the reduced budget afforded by strike pay (\$36. a week for a family of four in Sudbury). Their husbands are at loose ends and suffer from a crisis of identity at not bringing home a pay cheque. Strikes, for the women, are like a state of seige : you win by continuous waiting. The ability of women to deal with these tensions can make or break a strike.

The town of Sudbury came into being as a service centre for the CPR in 1883. Even at that time, about 50 women, mostly French-Canadians, lived in the bush with their husbands, raised their children and built their homes. Sudbury was first a railroad town, then a lumbering centre. By 1900, the mines had begun to assume real importance. The early lives of women here is a story of hardship and courage : struggling with the boom and bust cycles of the mining industry, they took in lodgers and raised their kids, nursed both

through epidemics of smallpox and spanish flu. They watched their gardens and the surrounding forest get wiped out by the sulphur fumes from the open hearth roasters. They raised their sons to be injured in the mines, and watched their husbands come home choking from the dust in the smelters and the mill.

It was always the women who kept the community together : working to have social events in the church or at the ethnic halls. The Finnish and Ukranian communities put on plays and had choirs; the Irish and the French Catholic communities celebrated the the holidays with feasting and dancing. The women laboured over their woodstoves to make the events a success.

During the Second World War, the women went to work for INCO in their husbands' places. In 1944, the Mine-Mill and Smelter Workers Union was formed, and many of the women were charter members. When the war ended, they went to other jobs, or back to their homes, and worked for the union in the Ladies Auxiliary. It was the Mine-Mill Ladies Auxiliary that did most of the work in the union halls and the summer camp : providing lessons, theater, concerts and banquets for union members and their families.

The first strike at INCO was in 1958. The company had provoked the strike They had a large stockpile, and had impoverished members by layoffs and cutbacks in the workweek. When the members voted to strike, the women went into action. They organised soup kitchens, ran a clothing depot, looked after welfare cases. The strike had almost no community support, and the union was under constant fire from the Catholic church : the Mine-Mill Union took the brunt of the McCarthyism of the 50's... the CLC refused to channel strike aid through the union and instead gave it to the churches.

Two months into the strike, the Ladies Auxiliary held a meeting to declare their support for the strikers : 900 women attended and voted to march on City Hall that Friday (two days later). However, the mayor and the Company seized on this opportunity to call a public meeting at the arena for the same day : "to give the women a chance to express their opinion". As the media in town were all owned by the same people, the mayor's meeting received the most publicity; the women called off their march. But it was too late. At the arena, 2000 women and children, most of them confused, many of them not even strikers' wives, sat in the stands and heard the mayor on the ice surface welcoming them to the meeting. He then called for any motions, and two women came forward with a very wordy and complicated motion asking, in effect, for the union to settle for 1957 wages. At this the mayor said "I see no reason for debate on this motion, all those opposed come down on to the ice surface". About 100 women did. And the meeting was adjourned.

The press treated this as the women voting the men back to work, the newspapers and radios were full of the story. And over the years the myth grew : the strike had been lost by the miners' wives, the story went. Women were not to be trusted. It became one of the great lies of Canadian labour history.

There were three other strikes at INCO before the strike of 1978. But the women were only allowed to make sandwiches. They were not allowed any voice in the strike, and were treated as the enemy, both by the union and their husbands. Worse, they believed the myths themselves.

So when the union voted to go on strike in 1978, the women wanted to make sure that it did not happen again. They immediately organised a committee called Wives Supporting the Strike", which took initiatives in the press and which purported to speak for all the wives. Their initial statement declared that women bore the brunt of any strike, and that women needed organisation to make winning a strike easier. They called on women to organise cooperative clothing depots, babysitting and car pools. To hold social events to make life less tedious, and to discuss the strike and educate themselves to block company propaganda.

The call was warmly received by the women and the group grew and remained active for the duration of the strike. Amongst the activities that the women undertook were five clothing depots, a regular newsletter, a strikers cookbook, a children's comic book called "What is a Strike?", a strike choir, a telephone tree (! ed.), a crisis committee, a bean supper for 5000 strikers (!!), family pickets at the INCO gates, benefits and concerts in other cities, a huge Christmas party for 10,000 children (each with gift), and a play called the People vs. INCO. Central to the work of the wives were their meetings every two weeks, where everyone had an opportunity to express their opinions and contribute their ideas.

When the union negotiating committee came back with the first contract in the May of 1979, the women felt that it was not good enough and after a heated debate decided to oppose it. They were a significant factor in having the first contract defeated. Three weeks later the company came up with a much better offer, in essence a clear cut victory, and the strike was settled.

Since the strike, most of the women in the "Wives" have gone back to their traditional roles in the home. A few have become activists in the women's movement. Quite a lot have gone to school, or have found jobs outside the home.

A film called "A Wives' Tale" is being made about the work and personalities of wives supporting the strike. We desperately need donations to finish this film. Tax deductible receipts are available. Donations should be sent to :

Development Education Centre
121 Avenue Road
Toronto, Ontario
Canada.

* Joan Newman Kuyek lived in Kingston between from 1965 until 1970, when she moved to Sudbury. In Sudbury she worked for Bell Canada for

almost two years. Partly as a result of that experience, she has written an account of the changing nature of the labour process at Bell. See Joan Kuyek, The Phone Book (1980). During the INCO strike of 1978-9 she was active in Wives Supporting the Strike.

A WIFE'S TALE

SOPHIE BISSONNETTE, MONTREAL, QUEBEC.*

...you're out because you have to,
you're out because you believe in it
(and that's what companies like INCO will never understand)

When I arrived in Sudbury at the end of February 1979, I was just as poorly equipped and prepared as were the first pioneer women who headed for Northern Ontario in the 1880's with the construction of the CPR : the tingle of adventure, the fear of new and unknown territory and yet a feeling that something big and important was about to touch my life.

I spent four months in Sudbury with two other Montreal film-makers, Joyce Rock and Martin Duckworth, canning on celluloid the history of the women who organised around their husband's strike against INCO Ltd., a slightly less than unknown multinational. When we arrived in Sudbury, they were going into the sixth month of what would turn out to be one of the costliest strikes, in terms of man-days lost, in Canadian history. (Very few woman-days were lost since INCO had only 35 women working for them out of a work force of 11,700, and the wives of the male workers went about their daily labour, strike or no strike. In fact their workload increased with tighter family budgets and the added pressure of disoriented husbands at home!).

We had become interested in filming the strike as a result of the benefit meetings that were being organised in Canada and in Quebec to support it. At these meetings we had been seduced by the strikers' wives' speeches. This was my first major experience at making a film. It was also my first close-up experience of a strike.

Determined to avoid all the "We-know-better-than-you-do" analytical films, the "You-girls-are-doing-a-fine-job-and-thank-you-very-much-from-us-guys" films, the "Aren't -strikes - fun - yippee-ya" films, the "Let's focus-on-the-sensational-andnews-making-items" films (a little indecent exposure is always a big seller), we wanted to make a film that was close to what those women were experiencing, a film that participated in their 'démarche' yet that provided a framework and analysis to make the situation comprehensible; hence a film that could be useful to women in similar situations. Whether we have achieved this is another matter. Our first step was to request the permission of the Wives Supporting the Strike Committee (WSS) to make the film about their organisation and

the women involved in it. The women welcomed the idea and insisted that we film, come good times or bad times, whether they were plantgating or in the middle of an argument. In short, they didn't want to be portrayed as exemplary heroines! I have to admit that many of the women so impressed us that we had to resist turning the film into a tear-jerker epic (1900-style)

Our initial contacts were facilitated by a wonderful woman, Joan Kuyek, a strong, devoted and sensitive organiser who was the chairwoman of the WSS. She introduced us to the women, briefed us on upcoming events, uncovered the behind-the-scenes tensions and conflicts in the WSS and in the union (so we understood the stakes) and gave us (and the film) a sense of direction.

We weren't exactly spared the tensions which were accumulating as the strike dragged on. Any foreign (and odd-looking, apparently) element which presents itself out of the blue (Quebec!) in a time of crisis easily becomes an object of scapegoating. A couple of women, egged on and manipulated by their red-baiting husbands, refused to let us film them after a couple of weeks. The basis for that hostility had less to do with communism than with another troublesome disorderly disease, feminism. Those were really exceptions; all the women were extremely warm and generous.

We lived in these womens' homes : this provided us with a comfortable roof over our heads and bed under our tired feet, with a privileged rapport with the women and a privileged point of view on the developments of the strike and of the WSS committee. At a moment's notice, we could be ready to filk any development. The women also participated in our discussions about the film. This constant interaction ensured that the film was close to their concerns.

We filmed the activities that the women organised in order to boost the strikers morale, to build community support for the strike, to raise funds and to promote political education among the women. Most of these women were "straight out of the kitchen" as their spokesperson put it, and had never been involved in such activities. In spite of the union and the men's initial skepticism, they organised clothing depots, communal suppers, a Christmas party for the children, a mock trial, family picketing, plantgating, benefit evenings, a teen dance, a comic book to explain the strike to kids, and dozens of other activities. Now, some of the women admit that is it hadn't been for the WSS committee the strike would have been lost.

We also followed a few women more closely in order to understand some of the tensions which were being brought to bear on them. We tried to document the pressures that these women had to deal with : it was difficult for many husbands to see their wives taking an active role in the strike and to have to do some babysitting! The union was also hesitant about the extent of the women's involvement in what was perceived to be union business.

It is hard to evaluate how our presence -- four months of such close contact -- influenced anyone. At best, I think that it

encouraged them to feel that their struggle was being supported and that it would not end with the end of the strike. Outside support is invaluable in a strike, and especially as in this case the strike dragged on for the INCO workers while their wives felt increasingly that they were leading this battle not only for themselves but also for the whole labour movement. When the strike ended, the women in the WSS were extremely concerned that what they had learnt in this struggle should be shared. The film is one way in which this can be achieved. All this time, it must be remembered that these families were living on between 26 and 35 dollars or so a week. So it's no longer money, or an eventual wage increase that keeps you going. You're out because you have to; you're out because you believe in it (and that's what companies like INCO will never understand).

Our own financial situation didn't have much to be envied (you know those little computer cards you fill in every two weeks ...). We spent a large part of our time raising money to buy film stock. (We didn't have any of the film stock processed except for a few rolls until the strike was over -- which means that we never had a chance to get feedback from what we shot and we were never sure that we were getting what we wanted -- a risky operation indeed). We relied on hundreds of good friends, organisers and militants to give us donations and set up benefit evenings for the film, as long as they didn't conflict with the fund drives for the strike. Some of the women in Sudbury helped us to raise funds for the film. We sent out hundreds of letters appealing for money. We managed to approach about 500 people in that fashion. They donated anything from \$5 to \$200, and it enabled us to keep on filming.

There is no doubt that the film suffers from the financial and technical constraints we were forced to work under. And that, of course, is part of our own struggle as film workers to refuse to be muzzled and to improve our working conditions so that political films stop carrying 'poor quality' as their trademark.

We were quite bold in fact. We shot 20 hours of film to make a 90 minute film : quite a comfortable ratio as it goes in the film industry, though nothing close to NFB (National Film Board - ed) standards of course. Since the end of the strike we have returned to Sudbury and and shot some more material and we have received money from the Canada Council and l'Institut Quebecois du cinema. The Women's Studio at the NFB is offering us some services and our Production House, Les Ateliers audio-visuels du Quebec, has invested much time, money and services into the project. The film, called Une Histoire de Femmes/A Wives' Tale, will be released in both English and French versions. It is intended for discussion and hopefully will be used by women's groups, unions and community groups. We also hope to negotiate some sales to television (successfull - ed).

We could never hope to come close to capturing on film the strength, the determination, the fighting spirit and the moving moments in the lives of the strikers' wives in Sudbury. I only hope that the film captured enough of their energy to encourage other women to resist being exploited and to fight to bring about changes.

* From 1976 to 1978, Sophie Bissonnette lived in Kingston, attended Queen's University, and participated in the activities of the (student) Socialist Coalition, a socialist-feminist group, and K.S. At present she is living in Montreal.

THE KINGSTON BELL STRIKE SUPPORT COMMITTEE - MARCH 1980

CAROL TOWN, KINGSTON, ONTARIO

In the fall of last year, several women in Kingston, Ontario, myself included, formed a small "socialist-feminist" study group. One way or another, we all shared a concern and involvement in both the personal and political aspects of women's role in our society. Outside this group, two of us had been involved in numerous discussions (within and beyond KS) about whether socialists must organize first around the workplace or whether other 'reproductive' community concerns like housing conditions, unemployment, sexism, and so on, were important issues to address. We both concluded that issues of reproduction were also very important ones and hence felt that a woman who was a socialist must also be a feminist. When the Bell Telephone Operators and Cafeteria Workers went out on strike, then, we supported them both as women and as workers.

"Community" and "workplace" issues meet best, I think, when you are working with women on strike because you are fighting both class and sex inequality. Women in our society have always been second class citizens, in the social value given to their work both at home and outside the home. One can accept the Marxist argument that in capitalist societies, work in the home is socially unproductive. Unpaid labour does not create surplus value because it doesn't have a direct relation to capital. Or, one can simply acknowledge that housework and child-raising, all reproductive functions, historically have had more negative connotations than jobs performed outside the home for a wage. But the fact remains that women's work is perceived to be less valuable than men's. Moreover, about 50% of all women who work for a wage are employed in service jobs so that their work inside and outside the home is lower status and more poorly paid than their male counterparts. Significantly less Canadian women than men are unionized and hence are powerless. What all this means, then, is that women benefit from strikes as women and as workers. Learning to be militant means learning to assert yourself with confidence against employers who so often are men. It is both a personal and a political action, indeed it is absurd to imply that the two are separate.

Last February, we invited two Bell strikers to come to our meeting and describe their conditions of work and the history of their strike which had begun in December. This was their first confrontation and so was an important learning experience for them. It was, to some extent, a test of the power of their new position as

members of the Communications Workers of Canada (CWC), the successor to the previous company union.

Working for "Ma Bell" is not easy. The company is known throughout Canada for its paternalism and rigidity. For example, some locals complained that being late by even ten seconds in the morning or from a break meant a sharp reprimand. Others said that in order to use the toilet they had to signal by raising a coloured card and waiting for permission from the supervisor. There were other examples of unusually authoritarian pettiness in management-staff relations that made the working environment very difficult at times.

When the strike was called, the Bell workers had many grievances, ranging from wages, to promotion and firing processes, to vacations. They had not had a wage increase since November, 1977 and the raise before that had been only 2.8%. When the strike started, top rates ranged between \$137.75 and \$194.29 per week -- not exactly champagne salaries. When Bell had requested conciliation assistance from the Federal Minister of Labour in September, 1979, it had been provided, but the management wouldn't support the crucial recommendations made by the conciliator. For example, the conciliator recommended that all firings be only for a "just cause" as defined by the Canadian Labour Code but Bell wanted to be able to fire an employee "without just cause". Further, the conciliator recommended a job posting system which would advertise the qualifications for a job and give the job to the most senior applicant with the required qualifications. Bell management rejected that suggestion. Bell rejected the vacation improvements recommended by the conciliator and offered even worse vacations than under the previous contract. The key issue there was the right to have a vacation during the summer months - certainly not an unreasonable request.

After the strikers talked with us for a while, several of the study group offered to form a Strike Support Committee. The Bell workers agreed that any moral and financial help offered to them would be useful. Their strike fund was very low because of the recent union change.

The Support Committee was organised immediately. There were twenty people at the first meeting, mostly friends of the women's group. About half came from the university and the others represented the local NDP, a CUPE local, and, of course, the Bell Strikers. The feeling of many people in our community was strongly supportive, both because of the paternalistic reputation of "Ma Bell" as an employer, and because of their rapidly rising telephone charges, unnecessary ones when seen beside their growing profits.

We planned several actions, including setting up a food depot, selling Bell buttons, helping on the picket line, organising a dance, soliciting money from university professors, and a "phone centre invasion". The last was never carried out, unfortunately, as the strike vote was taken before we got there. But it was a great idea both for publicity and for personal satisfaction!

The dance and the button sales were very successful and attracted support from three main sources -- the left university community, the local NDPers, and the Bell workers themselves. We did not get much support from other local unions, partly because of the lack of time to solicit help (we did everything very fast), and partly because by mid-March the dance had become more or less a victory party, as the new contract had just been ratified. There is always a problem about when to respond to strike action, because if you go too early, many people do not yet feel sympathetic to the workers' plight. But if, on the other hand, you wait too long, then you may find you can't sell dance tickets because the strike has been resolved.

How, then, can we analyse the usefulness of our committee? What effect, if any, did we have on the Bell strike? If we believe that community organizing is an important strategy for socialists in Canada, then we must be able to interpret these actions, to understand our successes and our failures.

The positive practical effects were obvious. We brought together a somewhat diverse group of people in response to an important strike and we did it without a great deal of effort. In the process, \$700.00 was raised for the strike fund and the Bell workers were shown that others in Kingston supported their cause, at a time when they felt the local press was ignoring them. Our action short-term, but immediately effective.

This linking together of 'left' people from different parts of the community is extremely important, both strategically and ideologically. It is perhaps evident that there exists in Kingston a network of support for progressive actions which can be tapped into and mobilized fairly rapidly. Many of the 150 people who came to the Bell dance form the basis of what can be a vocal 'left' response to current political issues when called upon to react. The recognition of our ability to rally support is probably the most important point of general significance that came from the Strike Support Committee. Another important consideration is that the formation of the committee provided a basis for students who have been involved in a unionization movement at the university to be active also in the community.

There were, of course, problems. One main one was a certain lack of communication between the Support Committee and the Bell workers. This is partly because so many members came from the student community. I believe our effect might have been greater if we had more long-term roots in the community. There were moments when working with the Bell strikers that several members of the committee felt disenchanted. Perhaps it was a misjudgment, but we felt that they wondered why we were doing this, what was in it for us? Were we opportunists, or idealists, or just what? If more of us had been representing unions from our own workplace, we would have been more credible.

One of the conclusions then, that this and other experiences demonstrate is that as a worker, you have to be actively involved in organizing your own workplace first. You can't organize for others

because it is not your situation. Yes, you can and should be an organizational link and support for people in the community but you need established roots to do that. At Queen's University in Kingston, several members of the Support Committee are part of a unionization drive for graduate students. This is important, I think, because students who are trying to mobilize union support in their community for current struggles can do so as representatives of their own unions and so be better accepted by local people.

This is not to say, however, that union support should be the primary concern of people like ourselves. Indeed, it is just such an argument which was refuted at the beginning of this discussion. We must be prepared to support mass actions which we feel will make our community better, whether they are strike supports or unemployment committees or political debates. "Workplace" issues are not necessarily primary and "reproductive" issues secondary because social change involves economic, political, and ideological changes, all of which are closely related. However, as mentioned earlier, the Bell strike was an especially important one because these categories of "production" and "reproduction" meet so well when women are on strike.

Clearly, the Strike Support Committee had a small but generally positive influence on the Bell strike, but the question of how the strike itself affected the operators is one that is difficult to answer. In fact, one of the failings of both the Committee and our women's group is that we did not take the time to really discuss this question with the Bell women. Yet, for those of us who profess to be interested in the issue of women's role and in practical community support groups, it is an important one.

From scattered comments and more general observations, it seems that the Bell workers benefited in several ways from this strike. They were very successful in achieving most of their demands and had very few scabs among their ranks. But there were some, and bitterness probably still exists. As one of the organizers stated, "In a strike, you find out who your friends are."

But probably a more important point is that the women have now experienced a strike of their own and, hence, will be more sympathetic to future strikes of their male co-workers (repairmen, etc.). The conservative role which women have sometimes played by demanding the end of a strike changes as more women come to experience them in their own right. This is not to say that there haven't been militant strikes by women workers in the past. There have. But since less women are and have been unionized, less have experienced militant political action.

The other positive effect of a strike like that at Bell relates to sex roles. As more women workers in the service industry become unionized and organize successful strikes, they become more accepted and respected by male-dominated unions. In Kingston, for example, the Bell workers were less aggressive in demanding support from the local Labour Council then, I believe, they could have been. But this will change as the women become more involved in the local labour movement.

The effect of the Strike Support Committee on our women's study group was almost negligible. We did not even take a session to analyse what had occurred because, in the end, only a few members were actively involved in the Support Committee. On the positive side, some of us came closer together as a result of the time spent organizing activities, and learned more practical organizing techniques. On the negative side, the strike confirmed the desire of most of the group for internal 'self-help' discussions, and the organizing of workshops around specifically women's issues, as opposed to more overt political activity. That, to me, is disappointing. Part of the reason for this reaction is that some members resented the fact that the Bell workers did not, for example, put a lot of effort into getting the dance off the ground. Unfortunately, as both the organizers in the Strike Support Committee and in the Union learned, when involved in community activities, one must be prepared to be "let down". Inevitably, there are times when people do not pull their weight because they are fed up, or busy, or whatever. But those who are committed and feel something is worthwhile must not be disappointed when others are not completely dependable.

In the end, then, the activity was a useful one and there were some important lessons learned. Some will argue that the long-term political and ideological effects of small actions like the Bell Support Committee are negligible. And, to some extent, this is true. We shouldn't overestimate the significance of these activities, especially when we failed adequately to analyse as a group the effect of what we were doing. But we have to ask what we can do in our own communities because the national organisation of socialists in Canada today is not presently viable. If we can be the link between union and other community groups, so as to provide a vocal left response to political issues of the day, then we are serving a useful function. If we believe that we must first organize a revolutionary party that disdains those with the "incorrect" line then we are only going to become very alienated from most people and completely discouraged about political change in Canada. If what Ray Schmidt says is true, that "the conservatism of the seventies is a deep pessimism about what can be accomplished" then community strike support and similar smallscale activities can counter this trend. Otherwise, we will throw up our hands in despair.

PART 2: REPORTS, COMMENTS AND CRITIQUES

THE INTERRELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SOCIAL PROCESSES AND SPATIAL STRUCTURE: A REVIEW OF RECENT MARXIST AND NEO-MARXIST POSITIONS

JOHN CAMPLING, GEOGRAPHY DEPARTMENT, QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY, KINGSTON.

Recent Marxist contributions to the debate on the relationship between social processes and spatial structure have differed markedly in their emphasis on the importance of analysing the accumulation process for understanding spatial differentiation. A marked contrast exists between those who argue that analyses of spatial uneven development should start from the process of accumulation and those who maintain that 'social and spatial relationships are dialectically interactive, interdependent' (My emphasis) (Soja, 1978, p.11).

ORTHODOX MARXIST THEORY: APPLICATIONS AND EXTENSIONS

Representatives of the more orthodox Marxist position contend that only by focusing attention on the nature of the principle forces responsible for the emergence, transformation and disappearance of spatial differentiation can the complexities of the "development" process be understood. And these forces are to be traced back to the always present tension between the degree of development of the forces of production, on one side, and the prevailing relations of production on the other.

The work of Doreen Massey is an extension of this more orthodox position where 'the process of accumulation within capitalism is seen as continually engendering the desertion of some areas, and the creation... and opening up of other areas to new branches of production, and the restructuring of the territorial division of labour and class relations overall' (Massey, 1978, p.106). In defining the term "regionalism", which she sees as the study of mechanisms by which the process of accumulation generates uneven spatial development and an analysis of 'the effect of such unevenness of the development of a national social formation and particular areas within it' (ibid, p.107), Massey is clearly arguing that spatial inequality is produced essentially by social processes and is therefore a social phenomenon.

In the formulations of Massey and Anderson, production is seen as creating spatial structures which in themselves will affect future production. In any given period, new investment in economic activity will be geographically distributed in response to the prevailing, historically evolved pattern of spatial differentiation. In trying to specify the real nature of this spatial differentiation, Massey

introduces the term "spatial division of labour." If one considers a national economy, then the various regions play different roles within it, contribute to it in different ways. It is analogous to the division of labour within the factory. In the case of regional economies the way in which these roles are divided up changes over time. In other words the way in which economic activity will respond to geographical inequality in the conditions of production, will itself vary both between different sectors and for any given sector, with changing conditions of production (Massey, 1978, p. 114). The term "spatial division of labour" thus refers to this manner of industry's response to the uneven geographical distribution of conditions of production. The determination of this manner of response will itself be a 'product of the interaction between on the one hand the existing characteristics of spatial differentiation and; on the other hand the requirements at that time of the dominant processes of production' (Massey, 1978, p. 114). Thus, changing conditions of production are not autonomous from spatial change in the distribution of resources. The requirements of the dominant process of production are not autonomous.

The geographical distribution of economic activity which results from the evolution of a new form of division of labour 'will be overlaid on and combined with, the pattern produced in previous periods by different forms of spatial division' (Massey, 1978, pp. 114-115). This combination of successive geographical divisions of labour will influence the determination of new labour processes, giving rise to a new form and geographical distribution of inequality in production conditions. Thus the political economy of a region will be 'a complex result of the combination of its succession of roles within the series of wider, national and international, spatial divisions of labour' (Massey, 1978, p. 116).

Massey maintains that by adopting an approach which starts from accumulation, regions can be identified as a result of analysis without any pre-specified regionalisation of that space (Massey, 1978, p. 114). She contends that identification of distinctive local areas and therefore of the pattern of regional differentiation of a national economy is possible through analysing the way in which the existing local economy combines with the use that the new spatial division of labour imposes on space.

NEO-MARXIST APPROACHES TO SPACE

Emphasis on distributional outcome, which goes along with a predisposition for analysis to concentrate only on space, spatial differentiation and on changes in the spatial surface can be found in much of the neo-marxist literature on the relationship between social structure and spatial structure.

This is certainly true of the work by the "French School" of urban sociologists (especially Castells), who see the city explicitly as the sphere of "everyday life", equating the urban process with the reproduction of the capitalist labour force. According to Castells:

...the essential problems regarded as urban are in fact bound up with the processes of "collective consumption", or what Marxists call the organisation of the collective means of reproduction of labour power (Castells, 1977, p. 440).

Castells argues that an increasing collectivisation of the conditions underlying the process of reproduction of labour power is occurring in advanced capitalist societies. He argues that the concentration of capital in advanced capitalism requires a concentration of the workforce in urban units and so the workers' consumption becomes increasingly socialised. The analogy is with the socialisation of production, the extension of the division of labour and the cooperation organisation of the act of reproduction (Harloe, 1979, p. 131). Castells also seems to suggest that this development involves demands for means of consumption which require large scale provision.

Castells notion of "urban" space finds support in the work of Soja who considers that 'its greatest appeal lies in its combination of social and spatial dimensions' (Soja, 1978, p.24). For Soja, "urban" signifies:

a more general socio-spatial relationship which is predominantly but not exclusively developed within an urban context. It is in essence a relationship having to do with socially organised space, with the social production of spatial forms, and with the unity and opposition of social and spatial structures. In this sense, the crisis and contradictions of contemporary capitalism can be seen as simultaneously in and of the socio-spatial dialectic (Soja, 1978, p. 25).

However, the perspective taken by Castells is somewhat problematical for a number of reasons. First, the exclusive emphasis on reproduction separates the essential unity of production and reproduction, defines the city as "non-working life." This separation obscures the integrated nature of production and reproduction and the influence of one on the other, they are inseparable in the Marxist analysis of capitalism. In fact, as several authors have noted, Castells's division seems to reproduce the way in which urban issues are normally presented by bourgeois ideology, as consumption issues remote from the struggle over production. Anderson makes the important point that by separating consumption (or reproduction) from production, and "urban" from "regional" (production space) 'the essence both of political economy and of geographic space' could be lost (Anderson, 1978, p. 89).

Because both Castells and Soja place special importance on consumption in advanced capitalism, consumption-oriented conflict is seen as having revolutionary potential. For instance, Soja maintains that:

...the proportionately increasing role of conflict over

the consumption process (provides) growing potential for radical social transformation... Unlike the situation under industrial capitalism, the realisation of surplus value and hence the accumulation of capital itself has become as dependent upon control over the means of reproduction/consumption as upon control over the means of production, even if this control rests ultimately in the same hands. (Soja, 1978, pp. 26-27).

This interpretation clearly suggests that the focus of the class struggle has shifted away from production to what Soja calls 'the consumption side of the spatial relations of productions - roughly defined as the organisation of space for the reproduction side of the social relations of production' (Soja, 1978, p. 27). As a result of this shift in the source of class conflict 'the transformation of capitalism has increasingly come to revolve around a socio-spatial dialectic, upon the revolutionary force of a combined consumption and wage struggle.- ..(Soja, 1978, p. 27).

CONCLUSION

Soja warns us that it is necessary to avoid the pitfalls of orthodox Marxist emphasis on the accumulation process and class relations because 'there exists in the structure of organised space a fundamental relationship which is homologous to and inseparable from social class, with each structure forming part of the general relations of production (Soja, 1978, p. 35). However, it is surely more accurate to see the use of space and its "domination" as a reflection of class relations under a particular mode of production, in this case, capitalism. Here, we are concerned with what Anderson has termed the "fetishism of space" - a tendency which is clearly evident in much of the neo-Marxist literature on spatial structure and social process. This short review paper has attempted to show that an understanding of spatial differentiation entails the application of a unified social science, one which rejects any notion that "space" is ontologically autonomous.

Hurst rightly points out that '...since radical interventionists are not able to see geography as a problematic, as a product like the other "social sciences" of a particular economic, political, and ideological conjuncture (domination by capitalism), they are not able to erect valid, critical, and scientific alternatives to current geographical practices' (Eliot Hurst, 1979, p. 15). Only by reconstituting social science outside the spatial problematic can social scientists overcome the "fetishism of space" and the ideological content of geography.

The use of Marxist concepts, such as dialectics, in approaches which still consider space to be a separate object, does not rescue them from ideological abstractionism. Hurst rightly contends that:

So long as geographers continue to use that problematic they are constrained in advancing our knowledge of social formations (Eliot Hurst, 1979, p. 9).

Only by adopting a truly interdisciplinary approach which recognises the unity of social practice, can all the structural relations which exist between epiphenomena and underlying social processes be discovered.

If our understanding of capitalist development is to be enhanced then it is vital that we examine empirically the way in which the tension between the degree of development of the forces of production, on one side and the prevailing relations of production, on the other, evolve in historically specific movements. Massey's work provides us with the most useful framework, to date, for undertaking historically specific case studies. Such studies should save us from overly mechanistic or functionalist explanations of social process under capitalism, and thereby allow more insightful work on the causes of changing inequality within and between social formations.

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THE COLONIAL EXPERIENCE IN THE CUCHUMATAN HIGHLANDS OF GUATAMALA

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Between the idea
And the reality
Between the motion
And the act....

Between the conception
And the creation
Between the emotion
And the response....

Falls the Shadow.

T.S.Eliot, The Hollow Men

Introduction

Over the years scholars in various fields of learning have added significantly to our understanding of the colonial experience in Latin America. Despite many important advances, however, considerable lacunae remain. There are, for example, large gaps in our knowledge of the events and circumstances of life under Spanish rule in regions too poor or too isolated to be of primary interest to the colonial authorities. The Cuchumatan highlands of Guatemala can be considered one such region. In view of this situation, a recently completed doctoral dissertation has sought to reconstruct, chiefly from unpublished archival sources, the broad features of what may be regarded as aspects of the colonial experience in the Cuchumatan Highlands.(1) The principal objective of the dissertation was to determine what happened to the land and the people in this remote northwestern corner of Guatemala during three centuries of Spanish domination. This paper will briefly review some of the basic findings in the hope of throwing into sharper focus the kind of existence led by subjugated peoples in a colonial backwater.

The Regional Setting

The Cuchumatan highlands, or Altos Cuchumatanes, are the most massive and spectacular non-volcanic region of all Central America. Ranging from 500 to more than 3,600 metres in elevation, and rugged

and broken throughout, the Cuchumatanes are contained within the present-day departments of Huehuetenango and Quiche, and comprise some 15% (approximately 16,350 sq.kms.) of the national territory of the Republic of Guatemala (See Map 1). During the colonial period the region formed part of the administrative division identified at various times as the corregimiento, alcaaldia mayor, or provincia of Totonicapan and Huehuetenango. The Cuchumatanes, like most of highland Guatemala, were densely settled in late pre-Hispanic and early colonial times. Today about one-half million people inhabit the region, of whom some 73%, or roughly three out of four, are Indian. The native peoples of the Cuchumatan highlands are descendants of the ancient Maya and speak several closely related languages belonging to Mayan stock, the most important of which are Aguacateca, Chuj, Ixil, Jacalteca, Kanjobal, Mam, Quiche, and Uspanteca.

The Colonial Experience

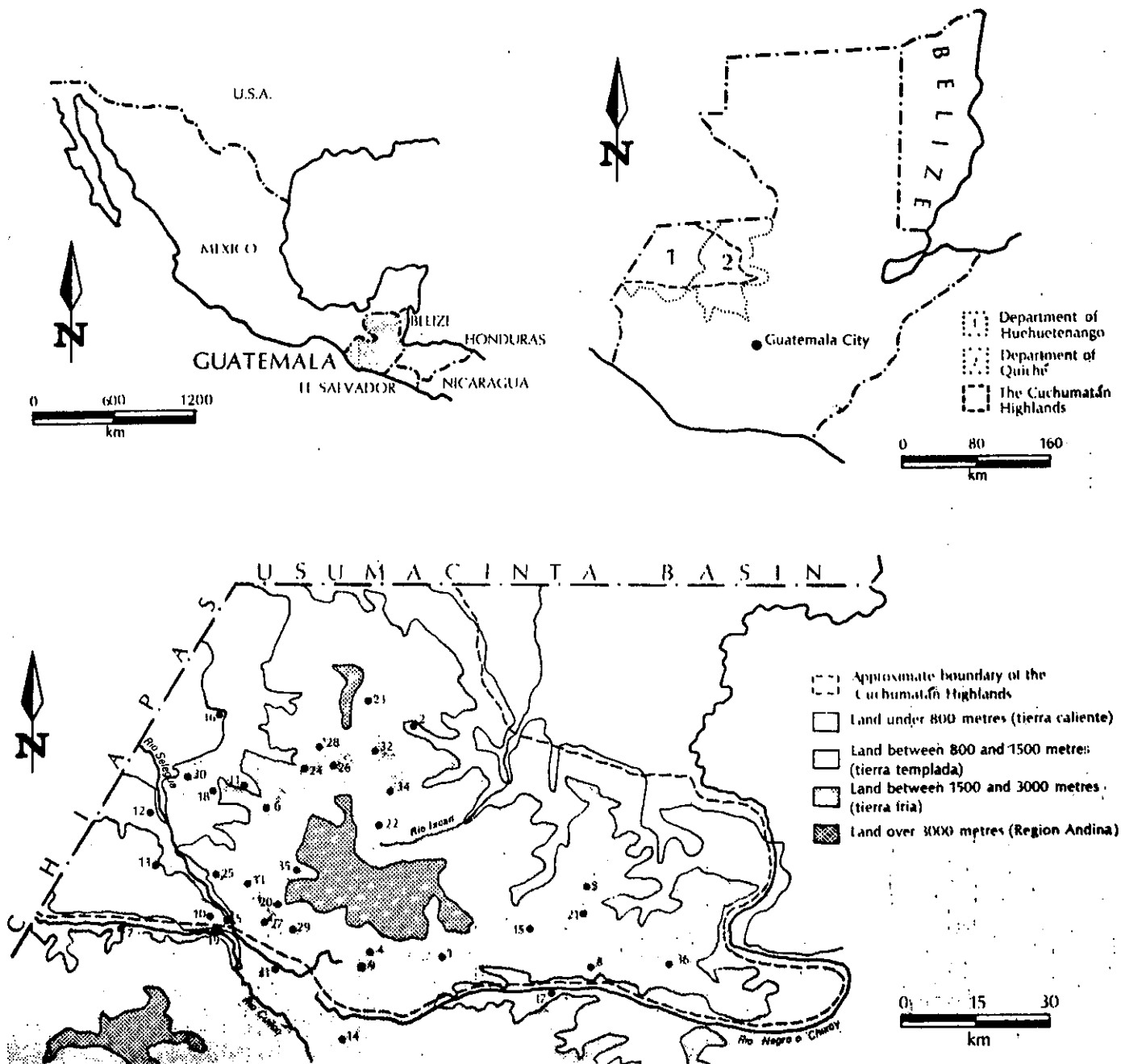
During the fifteenth century. most of the Cuchumatan peoples came under the hegemony of the Quiche of Gumarcaah, a strongly Mexicanized group who, in the course of two or three generations, succeeded in establishing tributary jurisdiction over many communities throughout the highlands of Guatemala. By 1500 Quiche domination in the Chuchmatanes had diminished, and Indian groups in the region had emerged as small, self-determining nations. Their hardearned autonomy was not to last for very long. Between 1525 and 1530 native communities in the Cuchumatan highlands were confronted and defeated by an alien force far more formidable than anything they had come in contact with before: imperial Spain.

The Spanish conquest of the region was not accomplished without prolonged and bloody conflict. Resistance to the European invaders was widespread, but was particularly marked among the Mam, the Ixil, and the Quichean people of Uspantan. By 1530, however, Indian opposition in most parts of the Cuchumatanes had been brutally crushed, and the region entered an era of Spanish domination which lasted until 1821.

Throughout the colonial period, prospects in other parts of Central America held a greater potential for the Spanish desire for wealth than did the Cuchumatan highlands. The slave trade in Nicaragua and Honduras; silver mining in the hills around Tegucigalpa; the cultivation of cacao in Soconusco, Suchitepequez, Guazacapan, and Izalcos; cattle raising and the indigo dye industry in the lands to the south and east of the capital city of Santiago de Guatemala; all these activities, and others, were more attractive to materially-minded Spaniards than the limited entrepreneurial opportunities offered by involvement in the Altos Cuchumatanes, rugged, remote, and with few major exploitable resources. With the possible exception of supplying much needed Indian labour to the cacao plantations of the Pacific coast, the region therefore had little direct participation in the great economic booms which had such a dramatic and long-lasting impact elsewhere.(2) If, in terms of its status with the mother country, Central America was indeed "the richest of the poor, or the poorest of the rich relations"(3), then

MAP 1

THE CUCHUMATAN HIGHLANDS, GUATEMALA: THE INTERNATIONAL, NATIONAL AND REGIONAL GEOGRAPHICAL SETTING



- | | | | |
|------------------|------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. Aguacatán | 10. Itahuacán | 19. San Gaspar Ichil | 28. San Sebastián Coatán |
| 2. Barillas | 11. Jacaltenango | 20. San Juan Atitán | 29. San Sebastián Huehuetenango |
| 3. Chajul | 12. La Democracia | 21. San Juan Cotzal | 30. Santa Ana Huista |
| 4. Chiantla | 13. La Libertad | 22. San Juan Iscuy | 31. Santa Bárbara |
| 5. Colotenango | 14. Malacatancito | 23. San Mateo Ixtatán | 32. Santa Eulalia |
| 6. Concepción | 15. Nebaj | 24. San Miguel Acatán | 33. Santiago Chimaltenango |
| 7. Cuico | 16. Nentún | 25. San Pedro Nebaj | 34. Soloma |
| 8. Cunfán | 17. Sacapulas | 26. San Rafael Independencia | 35. Totolm Santos |
| 9. Huehuetenango | 18. San Antonio Huista | 27. San Rafael Petzal | 36. Usulután |

the Cuchumatan highlands probably ranked among the Spanish crown's least prized possessions.

This is not to say that, because of the region's physical location and limited economic or entrepreneurial potential, the land and the people of the Cuchumatanes were untouched by three centuries of Spanish rule. The colonial experience here was marked only by differences of degree, not of kind.

Like all native groups throughout highland Guatemala, the Indians of the Cuchumatanes in the middle years of the sixteenth century were either persuaded or forced into leaving their old homes in the mountains and taking up residence in new church-dominated centres known as congregaciones. Established primarily with a view to converting the Indians to Christianity and to creating centralized pools of exploitable labour, the policy of congregacion produced an orderly pattern of nucleated settlement which contrasted greatly with the predominantly random and scattered arrangement of pre-Hispanic times. Although the imprint of congregacion persists to this day, the operation of the policy in the Cuchumatan highlands was not without its failures and frustrations. Particularly during the economically depressed years between 1635 and 1720, with Spanish authority in the region growing weak and less effective, many Indians abandoned congregaciones for outlying areas. The centrifugal movement away from the congregaciones was accompanied by a revival of pre-Christian Mayan religion, a development which was apparently just as distasteful to the colonial authorities as the fact that the Indians once again practising "their ancient erroneous rites" were no longer contributing to the economic well-being of the colony.

A number of devices were introduced by the Spaniards to control and exploit the human resources of congregaciones, the most important of which were the encomienda, the tasacion de tributos, and the repartimiento. Prominent and prestigious chiefly during the first century of colonial rule, encomienda was a means whereby a privileged individual was granted the right to enjoy the tribute, and originally also the labour, of a certain number of Indians in any town or group of towns. The amount of tribute owed by a town was stipulated by the tasacion de tributos, a count which assessed tribute-paying capacity principally in terms of age, sex, and marital status. Through the operation of repartimiento, labour was coerced from the Indians and channelled into a wide variety of menial and servile tasks.

Coming to the New World first and foremost as entrepreneurs who sought to profit from the work of others, the Spanish conquerors and colonists turned to the acquisition of land only after their search for gold, silver, or a successful cash crop--a produit moteur--proved fruitless.(4) Apart from a few early titles in the Huehuetenango area, the taking up of land on the part of the Spaniards began significantly only during the seventeenth century depression, when a frugal self-sufficiency was not without advantage. The trend continued throughout the eighteenth century as Spaniards who acquired land in the Cuchumatanes, particularly on the lush meadows of the Altos de Chiantla, became aware of the potential of the region for the raising

of livestock, especially sheep. Although sizeable haciendas were developed, precipitating conflict between Spaniards and Indians over land rights and boundaries, the emergence of the landed estate in the Cuchumatán region was not attained wholly at the expense of the territorial integrity of native communities. Some Indian towns, particularly in the south, may not always have had enough land to feed their populations and meet their tribute requirements, but they held on tenaciously to what little they had. Other Indian towns, especially along the northern frontier bordering sparsely settled tropical lowlands, apparently never experienced a man-land crisis throughout the entire colonial period.

Under Spanish rule, the Indians of the Cuchumatanes were introduced not only to the conqueror's religion, language, and customs; they were also exposed, as were native groups elsewhere in the Americas, to an array of diseases inadvertently brought by the invaders from the Old World to the New. The effect of this transfer on immunologically defenseless native Americans was devastating and may well have caused "the greatest destruction of lives in history".(5) Due to the ravages of epidemic disease, Indian numbers in the Cuchumatán highlands between 1520 and 1670 fell from possibly 260,000 to 16,000 a drop of over 90% in a century and a half. Although population doubled by the end of the colonial era over its nadir level of 1670, demographic recovery was both sporadic and intermittent because the Indians only slowly acquired immunities to the contagions long endemic to the Spaniards. Epidemic disease was therefore a debilitating peril with which native communities constantly had to contend. Its impact on Indian life was profound. When disease broke out, it invariably precipitated a chain of events, including catastrophic mortality, the inability of stricken towns to pay tribute, and the failure on the part of the Indians to plant their fields for the year ahead. Famine, misery, and a wretched existence were then never very far away, and served only to increase the susceptibility of the Indians to renewed outbreaks of pestilence. With the recurrence of such unforeseen human tragedies, imperial expectations soon proved naive and unattainable. Perhaps more than any other single factor, it was the unleashing of Old World diseases on a physiologically vulnerable Indian population which caused a shadow to fall between the idea and the reality of Spanish colonial rule, not just in the Cuchumatán highlands of Guatemala but throughout the entire Hispanic American realm.

Notes

1. W.G.Lovell, Land and Settlement in the Cuchumatán Highlands (1500-1821) A Study in the Historical Geography of Northwestern Guatemala (University of Alberta, Edmonton: unpublished PhD dissertation, Fall 1980)
2. M.J.MacLeod, Spanish Central America, (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1973), pp. 374-389.
3. P.Chaunu and H.Chaunu, Seville et l'Atlantique, quoted in Macleod, op.cit., p. xiv.

4. MacLeod, op.cit., pp. 374-375.
5. MacLeod, op.cit., p.20

ALTERNATIVE PERSPECTIVES ON THE INFORMAL SECTOR

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When it first appeared in the development studies literature in the early 1970's, the concept of the informal sector seemed to offer promise of a satisfactory solution to the chronic unemployment problem which had manifested itself in the Third world throughout the previous two decades. The continued explosion of the urban populations of Africa, Asia and Latin America had more than negated the positive effects of the employment generation of development policy, and unemployment had become recognised as the most pressing problem in the developing world. The suggestion by Hart (1973) and the International Labour Office World Employment Programme Mission to Kenya (ILO, 1972) that the absorption of surplus labour might be successfully carried out by encouraging the expansion of previously disparaged 'traditional' enterprise, in what they dubbed the informal sector, was greeted enthusiastically by researchers and development agencies alike.

Almost immediately, however, a number of studies appeared, strongly critical of the new informal sector concept. Leys' appraisal of the ILO Kenya mission contained the allegation that growth of informal sector enterprise were 'naive and utopian' (Leys, 1974) and work by LeBrun and Gerry (1975) and Bienefeld (1974) strongly questioned the belief propounded by both Hart and the Kenya mission authors that a major reason for the poverty of indigenous, small-scale enterprise was their lack of contacts with large-scale 'formal' markets, methods and firms. On the contrary, Bienefeld and LeBrun and Gerry argued that very definite links did exist throughout the urban economy, and that these contacts were very much to the benefit of large-scale, often international capital. Furthermore, the continued existence of these links would guarantee the continued exploitation and subordination of indigenous small-scale 'informal' enterprise.

Throughout the remainder of the 1970's, the literature dealing with unemployment in Third World cities, and in particular with the specific issue of finding solutions to the problem through the encouragement of the informal sector, has flourished. A recent bibliographical compilation of works dealing directly or indirectly with the informal sector contains over one hundred and thirty entries (Sinclair, 1978) and this list is by no means complete. The continuation of the World Employment programme of the ILO has been responsible for several of the most influential informal sector studies, and much of this work is summarised, and commented upon by Moser, (1978) and Bromley (1978). A number of recent studies, however, have adopted approaches to the problem of informal sector based employment policy slightly differently from earlier, and dare one say it after so short a time, traditional informal sector studies.

On the one hand, reaction to the critical studies mentioned above has produced an interesting progeny of the dualist informal sector framework. Steel (1976) and Nihan and Jourdain (1978), seem to have successful policy action which will aid the gamut of the urban poor, and instead have chosen to concentrate their attention on the 'intermediate sector' and the 'modern informal sector' respectively. Both are in fact very similar by definition, the purpose of the efforts being to identify a specific 'target' population for aid which is likely to provide the most spectacular returns to investment. It is clear that the policy proposals of these studies are not intended to direct assistance to those most in need, but to attempt to maximise economic results hoping at the same time that one of the side effects of action will fortuitously be the absorption of some of the poorest group of the population into the growth of the 'intermediate' sector.

Such an approach appears to differ little from the earlier diffusionist theories of development, which concentrated on expanding the productive foci in the 'modern' sector, in the hope that the 'traditional' population would be absorbed in its growth. That such policies had proved to be inadequate for the desperate situation behind the original proposals of informal sector analyses. It is surely retrogressive to believe that similar policy will work if applied merely at a different point in the urban economy.

On the other hand, there has been a steady growth in the literature essentially critical of the dualist informal/formal sector models. The alternative perspective utilised by Bienefeld, Lebrun and Gerry, and Leys in the paper already mentioned, based as it is on the Marxist concepts of the articulation of modes or forms of production within the global expansion of the world capitalist system seems to provide a more satisfactory rational or examination of the likely success of policy measures aimed at the urban poor of the Third World, and to provide a superior logical framework through which the future of this population might be projected.

Research from this perspective begins from the premise that accumulation within activities outside the incursive capitalist segment of the economy is necessarily limited, and determined by process outside the control of these activities. Bienefeld, and Gerry (1974) provide specific evidence of subcontracting by large-scale capital, utilizing labour in smallscale enterprise, thus effectively transferring much of the cost, and risks involved to lower echelons of the urban labour market. Tokman is similarly persuaded that the links between large- and small-scale capital, or between formal and informal enterprises, and exploitative of the latter, rather than potentially to their benefit (Tokman, 1978)

In this context, consideration of the potential for the expansion of small-scale enterprise takes on a very different aspect from that presented by the dualist studies. If links do exist throughout the urban economy, and if these links are essentially exploitative of the smaller enterprises in the system, as an

increasing number of studies clearly suggest, then the problem facing the Third World urban poor is not that of establishing contact with the capital-intensive, expanding segments of the economy, but rather of changing the nature of the contacts which already exist, and which are providing considerable benefit to the dominant partner in the exchanges of goods and labour which are at present occurring.

The possibility of effective changes occurring within the capitalist world system, however, and the prospects for meaningful transformation of the relations of exploitation which exist within the Third World appear almost equally remote. The revolutionary potential of the urban proletariat remains largely unknown, and evidence from studies of the unemployed poor suggests that violent upheavals against exploitation may be the least likely of a number of alternative actions to continued poverty. (Cohen and Michael, 1973; Levine, 1973)

It would seem on the contrary that the effective incorporation and subordination of Third World urban labour is likely to become an increasingly important aspect of the continuing expansion of the capitalist world system. Portes suggests that the subsidising role to labour costs in the periphery, previously played almost exclusively by the rural subsistence sector is now becoming increasingly borne by the urban informal economy (Portes, 1978). He suggests that the existence in Latin American cities of an informal economy which provides low-cost goods and services to the urban population allows for the maintenance of low wage rates in capitalist enterprise, while at the same time supplying the necessary subsistence for the reserve army of labour which, through ensuring intense competition for the employment opportunities available, removes any upward pressure on wage rates in the periphery.

If the expansion of western capitalism continues in the Third World, and there is good reason to believe that within a new international division of labour the massive potential of the labour in this peripheral area is about to be utilised more fully (Frobel, Heinrichs and Kreye, 1976) then it would seem that the perpetuation of an informal sector, or informal economy, preserving the existence of low urban cost of living, and at the same time ensuring the existence of a large surplus labour force is to the long term benefit of international capital. Thus, attempts to maintain the existence of a divided, dependent workforce, and to ensure the continued existence of the informal economy on which this workforce depends for its own daily reproduction might conceivably be recognized as an active design of international capital. One can thus foresee capitalist strategies designed to manipulate the informal economy to its needs, rather than to aid the poor who live and work in that exploited and impoverished segment of the urban economy to transcend their present misery.

In this context, it must be admitted that the present informal sector policies are providing a powerful incentive for the perpetuation of the present relations of production based on the utilisation and exploitation of the labour power of the informal economy. Attempts to provide for increasing the capacity of the informal sector, albeit with the most humanitarian motives in mind,

are also, as a consequence, furthering the involutory capacity of that segment of the economy, and consolidating the relations of exploitation that exist within the Third World city.

As yet it appears that capitalism in the periphery of the world economy is unable to afford the costs incumbent upon it if full proletarianisation of the labour force is achieved. In order to maintain a competitive advantage within the world economy some means of subsidising the costs of labour are necessary. It has been suggested here that the informal economy of the Third World cities is increasingly likely to adopt that role. Thus, the maintenance of the informal economy, and the preservation of the relations of production perpetuating it, far from being a transitional phase in the evolution of capitalism in the periphery, remains an essential and integral part of that development, and will continue to be so in the future.

Much of the latter part of the above has been largely speculative in nature, based on limited evidence gleaned from a few studies. It has been implied, however, that a new direction is needed for the study of the continued poverty and immiseration of large segments of the Third World urban population. The widely accepted informal sector framework has very limited relevance in a situation increasingly dominated by forces of an international scope. It is thus suggested that consideration of the future of the inhabitants of the informal economy of the peripheral nations of the world economy should be henceforth examined in the context of the world capitalist system, and of the articulation of modes of production within that system, and no longer within the narrow dualist confines of informal sector analyses. Certainly these latter studies have a place where the gravity of the situation required some immediate remedial measures, but it must be realised that such measures can not provide any more than a temporary, and at times misleading, panacea to the ills of the Third World poor.

Most importantly, work aimed at ameliorating, and eventually eliminating, the conditions of poverty and exploitation in the Third World must be more closely concerned with discovering the nature of the alignment of classes, and with revealing the disparate interests of classes within the national and international economic systems. Of particular importance is consideration of the harmony of interests of all those within the informal economy,---aspiring petty bourgeois, exploited proletarian and unemployed lumpen elements,---as only when the artificial divisions between different sections of the exploited classes are revealed, and the development of class consciousness among the exploited complete, are the conditions perpetuating that exploitation likely to be overcome.

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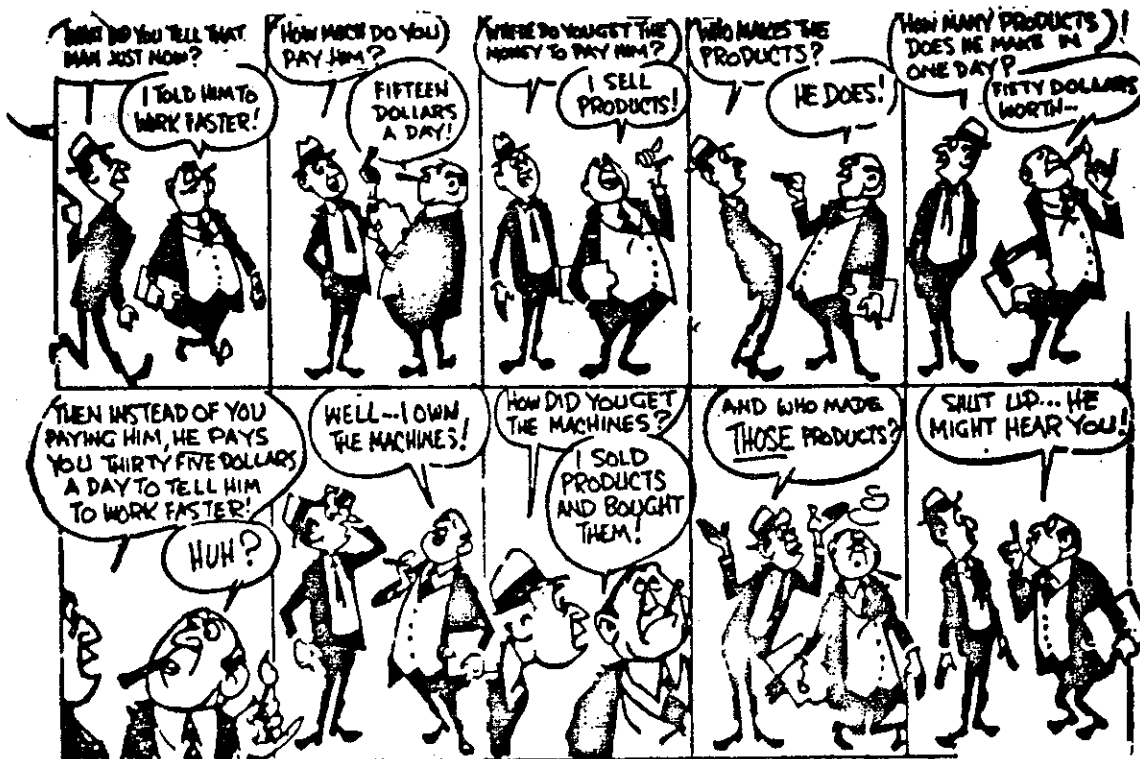
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PRELIMINARY NOTES ON THE FUNCTION OF FOREIGN MIGRANT LABOUR IN LATE CAPITALIST SOCIAL FORMATIONS

JOHN CAMPLING, GEOGRAPHY DEPARTMENT, QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY,
KINGSTON.

Conventional economic explanations of migration stem in the main from neo-Classical Equilibrium Theory which contends that the existence of inter-regional wage differentials will lead to labour, which is assumed to be perfectly mobile, migrating from low to high wage regions. Migration is seen, therefore, as an equalising mechanism moving excess labour from surplus to deficit regions (Richardson, 1970). However, on empirical grounds alone the theory is shown to be far from satisfactory. In addition, many of the explicit and implicit assumptions that neo-classical economic theory makes about the individual and society are questionable. However, it is not my intention here to provide a critique of neo-classical economic theory (see S. Mohun, 1979, pp. 231-272 for a critique).

Although a number of modifications have been introduced, conventional explanations still treat the relationship between labour migration and regional development as a uni-directional process whereby labour movements are induced by regional economic differences. Even major revisions to this approach by Myrdal (1957) and Hirschman (1958) are unable to account for the present migration trends in many Western economies, where there is presently a downturn towards net migration losses from the relatively high wage, low employment regions (South east England, Paris, etc.) and significantly reduced net migration losses from the relatively low wage, high unemployment regions (Northern and western Britain, South Italy, Brittany and South west Ireland).

The nature and magnitude of these spatial shifts in labour from metropolitan centres to smaller towns and regions has highlighted the need for an alternative approach for understanding migratory trends. What follows are some ideas about the role of labour migration in a dominantly capitalist society; ideas which should allow us to construct an alternative framework for explaining historically specific migrations.

In the conventional literature there is no attempt to specify the category migrant labour. For those working within a Marxist framework labour is seen as commodity, but as Carchedi points out "it is the peculiar character of labour (not the fact that it is a commodity) which commands the capitalist system (Carchedi, 1979, p.51). For instance, labour only creates value when applied to the means of production. It is only at this point that a transfer of value (which can be considered a resource) from worker to employer occurs. Thus, migrant labour represents a transfer of resources from the exporting to the importing region only when that labour is "put to work".

Qualitative and quantitative changes in these labour flows stem either from economic downturns in the importing region's economy or from longer term structural shifts in the organisation of production within the region. Quite often the former leads to the latter.

In a capitalist society the antagonistic relations of production produce contradictory tendencies which act as a force engendering periodic changes in the labour process/organisation of production and/or the location of production. Thus, changes in the nature and pattern of labour migration have to be seen in the context of the historical laws governing capitalist development (see Marx, 1977, ch. 25).

Migrant labour, whether foreign or indigenous, performs several functions in a capitalist system. For example, throughout its history capital has attempted to weaken the working class by creating an abundant labour supply - a reserve army of labour - which has the effect of depressing wage levels and of creating intra-class conflict within the ranks of the working class as they scramble for a limited number of jobs. The importation of Irish labour in the 1850's to Manchester had this effect. Today, the bulk of foreign workers still constitute and function as an industrial reserve army, compressing the level of wages; because in their absence capital would have to attempt indigenous workers to the less desirable jobs through an increase in wage levels (Carchedi, 1979, p. 54). Thus, it would appear that the value of labour migration for the capitalist class of the importing region is determined by the extent and nature of labour scarcities in the host economy. However, the concept of "labour scarcity" has to be defined in relation to the role a surplus plays specifically in a capitalist mode of production and its effect on the rate of accumulation. Factors such as the strength of organised labour and the kinds of concessions the working class can extract from capital are factors which play a crucial role in defining a situation as being one of scarcity. If the strength and the demands of the working class increase in the way they did, for example, in the major industrial regions of Western Europe and the U.S.A. during the 1960's then "expected" absolute and relative levels of surplus extraction are threatened, which jeopardises further capital accumulation. One way capital can respond is by recruiting "docile" migrant labour in order to depress wage levels and to exercise greater control over production.

In this respect capital directly benefits from the existence of spatial inequality. In Italy, for instance, the rapid development of the industrial Northwest ("The Golden Triangle") during the late 1950's and early 1960's was made possible largely by "drawing out" relatively "docile" labour from the backward sectors of the country, where material expectations were lower, in order to provide sufficient labour to avoid "scarcities" in the growing economies of Turin, Milan and Genoa. Secchi's analysis of the "regional problem" in Italy stresses the functional importance that regional disparities have for labour supply:

"... the existence and growth of regional inequalities made the Italian economic system more flexible in terms of labour supply than it would have been a better balanced regional situation, given an equal rate of employment in the various sectors; or in other words, that it gave the Italian economic system the possibility of a higher rate of technical progress for a given investment rate, than would have occurred in a well balanced situation. The depressed regions have allowed the retentions of flexibility in the labour market for whatever type of labour is demanded by firms (Secchi, 1977, p. 36).

This flexibility has allowed capital to use migrant labour as an element of anti-cyclical economic policy as well as providing capital with a long term source of labour for an expanded economy. In times of rapid economic growth migrants are "drawn in" to these economies, not only providing labour for sectors of the economy which are indispensable for the operation of "productive" sectors (for example, transportation, mass catering, industrial laundries, etc.) where there are often objective labour shortages, but also to depress increases in wage levels as the full employment of indigenous labour is reached. In times of recession, the in-flow of migrants decreases, being regulated not only through the market but also by the state.

Although, ideally, foreign labour must be "drawn in" to the market when needed and expelled when superfluous, Carchedi points out that if all foreign workers were subjected to forced repatriation, then the reduced supply of labour would further increase the economic difficulties, producing among other things, an increase in wages and a decrease in profits (Carchedi, 1979, p. 54). In addition, given labour scarcities, with or without objective labour shortages, and constraints (political and/or economic) to relocating production elsewhere or to capital substitution, then labour imports clearly become a valuable resource for the operation and expansion of the importing economies.

As already mentioned, the commodity (migrant) labour requires regulating to meet demand during periods of upturn and downturn in the economy . The coordinating and planning required must in the last analysis be undertaken by the state, for only the state can coordinate for capital's whole (see Holloway and Picitto, 1977). In Western Europe the state has clearly been instrumental in controlling the ebb and flow of migrant labour since the post-war period through legal and political means. It has regulated the inflow of migrants through its control of the issuance of work permits. It denies certain stratas of the migrant population political rights which would otherwise give these workers greater leeway to press for improved wages, working conditions and housing. And finally, the state has provided those migrants who are seen as "desirable" for the economy in the long-term, legal and political rights in order to integrate them more fully into the indigenous labour market.

The considerable movement of labour that has occurred during the post-war period in Western Europe represents but one element stemming from the internationalisation of production and exchange within the framework of dominant capitalist relations. However the control of the acquisition of foreign migrant labour has become a state function; regulating the ebb and flow of migrants in an attempt to ensure the continued accumulation of capital on an ever increasing scale. Within Western Europe this has given rise to a situation where, on the one hand, there is a very rapid rotation of certain Southern European workers in order to give the importing economies maximum flexibility to control labour supply in the short-term, hence the issuing of 12-18 month work permits; whereas, on the other hand, there exists a core of foreign migrants with more extensive political, legal and economic rights who constitute the lowest strata of the working class in the indigenous social formation - acting, ultimately, as reserve army. The role the state plays in perpetuating this condition has to be viewed as part of its overall role as the maintainer of capitalist hegemony.

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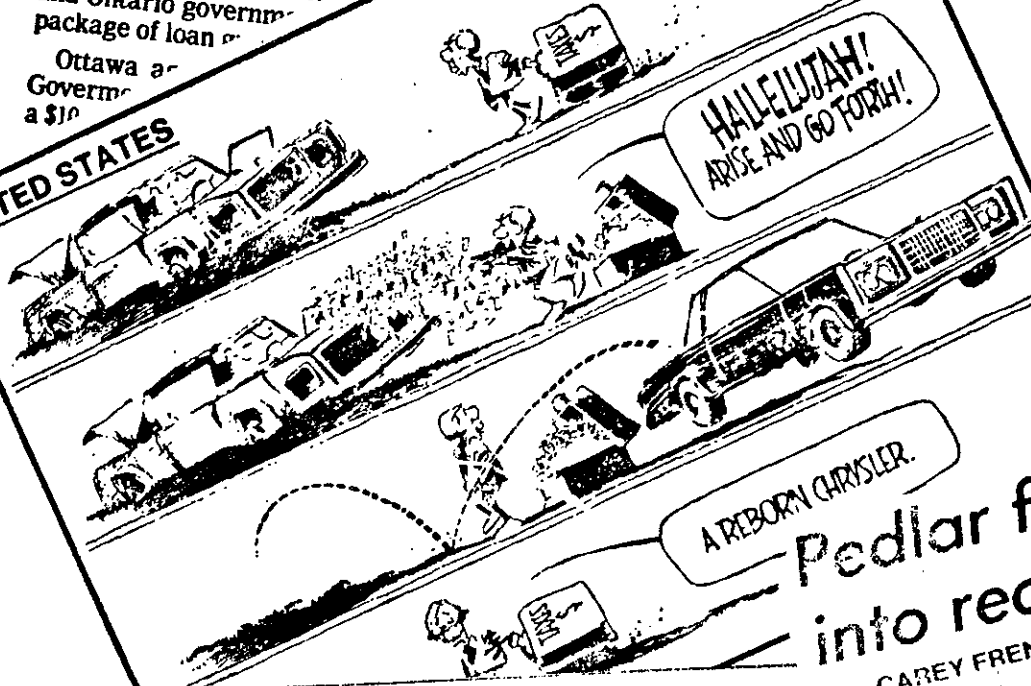
Chrysler rescued with \$1.7 billion in loans, grants

By MARY KATZ and JANE ...

Amid warnings that Chrysler ... of the month if it did not ... and Ontario government ... package of loan ...

Ottawa ... Government ... a \$1.7

UNITED STATES



UAW plan plant sit-ins on closings

United Auto Workers will fight plant closings by staging sit-ins at plants if governments fail to deal with the problem.

Robert White, Canadian director of the union, said the sit-ins, in which union members will refuse to leave plants being closed, would be staged to dramatize the economic and social havoc created when workers lose their jobs with little notice and with inadequate benefits to cushion the shock.

The sit-ins also would be aimed at preventing companies from removing machinery.

The union will also participate in demonstrations to be held in the fall by the International Union of Marine and Shipbuilding Workers of America.

The union also wants legislation to provide greater protection of Government-owned plant workers affected by

Pedlar forced into receivership

By CAREY FRENCH

Caught by the chilly economic winds buffeting the automotive and farm equipment industries, Pedlar Industrial Inc. of Toronto has been forced into receivership.

The UAW sought yesterday to force a minimum of six advance warning of a plant. It also wants companies to have to justify any closing by opening their books for public scrutiny.

Other proposals include the establishment of tribunals with representatives from government, communities and unions to review decisions to close and to examine alternative uses for the plants.

June 21 1980
G.M. 490 lose jobs

Bendix closes its Windsor plant

Special to The Globe and Mail

WINDSOR — This automotive city, which already has one of the highest unemployment rates in the country, got another shock yesterday when Bendix Corp. said it would close Windsor operations of its subsidiary permanently, sending 490 people out of work.

Earl Smith, president and manager of Bendix Automotive Canada Ltd., said ... in the ...

LAYOFFS AND CUTBACKS

AMC plans to cut salaried staff 10%

PRELIMINARY NOTES ON THE RESTRUCTURING OF THE CANADIAN AUTO INDUSTRY, 1960 - 1980

JOHN HOLMES, GEOGRAPHY DEPARTMENT, QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY,
KINGSTON.

The North American auto industry is in the midst of a severe economic crisis, one which appears to be qualitatively different from the periodic recessions which have plagued the industry in the past. As of mid April the UAW estimates that close to a quarter of a million North American auto workers have been placed on indefinite or temporary layoff by the Big Four alone (GM, Ford, Chrysler and AMC) - in addition thousands more have been laid off by the independent auto parts producers. At the peak of employment in early 1979 there were a little over 100,000 workers in the Canadian auto industry, this total being divided almost equally between assembly and parts production. Furthermore, around 90% of this employment was concentrated in Southern Ontario. Since employment in the auto industry is so highly concentrated geographically and in certain communities represents a significant proportion of local manufacturing employment, changes in employment level which result from periods of reorganization and restructuring within the industry have a profound impact on local economies throughout Southern Ontario. This is not only true of the towns of Windsor, Oakville, Oshawa, St. Thomas and St. Catharines in which the major assembly plants are located but also of many smaller communities in the Niagara Peninsula, London, S.W. Ontario and South Georgian Bay areas which contain many of the auto part and component firms.

Recently we (John Campling and myself) have begun a preliminary investigation of certain aspects of the organization of the auto industry in Southern Ontario. In particular, our objective is to analyze the restructuring and reorganization of production which has occurred in the industry over the last 20 years and the impacts that these changes have had on the political economy of local communities in Southern Ontario. The changing relationships and linkages between the auto assembly plants and those firms which are engaged in the production of auto parts and components appear to be a particularly fruitful area for research and one which largely has been neglected by previous studies of the North American auto industry. The period since 1960, upon which we have chosen to initially focus our analysis, encompasses changes associated with the introduction of the US-Canada Auto Pact in 1965, the major crisis which developed in the auto industry in 1973-75, and the current crisis which confronts the industry.

In order to fully comprehend the changing locational structure of the industry it will be necessary eventually to analyze both the processes which have led to various production operations being fragmented and separated between different firms or different units of production within the same firm, even to the extent of being divided

between different geographical areas, and, the processes which give rise to the existence of the specific regional characteristics which attract these fragmented elements of the production process. However, in the first phase of the research, which is just now commencing, we are attempting to identify, describe and begin exploratory analyses of temporal and spatial changes in investment, employment and production within the Ontario auto assembly and parts sectors; particularly changes in the relationships and linkages between assembly plants and parts producers.

The following are some preliminary background notes on the North American auto industry. We welcome any comments or pertinent information and would like to contact anyone else currently working on the auto industry. Since auto production is rapidly becoming internationalized it provides a good opportunity for collective and cooperative research.

Reorganization of the Auto Industry at the International Level

Historically, the auto industry has been subject to almost constant change with respect to ownership, technology, the organization of the labour process within individual firms and the geographical organization of production both at an intra- and inter-national scale. The industry appears to be highly susceptible to market forces and is subject, in a very pronounced way, alternately to slumps and booms in production. An interesting feature of the organization of production in the auto industry in North America (as well as W. Europe and Japan) is the relationship and linkages between the assembly sector and the independent parts sector. The former is characterized by marked concentration and centralization of production whilst the latter is characterized by a large number of large, medium and small firms which exhibit a much higher degree of territorial dispersion. This arrangement has persisted for sometime and over the past two decades there has been little if any vertical integration into parts production undertaken by the assembly firms in North America. This suggests that the relationship between assembly plant and parts plants is a structural feature rather than an ephemeral one. In the context of the European auto industry there has been speculation that the relationship provides assembly firms with increased managerial flexibility to adjust for marked fluctuations in demand for autos. In slack periods independent parts producers can be forced to carry a disproportionate share of the unused fixed capital and layoffs. (See Andrew Friedman, Industry and Labour, Macmillan for an elaboration of this thesis). Since the auto industry is of such vital and central importance to the economies of most advanced industrial nations it has been the subject of many state initiatives designed to aid the industry in overcoming these periodic recessions as well as other less frequent but more serious barriers to continued profitable expansion.

Internationally, the auto industry currently faces very serious problems. For roughly the last decade it has been going through a period of extensive dislocation, reorganization and restructuring. Increasingly, the reorganization and rationalization of production has occurred at an international scale. Initially the

internationalization of production took place at a continental scale; for example, Ford's production in Europe of the Ford Fiesta which is assembled in Spain, FRG and the UK from parts and subassemblies produced in Ulster, England, France, FRG and Spain. However, more recently, and as a result of intensified competition among international firms as the world demand for autos levels off, there has been a shift towards the global rationalization of auto production on an unprecedented scale and the emergence of the 'World Car'; for example, the production of engines by Ford in Brazil and VW in Mexico, Renaults use of Rumanian gearboxes and wheels from Mexico, the use of VW engines in Dodge's Omni (see IWC Motors Group A Worker's Enquiry into the Motor Industry, London: CSE Books, for further examples). Concomitantly, workers in the industry have experienced increasing managerial pressure for speedup and higher productivity and have been subject to widespread redundancies and layoffs.

Whilst it seems clear that the problems faced by the auto industry during the last decade stem in part from the world wide economic recession which has affected virtually every branch of production and the trend towards overcapacity within the industry, the crisis has been compounded by the sharp increases in oil and gasoline prices which have occurred during the same period. The latter, coupled with government safety, emission and fuel economy regulations, has forced auto firms (and particularly the North American producers) to significantly change their existing product ranges by developing smaller and more fuel efficient models. In turn, this has necessitated the retooling of production and assembly lines and massive new investments in capital goods, and all this at a time when there is significant overcapacity in the industry worldwide and when the large multinational auto firms have found it increasingly difficult to sustain their existing rates of profit. This combination of events has led to the considerable reorganization and rationalization of the industry which, in a number of countries, has only been achieved with the aid of large scale and direct state assistance.

Reorganization of the North American Auto Industry

In North America there have been some very significant changes in the organization of auto production in the last twenty years.

a) pre 1965

Prior to the signing of the sectoral free trade pact in autos and auto parts (commonly known as the Auto Pact) by Canada and the USA in 1965 the auto industries of the two countries, whilst dominated by the same three giant auto assemblers, were organized as essentially separate operations. The existence of tariffs on automobiles and automotive parts had led to the development of a mini replica of the US industry within Canada with each of the major firms producing in Canada a relatively broad range of models for domestic consumption and with relatively little trade in assembled autos between the two countries. Both productivity levels and wages in the Canadian industry were substantially lower than those in the U.S.

b) 1965-1974

As a result of the signing of the Auto Pact in 1965 and the removal of tariffs on assembled automobiles and original equipment parts the auto industry in Canada and the US underwent considerable reorganization. Each of the four auto assemblers rationalized their production into one integrated continent wide operation which led to the movement of large volumes of parts and finished autos between the two countries. Since 1965 each firm has assembled a relatively small number of models in Canada and exported a large proportion of their output of these models to the US. Conversely models assembled only at US plants have been imported into Canada. It is worth noting that until the early 1970's there was only very limited penetration of the North American market by European and Japanese producers and little export of North American built autos to third countries. Prior to 1974 the North American auto and the European/ Japanese auto represented virtually two distinct and non-competing commodities.

The development between the two countries of a complex pattern of linkages between assembly plants and firms producing parts and components also resulted from the Auto Pact. The production of parts in North America is carried out by three distinct types of firm. For instance, in recent years in Canada approximately 35% of parts production has been carried out 'in house' by the Big Four (Ford, GM, Chrysler, AMC), 25% by eight US based independent multinational corporations (Hayes-Dana, Budd Automotive, Eaton-Yale, Rockwell, Bendix, Kelsey-Hayes, Borg Warner and Thompson Products) and the remainder by about 500 small firms of which roughly one half are Canadian owned.

Between 1965 and 1974 there were significant increases in both investment and employment in both the Canadian assembly and parts industries. In addition to the quotas set for Canadian production by the Auto Pact several factors are probably significant in explaining this growth. Firstly, wage rates in Canadian auto plants in 1965 were 30% lower from those in US plants and didn't approach parity with the latter until the early 1970's. Secondly, although prior to 1965 productivity rates in Canadian assembly plants had been substantially lower than in the US there were very rapid increases in productivity in the late 60's. These increases stemmed from the reorganization of production in existing plants and the fact that new assembly plants which were constructed in predominantly rural locations - e.g. St. Thomas, Ontario and St. Therese, Quebec - combined the most advanced capital goods with a newly recruited labour force which had little previous experience with either industrial work or worker organization. Thirdly, the parts producers who located in small rural towns scattered throughout S. Ontario, in some cases with government regional assistance grants, were faced with low wage rates and consistently made higher rates of profit than parts producers in the Midwestern U.S.

c) 1974-1980

The short term effects of the Auto Pact are often argued to have been beneficial to Canada in that it led in the 1965-74 period to higher levels of employment and a shift in the balance of auto trade in Canada's favour. However, the continentalization of production which occurred during this period produced certain features in the Canadian industry which have become a major source of concern given the crisis which has developed in the North American auto industry in the period since 1974. Since that date Canada has moved into an increasingly large balance of trade deficit in auto products with the US. With the sharp increase in oil and gas prices in 1974 the demand for full-sized North American cars dropped dramatically and European and Japanese built cars began to make significant inroads into the North American market. Although North American production recovered temporarily during 1977-78 the combination of further oil and gas increases, tighter governmental emission and fuel consumption regulations, further penetration by foreign producers, and weakening demand as the US slid into a general economic recession resulted in the major crisis which confronts the North American auto industry today. The industry is now in the midst of a period of almost complete redesign of many of its product lines which in turn requires massive retooling and reinvestment for the switch to the production of smaller automobiles - hence the massive layoffs currently taking place. The rapid phasing out of the full-sized North American models and the switch to the production of small cars will bring the North American producers into direct competition with Japanese and European auto makers - hence the development of the 'World Car', the mergers and joint agreements between major producers e.g. British Leyland - Honda, Peugeot - Citroen - Chrysler UK, Volvo - Daf, Mitsubishi - Chrysler etc., the shift to the global rationalization of production by Ford and GM (eg. the Pintos assembled at Ford's St. Thomas plant use engines made in Brazil and gearboxes made in France) investment in auto and auto parts production in North America by European and Japanese firms, the search for lower cost production sites in the Southern US and Latin America as increasing international competition forces firms to strive to reduce production costs yet further, and increasing pressure from the UAW to impose import quotas on foreign cars or force foreign producers to locate more production within North America.

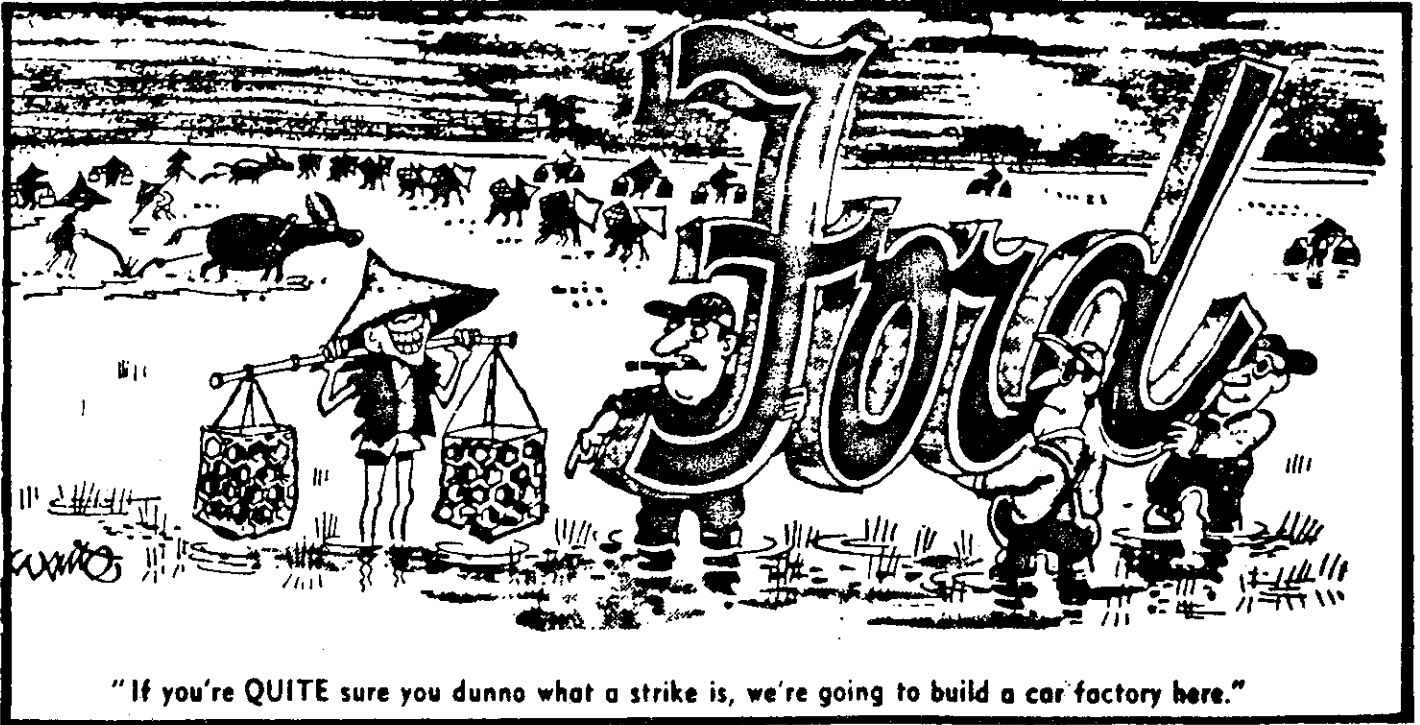
What then were some of the longer term consequences for the Canadian auto industry of the rationalization which followed the Auto Pact; consequences which are becoming increasingly apparent in the light of the current crisis? Firstly, the integration of production on a continent wide basis locked Canada into a trade dependency with the US because of the large difference in the size of their respective markets. Canadian assembly plants producing a limited range of models are extremely vulnerable to shifts in US demand for those particular products, e.g. the Chrysler plant in Windsor producing V-8 engines, the Ford Oakville plant producing the full-sized LTD and the Scarborough GM van plant have all been seriously affected by the collapse of demand for these products in the US occasioned by the rise in gasoline prices. Full integration of the industry also resulted in the virtual disappearance of Canadian design and technical facilities and most of the key decision making became

highly centralized in Detroit.

The Canadian auto industry became more labour than capital intensive as compared to the U.S. This was partly a result of an emphasis by the Big Four in Canada an assembly (which is relatively labour intensive when compared to an engine or transmission plant) rather than 'in house' parts production. Even where in house parts production by the Big Four does occur in Canada it tends to be more labour intensive subassembly work. In addition, much of the independent parts production which takes place in Canada is concentrated in low value parts by small firms which use low cost and low skilled labour. In fact, the differences in skill level between the US and Canadian auto industries are quite significant e.g. 73% of vehicle assembly workers in Canada are unskilled compared to only 49% in the US and 51% of workers employed in parts production in Canada are unskilled compared to 33% in the US. With increased international competition it is precisely those production units which depend on unskilled labour and in which capital investment is small and obsolete, and therefore easily abandoned, which are the most vulnerable to being moved to even lower cost production sites in the Southern US, Central and South America. In addition, since such a significant proportion of auto part producers in Canada are subsidiaries of US parent companies there is concern that as the market continues to contract more and more parts production will be withdrawn by the US parent firms from their Canadian subsidiaries.

At the moment the future of the North American auto industry, and, particularly, those segments of it which are located in Canada, is highly uncertain. Whether or not the industry can recover as it did after the 1974-75 slump depends in part upon whether or not the new generation of North American small cars for which retooling is currently underway can compete with European and Japanese cars in both domestic and overseas markets. It also crucially depends upon whether the introduction of the 'World Car' and the attendant global rationalization of production will result in a new spatial division of labour which will leave traditional auto making areas such as Michigan and Ontario with far less, and possibly qualitatively different kinds of employment than before.





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June 27 1980.
BMW to buy more parts from Canada
By KEN ROMAIN
BMW, the West German maker of quality cars, intends to increase its auto parts purchases from Canada. Trade is not a one-

Nissan site
WASHINGTON (DJ) — Nissan Motor Co. of Japan is expected to select the site for its \$300-million U.S. light truck manufacturing plant by mid-July. Takashi Ishihari, Nissan president, plans to visit the United States around July 10 and the Nissan truck division on the location.

Kuwait buys 10% interest in Volkswagen's Brazil unit

WHY ALL THE FUSS ABOUT BEHAVIOURAL GEOGRAPHY?

ARON SPECTOR, GEOGRAPHY DEPARTMENT, QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY,
KINGSTON.

"Behavioural geography" has been fair and favoured game, over the past few years, of a good many people in geography. (Cox, (forthcoming), Bunting and Guelke (1979)). The purpose of this essay is not to derogate the potential usefulness of this work but rather to provide some recognition of the need to place it in some perspective or context.

In the following I will try to outline a few ideas concerning the development of individual consciousness which I believe are of relevance to how social relationships develop. At the same time, I shall emphasize that the study of the nature and development of consciousness can best be understood within the nexus of these relationships and that these provide many of the building blocks of what is considered "real". I shall discuss these ideas in the context of the research that I have undertaken over the last couple of years which concerns the way in which housing comes to be understood and commodified within the present Canadian context.

In what follows I shall be implicitly arguing against a movement towards extreme reflexivism or towards an idealized empiricism. In the first case, it is assumed that the symbolic aspects of language and understanding are somehow created and translated directly into consciousness. In the second, it is only that which is, without consideration of how it became that way or how it can change, that is considered. I shall be arguing for a view which emphasizes the role of the social definition of an emergent reality, dialectically interwoven in the political and economic relations of a social formation.

I shall begin by providing a very general working definition of traditional "behavioural geography" and by pointing out some of the weaknesses in this approach to understanding. I shall then quickly outline some channels where I believe that a revised "behavioural geography" can be of relevance, when a need is felt to follow the way in which certain types of consciousness are created. Lastly I shall show how this approach can be translated into a material context and shall examine some of the uses that this type of research can have.

What is Behavioural Geography

Traditionally "behavioural geography" has been primarily concerned with the interface between psychological process and the behaviour of some set of individuals. Within this area, concern has been wide ranging but strong emphases can be found in:

- 1) the cataloguing of regularities associated with

"understanding" and "decision making" (Gould's chapters in Spatial Interaction provide neat examples) (Abler, Adams and Gould, (1971))

and 2) the use of these to establish models which can stereotype and thus "predict" behaviour (the material provided by the group concerned with "natural hazards" provides a good example here). (White, (1974))

In each of these cases, concern has focused on "explaining" why groups of individuals articulate their reaction to a set of "stimuli" (i.e. guesstimates of the probability of floods, or preferences for U.S. states). Explanations usually involve linking reactions to some set of measurable personal or stimuli attributes. Thus, Burton and White pointed broadly at culture type to "explain" different reactions to natural hazards. In some cases, deductive theories about learning are used to generate data which is compared to outcomes in some experimental situation (see for example Louviere's work concerning supermarket choice (Piccolo and Louviere, (1977))).

In most cases, there has been a constant lament concerning the inability to translate survey responses into workable models which "predict" behaviour. Explanations for this failure have been numerous. In some cases, the finger has been pointed at the artificial nature of the context within which data were gathered. Others have brought forth the "necessarily" weak link between the articulation of attitudes, preferences, understanding and behaviour. Still others have pointed at the need to see the data collected within the context of environments within which people are thrust and within which they make decisions (see for example Harrison and Sarre, (1976)).

In providing a critique, each of these "explanations" play a part. It's essence involves the argument that understanding is continually constructed and reconstructed in the context of situations as they arise. People, in this constructivist view, (Neisser, (1970)) are continually developing the capacities to construct interpretations and learning to associate these with situations that are perceived to arise. In this way, understanding becomes contingent upon the history of individual development. The genesis of understanding at this micro scale occurs within situations contingent upon the nature of the containing formation. Experience that leads to the development of understanding thus occurs within preconstructed information fields (i.e. settings containing readily discernable "facts") and educational devices (i.e. teaching situations). These range, in the context of this society, from the marketing agency to the school to the family. Understanding thus reflects the social formation and is conditional upon it.¹

Much of the literature of "behavioural geography" has been unsuccessful in tackling the issues associated with this conditionality of understanding and development. It has been so because of a failure to recognize that understanding involves a process partially contingent on the rationality which is developed within, and part of a social formation.²

The need to accept this conditionality has been partly recognized in intra-urban migration literature, as a link between decision making, life style and life cycle characteristics (for example, Michelson (1976), Rossi, (1955)) Decisions become contingent upon the demands associated with having children, of being old, or of living the life of a "cosmopolite".³

The migration literature cited though, goes only so far. No concern, for example, is given to the interlinkage between preferences for particular housing attributes and these characteristics. Further, the issues of how life style and cycle characteristics are translated into commonly understood housing attributes are not usually addressed, nor are the ways that this understanding is transmitted. Why, for example, does having three children, earning \$30000 per year and being 47 years old translate into a four bedroom house on a 7000 square foot lot eight miles from a central city?

The argument here is for a "behavioural geography" which can provide a basis for the study of understanding within the dynamism of its history and development. People thus learn and learn how to learn within an environment of social structures. As part of "behavioural geography" then, is the necessity of placing the foundation for attitudes, preferences and all the other paraphernalia of understanding firmly within the social, political and economic conditions of a social formation.

My research: Aspects Affecting the Creation of a Housing Market

My concern has been with the nature of the process by which household members come to learn about "the housing market".⁴ Of primary concern has been the attempt to understand something of how information about housing is communicated, organized, assessed and used. This information and the mechanisms for adopting, understanding and using it are seen as products evolving as part of a social formation. Many thus learn about, forget, change and relearn information and heuristics (or "strategies") when they become involved in searching for a new place to live.

This position contrasts markedly with naive empiricism and reflexivism in that it centers upon the origins of concepts and ways of understanding. In the context of housing, for example, searchers often learn to distinguish neighbourhoods during the process of looking for a new dwelling. They may also learn to distinguish among neighbourhoods and to use ideas about neighbourhood in conjunction with other criteria in assessing where and if to move. In the literature of "behavioural geography" there has been some consideration of the changes that occur in searchers' assessments of housing but none concerning whether or not there is change in the how and what is assessed (see for example, Smith et.al. (1978)).

At this point it seems important to ask the relevance of this

material to the socialist geographer. I would put forth the idea that through the process of learning about aspects of the material necessary for existence, the baggage of a social system is also encumbered. In this case, in finding a roof to put over their heads, searchers learn to equate housing attributes with commodities and how to assess them from this stance. Simply put, good schools and friendly neighbours are thus commodified, evaluated, bid upon and sold.

To understand the way in which an economic structure such as a housing market, evolves and sustains itself, study should partially be directed towards the ways in which that system's understandings are created and recreated. Thus the Canadian housing market, or for that matter the system of capital appropriation lies upon a base of ideas and assessment procedures.

In this regard it is of interest to study the types of information portrayed to those searching for housing. Important also is the examination of the institutions such as the real estate marketing and development industries who both actively disseminate information about housing. For example, in building and refurbishing housing, a vested interest is created in the establishment and perpetuation of tastes and preferences for particular housing products. In marketing housing, the real estate agent is concerned with trying to make a living based solely on sales commissions. In doing so, he/she adapts in evolving techniques which, for example, may involve trying to establish a clientele of return customers, and/or acting to speed up and rationalize the process of the housing search. Within economic exigencies, then, a context is set within which information is disseminated (Spector, (1979)).

It is instructive in this regard to briefly examine the techniques utilized by the real estate salesperson and the implications this may have on the establishment of a housing market. The archetype agent attempts to lean his/her client towards housing which he/she feels, through experience, best suits the client (according to a qualification process involving the gathering of economic, social, and life style attributes). At the same time, the agent presents and often instructs clients about the financial characteristics of housing and about the attributes of the neighbourhood which are felt to be appropriate to the client. The real estate agent's position encourages him/her to stereotype housing and clients to link the two and to design methods of convincing the client of the merits of the interlinkage. As part of this function, housing attributes are translated into commodities having, for example, resale value. Thus the characteristics of neighbours and neighbourhood are evaluated as are the worth of a good school and proximity to shopping centers. The real estate agent thus acts simultaneously as a gatekeeper and teacher in the role of salesperson. The agent tends to channel clients to particular neighbourhoods and introduces to the client some of the criteria for adopting this strategy. Neighbourhoods as thus defined as nice places to bring up children in, or good places to purchase "starter homes". However, since search strategies vary in terms of the way in which agents are

used, as does the expertise and strategies of agent, it is difficult to assess, in isolation, the impact of this single link in the provision of housing information.

It is the nature of the developmental process of coming to understand housing in an economic and political milieu that is the aim of my research. In doing so, though, a further step becomes necessary. This is one step removed from the actors involved in search and relates to the nature of an historical development of the concept of housing through the marketing and commodification of housing and its attributes.

Footnotes

- 1) For an exposition of this point see Sartre (1976).
- 2) For elaboration of these ideas, see Habermas (1974).
- 3) Even from this view it is difficult to link the preferences of Gould's university students to future aspirations or, for that matter migratory trends, because of the way these translate into future contingencies is left as a matter of conjecture.
- 4) It is clear that a distinction should be made between the presentation of housing to those involved in its production for exchange, including for example, the development industry and the presentation of housing to those whose aim is generally the consumption of "goods" associated with this commodity.

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WHY BEHAVIOURAL GEOGRAPHY?

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This short paper sets out to do two things: firstly to offer some critical comments about reformulations of behavioural geography, as attempted by Aron Spector in his article "Why all the Fuss About Behavioural Geography?" and secondly, to offer some thoughts on the question of how one should go about treating and explaining behaviour. Here, the author is critical of both positivist behavioural studies, reformulations or not, and of recent attempts by Marxists who tend to see consciousness and behaviour as "products" of the social structure. This negates the possibility of conscious social/ structural transformation. It is argued that human development, in the very broadest sense, is necessarily a dialectical process and one which can only be understood by focusing on the complex mediations which link "men" to their society at a particular historical instance.

Spector's concern for explaining how certain types of consciousness are created is one that we as Socialists should share, for it is only through conscious, unified social action that revolutionary social change is possible. For Spector, individual behaviour appears to be the point of departure for his own research on housing and he does indeed argue that the "tools of the "behavioural geographer" can help us understand the way in which people come to learn and develop notions about housing (Spector, 1980, p. 1). Although, he does not make it clear whether he intends simply to use only the "tools" and not the methodology. However, this in itself would be problematical as tools develop out of a particular methodological position. And in this case, he could not avoid adopting elements from a "behavioural geography" which has strong ties with the positivist/spatial science tradition.

Although Spector makes the point that a number of ideas concerning the development of individual consciousness are of relevance to how social relationships develop (alluding to the work of structuralists), he appears to see the process as being relatively autonomous from structural forces; with individual consciousness and notions acting upon social relationships (which, incidentally, he does not clearly define) in a very peripheral way. He makes use of the terms "nexus" and "dialectical", but does not reveal to us how his dialectical method is to be constructed or how it works in practice.

Before developing some thoughts about behaviouralism it is, perhaps,

worth reminding ourselves of the kinds of explicit and implicit assumptions that are contained in conventional approaches to the study of behaviour and the method of inquiry that is employed.

The application of the behavioural paradigm in geography is advocated by its practitioners because it supposedly employs more realistic concepts of man in the analysis of spatial behaviour; it specifically focuses upon the nature of the decision-making process and the parameters which determine its outcome (Downs, 1970). The adoption of this approach can be seen partly as a reaction against the abstract formulations of much of the literature produced during the 1960's within Geography. However, the behavioural revolution in Geography, indeed, in all the Social Sciences, was based upon an uncritical acceptance of the epistemological premises upon which contemporary Psychology rests.

Mainstream Psychology claims to provide a general theory of human behaviour, yet it defines itself to be a science of the "individual". The scientific object which Psychology attempts to theorise is man. The "individual" is Psychology's basic unquestioned concept, one which is taken as the focus and origin from which social relations are constructed. This epistemological basis shares with most other philosophical positions within bourgeois social science, the fundamental notion of the individual as the already constituted centre of social action and thought. In other words, the object is taken as given to it.

The implication is that men are governed by unchanging human nature; this position clearly represents an extremely static view of human development because it assumes, as Massey points out, that "mental processes are a historical.... constant" (Massey, 1975, p.202). This has been taken to an extreme in the work of those who have tried to identify parallels with animal behaviour. The drawing of analogies between the behaviour of animals and men can be seen in a still growing literature on "territoriality" and the immutability of aggression and nationalism. Rieser (1978) points out that the studies by researchers such as Robert Ardrey, with his abstract notions of "territoriality", Calhoun and his rats, with their "behavioural sink" (which allegedly provides "proof" that urban overcrowding is the cause of moral degeneration) and, of course, Desmond Morris with The Naked Ape have greatly popularised behavioural ideas. The popularisation of these ideas has led to wider support for the idea that competitiveness, aggression and nationalism are part of man's instinctive, animal nature.

While, on the one hand, some Psychologists argue that we are simply higher order animals endowed with unchanging mental processes and therefore unchanging consciousness and behaviour, Piaget, on the other hand, offers a thesis which is diametrically opposed to these "static nature" notions. Piaget dismisses the idea of innate human behaviour, seeing man as having the capability to change and transform into a new state of being. Man is able to do this by creating structures:

"Man can transform himself by constructing structures;

and these structures are his own, for they are not entirely predestined either from within or without" (Piaget, 1970, p. 118).

The subject is seen as both structuring and being structured by the object. The interplay between the social structure (its dynamic tendencies) and "men" is the motor of social change, creating a particular type of social formation, yet at the same time, producing tensions within, that potentially threaten its continued existence. Thus, the development of the individual and the social formation is a dialectical process, which means that forms of behaviour can never be taken, theoretically, as given. In fact Massey goes as far as maintaining that they are always "produced" - that is, they are always the outcome of the structured context in which they occur (Massey, 1975, p. 202). Thus, goals, attitudes and behaviour, which are seen as "independent" in behavioural studies, are, on the contrary, products of structural processes which are themselves amenable to analysis.

However, in emphasizing the need to analyse structural processes, it is necessary to avoid adopting a mechanistic explanation; for our social environment is fashioned by "men" but as a result of alienation, "men" are dominated by it. Marx makes this point when he speaks of the agents of social formation, "men", as the bearers of objective instances; in other words they are not free agents. Rieser (1978) also refers to Marx to support his criticism of mechanistic and simplistically materialist conceptions of behaviouralism:

"Men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please, they do not make it under circumstances directly chosen by themselves."

Thus, it is impossible to explain human choice and behaviour without examining the social conditions under which men turn themselves into instruments to transform Nature into reified social ends. However, as Marx points out, this act of transforming Nature by the application of human labour simultaneously transforms human nature and therefore alters human behaviour:

"by... acting on the external world and changing it, he (man) at the same time changes his own nature" (Marx, 1977, p. 173).

Support for this explicitly dialectical approach to the understanding of human development leads us to criticise Massey who makes several statements which show her approach to be a mechanistic interpretation of Marx's dialectical materialism. For instance, she maintains that "it is the analysis of the structural context itself which will allow explanation of geographical behaviour." Thus, forms of behaviour are always "produced", but, as Leach points out:

"... to consider that our behaviour is simply "produced" is to fail to grasp the key element in the transformation of capitalism into socialism, conscious

behaviour" (Leach, 1978, p. 35).

The complex mediations which link the individual to his/her society as a whole need to be analysed and understood in their historically specific juncture if an understanding of human development, which includes questions of behaviour and choice, is to be formulated. Leach correctly maintains that this cannot be achieved through mechanical materialism because it is "unable to understand the interplay between phenomena, seeing only one (the system) as cause, and the other (inequality) as effect" (Leach, 1978, p. 35). Thus, the search for an understanding of the dynamic system of mediations between phenomena necessitates comprehending the dialectical relationship between subjective and objective, and individual and institutional factors.

CONCLUSION

A criticism of both the behavioural approach and the mechanical materialist mode has been offered. It has been argued that behaviour is not essentially innate, and that individuals are not free agents to choose and control their destiny. Marx (1973) adds weight to this argument in remarking that society "expresses the sum of the relations and conditions in which individuals find themselves positioned towards one another."

Mechanical materialist approaches, while emphasizing the need to analyse structural conditions, ignore the crucial mediations between the social structure, on the one hand, and the consciousness and behaviour of individuals ("men"), on the other. It is necessary to see man's actions and motivations as the complex result of a dialectical interaction of both biotic and social processes, the latter continually propelled by the dynamism of the forces and relations of production.

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ON THE CONCEPT OF ALIENATION

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The purpose of this note is to make apparent two useful elements of the Marxian theory of alienation. The debate on alienation has prompted questions in two areas at least and they are: 1) the assumptions which Marx and later historical materialists made about humankind and 2) the segmentations in human activity under capitalism.

In looking at the assumptions underlying the Marxian view of what human beings are it is critical to understand that writers such as Meszaros (1970) and Ollman (1976) have attempted to describe what Marxists have viewed humanity as being and not necessarily what it ought to be (Is not ought is crucial here). These writers and others (e.g., Venable (1945), Plamentz (1975), Walton and Gamble (1977)) have asserted that Marxism makes some basic assumptions about the nature of humankind. These assumptions are threefold. It is assumed that humankind is industrious, social and historical.

Humankind is seen by writers such as Meszaros and Ollman as engaging in conscious, purposive activity. Productive work is the core of life activity. Industry of this nature is a key element of Marxian thought. Not only is the human animal one which is consciously industrious but it is one which is social. It is asserted that humankind operates socially not separately. Most of the alienation writers note Marx's critique of the concept of people as basically egoistic. (1844) The assertion that people operate in an egoistic manner is countered by an assertion of the sociality of human action. Finally it is asserted in this literature that humanity is historical. Human character, aspiration is ever-changing. These three characteristics are seen as central to the Marxian conception of human nature.

Given this argument about assumptions, two sets of questions may be raised - one concerning historical materialism itself and one concerning alienation and the analysis of human being. Looking at the latter first, it should be patently obvious that anyone or any

philosophy holding assumptions different from the Marxist could be seen as alienated or separated or segmented from proper analysis as well as from their human being. This becomes a bit tautological in that humanness is defined in one way so any view outside the definition is automatically deemed alienated. But one might ask whether this whole discussion is a bit silly since the assumptions are so reasonable that nobody would disagree with them.

Here the ground work of Ollman and Meszaros and Marx himself is crucial for these authors show that many people throughout history have held very different assumptions about humankind. For the sake of brevity let us look at two views; religion in general and classical political economy. Religions, for example, Christianity and Judaism, have often held that the essential nature of humankind is unchanging. For example, people are born in sin and people experience the Fall continually throughout history. Human nature is always fallen and sinful. Further, such religions often deny the power of humans to engage in purposive activity and attribute this power to a deity. Further such religions often assert the individuality of the human and stress his or her humility before a god as being the ultimate human condition and hence often implicitly deny the sociality of humanity. In the case of political economy of the classical strain it is well known that Marx blasted these scholars for their failure to appreciate the historical nature of humankind and for their continual assertion that people operate in an essentially egoistic and competitive manner and for their denial of peoples' sociality. Such analyses must be seen as alienated because they fail to appreciate the real nature of humanity and any further studies based on them must also be alienated.

The other question raised by this discussion so far is precisely what are the basic assumptions of historical materialism. Have Ollman, Meszaros, et al. adequately described these assumptions? Do historical materialists hold basic assumptions about reality? My thinking suggests that they must and that it is impossible to proceed with Marxian analysis without these assumptions. Perhaps diehard materialists will accuse me of a form of idealism but I cannot equate assumptions with idealism. At any rate comment on this question of assumptions would be most welcome. Or is this not an issue?

This brings us to the second general element in the debate. This is the segmentations of human activity in capitalist society. This area of questioning raises some thorny problems which has led more positivist Marxists to berate humanist, semi-idealist Marxists and vice versa.

At the simplest and in some ways most useful level alienation may be seen as a description of segmentations in capitalist society. In capitalism humanity is split into classes of owners and non-owners of the means of production. Both classes relate to industry in an alienated or segmented way - that is, one controls its direction and the other is active in it and merely obeys the former's plans and commands. Hence at one level the concept of alienation is a descriptor, that is, a summary of the various levels of segmentation in capitalist society. As such it is clearly a useful polemical and

educational instrument because when people see these segmentations in society they are led to ask why they occur.

However the concept is often seen to imply more than a description of segmentations and indeed is in many ways a condemnation of them. Embedded within it is an understanding that a social system which denies people the ability to engage in purposive activity is alienated, that is, alienated from the species being of humankind (i.e., being industrious, social and changeable). Further, a social system which overtly stresses individualism and encourages competitiveness is also alienated for it fails to appreciate a crucial element of peoples' species being, namely, sociality. At one level these things may be seen as further descriptions, at another, for some scholars, they apparently indicate that some Marxists may be seeking an ideal, unalienated state.

All sorts of questions arise here. Are the alienationists promoting a Marxism which sees people as becoming freer or less alienated throughout history? There is a problem in answering this since some Marxists may hold to this and others may not. Are these scholars positing an ideal, unalienated state? In a sense they are doing this since the realization of alienation or segmentation in and of peoples' species being implies that at some point people may have been and/or may be unalienated, that is, more cognizant of and more a part of their own being. It is in this horribly ambiguous area that problems arise. It is unclear to some why certain states would be alienated and why others would not be. For me, it brings the argument full circle to the question of assumptions. Is there agreement on these? If there is, then, at one level, the analysis of analysis, there are obviously degrees of alienation. However, at the level of society only in certain senses may activity be said to be alienated. The counter to the alienation in capitalism argument rests in the assumptions themselves. If it is peoples' nature to be industrious, social and changing then this must be true in all social formations so where is the alienation?

In closing, this note has raised certain questions about the concept of alienation and suggested two broad areas 1) assumptions about human nature basic to historical materialism and 2) segmentation of human activity in capitalism which may be of use to the social critic. The alienation debate has raised questions about a Marxian conception of human nature and about human activity in capitalism. Ambiguity abounds but hopefully this brief note has shed some light on these elements and also raised some questions about them.

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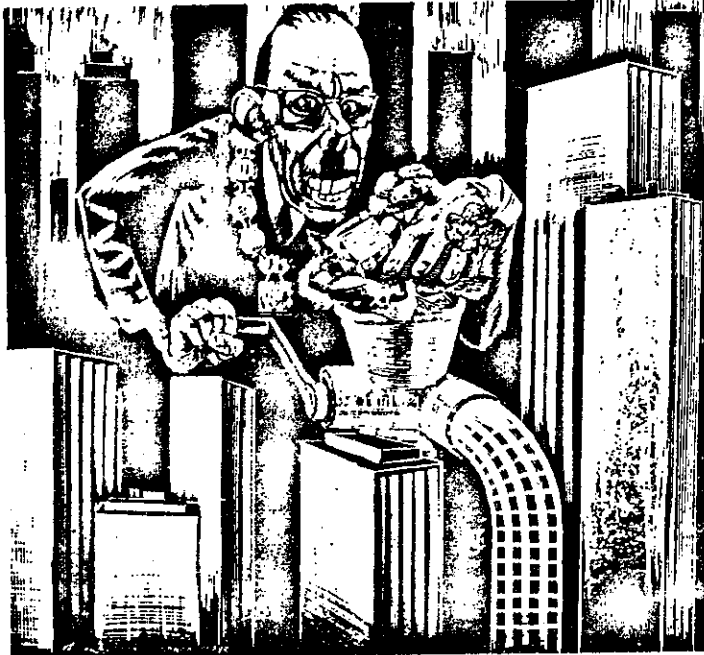
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FOURTH ANNUAL MID-WEST MEETING OF THE U.S.G.

The fourth annual meeting for U.S.G. members in the Mid-West (or for anyone else who wants to come) will be held on October 18-19, 1980. It will be hosted by Jim Blaut, and will occur in Chicago on the University of Illinois at Chicago Circle campus. We hope that this location will encourage those in more Eastern parts (Michigan, Ohio, Indiana etc.) to come and take part. It would be marvellous to have more than the same old faces. This notice is also a first call for papers and possible active participants. Anyone who wants to present their ideas, or would like to see a workshop organized on a particular topic, or who has any other ideas for the meeting, should please contact the organisers as soon as possible. The organisers are James Penn, Ben Wisner and Mark Garner. Any one of these can be reached at the Department of Geography, University of Wisconsin, Madison; Science Hall; Madison WI 53706. If you prefer to telephone the numbers are (daytime) (608)-262-1857, or (608)-262 - 8920

PART 3: NEWSLETTER FEEDBACK

THEORISATIONS OF THE CAPITALIST STATE AND O'CONNOR'S
FISCAL CRISIS OF THE STATE

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The following is a short note stimulated by a piece on the capitalist state which appeared in a recent issue of the USG Newsletter (The Capitalist State: A Workshop Report by Mickey Lauria which appeared in vol.5 no.1) The major point which Mickey raises that I wish to respond to concerns the theorisation of the capitalist state which underpins O'Connors work. Mickey states that

"...it is the final two theories the materialist (by which I take it he is referring to the Hirsch/Holloway and Picciotto approaches) and the political class struggle (Wright) that promise most in the way of providing the context for urban redevelopment in the U.S. It is James O'Connor's Fiscal Crisis of the State which is the concrete specification of these theories to the case study of the U.S. today"

Whilst I would agree that those two theorisations of the capitalist state are among the more promising, I do not agree that O'Connor's work represents "...the concrete specification of these theories to the case study of the U.S. today." From the outset let me make it clear that I think that the Fiscal Crisis of the State was an extremely important book which contained many powerful insights into the nature and interpretation of particular state expenditures and for that many of us owe O'Connor a considerable intellectual debt. However, I believe that there are a number of problems both with O'Connor's original analysis and with many later studies of "local state" expenditures (particularly studies of urban fiscal strain) by other authors who essentially adopt O'Connor's categorization of state expenditures as an organising framework for their own analyses. Furthermore, I would argue that these problems stem in large measure from precisely the fact that the analyses are not based upon a conception of the capitalist state as an historically specific form of

class domination as developed by Hirsch et.al. Instead they embody functionalist and instrumentalist conceptions of the state.

Before discussing O'Connor's work specifically allow me to make a few general points concerning marxist theories of the capitalist state. The first point to make is that the marxist tradition has a totally different perspective on the state than that held by orthodox social science. Marxists are not concerned to develop a theory of the state 'in general' (I would also question whether it is possible to develop even a theory of the capitalist state in general).

The fundamental tenet of historical materialism is that the categories of social existence, such as the state, are not absolute prior ahistorical givens but rather relations between people that emerge in particular historical circumstances. The study of any social category, including the state, within a historical materialist framework centres on the conditions of reproduction of that category within the total system of social relations and its effects on other relations. Furthermore, the reproduction of social relations is from a historical materialist viewpoint contradictory in the sense that a certain relation may tend to destroy the very conditions of its own reproduction. Thus, the central questions for the marxist analysis of the state in any society are: what are the central social relations of the society in question?; how is the state linked to these relations?; what developments in the relations of production are shaping and altering the form and functions of the state?; and, what effects are state activities having on the conditions of reproduction of other elements of the society?

So, if we accept this view that the state is a historical specific category, what is the precise nature and role of the capitalist state? The fundamental feature of the capitalist state from a marxist perspective, and one which differentiates it sharply from the orthodox views, is precisely the fact that it is a capitalist state, i.e. a class state and not, as orthodox theory and bourgeois ideology would have us believe, a neutral arbiter between competing interests which stands outside social change and social structure. However, although this is a common assertion which runs through virtually all the marxist writing on the state there has been considerable debate in recent years around various attempts to theorize how exactly the class nature of the capitalist state is constituted.

Although the capitalist state and state power are rarely treated now as simple epiphenomena (i.e. simple surface reflections of a self-sufficient and selfdeveloping economic base with no real influence) as in early crude base-superstructure formulations, nevertheless marxist studies have tended to adopt the view that the state is both the instrument and reflection of capital and that its activities and apparatus have been, and continue to be, designed to serve capitalist interests. As a consequence, such studies have tended to confine themselves to showing that the state acts in the interests of the capital and to analyzing the correspondence between the content of state activity and the interests of the ruling class.

This tendency has itself resulted in the analyses often falling into one of two traps: either they adopt a basically reductionist view of the capitalist state which implicitly leans towards theories of conscious conspiratorial direction of the state by and in the class interests of the bourgeoisie or, alternatively, they adopt a kind of marxist functionalism which explains particular state actions by showing that they meet the 'needs' of the system as a whole. This functionalist style of analysis appears to claim that if it can be shown that a particular state action helps to reproduce social relations then we have given a good explanation for why the action did in fact occur. Such an approach offers no explanation of the mechanisms by which needs are transformed into actions and also tends to obscure both the contradictions which appear to be inherent in state policy and the real struggles over state policies carried on by particular classes and class fractions. Thus, many marxist theories of the capitalist state including those of Miliband, Poulantzas, the SMC school, the neo-Ricardians (Gough, Glyn and Sutcliffe, etc.) and the 'tax state' arguments of people such as Yaffe and Fine/Harris assume that the class nature of the capitalist state depends entirely on factors external to the state itself. All of these approaches imply that the institutional structure of the state is irrelevant provided that it is manipulated by monopoly capital, capital in general, or a power bloc dominated by capital, or, alternatively, that it is subject to definite economic constraints so that it can never become the instrument of any noncapitalist force at all. This means that these approaches do not view the state as a system of political domination whose form may be more or less adequate to securing the various requirements of capital accumulation in different situations.

Now, I want to consider the analysis that O'Connor presents in The Fiscal Crisis of the State in the context of the above comments. Although O'Connor's thesis on the fiscal crisis of the state is probably fairly well known, it might be worthwhile to rehearse some of its major features in order to provide a framework for the criticisms which follow.

Briefly, the expansion of state activity and the concomitant growth of state expenditures is, for O'Connor, both a cause and a consequence of the expansion of monopoly capital. He argues that the capitalist state in a period of monopoly capitalism must strive to fulfill two basic functions - accumulation and legitimation. In other words it must try to maintain or create the conditions in which profitable capital accumulation is possible (since its own power rests on taxes drawn from surplus production) and also try to maintain or create the conditions for social harmony (since its own power also rests on its ability to maintain mass loyalty and support i.e. legitimacy). O'Connor argues that the increasing socialisation of production which occurs under conditions of monopoly capital necessitates greater state intervention to ensure private accumulation and profitability; hence social capital expenditures which are designed to increase the rate of profit through either increasing the productivity of a given amount of labour (social investment expenditures) or through lowering the reproduction costs of labour

power (social consumption expenditures). Such state intervention stimulates the development of productive capacity, notably in the monopoly sector of the economy but demand for its products rises more slowly and this tends to create surplus capacity and surplus (unemployed) population i.e. a realization crisis. This in turn generates a further round of social expenses designed to generate demand but not add to capacity. Surplus capital necessitates military expenditure and the surplus population requires an expansion of state functions in welfare relief, unemployment payments etc. The result is a two fold growth in state expenditures and this increased socialisation of costs coupled with the continued private appropriation of profits creates a fiscal crisis or structural gap between state expenditures and state revenues.

This in a nutshell is the basic thesis of O'Connor's work. Note that O'Connor's state theory in the book is clearly developed within the tradition of American neoMarxism which flows out of Baran and Sweezy's Monopoly Capital.

Although I believe that there are a number of problems with the analysis developed by O'Connor, for the purpose of this note I will simply discuss those that stem from his identification of the expansion of state activity and state expenditures with the interests of the monopolies rather than the necessity of reproducing capital as a whole. Throughout the work there is an implicit (and sometimes explicit) view of the state being controlled or used as an instrument by monopoly capital. There is a clear tendency for the discussion to lapse into the kind of reductionist and functionalist arguments we noted earlier. The reductionalist tendency is reinforced by O'Connor's contention that state power has been privately appropriated for particularistic ends and that particular parts of the state apparatus are associated with particular segments of capital, i.e. an instrumentalist view.

Thus, despite the fact that much of what O'Connor says is of interest in explaining the purpose and, effects of particular aspects of state expenditures and although he notes the need to disentangle the concrete historical origins of state expenditures from the ongoing function they play, it is difficult for O'Connor to avoid a functionalist interpretation of state expenditure. Repeatedly state expenditure is explained in terms of what is necessary for the economy as a result of social trends associated with the development of monopoly capitalism. A few examples will serve as illustration:

- i) "...special interests are even more powerful at the local level ...downtown business interests (utilities, large retail establishments, banks, etc.) normally determine urban renewal priorities and expenditures ...local government is also responsive to the needs of national monopoly capital with local plants, offices and other facilities. Thus, Detroit city government cannot afford to ignore the automobile companies, downtown renewal in St. Louis is shaped by the Busch interests, the Mellans wield

great power in Pittsburgh, Wilmington in many respects is the private preserve of the Duponts..."

- ii) "...the rapid transit system in both Washington and the Bay Area were planned by leading monopoly sector corporations not to meet the needs of people but to serve large downtown business corporations, banks and insurance companies which need centralised office facilities and a transit system that can move suburban white collar office workers to and from the commercial and financial districts..."
- iii) "...urban renewal programs cannot be considered steps toward rational, overall social planning but rather specific responses to particular needs of monopoly capital and downtown business..."
- iv) "...clearly federal housing programs must concentrate more on building and subsidizing suburban homes for low income workers to ensure that the movement of people keeps pace with the movement of jobs..."

Many studies of local government expenditures and urban fiscal strain simply become attempts to categorize and squeeze a range of observed state expenditures into O'Connor's classification scheme and then declare the observed expenditures as 'explained'.

It is possible to show (although I don't have space to do it here) that there is an objective (i.e. formulated in terms of value theory) framework which allows one to make statements about general tendencies in relation to the crisis ridden development of state expenditures and to define in a general form the objective interrelation between the accumulation/ valorisation process and the system of state finances. However, it should be stressed that at this level of analysis no definite statement can be made about specific state interventions or expenditures in concrete historical situations. The only immediate result of this formal analysis is the definition of what Hirsch has defined as a fundamentally limited "functional corridor of state policies". The 'political' processes going on within this corridor will appear as an empty box at this level of analysis. In other words, although the growth of state expenditures and the tendency towards fiscal crisis can be shown to have their origins in the general structural relations and development logic of capitalism the precise manner and extent of state intervention into the social process of reproduction (and hence the precise size and composition of state expenditure) cannot be determined through such a formal analysis. As Hirsch notes, answers to questions such as 'what reduction of accumulable surplus value by state taxation will still be acceptable by capital?' or 'what restrictions on its standard of living is the working class prepared to bear?' are contingent upon historically changing relations of strength between classes.

Implicit in much of the discussion in O'Connor's book on the state's functions is the assumption that the analysis tells us

something about the determinants of state action, that the state responds to the functional requirements of capital. As Hirsch has pointed out this assumption is quite unjustified, the fact that some function is required for the reproduction of capital tells us nothing about the state's ability to meet those requirements or about the manner in which it will respond to them. Therefore, although the analysis of the state's functions can tell us something about the effects of state expenditures, in terms of explaining the determinants of state action it can do little more than suggest the sorts of pressures that are created for the expansion of state activities in certain directions.

The transformation of a 'functional requirement' of capital into state activity requires a very complex process of politically mediated class struggle. In fact, one consequence of the separation of the economic and political in capitalist society is precisely that one cannot conclude from the existence of a 'requirement of the economy' that the state will meet this requirement. The economic requirement must first be transformed through the political system into a political demand and the success of this political demand will depend ultimately on the state of the class struggle.

Holloway also notes that the separation of the economic and political implies that at any point in time not all state expenditure is necessarily reproductive; that state expenditure will always be to some degree dysfunctional from the point of view of capital accumulation. He points out the fact that the state responds not to the requirements of capital but to political pressure, the fact that the reproduction of class and fractional conflicts within the state apparatus makes the coherent pursuit of policies impossible, and the fact that state employees are not directly subject to the law of value all make it inevitable that 'irrationalities' will creep into state activities. Thus, the outcome of bygone struggles will become fossilized within the state apparatus and difficult to remove and from the perspective of capital accumulation many particular expenditures can no longer find justification. Other state activities while not directly 'dysfunctional' may serve the ends of capital accumulation far less "efficiently" than might otherwise be possible if the state actually was an instrument of the capitalist class. Viewing the matter from the standpoint of the 'logic of capital' one would expect, therefore, periodic attempts by the bourgeoisie not only to reduce unproductive state expenditure but also to reshape state expenditure qualitatively to render it more functional for the process of accumulation - more reproductive. (note the aftermath of the NYC fiscal crisis, recent attempts to restructure expenditures in Ontario, the last six years in Britain - cutting of social services, renewed assistance for industrial restructuring. Also attempts to reshape the state apparatus to make it more able to respond to the functional requirements of capital by immunizing it from the class struggle, the Friedland et al article which analyses the establishment of special bodies, crown corporations etc.).

Therefore, I would agree with writers such as Holloway and Hirsch when they argue that it is not enough to analyse the process of

capital accumulation and then draw conclusions as to the requirements of capital and hence, as to the determinants of state action which is what O'Connor tends to do in the Fiscal Crisis of the State. Rather, it is necessary to analyse the prevailing pattern of political domination because it is largely this which determines the actual composition of state expenditures in concrete situations.

This brings us back full circle to the need for a materialist theory of the state and the recent attempts by Holloway and Picciotto and Hirsch to develop such a theory. Their work has introduced both a greater degree of historical specificity, in contrast to the abstract formal analysis of many other marxist theories of the state, and has forced attention on the role of class struggle in the study of the capitalist state. They see the state as a particular surface (phenomenal) form of the capital relation and, therefore, not as something exterior to capital as a social relation - grounds on which a wide range of marxist writing on the state was criticised earlier in this paper - arguing that the capitalist state can be understood only in terms of its changing functions in the class struggle over the organization of the labour process and the appropriation of surplus value.

Capital accumulation is conditional on the continued ability of capital itself to secure through struggle the many different conditions necessary for the creation and appropriation of surplus value. This means that the laws of motion of capitalism are not natural and inevitable. Rather, they depend for their realisation on the balance of class forces. Crises are therefore seen as the effect of failure to maintain the domination of capital over labour rather than as the result of the inexorable logic of accumulation. Since capital accumulation is an unplanned and anarchic process that takes place behind the backs of economic agents, it is generally seen in a more or less distorted, fetishised guise. As a consequence, actual state intervention is rarely directed explicitly towards the actual needs of capital but more generally reflects a response to the political repercussions of accumulation. Because there is no necessary direct correspondence between state intervention and the needs of capital, crises play a major role in reshaping the form, and redirecting the thrust, of state activity. Since crises are the complex effect of various contradictory factors and affect different classes in contradictory ways there will be continuous conflict and struggles over their interpretation and resolution. Since state activity is seen as the result of the historical development of this struggle rather than the logical implementation of the 'needs of capital' these approaches are more able than O'Connor to come to grips with the analysis of contradictions in state intervention.

In summary, whilst I would agree that O'Connors' analysis represented a significant advance and provided considerable insight into the nature and purpose of a variety of specific categories of state expenditure (which are in turn a reflection of particular elements of state activities) it nevertheless failed to provide a wholly satisfactory explanation of the determination of state activity. This failing was largely a consequence of the tendency for

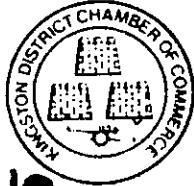
O'Connor to base the analysis in Fiscal Crisis of the State on instrumentalist and/or functionalist interpretations of state activity. The view of the state as a historically specific form of class domination as developed by Hirsch appears to provide a much more useful starting point from which to build an analysis of the development of state activity. By rejecting the instrumentalist and functionalist approaches the question is no longer one of how externally defined classes use the state (or the state itself acts) in the defence of capitalism defined at an economic level. Rather, it is a question of the adequacy of state power as a necessary element in the overall reproduction of the capital relation in historically specific instances. And state power in turn must be considered as a complex contradictory effect of struggles mediated through and conditioned by the institutional structure of the state.

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SOCIALISM, COMMUNISM, AND ANARCHISM: FURTHER INTERPRETATIONS L.G. WOLF,
DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY, UNIVERSITY OF CINCINNATI

Francis Walsh's comments on socialism, communism and anarchism in the Feb-Mar. 1979 issue of the Newsletter were of considerable interest to me. They involve several questions that I feel ought to be discussed further. To that end, I offer some interpretations that differ from Walsh's.

If a socialist society is still a class society, then the socialist states have a New (ruling) Class, and Mr. Djilas was not (initially) such a heretic after all. A great many people in Marxist parties, however, felt that they were struggling for a classless society. Shall we say they were naive, or misled, or were victims of a "false consciousness"? If Marxism can put forth political arguments that are that erroneous, how "scientific" is it? Certainly, the idea that the transitional period to communism would of necessity still be class-structured was not given any recognition in Marxist political propaganda or Marxist worker-education efforts in decades past, and only recently is being emphasized by some Marxist scholars. While socialism was said to be the transitional stage to communism, this was portrayed by Leninists as a period in which the Party guided the society through the dictatorship of the proletariat. The implication that this meant that the Party would structure society in such a way that the Party would be the crucial portion of a new ruling class was not mentioned or not realized. This point has important political consequences in the advanced (central, industrialized) countries. Among people disillusioned with, and hostile to, large impersonal bureaucracies and what they perceive as the unresponsiveness of centralized authority, arguments for socialism are partly negated by the argument "Why struggle to replace one ruling class with another?" I suppose one can argue that the New Class would serve our material interests better than the Old Class, but I have not noted that it is a very effective political argument.

The Soviets are now arguing that class-conflict in their society is non-antagonistic -- only bourgeois societies have antagonistic classes! If one accepts certain technical premisses, one can see the logic of this argument, but it smacks of rationalization. If there are ruler and ruled, there are antagonisms. Regardless of who, on paper, "owns" the means of production, it is obvious that the people as a whole, the "toiling masses", or "the working class", do not CONTROL the means of production in Soviet-style societies. Indeed, attempts by the original soviets (councils) to do exactly that were carefully and thoroughly destroyed by Lenin.

If, as Walsh would have it, "the historic role of the socialist 'phase' is to develop productive forces to such a degree that decentralized living at a high material level will become technical feasible, then the socialist phase has already been rendered unnecessary in the capitalist center (but NOT in its periphery). We, in the center, should be pushing for a left-libertarian or communist-anarchist society. The physical basis for an adequately productive economy has long since been achieved here.

Walsh is on the right track in his formulation of the historic role of the 'socialist phase', but are there not other interpretations of it? The historic role of Marxist regimes in the disadvantaged (underdeveloped, peripheral) countries is to assume the industrializing role which the bourgeoisie has carried out in the advantaged (developed, central) countries. This requires a bureaucratic ruling class, which, like all ruling classes, exploits those whom it rules. As has been amply documented elsewhere, this brings with it material privileges such as suburban dachas, expensive chauffeured, curtained limousines, special retail stores, etc., all of which are paid for by the workers without their consent,

just as in capitalist societies. It also enables them to engage, in the name of "national security" or "protecting the proletarian revolution", in various politically and militarily expensive foreign adventures (often counter-revolutionary). The number of times faithful Communists have been sacrificed to the "realpolitik" of the Soviet ruling class is too great to be ignored. Indeed, outside East Europe, where Marxist regimes were established only because of the presence of the Red Army, Marxists have come to control the State, often, in areas where the Soviets could not intervene or where they actively opposed the local Marxists.

One is free to apply the socialist label to this sort of regime if one so wishes, but some socialists are insisting that the label be restricted to regimes which are democratic. Michael Harrington and the Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee are not alone in this position: the Italian Communist Party has been making statements open to this interpretation for a long time.

To criticize Soviet-type regimes for their political (and economic and ecological) shortcomings is not to deny their achievements. To provide a more equitable distribution of food, health facilities, and technical education, than did previous regimes, is a tremendous step forward. The attempt to provide a rational socialised control over the economy is a worthwhile matter, but how it has been implemented is certainly open to severe criticism. William Kunstler is grievously wrong in assuming the attitude that one should not criticize a regime at all simply because it has adopted for itself the labels "socialist" and "Marxist". The cause of socialism would be on much firmer ground today if more people had heeded Rosa Luxemburg's criticism of Lenin. The sort of skepticism and open criticism which the Leninist regimes prohibit are essential for the discovery of the "correct" modus operandi.

As far as the situation in the United States and other advanced capitalist countries is concerned, the means of production are quite adequate, given the skills of our workers and engineers, to provide everyone with a materially very comfortable life. We do not have poverty for some and economic insecurity for many because of any technological insufficiency. Our labor force is overskilled and underutilized and our machinery rarely operates at full capacity. We have socio-economic inequality and inequity because of, among other things, our capitalist system.

In those countries in which the bourgeois system has produced some degree of political democracy and has made the ideals of democracy a basic part of the iconography, the Leninist model of proletarian revolution (in order to establish an authoritarian state led by a Communist Party) is politically unacceptable and socially unnecessary. It may be necessary in a country that is not yet industrialized, though Mao and Luxemburg had doubts even of that. Democratic ideals and rights need to be extended and nurtured, not abolished. Ideals which served the bourgeoisie (in only some capitalist countries, one must remember) ought now to be used against them, so that a much more democratic society can be created. One must therefore not only be critical of the shortcomings and hypocrisies of bourgeois democracy, but also be critical of the flawed nature of "Marxist" regimes.

It is possible that in the most technically advanced countries the advance of technology may be the undoing of the capitalists. If there is a sufficient market for machines and gadgets which weaken central authority, some capitalists will produce them. Likewise, if there is a sufficient mar-

ket for the means whereby people can produce more for themselves in the household economy, instead of via the market economy, this, too, some capitalists will produce, for they do need profits. To the degree that people can lessen their dependence on centralized institutions (in both the private and public sector), they will thereby weaken the power of corporate capitalism.

The class struggle should be interpreted as something wider than only the struggles at the workplace. In a society as complex as ours, the concept has wider ramifications. Anything which weakens the hold that capitalism has on society is to be appreciated for its socialist potential. That a few people "withdraw from the struggle" by entering communes can be interpreted as a rejection of the marketplace. Insofar as such communes are self-supporting, and offer an alternative to the atomistic, competitive, monetarized capitalist culture, they should be seen in positive light. They represent an attempt to expand the household economy and minimize dependence on capitalist-owned means of production. Instead of disdaining such phenomena, one should welcome them. Capitalism can be opposed by withdrawal as well as confrontation. The real problem for socialists seems to be that this mode of response is not traditional, and therefore, since socialists are as bedeviled with ideological inertia (conservatism) as their opponents, it is not much appreciated. The real problem for society is in part that there are not more communes!

To end the dominance of the ruling class, its opponents need the economic and technological means of undermining its strength. Theory and political organization are not enough. Trade unions, electoral politics, community organization, separately or collectively, are not enough. They are all still beholden to the marketplace. The very success of capitalism in creating a large middle-income white- and blue-collar "class" enables this "class" to use its purchasing power (spurred by the stresses of inflation and insecurity) to influence the course of technology. It is therefore within the realm of possibility for this portion of the population to progressively reduce its dependence on corporate capitalism. What the probabilities are remains to be seen --- the possibility is there. The battle over solar vs nuclear energy is one of the more openly noticeable aspects of what might be the early stage of this sort of development, too. It is part of the class struggle because it challenges the right of the ruling class to move on to a new, highly centralized, dangerous stage of energy production.

Where is there any such possibility for worker-consumer influence on the development of technology and political economy in the Soviet countries? The longer such regimes are in power, the more widespread is the cynicism among the populace about socialism (to say nothing of the alarming rise of Russian reactionary chauvinism.) Where in such societies are there the structural conditions which could lead to the transformation of the regime? The rulers of the "socialist" societies are more capable of shutting off liberating technology than are the capitalists in their societies.

As for the superior productivity of these "socialist" societies, of which Walsh is convinced, one needs to be critical here, too. The Soviet Union excels in some aspects of military and space technology, but its agriculture is woefully underproductive to the point of scandal. The Ukraine used to be one of the world's "breadbaskets". Now the Soviet Union is dependent upon the United States for critical portions of its wheat supply! Its population has increased, and has increased its per capita consumption of wheat. True enough: but the Soviet version of collectivized agriculture has not been able to keep up with the increased demand for agricultural products. Either the Soviet Union

is overpopulated, or, what is rather the case, its mode of production is faulty. The Soviet Union is also still dependent upon foreign, capitalist industrial technology, instead of being far ahead of the capitalists in technical advances. One cannot explain this all away entirely on the basis of the tremendous losses the Soviet Union suffered because of the Nazi invasion. Indeed, wars are known to clear away old technology and spur the development of innovation. The regime itself has contributed mightily to the lack of progress.

We, in the center of the capitalist system, are in need of both more centralization and more decentralization. The political problem that is facing us is one of building popular support for a rational, socialized control of capital. That requires more centralized control of the core or "heights" of the economic system than capitalists will tolerate. It also requires more decentralization so that this rationalization of the economy can be accomplished with increased, not decreased, popular control. The political need of a socialist movement in a bourgeois democracy, then, is not the Leninist model, but one which draws heavily on the anarchist tradition, and builds on (and removes the hypocrisies from) the democratic tradition which the bourgeoisie has bequeathed us (without intending to).

L. G. Wolf
November 1979.

The following sources should be taken as suggestive and indicative, rather than exhaustive:

Michael Albert,	<u>What is to be Undone</u> , Porter Sargent 1974
Michael Albert & Robin Hahnel,	<u>Unorthodox Marxism</u> , South End Press, 1978
Scott Burns,	<u>The Household Economy</u> , Beacon Press, 1977
Milovan Djilas,	<u>The New Class</u> ,
Theodore Dan,	<u>The Origins of Bolshevism</u> , Schocken, 1970

The following sources should be taken as suggestive and indicative of where I am "coming from", rather than exhaustive or authoritative:

Michael Albert,	<u>What is to be Undone?</u> , Porter Sargent, 1974.
Michael Albert & Robin Hahnel,	<u>UNorthodox Marxism</u> , South End Press, 1978.
Franz Borkenau,	<u>World Communism</u> , University of Michigan Press, 1962.
Scott Burns,	<u>The Household Economy</u> , Beacon Press, 1977.
Theodore Dan,	<u>The Origins of Bolshevism</u> , Schocken, 1970.
Milovan Djilas,	<u>The New Class</u> , Praeger, 1957.
David Lane,	<u>The Industrial State</u> , Geo. Allen and Unwin, 1976.
Rosa Luxemburg,	"Leninism or Marxism?", in <u>The Russian Revolution and Leninism or Marxism?</u> , University of Michigan Press, 1961.

CONCERNING THE "U.S.G.
TEXTBOOK PROJECT"

The proposal for a U.S.G. textbook was, I feel, a progressive step for our organization. That the proposal did not materialize does however raise several important questions. Chief among these questions are ones concerning the nature of the project, its intent and its organization. The coordinators of the project cannot be faulted, for it was they who took the initiative in what may yet prove to be a worthwhile venture.

Concerning the nature of the project, my understanding is that Methuen (the proposed publisher) suggested the textbook format. This suggestion has evidently met with little response on the part of the U.S.G. membership and there are several reasons why such a response has been forthcoming. First among these is, I believe, that a textbook format suggests a compilation of finished products (rather than works in progress). Second, that a textbook format suggests a product that is to be (uncritically) consumed by undergraduate students as required reading. And thirdly, that such a format suggests a rather rigid orthodoxy — the elimination of internal contradictions, the need for the contents to fit the structure, the belief that theory must stand side by side to empirical work (rather than in relation to it) etc.

Several weeks before I received Vol.4 No.4 of our Newsletter I was discussing the textbook project with a friend who happens to be a graphic artist and who has some experience with editors. He suggested that perhaps the U.S.G. should consider a different format which could be more flexible and would perhaps serve our needs better. His suggestion was the format of a "critical reader" rather than the format of a "textbook". My understanding is that there are major differences between these two approaches, just as there are major differences between their intended "audiences".

Rather than abandon the project, perhaps we ought to consider alternative approaches and, as well, perhaps we ought to seriously discuss the intent and organization of the project.

Gordon Garland
Toronto, Ontario
September 19th, 1979

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3	November 15 1980	Bryan Higgins* Department of Geography University of Minnesota Minneapolis, MN 55455 *SPECIAL ISSUE: PRAXIS AND HUMOR	Dec 15 1980
4	January 15, 1981	Dick Walker Department of Geography University of California Berkeley, CA 94720	Feb 15 1981

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