SCIENCE FOR THE PEOPLE

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INSIDE

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EDITORIAL PRACTICE

Each issue of *Science for the People* is prepared by a collective, assembled from volunteers by a committee made up of the collectives of the past calendar year. A collective carries out all editorial, production, and distribution functions for one issue. The following is a distillation of the actual practice of the past collectives. **Due dates**: Articles received by the first week of an odd-numbered month can generally be considered for the magazine to be issued on the 15th of the next month. **Form**: One of the ways you can help is to submit double-spaced typewritten manuscripts with ample margins. If you can send six copies, that helps even more. One of the few founding principles of *SESPA* is that articles must be signed (a pseudonym is acceptable). **Criteria for acceptance**: *SESPA Newsletter*, predecessor to *Science for the People*, was pledged to print everything submitted. It is no longer feasible to continue this policy, although the practice thus far has been to print all articles descriptive of *SESPA/Science for the People* activities. Considerably more discrimination is applied to analytical articles. These are expected to reflect the general political outlook of *Science for the People*. All articles are judged on the basis of length, style, subject and content. **Editorial Procedure**: The content of each issue is determined by unanimous consent of the collective. Where extensive rewriting of an article is required, the preference of the collective is to discuss the changes with the author. If this is not practical, reasons for rejection are sent to the author. An attempt is made to convey suggestions for improvement. If an article is late or excluded for lack of space, or if it has non-unanimous support, it is generally passed on to the next collective. **Editorial statements**: Unsigned articles are statements of the editorial collective. **Opportunities for participation**: Volunteers for editorial collectives should be aware that each issue requires a substantial contribution of time and energy for an eight-week period. Help is always appreciated and provides an opportunity for the helper to learn, and for the collective to get to know a prospective member. There are presently plans to move the magazine production to other cities. This will increase the opportunity for participation. For legal purposes *Science for the People* has become incorporated.

ABOUT THIS ISSUE

When we first came together to discuss the focus of this issue, our feeling was that, of late, the magazine had been pretty theoretical. We wanted our issue to be more of a political tool, to focus on the strategy and tactics of people's daily struggles. We particularly wanted practical articles, articles on political organizing; articles that people can incorporate into their practice. This is not to say that theoretical articles should not be included, but rather that there should be a balance in hopes that the theoretical articles will help to produce a better practice.

We solicited this type of material, with a special emphasis on health related articles, by sending a letter to all of the chapters, and by talking with people in the Boston area. The response was encouraging, although in most cases we only recieved one article on a given subject. We were disappointed that we didn't recieve more articles on women's issues, and we strongly urge people to submit more material on women.

During the course of our editorial meetings, we had several knock-down, drag-out, political fights, but in the end our collective politics were forged without bitterness. We learned a lot of editorial skills, sharpened our politics, and all in all had a damn good time.

Editorial Practice

We see the production of an issue of *Science for the people* as a creative political act in which the collective solicits, organizes, and edits material to produce a work of political art and propaganda. The activity of the organization in general and the production of the magazine in particular is a part of a much broader struggle for liberation. As part of that struggle we feel that the organization can ask nothing less of an editorial collective than to put forward the best possible political analysis and practice. While the magazine has an obligation to present differing opinions and encourage open and comradely discussion and criticism, we see it not merely as an assemblage of opinions but also as an active tool in a political struggle.

Political writing, as we have discovered, is a difficult task. It is unusual for an individual author to produce an article so clearly written, well organized, and above all so thorough in analysis, that it cannot be improved. This being the case, we believe it is very important for the editorial collective to take an active role in the creation of materials for the magazine. With respect to articles submitted we see our role primarily as a process of entering into a dialogue with the author, where the collective makes suggestions and criticisms to the author, including rewriting, clarification, or even a different political perspective. Suggestions and criticisms, however, must be concrete and specific to be constructive, explaining precisely what the problem is and how it might be changed. After considering the recommendations of the collective the author could then incorporate them in the article or make alternative suggestions or criticisms of the collective's recommendations.

Ideally this back and forth process should go on until a high level of unity has been reached between the author and the collective or the remaining disagreements have become clearly defined. If at the end of this process there is a sharp political disagreement, then the collective has, in our opinion, an obligation to the movement and to the organization to do one of two things: [1] either to write an editorial stating clearly its differences with the article while giving the author(s) the opportunity to respond or withdraw the article, or [2] in extreme cases to reject the article as being counter to the general political direction of *Science for the People.*

NEWS NOTES

Everyone! Please contribute items of interest and humor to this regular section.

LAW SUIT CHALLENGES ACADEMY COMMITTEE SECRECY

The National Academy of Sciences' tradition of performing most of its government advisory work in secrecy is under challenge in a lawsuit filed by an independent, Nader-style organization known as the Public Interest Campaign. The suit is specifically aimed at acquiring the records and opening up the proceedings of the Academy's Committee on Motor Vehicle Emissions, which is under contract to advise the Environmental Protection Agency on enforcement of the Clean Air Act. However, the suit could have a devastating effect on the Academy's operating style, which is based on the assumption that secrecy is necessary and that, therefore, specialists who are summoned to help the Academy should meet in private.

Before taking legal action, the president of Public Interest Campaign asked the Academy president for a formal opinion. A reply was furnished by the Academy executive officer, who piously asserted, "That the Academy is able to obtain (privileged) information depends in large measure upon its unquestioned integrity, independence and objectivity. In itself, this ability is a valuable resource to the federal government. The application of the regulatory provisions...to the deliberations of the Academy Committees could seriously compromise this independence and objectivity."

OUR BODIES DEEMED DIRTY

The women's health book, *Our Bodies Ourselves** was banned from a high school class in Gilroy, California. "It is one of the dirtiest, dirtiest books I've ever read," said one school trustee.

The trustees refused to approve a course called "Survival for Today" which had the book on its reading list. A Home Economics instructor who had been scheduled to teach the course was ordered instead to teach "Advanced Foods."

The trustees, who made the decision, said, "The book is contrary to the predominant moral values of the taxpayers in the community....It is a political document and propaganda for socialist leftism."

UNION WOMEN FORM COALITION

On March 23, 1974, the founding convention of the Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW) was held in Chicago. 3600 women from over 58 unions poured into Chicago, drawn by the call to the convention, which stated, "In an inter-union framework, the Conference will consider positive action in the areas of equal pay, equal rights, and equal opportunity...(more specifically)...education about women's legal rights, adequate maternity benefits and child care, equitable hiring and promotion practices, adequate minimum wage, up-grading and affirmative action, organizing the unorganized women workers, and equitable representation of women in union structures and policy-making decisions."

The formation of CLUW is directly related to the growing upsurge of working women's fight for equality on the job. Recent struggles for equal pay, maternity benefits, fights for union recognition such as the Farah and Oneita strikes, plus the entrance of hundreds of women into basic industries like auto and steel, have paved the way for uniting working women into their own organization to fight for their special needs. The CLUW conference reflected the positive effect the women's movement has had on millions of working women by awakening them to their particular oppression.

NIMH TO PUT RESTRICTIONS ON PSYCHOSURGERY SUPPORT

The federal government's long-awaited guidelines governing the use of psychosurgery to control "abnormal" behavior (see *Science for the People*, Vol. VI, #3) are now undergoing final review in the top echelons of HEW. The proposed guidelines would prevent federal aid from being used to support the most controversial applications of psychosurgery–those operations performed on children, prisoners, and mental patients detained in institutions against their will–but they would stop well short of calling for a flat ban on the irreversible behavior modification technique. When they finally emerge, the new regulations will legally apply only to the use of federal funds for psychosurgery, but they may have an impact on other programs if copied at the state level.

ACCIDENT SHUTS DOWN INDIAN POINT A-PLANT

An accident has shut down Con Edison's second nuclear plant at Indian Point, on the Hudson River. The accident occurred only a few weeks after the new plant went into operation.

The accident caused a cracked 18-inch water pipe and buckling of the steel liner in the reinforced concrete dome housing the nuclear plant. Con Edison officials admit that there are puzzling problems of "what to do to get the plant started up again."

A year ago last March one of the Westinghouse subcontractors on the plant wrote to the AEC saying that the plant's license should be withheld because of "inadequate, incomplete, and questionable design" of parts of the reactor that pose "a serious problem of plant safety."

Licensing of the plant is being challenged by the Citizens Committee for the Protection of the Environment. A lawyer for the group pointed out that the accident was just another indication that "the record of nuclear reactors is so bad that they should be the last place you would look to solve the energy crisis."

PHILLIPINES: THE NEXT VIETNAM

Since the declaration of martial law in the Philippines 23 September 1972, many people in the United States have been alarmed about the growing repression in that country and continued U.S. involvement there. With this in mind, representatives from ten eastern seaboard cities held a conference in Philiadelphia on 20 October 1973 and founded the "Friends of the Filipino People" (FFP). The conference approved an essay outlining the main concerns of FFP, based on four central points of unity, and set guidelines for a nation-wide organization.

ANOTHER VIETNAM?

Today the situation in the Philippines is remarkably similar to Vietnam a decade ago. Will the Philippines be the next "Vietnam"? This is the central concern of FFP

On 23 September 1972, President Ferdinand Marcos declared martial law in the Philippines, imposing a dictatorship on the Filipino people. Since then the "showcase of democracy" in Asia has become a military state alongside South Vietnam and South Korea.

The dictatorship in the Philippines depends upon economic and military aid from the U.S. Because opposition to the regime is growing and there is open rebellion in parts of the Philippines, Marcos is seeking additional U.S. military assistance.

A major purpose of the FFP is to inform the American people that such aid carries with it the threat of another U.S. war against an Asian country. Already, U.S.-trained pilots have flown U.S.-made planes on bombing missions against peasant guerrillas; and the U.S. military has been involved in counter-insurgency activities. Even though Americans want no more "Vietnams", and Washington, no doubt, will be wary of getting into another Asian war, the strategic and economic importance of the Philippines is so immense-far greater than South Vietnam ever was-that the potential for escalated intervention is considerable.

THE UNITED STATES IN THE PHILIPPINES

Whereas U.S. involvement in Vietnam goes back only to the 1940's U.S. interests in the Philippines date from the late 19th century. After suppressing the Filipinos, the U.S. made the Philippines an American colony.

Though in 1946 the U.S. ended formal colonial rule, the Philippines remains an economic ally tied to the U.S. After "independence", U.S. business interests strenghtened their hold on the Philippine economy through a parity amendment to the new Philippine constitution. This amendment, which was literally forced upon the Philippines, gave U.S. citizens equal rights with Filipinos to own and exploit the country's land and resources. Today, 800 U.S. companies in the Philippines hold or represent investments of between two and three billion dollars. Research reveals that U.S. investors own over one–third of all business assets in the country, extracting high profits which drain off the nation's wealth. All of this led to increased popular discontent and a revival of Philippine nationalism that the Marcos martial law has attempted to suppress. One of President Marcos' first moves after declaring martial law was to suspend the previous legislation and Supreme Court decisions that tended to weaken and nullify the parity arrangements by 1974. Following this, Marcos also granted oil exploration rights to several American oil corporations, an act that earlier laws had prohibited.

U.S military and business interests have, therefore, an important stake in the survival of the Marcos regime or some other anti-democratic rule. As the Filipino people increase their opposition to the Marcos dictatorship, there is the real possibility that the U.S. government may drag the U.S into another war against an Asian people.

WHAT CAN YOU DO

The U.S. government has been interfering in the affairs of the Filipino people for over 75 years. If you think it's time to call a halt and if you agree with the four points of unity, you are invited to join Friends of the Filipino People and help with its work of education and action.

POINTS OF UNITY

1. We seek an end to U.S. support to the Marcos dictatorship.
2. We seek an end to U.S. military and political intervention in the Philippines.
3. We condemn the long standing domination of the Philippine economy by U.S. corporations which has been a major cause of the continued poverty and underdevelopment of that nation.
4. We support Filipino people in their efforts to secure full independence and freedom in their country and social and economic justice in the U.S.

FRIENDS OF THE FILIPINO PEOPLE
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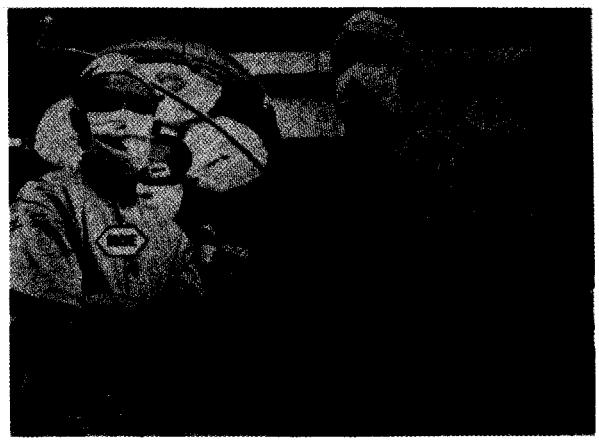
POLITICS

OF

HEALTH



The health care system and the industrial health and safety conditions in America can only be described as institutional murder. In recent years radicals have worked to create alternatives to present health structures, to confront and expose the capitalist health system, and to organize around health and safety issues in the workplace. All of these struggles serve to improve people's day-to-day situations and politically educate those involved. For those of us who see these efforts as part of a broader struggle for socialism in this country, we must ask how these efforts are helping to build this broader struggle. The following articles "The Emma Goldman Women's Health Clinic", "Midwest Workers Fight for Health and Safety", and "How to Look at Your Plant" present important ongoing struggles.

The first article describes the Emma Goldman Women's Health Center, which was begun two years ago in north side Chicago. The Emma Goldman Collective, which stresses the importance of individual responsibility and self-reliance, created the clinic in the belief that women would not have decent health care until they took care of it for themselves. The members of the Emma Goldman Collective, whose politics is anarchist, deal with the immediate health problems of women, but we, as socialists, believe that this is not an adequate solution to the problem. We believe that the central problem of health care in America is that the major facilities—hospitals, drug companies, health insurance—are controlled by a wealthy elite which profits by them. Those of us who work in community health clinics must be aware of the need not only to help provide health care, but to expose and confront the inadequacies of the capitalist health system. It is only after this system has been overthrown that a health care system truly by and for the people can be built.

"How to Look at Your Plant" (page 17) is excerpted from a handbook for workers which describes how to detect and deal with health and safety hazards in the workplace. "Midwest Workers Fight for Health and Safety" (page 12), a speech by Carl Carlson, is a clear and forceful appeal to workers to organize and fight against dangerous working conditions. As his speech illustrates, working people in this country have been compelled to sell not only their labor, but their very lives. The question is, whether these struggles around occupational health and safety advance the political consciousness and militancy of the working class.

EMMA GOLDMAN

WOMEN'S HEALTH CENTER

One day an inspector made his way into the clinic, flashing his badge. "Who's this here Emma Goldman?" he wanted to know. But he wasn't really interested in hearing of courageous Emma's deportation for draft resistance, or of her nursing and midwifery skills. When he heard that she'd died in 1940 he wrote "Now deceased" on his form. You're wrong, Mr. Inspector. Emma Goldman is alive and well and living in Chicago.[1]

The Emma Goldman Women's Health Center is located at 1317 W. Loyola (Chicago). It offers routine gynecological care by feminist paramedics. Donations are strictly voluntary. Clinic hours: Monday, 7-9 p.m.; Saturday, 10-2 p.m.

A Short History

"Health" was a big word in the women's movement in the beginning of 1973. "Bodies" classes were spreading the doctrine of self-help–teaching that a woman had the right to control over her own body. The Boston Women's Health Collective's 40¢-newsprint-edition of *Our Bodies, Our Selves*[2] was our bible, and the Supreme Court abortion ruling our first solid taste of victory. The legalization of abortion freed a lot of energy in the women's health field and provided the breathing space in which ideas about a new kind of health care could be given form and life.

In Chicago a four-year-old feminist paramedic abortion service (JANE) was disbanded and a court case against some of its members was dropped. Thus, people, skill, and equipment from the service as well as the money and interest which had been mobilized for the defense were available for other tasks.

In April 1973 some women from JANE, some from Southside Pregnancy Testing [see box], and others began to hold meetings to plan the opening of a women's health clinic. Ultimately the clinic drew women from a wide variety of backgrounds–some brought skills as nurses, pre-med or nursing students; some from working in other free or women's clinics; and some had no previous medical experience at all.

Meetings were held by a constantly diversifying membership of 20 to 30 women for nearly a year before a place was found and the clinic became a reality. It was not until the clinic opened in Jan. '74, that the distinctions between old and new people began to be blurred and the group emerged as a working unit. We had a long time to get to know each other and to work out ways of dealing with our differences while we were getting it together.

With time, a sense of what we consider most important about ourselves has emerged. The following is a summary.

Purposes of the Emma Goldman Clinic

To enact and convey to others a strong optimism about our physical and social potential as women.

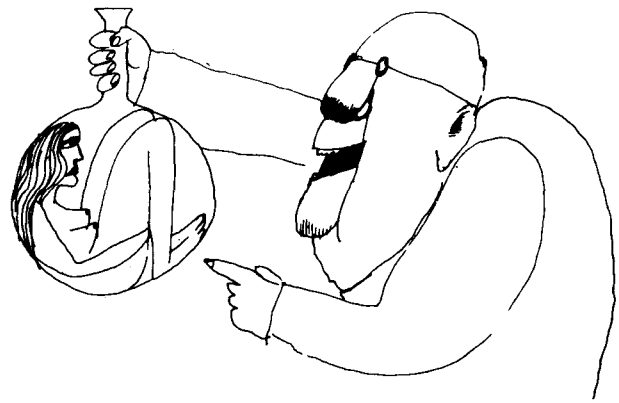
To provide routine and unmysterious health-care which respects and encourages a person's right to make informed decisions about her own health needs.

To involve women in self-help, and in the collection and interpretation of their own medical histories.

To demonstrate that health care can be dignified and to arm women with the knowledge that they can demand such treatment from the health establishment.

To provide services to women who might otherwise not get them.

To be a collective–a source of joy, strength, and power among ourselves and for the women who use the clinic.



JANE

Jane, a Chicago women's liberation abortion service,... "that proved by four years experience that included performing more than 12,000 illegal abortions, that abortions can be performed safely, humanely and very inexpensively by nonprofessional paramedics working under often primative conditions." (from "The Most Remarkable Abortion Story Ever Told", *Hyde-Park Kenwood Voices* (Chicago) June 1973)

The service functioned from about mid 1969 to April 1973. It was initially a referral service for abortionists, and then achieved partial independence thru special arrangements with one abortionist, which began a slow process of dropping the price and raising the educational status of the counselors. When the service finally closed, the fees had been reduced to low levels only possible because the abortions were being performed by trained paramedics drawn from the ranks of the counselors.

Because many of the women affiliated with Jane were equally concerned with improving the quality of women's health care in general, and the level of knowledge about their own bodies among women, as they were with providing safe, inexpensive abortions, they sponsored self-help clinics for women from time to time, offering free pap smears, v.d. testing, self examination, etc.

PREGNANCY TESTING

In 1970, women from the Chicago Women's Liberation Union set out to build a city-wide movement around health-related issues.. Alice Hamilton Women's Health Center was the vision, a clinic which would provide free or at cost medical care for women and children; educate women in nursing skills laboratory skills and medical records, and offer courses that would be generally useful for women (Nutrition, prepared childbirth, etc.)

Lack of funds prevented the simultaneous opening of all aspects of the clinic and instead services were phased in as they became feasible. Courses on Women and Their Bodies, and Prepared Childbirth; and Pregnancy Testing appeared at locations around Chicago. Pregnancy testing has become a self-perpetuating, self-supporting operation with the skill passed on from one group of paramedics trained in the women's movement to another. Both pregnancy testing and Bodies courses have achieved the status of women's movement traditions in Chicago, and probably in most other parts of the U.S. as well, and are part of the program of most women's liberation organizations.

How do we work?

Emma Goldman is a collective. At the present time there are about 40 of us. We believe in decision-making by consensus. In practice, this often means "consensus by default"—the ones who care enough about something, do it in a way that is more or less acceptable to all.

We hold clinic two times a week, and are thinking about adding a third time. We see ten to twenty women and receive $20-$30 in donations each time. Skills are transferred during clinic by a "team" arrangement in which skilled and unskilled work together. Groups of 6 or 7 meet weekly in bodies classes (sometimes with skilled outsiders) to increase the group's total knowledge. Though we are in the process of developing orientation procedures, no formal mechanism insures that a person will learn all the basic skills, nor is there yet a clear sense of exactly what these skills are. The group has avoided structuring tasks, insisting that members take individual responsibility for doing what needs to be done. More structure is developing as our responsibilities increase, but the credo of individual responsibility remains central. Anarchist Emma would probably feel comfortable with us. We know, as she did, that women will not have decent health care until they take it for themselves.

We have full membership meetings once a week, varying the place so that the full burden of travel doesn't always fall on the same people. Transportation difficulties create divisions which we struggle against with limited success. The groups' use of social gathering to cement feelings of solidarity outside the meetings has to struggle against the realities of geography and a poor public transit system.

Our meetings are loud, lively and frequently emotionally charged. Feelings are often discussed and arguments are often heated. Healing meetings follow angry ones and people take it on themselves to "follow up" on anyone who might have been hurt at a meeting. Meetings in people's houses tend to be friendlier than meetings at the clinic.

The way we work is predicated on a high degree of trust in each other's judgment. We seem pretty good at routine self-criticism, but we haven't yet figured out how to deal with the individual who consistently makes serious mistakes.

The clinic operates out of a brightly-painted storefront in a heterogeneous neighborhood on Chicago's northside. It is near an 'L'-stop, so we are accessible from other parts of the city. We advertise in a citywide free weekly and get referrals from other women's groups in the city. We won't do any more advertising until we train more people. We are handling all that we feel we can right now.

We pay for some of our expendable materials and we get some donated. Nearly all our equipment was donated. We are seeking a free-supply relationship with a city hospital, such as Benito Juarez, a Chicano clinic, demonstrated for and won several years ago. (They are thus able to maintain a free pharmacy.) We are also looking for funding, since our present resources will probably run out in six months or so.

Our only problem with the community so far arose over the mistaken belief that we do abortions. (Our sign said "abortion counselling".) On opening night a contingent of Right-to-Lifers raised a big fuss. Shortly afterwards several city agencies came around checking out "complaints".

During the period of planning, the collective was not successful at recruiting doctors, although some did express interest in working with us after we became operational. Ideally, our doctors will be co-equal members of the collective, sharing and learning skills with the rest of us and drawing on the power generated by women working well together. So far, the women doctors that we have located have not become this deeply involved. With time, we hope to work this out.

Working Out Our Differences

There have been several big disputes whose resolution has been critical to the survival and nature of the clinic.

Lesbianism. When the group rejected the possibility of sharing a building with some Lesbian-feminist groups last summer, hostility between Lesbians and straights surfaced. Several of the Lesbians decided that the group could not be supportive for them and left. The straight women of the group tried to reassure the remaining Lesbians that they considered it important that the group represent gay interests, but that was not enough. Nobody wanted to be the clinic's "token Lesbian". It took a lot of emotional effort, but the honesty shown and the support offered made it possible for some to stay and for others to return.

Men. We are a clinic by and for women, offering no services to men alone. However, when a woman indicates a desire to be counselled with a man, we do so. Recently a decision was made to restrict men to the outer rooms. The decision was a sensible and easy compromise between total exclusion and no restriction, since respect for a woman's right to be treated with a friend of her choice eliminated one extreme and the problem of congestion eliminated the other. It was clear, however, when the subject came up, that differences of opinion ran deep, and that the broad issue of the clinic's proper relations with men is far from settled.

Money. The clinic was formed in order to bring into existence a new kind of health service, then unavailable at any price. Doing a health clinic for "Chicago's needy" could have been a big charity trip for the largely middle class women of the group. What the clinic was trying to be would be useful and important to each of us directly. Many feared that money worries could close the clinic, or at least drain away precious energy from the main business of actualizing this new concept of health care.

Others felt that the clinic would not be worth doing unless it was free. After months of dispute, consensus was realized in the decision to operate on a vol-

untary donation basis, with a posted list of our expendable costs serving as a guideline. (Also as a tacit commentary on the usual medical fee rip-off.) Our collections, in practice, about match the income that we would have received for the sums we considered charging, but the donations are unevenly distributed, from nothing to $10 or $15.

In Sum

It is a continuous source of excitement that a group with such different opinions and styles can work together, and so successfully. The energy, satisfaction and strength we derive from working together is tremendous. We have a history of working out our problems which gives us enormous enthusiasm for doing what remains to be done. We are already outgrowing our space.

The future? Two, three, many Emma Goldman's!

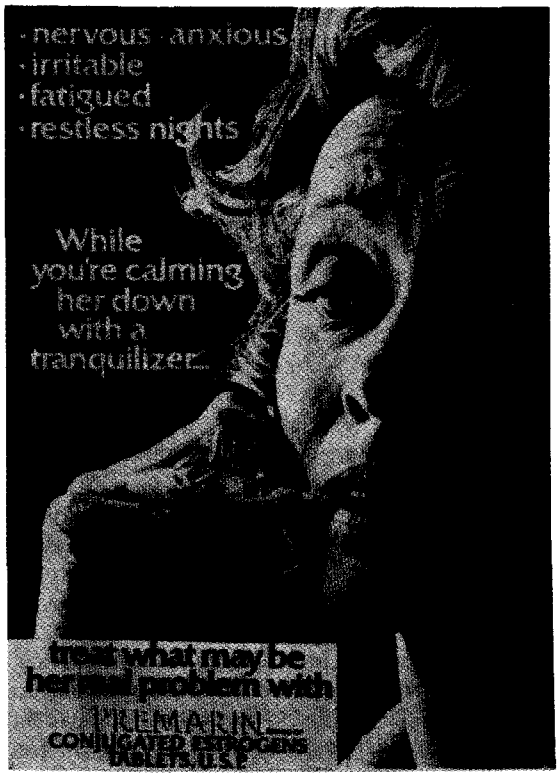
A.A. with a lot of help from her friends

NOTES

[1] Emma Goldman (1869–1940) immigrated to the U.S. from Russia as a young woman shortly before the Haymarket murders in Chicago in 1887. She became a nurse and militant anachist. Imprisoned many times for her advocacy of free speech, free love, birth control and draft resistance; during World War I she was eventually deported to Russia.

[2] The forty cent edition is still available in limited quantities from Science for the People.

A Drug Company's View of Women



PUBLICATIONS BY HEALTH/ PAC

WOMEN AND HEALTH

Includes articles on abortion, nurses, licensure, contraception, and physician's assistants. These articles outline the problems faced by both women health workers and women health consumers in the American health system. $1.50.

HEALTH WORKERS

Deals with the problems, concerns and organization of the nation's second largest employee group. Includes articles on hospital unions, nurses, women health workers, the so-called new professionals, and professionalism. $2.00.

STRATEGIES FOR CHANGE: ALTERNATIVE INSTITUTIONS VS. INSTITUTIONAL ORGANIZING

A packet which takes a careful and critical look at major activist strategies, including free clinics, neighborhood health centers, and institutional organizing as manifested in the many-year struggle at Lincoln Hospital. Also included is the Health/PAC Research Guide. Altogether this packet is an excellent starting point for any serious discussion of strategies for a health movement. $2.50.

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH

While everyone talks about preventive health, on the shopfloor someone is actually doing something about it. This packet includes three Bulletins which provide for the first time an analysis of how industry and government have dealt with the problem; two case studies of occupational diseases–one of "white lung" disease and another of the most terrifying occupational health plagues–asbestosis; and an up-to-date profile of the miners' struggle with black lung disease. $1.50.

WHO WILL PAY YOUR BILLS?
A HEALTH/PAC SPECIAL REPORT ON NATIONAL HEALTH INSURANCE

A detailed analysis of various proposals and an overview of the issues behind national health insurance. 30 pp. $.50 apiece; $.30 apiece for ten or more.

BILLIONS FOR BANDAIDS

A new 128 page analysis of the U.S. health care system. 1-9 Copies $2.00, 10 or more $1.50.

THE POLITICS OF HEALTH CARE edited by Ken Rosenberg and Gordon Schiff

An annotated bibliography with readings in the following areas: Power in the Health System, Health Capitalism, Community Control, Strategies for Change, and others. 24 pp. $.40.

Mail orders to: Health/PAC, 17 Murray Street, New York, N.Y. 10007; Call (212) 267-8890.

MIDWEST WORKERS FIGHT FOR HEALTH AND SAFETY

The following speech was given on March 16 by Carl Carlson, a Chicago worker, to a gathering of workers, union leaders, doctors, scientists and radicals in Madison, Wisconsin. The event was a "Workers' Forum on Safety and Health" which Science for the People had helped organize. On the program were speeches by union leaders and university experts on occupational health, but Carlson's speech was clearly the most exciting moment of this forum, which we hoped would lead to an organization to aid Madison workers in their fight for healthy working conditions.

The idea for this organization came to us from Chicago, where CACOSH (Chicago Area Committee on Occupational Safety and Health) has been carrying on this kind of program since 1972. CACOSH has been providing Chicago workers and their unions with the scientific, legal and medical skills needed to identify hazardous working conditions and to force their bosses to remove them.

Inspired by the CACOSH example, various people in Madison have wanted to form an occupational health group. To get started, we organized the occupational health forum, and one of the first speakers we invited was the CACOSH president, Carl Carlson. We also asked many local labor leaders to speak to the forum or to publicize it among their members. Some of the union representatives, especially from industrial unions, were enthusiastic about our ideas. Another important ingredient was the publicity given to the occupational health issue by We The People, *a radical newspaper written for local workers.*

About fifty people came to the occupational health forum, and out of it came a permanent action group. A group of workers, union representatives and technical people have meetings every other week, and we have already begun work on the health problems in a foundry, the phone company, a meat packing plant and a plastics fabricating shop. The enthusiastic co-operation we have gotten from the workers tells us that we are working on an important issue.

J.B.

First of all, I'd like to get one thing straight—I'm not an expert. I don't profess to be. I got involved in safety work quite by accident when I was working for the International Harvester Company, where I've been employed now for twenty-seven years. I got appointed to the accident and safety committee and took part in an investigation of four fatal accidents in our plant.

As I investigated these accidents, it became clear that all four were toally preventable. But, of course, they weren't prevented; they happened, and the people died. The first fellow was boiled alive in a large tank of "oakite" we were using for stripping parts. Nobody knows whether he drowned or was boiled alive. Two men were crushed under tractors, and the last man was cut in half when a flywheel came apart on an engine under test. He survived for about two days before he died.

Inadequate Protection For Workers

As I said before, my getting into safety work was quite by accident. But soon after I did, I learned of the total inadequacy of protection for workers. The Walsh-Healy Act, which was passed in 1936, established a lot of safety standards. But the only way of enforcing the law was the threat that, if the company had more than $5,000 worth of contracts with the government, the government might take the contracts away if the company didn't obey the standards. But I know of no such action whereby any department of government took any contracts away. We had the federal people come out to our plant twice. They inspected the plant and gave the company a laundry list of things that should be corrected. But there was no enforcement, and some of those hazards still exist today.

Now we have the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970 (OSHA). The purpose of the act, as stated in its preamble, is: "To assure, so far as possible, every working man and woman in the nation safe and healthful working conditions, and to preserve our human resources." Now that's a very simple statement, and very profound. Obviously, if that preamble were enforced, we wouldn't have need for all of these laws and lawsuits and everything else.

I think the reason for the law is something we should recognize. The politicians were aware of the horrible state of safety conditions in the country. The fact was that the total number of safety inspectors for corporations and factories in the country prior to OSHA was one-thousand. And most of these people were toally unqualified to do their job—just political hacks who got a job because they were somebody's brother-in-law.

There are fifteen thousand deaths recorded annually, and more than 1.2 million work-related illnesses and accidents. A Presidental Commission has estimated that more than 100,000 persons die each year as the result of long-range effects of unsafe working conditions.

Law'n Order For Corporations

Unfortunately, a lot of problems stand between the enactment of the OSHA law and actually getting some things done. One of the big problems is the lawlessness of the corporations that we deal with, and the fact that violations usually result in only the lightest of penalties. To show you how things work, take the Sherman Anti-Trust Act. This act was passed in 1890, and like OSHA, provides for criminal penalties. Neverless, in eighty-three years, and in spite of a large number of convictions, if you take the total time spent by corporation people in jail as a result of all these convictions, it's less than two years. Now that's not a very good record.

As an example, in 1967 a Convair 580 plane crashed and thirty-eight people were killed. The government agency investigating the crash found out that the Allison Division of General Motors had knowingly and deliberately supplied faulty propellers to that plane. They *knew* they were bad, and the total fine for General Motors was eight thousand dollars.

In 1964, a drug company was found to have submitted false data to the Food and Drug Administration about an anti-cholesterol type of drug. It was put on the market, and after a few thousand customers had reactions–some got cataracts, some had loss of hair, some had severe skin reactions–they finally removed the drug from the market. The case went to court and was tried. Now the company made eighteen million dollars from the sale of that drug, but here again, the total fine for the company was eighty thousand dollars. And the three company executives who were responsible for submitting the false data, all got suspended sentences.

Outlaw Corporations

Now, to show you the kind of corporations we have, in the last forty-five years, 60% of the 70 largest corporations in this country have been convicted an average of 4 times each for criminal offenses of violation of the law. And all seventy corporations have had civil convictions, an average of 14 each. There are very few street.criminals who can come anywhere near that kind of record!

In 1961, the *Harvard Business Review,* did a survey of business ethics. The magazine submitted a questionnaire to a lot of businessmen, and of those executives who responded, 4 out of 7 said they would violate the law if they could get away with it. Four-fifths agreed that they knew they were doing illegal acts in the normal course of their business. So, these are the kind of people we're dealing with when it comes to an occupational safety and health law.

INDUSTRIAL CHEMICALS GO UNTESTED

Any new pesticide or chemical intended for use in food, or any drug, now must be tested for animal toxicity in a very detailed way–feeding it to several species of animal for two or three years, examining its carcinogenic, mutagenic (mutation causing) and teratogenic (birth defect causing) properties in great detail. No testing is required before introduction of new industrial chemicals. In general, industry wants at least a crude idea of the toxic properties of a new chemical before it is used. Often a few rats or mice (10 or 20) will be fed the chemical, exposed to its vapors, have skin and eye irritants tests done. But since there are 15,000 chemicals in industrial use today, there just isn't much toxicity data on most of them.

F.M.

Lawyers–Bad And Good

Now the lawyers are another problem; so are our politicians. We all know about Nixon; he's a lawyer. Mitchell's a lawyer. So are Gray, Haldeman, Ehrlichman, Dean, Liddy, Colson, Kalmbach, Mardian, and Agnew. We could go on and on about the kind of lawyers that assist in getting these laws passed and in finding the violators.

Not all lawyers are bad. For instance, I've been working with a group of lawyers from the National Lawyers' Guild. Now these guys have done some terrific work. Three years ago a man working for the Chrysler Corporation at the Detroit Axle Plant was taking hot brake linings out of his oven, putting them on the assembly line, and assembling them, all without any protective equipment. They wouldn't give him gloves to handle the parts. The man tried to get gloves; he tried to talk to people. And although he had no prior record of any problems, finally something snapped. He went home, got his M1 carbine, loaded up, went back, and killed 2 line foremen and another worker who tried to take the gun away from him. Now his lawyers from the National Lawyers' Guild did an unprecedented thing. They took the whole jury into that plant and showed them the kind of conditions this guy had to work in and survive under. The jury found him not guilty.

So, there are good lawyers, and I guess there are good companies, too, but in all my experience I've never run into one.

(continued bottom next page)

POLYVINYL CHLORIDE CAUSES CANCER

In February 1974, the *Wall Street Journal* reported that three workers in a B.F. Goodrich polyvinyl chloride plant had died of an extremely rare form of cancer, angiosarcoma of the liver. Polyvinyl chloride (PVC) is made by reacting vinyl chloride, a gas, with itself under pressure to form the solid plastic. A search of the scientific literature showed that in 1970 an Italian scientist had reported that inhalation of vinyl chloride gas caused cancer in rats. More cases of cancer in workers in other polyvinyl chloride plants turned up. Conferences were called by the federal government, and more information came out in the press. All the evidence isn't in, but the story reveals a lot about the science and politics of occupational health.

Vinyl chloride is by no means a rarely used chemical. It is one of the 25 most commonly used chemicals in the United States, with about 5.2 billion pounds manufactured in 1973. It's the basis for a little less than a fifth of the plastic made in the U.S. It was, in fact, one of the better studied chemicals, and thought to be almost non-toxic. In 1970, an Italian chemical company commissioned the study in which rats were exposed to vinyl chloride everyday for a year. The material is "non-toxic" enough that rats survived a year of being exposed to 30,000 parts per million (ppm) of vinyl chloride in the air (30,000 ppm is 3% of the air). After the year of exposure, the rats were then observed for another year, and they all died of cancer.

Extending the experimental results from rats to humans is both simple and difficult. The simple part is that there is no doubt that vinyl chloride exposure causes cancer in humans. However the dose/response effect is not known. In all known cases there is a "latency period" for chemically caused cancer to develop. In humans, there is always a lag of 15 to 30 years between first exposure to a chemical and the noticible onset of cancer. The gruesome fact is that the first great increase in polyvinyl chloride production and vinyl chloride exposure was about that long ago, and the exposure of the dead workers fits the pattern exactly.

The Labor Department has set an emergency standard for vinyl chloride exposure of 50 ppm along with some required work practices and medical surveillance. Unions, many academics and activists in the field protested that only "zero" exposure would be safe. In effect, the Labor Department was asking workers to play "you bet your life" for the sake of an important industry, since 50 ppm was thought to be easy to achieve, while zero exposure was not (the latest report states that mice get liver cancer at 50 ppm).

The story of vinyl chloride is only the latest in a series of chemical hazards discovered. Cancer is a very scary word, but it is nothing new in the workplace, such substances as asbestos, coke oven emissions, and coal tar pitch have been proven to be carcinogens. For many workers cancer-producing chemicals are a silent hazard along with the unsafe and uncomfortable conditions to which they became reconciled long ago. F.M.

Aid From Medical Workers

And then, let's talk about some of the medical people and the medical organizations. Back in 1931, in England, a Dr. Merriweather, who was a medical inspector for the British Home Office, found that twenty-five percent of the people working with asbestos in a textile plant were getting pulmonary fibrosis. That went up to eighty-one percent if they stayed in that plant for more than twenty years. Testifying before Parliament, Dr. Merriweather was asked if a young girl working in this textile plant for a period of two years would ultimately end up with asbestosis.* Dr. Merriweather replied, "Yes, if she lives long enough." So England, way the hell back in 1931, made asbestosis a conpensatable disease.

In this country, there are thirty-six thousand workers involved in making asbestos, and over one hundred thousand others who work with asbestos in other ways. It's a proven fact that when anyone inhales asbestos in any form it stays in their lungs for twenty years, and at any point it can trigger cancer. Asbestos workers suffer from six times as much cancer as the general population.

*Asbestosis is scarring of the lungs caused by asbestos.

The Buried Asbestos Plant

There are some good people in the medical field, such as Dr. Irving Selikoff, and quite a few others that I've worked with through the Medical Committee for Human Rights. Dr. Selikoff founded a medical clinic in Patterson, New Jersey. Seventeen of his early patients were referred to him from a plant making things out of asbestos for the government. These guys started working with asbestos in 1940. In 1954, the plant closed down and moved to Tyler, Texas. By 1961, six of the seventeen workers were dead, and today only six survive. Of the eleven who died, four died of lung cancer, one of mesothelioma†, three of other types of cancer, and two with asbestosis. Of the six still alive, two are totally disabled with lung disease; one has had surgery for the removal of a lung and his larynx. Johns-Manville corporation, which ended up with this plant, refused to supply Dr. Selikoff with any records. So even though there may be good medical people working on these cases, you usually have to deal with the corporations, and that's a problem.

†Mesothelioma is a cancer on the walls of the lung cavity.

As is said before, this same company that had all the bad history in New Jersey moved to Tyler, Texas. The workers here filed complaints about the conditions, and when the government came in through OSHA, they decided things were hopeless. They closed the plant down, buried the machines, and bought back all the gunny sacks which had held asbestos but were sold to a local nursery. They literally wiped the plant off that particular area of the map.

Paul Broder, who wrote an excellent article for *The New Yorker* magazine, went to Tyler to interview the asbestos workers. He learned that the corporation people had spoken to one of the workers because he had shadows in the X-rays of his lungs. Well, the corporation man started asking the worker personal questions about what his private life was like. He asked, "Do you drink alot of milk?" The worker answered that he did, and the corporation guy said, "It's probably the calcium in the milk that's causing your lung problems. You're drinking too much milk." So that's the kind of direct deliberate lies the company tell to the people in the plant.

One very significant thing happened out of this case. A $360,000 lawsuit was filed against the John's-Manville company, and the only issue was the fact that the company was aware that this worker had asbestosis, but they didn't tell him and they concealed the records.

The Reasons For CACOSH

Now it's very important that the OSHA law is enforced the way it should be. In other words, nobody is going to come in to wherever you're working and say "We're going to take care of your health." It's no more likely that someone will hand you a good contract. You have to fight for every nickle and dime from your company. Now, it's been estimated that OSHA is going to cost the average corporation $330 per man to make its plants safe. So, you're going to have a battle on your hands to get companies to pay out that kind of money for safety and health.

Now, it's easy if you've got a broken chair or something that obviously should be fixed. But the real difficult part, and where the unions must get help, are the diseases of the body that are caused in the workplace. There isn't any union in this country who has the facilities, the laboratory facilities and the legal staff, to do something about unhealthy working conditions.

What is possible, though, is to get together. We've done it in Chicago under the CACOSH (Chicago Area Committee for Occupational Safety and Health). We've got the United Electrical Workers, the United Auto Workers, Teamsters, Butchers, all these different unions getting together with one purpose in mind—that we can help one another. We've got the MCHR (Medical Committee for Human Rights), we've got alot of good people from the medical field, and we've got some lawyers from the National Lawyers Guild. You'd never find a wilder bunch of guys; it's like a brain surgeon, a chiropractor and a dentist getting together and agreeing on a program.

Exposing A Company Doctor

One example of the services we've done happened in my plant, International Harvestor. There, we had a real prostitute of a medical doctor. His name is Doctor Whelter. Once he took over the sole responsibility for our company, everything suddenly changed. He didn't want to use this OSHA Form 102, that reports lost-time accidents to the government, and that became his personal vendetta. (A lost-time accident causes the worker to miss work time as measured by the punch clock. They are reported to the government for purposes of setting insurance rates, compiling statistics, selecting targets for safety inspections, etc.)

It used to be that if you had a cast on your hand, on your arm, on your wrist, or on your foot, you couldn't even walk in the plant. You had to have somebody else go get your check for you. Now, a guy broke his wrist, and this new doctor put the cast on. When the cast dried he sent him back to work. Now this guy doesn't show up as a lost-time accident, even though he's got a broken wrist, can't work, or can't do nothing. That's not a joking matter, but that's exactly what happened.

This is the kind of medical people you've got in some of these companies, but the only way we could combat them was through CACOSH. Because I could make my feelings known, the rest of the union people could make their feelings known—and we've got alot of good people who don't like that doctor—but it doesn't do any good because this man has got that "Doctor" in front of his name, and that makes him sacrosant.

So what we did do is to go to MCHR. There, we got Dr. Gerber from Cook County Hospital, and had her come out to our union hall. She interviewed about twelve people, and went though the history of how they were treated in the company's medical department. Based on that, she made some recommendations. So in negotiations, we said that Dr. Whelter has got to go; that's one of our requirements for going back to work.

"You've been overworking yourself lately, Burrows. Keep it up!"

Now the company knew we were serious because we had these medical facts. So at that point, the company gave us a paper, in writing, saying: "All right, go back to work, and we'll select another doctor that's not company or not union, have him come into the plant, evaluate what's going on, talk to these people, and make recommendations."

Well, unfortunately, they didn't know that the reviewing doctor they selected to come into the plant was Quentin Young, a member of MCHR. And he did a very good job. He made some excellent recommendations, and his number one recommendation was to get rid of the company doctor.

The company is now up in arms, because they were surprised that a medical person would make such a statement to a corporation. So now they're trying to hedge on the agreement, but we intend to strike over it.

Organization in Madison

So there are things you can do by organizations. I would recommend an organization to do these things here in Madison, if you've got up interest in people to get together. First of all, you've got to get some kind of organization; you've got to get some money to pay for office space; you've got to get people to donate equipment and money.

Once you start providing services, it's surprising how quick people come to you because even the international unions don't know what this OSHA law is about. They're afraid of it. The lawyers don't know what this new law is about; they're afraid of it. It's a whole new field; it's wide open.

So your lawyers and medical people must get expertise in this field. For example, the lawyer we had was Harold Katz, who was one of our state legislators. He didn't know what a turret lathe was. I explained to him, in court, what a turret lathe was, when we went to court with the government and our union. I also explained to him what a rachet wrench was. To him those are foreign words.

But you can't depend on lawyers and OSHA alone, because the OSHA law has some very significant problems. For instance, it's nice to say that you should have an organization that could do something about your exposure to dust and fumes in the plant. That's fine to say, but you try to get an expert to go into that plant. The company won't let them in there, just like John's-Manville wouldn't give Dr. Selikoff any information. If I wanted to go into your plant to look at your working conditions, they wouldn't let me in. So the workers are the ones who are going to have to know what the conditions are, and what they should be.

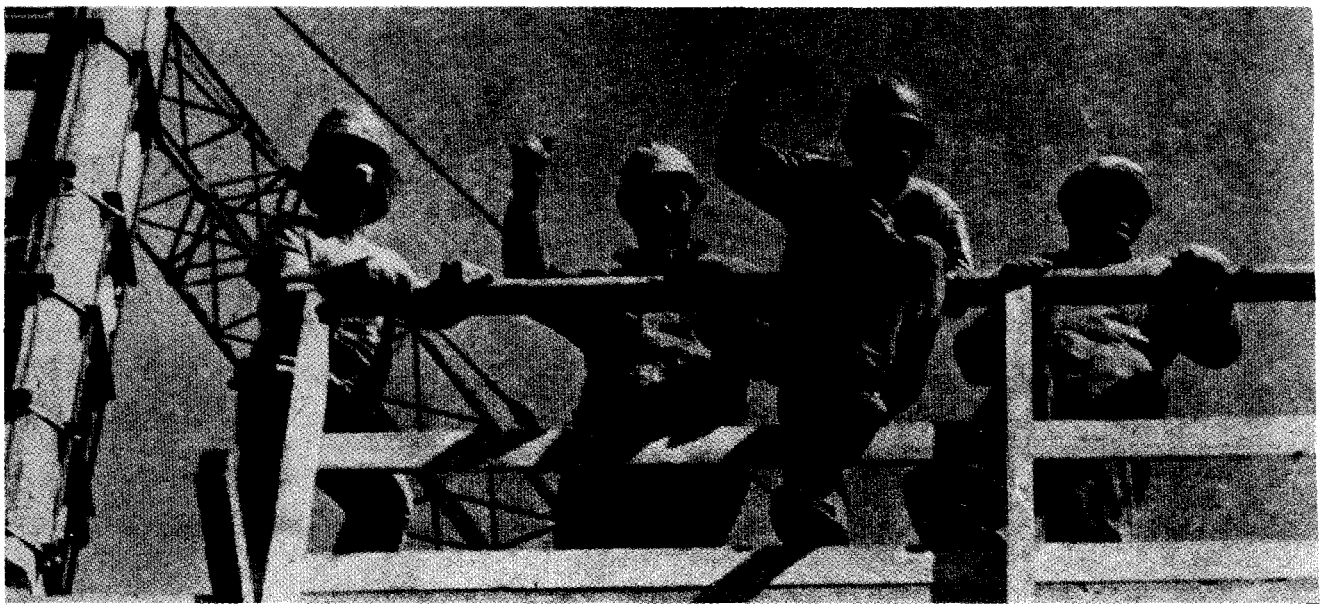
This is the kind of thing where you need people to get involved. It can be done, but somebody's got to push the issue, and it's got to be done from the factory floor. My international union isn't going to come out and tell me what to do. I tell them what *we want.*

It's the same thing that you should do. You can't expect the international union who doesn't know what your safety conditions are to come out to your plant, and ask you "Is everything OK with your job?" You've got to tell them: I won't work here", or "This is wrong", or "This is against the law". You've got to educate the international on what should be, and then if they can't furnish you help, do like our union did: Form that other organization and get support from the international union—mine is supporting us with $150 a month.

So in one way or another, we at CACOSH are helping everybody. We're helping the union organizations and we're helping the lawyers and medical people to get experience working with unions.

That more or less concludes my statement.

C.C.



How to Look at Your Plant

This article is excerpted from a pamphlet written by the Industrial Health and Safety Project of Urban Planning Aid (UPA), Cambridge, Mass.

YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE AN EXPERT

You don't have to be an expert to inspect your workplace. The people who are best qualified to identify dangerous situations are the ones who have to deal with them every day — the workers on the shop floor. With a few basics, outlined in this pamphlet, anyone can learn to spot the dangers and take action to get them eliminated.

FINDING THE HAZARDS

The first step in a plant survey is to list in your notebook the problems you already know. Get as many people as possible to add the hazards they know of to the list.

Questions like these can be answered simply and quickly:

Is noise so loud that it makes your ears ring or leaves your hearing dulled after work?

Do any vapors or fumes give you headaches or make you dizzy?

Do any oils or solvents give you skin rashes?

Do metal fumes ever make you feel like you have the flu?

Does dust make you cough and sneeze?

Are cranes lifting loads heavier than they're rated for?

Is any machinery or equipment faulty?

Some accidents are caused by obvious hazards — unguarded machines or inadequate lighting or slippery floors, for instance. Check every accident to find the cause. It could be a hidden hazard like the ones listed below.

Lack of Information. People sometimes act carelessly (and cause accidents) because management never informed them of the dangers involved in working with certain substances and processes.

Slowed Reactions. Some chemicals reduce the ability to concentrate, or slow reaction time. Used without proper ventilation and protection, these chemicals threaten workers with a higher chance of accidents.

Noise. Accidents can happen because shouted warning are drowned out.

Speedup. Working too fast can make it impossible to respond to unexpected situations. Minor accidents could become serious.

Pressure management to deal with hazards that cause accidents right away, when feeling is running high and management can't offer easy excuses.

HEALTH HAZARDS

Workplace dangers to health are often more serious than accident hazards. Something that causes mild symptoms now could have serious long term effects, and is bad for you now. Don't ignore headaches, frequent coughs and colds, dizziness, or skin irritations. They could easily be due to conditions at work.

Management will probably not admit any connection between an illness and the job. They prefer to blame bad personal hygiene, or allergies, or smoking — anything which gets them off the hook. But you don't have to put up with unnecessary sickness caused by your work.

Find out whether a number of workers around the shop or plant suffer the same symptoms. If they do, their health problem is probably work-related.

MAKE A FULL LIST

Make a section in your notebook for dusts, mists, fumes, vapors, and smoke. They are annoying, and can be dangerous. Mark down the locations, the characteristics, and the source.

Unfortunately, you can't really measure the hazard levels in the air without using certain instruments. Some of them are easy to operate and can be purchased by your local. They can also be borrowed from UPA.

You could call in the state to make tests, but you are better off first doing your own.

In your survey, however, you don't have to wait for the instruments. You can make the following preparations.

Wherever you find dust, mist, fumes, vapor or smoke, check the operation producing them. Find out what substances are being used.

Is there ventilation? Is it faulty? blocked? inadequate? If there is anything wrong with the ventilation, you could make strong demands for repairs.

It's a good idea to list in your notebook all substances used in your plant—chemicals, oils, solvents, etc.

Put the brand name labels in if you can. If you can't, copy them. Get all the details you can from labels.

All of these things are potential hazards. An otherwise good oil for instance, can cause skin irritations if not changed often enough.

Later on you can research many of these substances, especially the suspicious ones. This information could be used in an education campaign, and to prepare for inspections.

USING YOUR NOSE AS A TESTER

You can't usually rely on your nose to tell you when you are getting too much of a substance. The concentration you can smell is usually much higher or lower than the legal limit for exposure.

But there are a few chemicals you can test very approximately with your nose. If you can smell one of these substances:

Chlorine
Ammonia
Methyl Alcohol
Trichloroethylene
Tetrachloroethylene

then you know you are getting too much of it.

But, especially with the solvents, too much of a substance may dull your sense of smell, so if you can't smell it, but it seems to give you headaches, or make you feel bad in other ways, you may still be getting too much.

A NOTE ON LEGAL LIMITS

Mark down in your notebook any areas where there are extremes of heat and cold, or excessive noise. These hazards can be more dangerous than people realize. You will certainly want to have tests performed in these areas.

Look for monitoring devices. Write down the locations, the warning levels, and the hazard being watched.

Monitoring devices are instruments that measure how much of a hazard is in the environment, and are set to give a warning or indicate when a set level is exceeded.

To find out what the monitor is for, check the label, and ask the company. If necessary, grieve.

Be sure the levels conform to the legal requirements. These instruments are sometimes altered — for the management's convenience. Be sure they are set properly, and really work.

You might think about making the installation of monitors one of your health and safety demands. Perhaps they would be useful in areas subject to air hazards, heat, and noise.

If you work with any materials that give off radiation, the shop should have appropriate monitoring devices.

ELIMINATING THE HAZARDS

Getting the hazards eliminated isn't going to be easy. Management will resist spending money to improve shop conditions — profits always come first. To succeed in your health and safety drive you will need strong shop floor support.

You will also need organization — perhaps the people you involved in the shop survey could form into a rank and file health and safety task force. This could become the basis for an on-going health and safety committee.

Make your demands specific. Look for some success, no matter how small, at the beginning. Success builds support.

During the shop survey you had a chance to hear suggestions from fellow workers on how to eliminate hazards. Follow through on them.

Be sure to use the poll you conducted to find out what hazards people are most conscious of, and want eliminated first.

FORM A UNION COMMITTEE

You or the committee can help debunk management's claims that they will go broke if they have to fix up hazards. Ask for estimates of the cost of solving each problem. Ask where they got their estimates — the precise engineering firm, the manufacturer of safety devices and improvements, the consulting firms. If you can, check out these figures. (You may find management never bothered to talk with them in the first place.)

Having to give you concrete estimates will make it harder for the company to talk in vague terms about lavoffs or moveouts caused by fixing up the hazards

you find. Obviously, it's even better if you can get your own cost estimates, or costs for your own solutions which are cheaper than theirs.

If you decide to file a grievance about a hazard, prepare it carefully. The more facts you have, the better your chances for success.

The grievance procedure can be slow and difficult. It can be useful in some situations, but it doesn't pay to rely on it. Filing a grievance can get a problem fixed — as long as it's easy for management to correct, and not too expensive.

You can also grieve for information about a process or material used in the plant. But don't rely on any information gotten from management. It will probably be technically correct, but could easily be misleading. Do some research of your own.

CONTRACT CLAUSES

Getting a good health and safety clause written into the contract can establish the union's right to a say in work conditions. This is crucial. More control by workers over their workplace environments can bring better conditions.

The Right To Walk Off: Workers should be clearly allowed to stop work on a particular job if they consider conditions immediately dangerous. Federal law provides for this action, but the protection it provides is limited and hard to use. Writing this clause into the contract will offer more realistic protection.

Hazard Deadlines: The contract could require the company to correct specific hazards by a set date.

Standards: Writing legal standards into the contract gives you the advantage of negotiating through the grievance procedure whenever standards are neglected or ignored.

Information: The company should have to supply workers with full information about every substance or process used in the plant.

New Processes and Substances: The union should have the right to check out all processes and substances before they are introduced to the plant.

USE THE LAW

Under federal law, workers have the right to accompany the inspector and point out problems. Take advantage of this. Use all the information you found through your plant survey and your research. Be sure the worker selected to accompany the inspector is really informed, and not afraid of management.

To call for an inspection, you simply fill out a written request form available from the nearest OSHA (Occupational Health and Safety Administration) office. You must sign your name, but you can bind OSHA not to reveal your name to the company by checking off a box on the form.

In cases of imminent danger, you can put in a phone call (preserving your anonymity, if you wish). An inspector should come as soon as possible.

If you do call for an inspection, be alert. Don't rely on management to tell you that an inspection is about to begin.

Whenever the inspector arrives, he, or she should ask for a union or workers' representative who is supposed to accompany him. Be sure that people are ready. Alert all parts of the plant about an expected inspection. Let people know to check that the inspector is accompanied.

Workers also have the right to see the inspector's report. If there are any violations, the government can fine the company on the spot (But don't bet on it — it's almost never done.) The inspection results and any fines imposed must be posted publicly in the workplace. They cannot be taken down until the violations are corrected.

Again, take the initiative. Get a copy of the inspector's report and any fines imposed. Make sure that the results, fines, and hazards cited are posted and that other workers get to read them.

Even if the inspection goes well, and you have a chance to voice your complaints and point out hazards and management neglect, don't rely on the government to take care of the problem. The company can appeal fines and penalties and usually wins long extensions in the time allowed to correct hazards. Fines are almost always chopped down to a token amount on grounds of "good faith" or a good safety record.

So it's still up to you. Health and safety problems must be dealt with at the point of production. Think of how you can use the inspection, but don't mistake it for a solution. It can dramatize the problems, and be used to emphasize the need for shop solidarity, rank and file initiative, and union militancy.

UPA provides free assistance to unions in trying to understand and correct health and safety problems.
For this and other pamphlets or assistance, call or write:
Industrial Health and Safety Project
Urban Planning Aid
639 Massachusetts Ave.
Cambridge, Mass. 02139
(617)661-9220

COMPLAINTS AND DISORDERS
THE SEXUAL POLITICS OF SICKNESS

a book review

Medical science has been one of the most powerful sources of sexist ideology in our culture. Justifications for sexual discrimination must ultimately rest on the one thing that differentiates women from men: their bodies. Theories of male superiority ultimately rest on biology.

Medicine stands between biology and social policy, between the 'mysterious' world of the laboratory and everyday life. It makes public interpretations of biological theory; it dispenses the medical fruits of scientific advances. ...Biology traces the origins of disease, doctors pass judgement on who is sick and who is well.

—from *Complaints and Disorders*

Complaints and Disorders: The Sexual Politics of Sickness is a new pamphlet by Barbara Ehrenreich and Deirdre English, the authors of *Witches, Midwives and Nurses.* Both are published by the Feminist Press in Old Westbury, New York.

While *Witches, Midwives and Nurses* offers an introduction to the history of women healers, and focuses on the takeover of medicine by male professionals in the nineteenth century, *Complaints and Disorders* deals with the medical system and ideology from 1865 to 1920 and how it applied to women.

The authors focus separately on women of the upper and upper-middle class, and on working-class women. And they are clearer about the effects of the medical system as it applied to affluent women [probably because wealthy women were more directly affected by the medical system]. In addition, Ehrenreich and English explore the ambiguities of the early public health reform movements directed—often by wealthy women--at the poor.

The following is a summary - review of *Complaints and Disorders* mostly excerpted directly from the 94-page pamphlet.

* * *

Affluent women lived lives of enforced leisure. The majority of upper and upper-middle class women had little chance to make independent lives for themselves; they were financially at the mercy of their husbands and fathers. They had to accept their roles--outwardly at least--and remain dutifully housebound, white-gloved and ornamental.

This boredom and confinement fostered a cult of 'female invalidism' that began in the mid-nineteenth century and didn't fade until the late 1910's. Sickness was an integral part of upper and upper-middle class female culture and made these women dependent for their very survival on both doctor and husband.

Women at that time did in fact face certain risks that men did not. Childbearing, for instance, was much more dangerous. In 1915, the first year for which national figures were available, 61 women died for every 10,000 live babies born, as compared to 2 per 10,000 today. Maternal mortality rates were no doubt even higher during the nineteenth century and without contraception, a woman could expect to face the risks of childbirth repeatedly.

In 1900, there were 173 doctors per 100,000 population in the United States, compared to 50 per 100,000 today. It was in the interest of doctors to cultivate the illnesses of their wealthy patients with frequent home visits and drawn-out treatments. Some women saw through this, and Dr. Mary Putnam Jacobi wrote in 1895:

"I think, finally, it is the increased attention paid to women, and especially in their new function as lucrative patients, scarcely imagined a hundred years ago, that we find explanation of much of the ill health among women, freshly discovered today."

The underlying medical theory of women's weakness at that time rested on what doctors considered the most basic physiological law: 'conservation of energy.' According to the first postulate of this theory, each human body contained a set quantity of energy that was directed from one organ or function to another. This meant that you could develop an organ or ability only by drawing energy away from the parts not being developed.

Women's Ward in Bellevue Hospital

The second postulate of this theory–that reproductivity was central to a woman's biological life–gave the reproductive organs almost total command of the whole woman.

Since reproduction was woman's purpose in life, doctors agreed that women should concentrate their physical energy inward, toward the womb. Doctors and educators were quick to draw the obvious conclusion that, for women, higher education would be physically dangerous. Too much development of the brain, they counseled, would atrophy the uterus. In addition, doctors found uterine and ovarian "disorders" behind almost every female complaint.

Treatments were aimed at altering female behavior. One, used to treat many problems diagnosed as "nervous disorders," was based on isolation and uninterrupted rest. Passivity was the main prescription, along with warm baths, cool baths, abstinence from animal foods and spices, and indulgence in milk and puddings and cereals. As a Dr. Dirix wrote, "all forms of mental excitement were to be perseveringly guarded against."

Doctors also took the surgical approach. Since a woman's entire personality was supposedly dominated by her reproductive organs, then gynecological surgery was the most logical solution to any problem. Removal of the clitoris was practiced and more widely, removal of the ovaries or "female castration."

Patients were often brought in by their husbands, who complained of their unruly behavior. When returned to their husbands, they were "tractible, orderly, industrious and cleanly," according to Dr. Robert Battey of Rome, Georgia, in 1872. Of course the very threat of surgery was probably enough to bring many women into line. In fact the medical attention directed at these women amounted to what may have been a very effective surveillance system. Doctors were in a position to detect the first signs of rebelliousness, and to interpret them as symptoms of a "disease" which had to be "cured."

Working class women were in an entirely different situation. Crowded, poor living conditions were fertile breeding ground for typhoid, yellow fever, TB, cholera, and diphtheria. While sickness, exhaustion and injury were routine in the life of the working class woman, a day's absence from work could cost a woman her job.

Two women who worked in the garment industry recall, "We only went from bed to work and from work to bed again... and sometimes if we sat up a little while at home we were so tired we could not speak to the rest and we hardly knew what we were talking about. And still, there was nothing for us but bed and machine."

While there was no great public outcry about the health of poor women, there was a great deal of upper and upper-middle class concern about what the poor were doing to the "health" of the cities. Disease was invariably seen as foreign in origin, imported on immigrant ships and bred in immigrant slums. While it was true that the rates of infectious diseases were higher among the poor, the affluent frequently used a fear of germs to express their fear of the poor.

An Early Nineteenth Century Ovariotomy

Working-class women, often employed as house-hold servants in the homes of the rich, were regarded as potentially "sickening." "If anything was missing, like a piece of silverwere, servants must have taken it. If anyone in the family got sick, you naturally suspected the servants of carrying something," according to one survivor of the early twentieth century.

As the health of the poor posed a threat to the upper classes, the public health movement and birth control movement arose, both drawing heavily on the energies of upper and upper-middle class women. Although these movements obviously brought progressive achievements, both mobilized large numbers of wealthy women in a way which solidified their relationship to working class women–not as sisters, but as uplifters.

The issue of health–female health and family health–which potentially could have united women of different classes, now divided them into "reformers" on the one side and "problems" on the other. Upper-middle class women did not turn against the medical profession that had imprisoned them and rejected poor women. They did not unite with poor women to create a movement which could demand a single standard of health care for all women. Instead they allied themselves with doctors against the poor.

Complaints and Disorders ends with some thoughts on the situation today. "We can only marvel at the endless plasticity of a medical 'science' that can adjust its theories for age, sex or social class depending on the needs of the time. ... What is amazing about medical 'science' as it relates to women is that the theories change so neatly to fit the needs of the dominant, male ideology."

Complaints and Disorders: The Sexual Politics of Sickness is available for $1.50 from the Feminist Press, Box 334, Old Westbury, N.Y. 11568.

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FASCIST JUNTA STRANGLES CHILEAN HEALTH CARE

The author of this article lived in Santiago, Chile, during Allende's term in office. In February, 1974, she returned to Chile with the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) fact-finding delegation, which investigated repression in Chile since the coup.

"On September 17th [six days after a right-wing coup toppled the Chilean Popular Unity (UP) government] a military operation ordered the entire hospital staff of the Barros Luco Hospital to line up along a corridor. The lieutenant in charge, with collaboration of a National Party (far right) doctor, began one by one identifying the Allende supporters from the long row of doctors, nurses, aides and janitors. Those singled out were escorted to the outer patio where they were executed immediately. I was the second-to-the-last person on the line and was standing in front of the doors to the Hospital Chapel. Silently, a nun grabbed me and three other male doctors and snuck us inside the chapel where we hid for one day. As we hid, we heard at regular intervals the shots that took the lives of our fellow hospital workers."

(From a letter sent anonymously to the United States. Facts corroborated by direct testimony to the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom delegation, Santiago. February 1974.)

Since the coup, the health care system in Chile has been subjected to fierce attack by the military junta, and health workers have been especially targeted for repression. The reasons for this are many, but they mostly boil down to the junta's reasoning that the health care system is essential to any plans to exterminate resistance and control the people of Chile.

The right wing has thus far used the health system for two main ends:

1. for direct military purposes--to identify and liquidate health workers or patients who are leftists, and to use health skills and facilities to actively oppose and suppress resistance.
2. for broader political ends, namely the return of the health care system from an increasingly socialist orientation to a capitalist orientation.

Health Care as a Military Weapon

The Chilean junta has received military and technical training from the U.S. and Brazil on a long-term basis. As in Brazil, medical doctors in Chile are being used to perfect scientific torture. For example, Dr. Tuane was thrown out of work during the Allende government for torturing prisoners. He is now assisting the military in the development of more sophisticated uses of sodium pentathol (a truth serum). Political exiles have repeatedly testified that doctors present during interrogation and torture informed the torturers as to how far they could go without actually killing the prisoner. For example, Bautista von Schoen, a medical doctor and member of the Central Committee of the MIR (Revolutionary Left Movement) has been systematically tortured with the assistance of the chief doctor in the hospital in which he is "recuperating."

> *Lt. Col. Charles R. Webb, M.D. (U.S.A.) stated in Military Medicine, (Vol 605-8, 1967) that an "important facet of medicine in Internal Defense and Development is the denial of medical resources to insurgents."*

Just as common is the denial of medical care to political prisoners when this is deemed convenient. During the first days of the coup, doctors worked under armed guard to assure that soldiers were cared for before any civilian casualties, and to assure that leftists seeking medical treatment were captured. Jose Toha, a 6'4" former Popular Unity minister weighed 75 pounds at the time of his death. An autopsy showed his "mysterious ailment" to be severe prolonged malnutrition produced by his stay in the concentration camp for high Popular Unity officials on Dawson Island. Daniel Vergara, another former member of Allende's cabinet died of gangrene resulting from an untreated arm wound. Common causes of death in prison camps are from untreated bleeding ulcers, "cardiac arrests", and negligence of other pre-existing medical conditions.

The military junta is also using doctors for spying purposes. Surveillance of working class and poor communities (*poblaciones*) is being conducted through right-wing

loyalist doctors who have replaced leftist doctors who worked in the neighborhood clinics during the UP. As Lt. Col. Dr. Webb suggests, "people under treatment are frequently very cooperative in revealing information." One angry left-wing doctor exclaimed, "During the UP they wouldn't set foot in a poblacion. The rightist doctors wanted to do their hospital work and scurry off to their private practices as quickly as they could. Now they're there to watch for gunshot wounds and to keep their ears open for trouble in the neighborhood."

Attacks on leftists through the health system began long before the coup in September. The doctors' gremio (the Chilean medical society equivalent to the American Medical Association) was a key force in organizing health professionals against the Popular Unity government. The Chilean Medical Society supported the anti-UP work stoppages of October, 1972 and August 1973, announcing that the last stoppage would continue "until Allende falls." The medical society now justifies this by saying that there were no medical supplies, etc. because of the collapse of the UP economy and because the leftists were stealing all the hospital equipment and medication to build "clandestine hospitals" for the resistance. Under Allende the health system was approaching sure ruin, says the right. In this light, it is interesting that their demands did not include a single health-related issue but merely called for Allende's ouster. Right-wing boycotts of services drained the energy of left-wing doctors and other health workers who were left the responsibility for the vast SNS (National Health Service) hospital system (90% of all Chilean hospitals) as well as neighborhood health centers. Those health workers who went to work during October, 1972 or August, 1973 were readily identifiable as leftist sympathizers. Thus, after the coup it was very easy to purge leftists from hospitals and clinics.

As of February, 1974, over 1000 out of the 6000 odd M.D.'s in Chile had been killed, arrested, fired or exiled. Many more have been demoted or are under surveillance. The professional medical union is responsible for the firing of many doctors. The government may arrest, interrogate and finally absolve a doctor only for the medical society of Chile to announce that the doctor is not a person sufficiently trustworthy. A "white list" of doctors has been drawn up, naming those doctors acceptable to the doctors' gremio and the junta. All leftists or doctors suspected of being leftists, have been removed from positions of authority, i.e. professors, heads of services. Any M.D. who wants to work in Public Health must present five letters of political recommendation.

Doctors constantly emphasized, however, that the experience of professionals was not comparable in severity to the experience of lower-level health workers. All three people executed at one doctor's hospital were workers. Fired nurses, nurse's aides and other hospital dependent workers will not be able to find a job as easily as doctors who can practice on their own or more readily leave the country. In an economy of soaring unemployment, those who are politically suspect are the first to be fired and the last to be rehired.

Health Care as a Political Weapon

As in all areas, the new rulers of Chile see as a central task in health care the destruction of socialist concepts and structures and their replacement with capitalist ones. In relation to the health care system, this means changing two things: who pays for health care and who controls the health care system and decides its priorities? One obvious political priority for the military junta is to dismantle the remaining structures of the socialized national health service (formerly SNS) and to eliminate and/or discredit those who worked within the SNS.

The SNS was about fifteen years old when Allende took office. Health resources were not distributed equally within the population, however: 60% of the resources went to 25% of the population, while the other 75% squeezed by with 40% of the available resources. For upper class Chileans there was one doctor per 800 people. For poor Chileans there was one doctor for every 2300 people.

During the Allende government some advances were made toward the re-organization of the national health service along more socialized lines. For example, a night school for workers who wanted to become doctors was set up; local health committees were established representing doctors, health workers, community people and labor unions. Given that only one third of the doctors in the country had leftist sympathies, the vast majority of the School of Medicine and its quite conservative graduates worked against reforms the UP had undertaken. Despite great contradictions, gains were made: infant mortality, which had been the highest in the world, dropped from 79 to 71 per thousand; deaths from infant diarrhea were down 20%; deaths from bronchial pneumonia were down 15%; 90% of the services were free.

There were weaknesses in the nationalized health system which reflected a general weakness in the UP. Often organizations of popular control did not work well during the UP because of its own over-reliance on bureaucratic methods of work, and lack of reliance on mobilization and education of the masses of people. The reformism of the UP as well as U.S. financial and technical support of a well-prepared Chilean right opened the door to fascism.

With the coup, the SNS was abolished. The School of Public Health and the worker's medical school were closed. Many of the leading people in the SNS and the people who had been doing health work in the poblaciones were killed or arrested.

Neighborhood health committees and community health workers were told they were no longer needed. Leading health activists were harrassed, often arrested. Some neighborhood clinics, like that of Campamento Nueva Havana were razed. The majority of clinics limp on with drastically decimated resources.

It isn't sufficient to abolish organs of popular control. The junta must also discredit them in the eyes of the people. This they do by smearing the reputations of the people who worked in popular organizations through

slanderous accusations of personal gains and abuses of the popular power they held. For example, the junta has accused mothers involved in the powdered milk programs under the UP of selling the milk rather than giving it to the children. The obvious (to the right-wing) conclusion is that poor people will abuse any responsibility, and that the system should be reconstructed to control them.

The junta's plans for the national health organization that will replace the SNS at first glance seems strangely similar to the old SNS of the UP. In place of the National Health Service (SNS) they suggest the National Systems of Health Services (SNSS) and discuss at length the importance of preventive care, especially prenatal and wellbaby care and decentralization of health services. Ostensibly the new document is progressive, but fundamentally it places control in the hands of the governing military. In the entire proposal (entitled "the national health doctrine and policy, Nov. '73) no mention is made of control by workers and community or democratic decision making. It is strongly stated that the Ministry of Health is the decisive organism in health planning. "The community", it is stated, "has the right to receive health care and the responsibility to pay for it."

The frightening implications of this were brought home to the WILPF (Women's International League for Peace and Freedom) delegation when a group of women working with the junta's Secretariat of the Woman explained that they were going to begin a massive publicity campaign in regard to birth control for poor people. "They (poor people) are scum and don't know any better (than to have many children). Their men are brutes– they are not happy unless their wives are pregnant." Progressive health measures in the hands of fascists have become genocidal.

Who Pays for Health Care

Colonel Spoerer, Minister of Health, Chilean Air Force, and former Rockefeller Fellow, saw as a major problem of the former health system a shortage of personnel: "Wages for doctors were too low and doctors had no incentive. They felt that everything was going to be socialized from under their feet and they would have no more power. The lack of liberty to work on one's own created an exodus which resulted in a shortage of health personnel."

The doctors have clamored for a return to fee for service instead of the salaried structure of the former National Health Service. The provisions of the fee scale are a blatant move from the principle of equal service to all toward better service for those who can pay more. Under the old SNS, anyone might end up seeing the top specialist in a given field if his/her case so required. Now the fee scale leaps substantially for every ten years of experience.

The junta is rapidly returning the health system to the control of private industries and the doctors' professional associations, gremios. This means a renewed orientation toward profit-making. Antibiotics cost ten times what they cost before the coup. The drug industry had been controlled and subsidized by the government. Now that "free enterprise" has returned the cost of drugs can climb without limit. For a simple case of pneumonia, treatment would now cost ten times more than the minimum monthly wage. People are stealing medications of all kinds from hospitals not for political reasons, as much as sheer economic necessity.

Meanwhile, workers get robbed blind under newly oppressive working conditions, are starving because of an inflation that has eaten their salaries to the point where there's nothing left, and are charged to the teeth for the little health care they still get. Workers have in the past been charged 1% of their salary for health insurance and their employer paid another 1%. Colonel Spoerer thinks that health insurance costs may have to rise to 10% or 12% of a worker's salary.

The fascist government has moved to deny the working class even the basic necessities like health care. This is the most fundamental aspect of the new fascist government; super-exploitation of the working class in all aspects of life. Fascism is the logical form that monopoly capitalism takes when it is afraid that it cannot maintain its control through constitutional means. Fascism is not simply a repressive government or a lack of democracy. It is one more phase in the Chilean people's ongoing struggle with the ruling class. The Chilean people are enraged and fighting back in whatever ways available to them at this point when resistance is not totally organized.

However, there is evidence that the resistance is approaching a higher level of organization. On May first, international workers' solidarity day, the center of Santiago was flooded by leaflets that dropped simultaneously from the windows of numerous office buildings. Signed by the Revolutionary Left Party (MIR) and the Socialist Party, the leaflets announced, "The resistance has begun."

C.R.

SftP Activist Rejects National Academy

Mr. Allen V. Astin
Home Secretary, National Academy of Sciences

Thank you for your letter informing me of my election to the National Academy of Sciences.

During this past week I have consulted with friends in and out of the Academy, discussed the situation with some of my students, examined a number of Academy reports and correspondence, and met with my comrades in Science for the People. I have come to the conclusion that I cannot join the Academy.

My first and most urgent concern is the continuing participation of the Academy in military matters.

There is no secret about the involvement of the National Academy of Science in military research or its collaboration in U.S. foreign policy. In Dr. Handler's letter transmitting the Academy's report on the effects of herbicides, he notes "The Academy has a long tradition of scientific assistance to the national defense and it desires also to be of whatever assistance it can in furthering our ability to minimize the underdesirable secondary consequences of warfare without sacrificing the capability of the American military establishment to assure the national defense."

This is accomplished through direct research contracts from the Department of Defense, including classified research, by its participation in formal program reviews and informal interagency groups which coordinate military research (see DOD appropriation hearings FY1971 Part 2, Army, p. 824). It is supplemented by the efforts of the Academy's president to weaken any criticism of the actions of the military, as he did in his covering letter cited above where among other things he dismisses the evidence of damage to human health and of death caused by herbicides.

My rejection of military research is not based on a generic pacifism but rather on the way in which U.S. military power has been used since World War II. The whole system of direct intervention, covert operations, military aid, training, advisors and consultants acting through many government agencies as well as privately, has been aimed at thwarting popular insurgent movements throughout the world. They can only be described as "defense" by the most cynical doublespeak. These interventions depend for their feasibility on a large and varied arsenal of "flexible responses" that draw their most imaginative and vicious schemes from academic science. The NAS, through its formal contracts and informal advice, is an accomplice in this program.

The involvement of the NAS and its operating arm, the National Research Council in military research is not the result of a perversion of the Academy's nature by Phillip Handler or his predecessors but of a faithful interpretation of its charter and traditions.

When Richard Lewontin raised the problem of military research in the Academy a number of members responded with general sympathy. But they doubted that anything could be done, or that president Handler could do anything about it if he wanted to. They pointed to the charter of the Academy, and to its formal and informal long term collaboration with the government. Their observations are accurate. I cannot hope to remedy this situation by planning with other colleagues to replace Mr. Handler with a more liberal president or by maneuvering to restore the NAS to its true mission: it is performing its true mission, and I find that mission repugnant.

There is something in the nature of the Academy as an elite honorary body linked to government which turns the creativity of its members into conformity or impotence and makes the NAS behave below the level of its individual members. There are pacifists in the Academy who refused to fight in the last war that I could have supported, but who are unable to prevent NAS involvement in current wars; veterans of the Spanish Civil War who took great personal risk to challenge fascism but are unable to defy the Academy's charter; outspoken critics of the Viet Nam war who continue to see the NAS as neutral ground; people who were persecuted in the McCarthy period, who faced unemployment with equanimity but fear the raised eyebrows of prestigious colleagues.

There is the elitist myth that history is made by the important people who are in the know, which happens to include us, which makes the loss of credibility with the powerful people a terrifying prospect.

There is the sporadic direct contact with the real centers of power that creates the illusion of access to power if only we play it carefully.

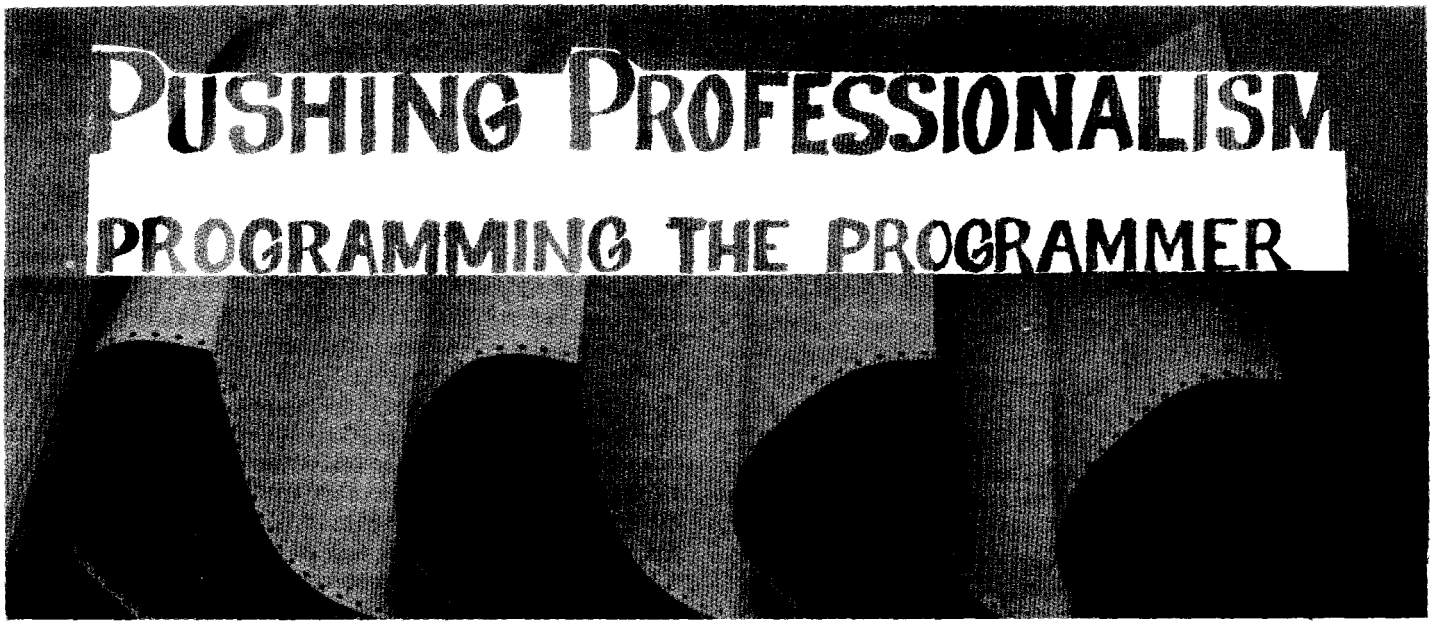
There is the placid belief that a society which appreciates us so well cannot be all that bad.

And there is the acceptance of the pervasive ideology which has been so much a part of our own careers– the separation of thinking and feeling which makes strong commitment suspect; the faith in technique which sees problems as yielding best to well-financed expertise; the individualism which avoids any collective action as an abdication of self; and what C. Wright Mills labeled "crackpot realism", an overwhelming preoccupation with short term feasibility that produces acceptance of the present as necessary. In short, NAS concentrates and imposes the worst features of American academic ideology.

I have to conclude that by its charter, formation, recruitment, ideology, and modus operandi the National Academy of Sciences is not capable of leading in the creative transformation of science to serve people's needs, that it is the least favorable arena in which to fight for change in the scientific community, and therefore that is not a worthy career ambition.

Sincerely yours,

Richard Levins



This article was written as part of a continuing discussion of the technical workforce. See **Science for the People,** *May 1973, "An Examination of Some Myths and Contradictions Concerning Engineers" and "Technical Intelligence and the Capitalist Division of Labor." We encourage response, particularly from computer programmers.*

Zap! You're A Professional!

Computer programmers and other computer specialists are about to become professionalized after fewer than thirty years as a distinct occupational group. What makes the professionalization of programmers especially interesting is the fact that programmers are about to be professionalized behind their backs. In fact, what turns out to be the most intriguing aspect of the professionalization process is not that it's taking place, but who's pushing it. If programmers themselves seem largely indifferent to the question of professional status, programmers' *employers* have shown the most lively sort of interest.

But something is amiss here. *Why* would employers (or more accurately, their hired managers) promote attitudes among their employees which, on the surface, appear at odds with the interests of management? After all, professionals historically have been monopolistic and exclusive, particularly with regard to controlling their workplace and regulating their income. Both areas, of course, are regarded by management as their exclusive preserves.

There is a reasonably straightforward explanation of management's push for programmer professionalization. It has to do with, first, the needs of managers in controlling their workers—in this case, computer specialists—and secondly, with the real versus the official—and deceptive—meaning of the term "professional."

The Emergence of Programming

Computer programming is a new occupation with few if any antecedents in other occupations. The twin developments of technological complexity and continuously expanding applications of computers have generated parallel developments in the skills needed to operate the machines and to manage their applications. For all its complexity, the computer has to be "instructed" how to compute, what to compute, and how to display the results of the computations in some useful way. Programmers are the people who supply such carefully detailed step-by-step instructions (the "program") in a format (the "language") accepted by the circuitry of the computer so that it will perform exactly the kinds of operations desired.

The complexity of the programming task varies with the complexity of the language and its "logic," the extent and nature of the information to be processed, the kinds of calculations desired as well as the skills of the programmer. On the whole, it remains a time-consuming, error-prone, almost handicraft activity, with aspects, as Daniel Freedman has put it, of both magic and art. The slowness and vulnerability to error of programming are in sharp contrast to the speed and efficiency of the machines themselves. But it is precisely the efficiency and accuracy of the machine which are dependent on the skills of the programmer. However slow, error-prone and human the programmer may be, s/he has thus acquired a critical, if problematic, role in a critical industry.

Virtually all programmers and related computer specialists are employees. In this they are no different from the great majority of American workers. Programmers are, however, different in one significant way from most other employees. For most other workers, managers have successfully developed techniques of organizing the work situation itself–the workplace–to act as regulators and manipulators of the workers. The assembly line eliminates the need for a large number of foremen by forcing line workers to adjust the movements of the human body to the (management-controlled) pace of the moving belt. Computer-controlled dictation equipment simultaneously sets the pace for and monitors the output of clerk-typists. The teen-ager who serves you your Big Mac must enter the exact order in the exact place on the correct inventory tab and smile at the same time, customer after customer after customer–or lose her/his job.

What all these techniques have in common is that the very rhythm of the work activity, the minute by minute relationships between workers and their work and between workers and each other have been arranged–deliberately and carefully–to make sure that employees do exactly what their managers want them to.[1]

Programmers, although every bit as much employees as the assembly line worker or the typist or fast food server, have successfully resisted attempts at managerial control *via* structuring of their workplace–at least up to now. But if they have maintained, compared to other employees, some degree of independence of managers, it is not because managers haven't tried to regulate programmers in the same manner they've regulated non-programmer workers. Various ways of organizing the programming task–"top-down programming," "chief-programming teams," "modular programming" and other similar-sounding approaches–have been used by management to structure the social organization of the programming task to make it look as much as possible like the conventional bureaucratic hierarchy of the factory or office.

For a number of reasons, such managerial efforts at best have been only partially successful. Programming is an acquired skill which is both relatively hard to learn and even harder to use well. Moreover, because it is a mind-skill, there are few hard-and-fast rules of behavior which managers can compare against an efficiency expert's model in order to check performance. Similarly, most managers, even those who were once programmers themselves, aren't capable of judging when a program is written well or badly. In most cases, they have to take what the programmer offers.

Programmers are therefore something of an anomaly: they are employees, but they are in a position to control how they will go about doing their programs–the final product–as well as the form the final product will take. Not surprisingly, managers and employers find this an intolerable situation. It is intolerable not because employee workplace control is less efficient (cf., Gerald Weinberg, who makes impressive claims that programmer control of the workplace is significantly *more*, not less, efficient [2]) but *because employee control of the workplace threatens managerial authority*. In this sort of situation, managers and employers will accept even a certain amount of inefficiency in order to re-enforce or preserve their dominance of the programming work activity.

But, as we've seen, the traditional methods of employee manipulation have not yet been successfully adapted to the peculiar situation of programmers. While these traditional methods are being debugged, an alternative managerial strategy has emerged, the strategy of "professionalizing the workforce."

Professions Without Professionals

An occupation which is still new, vaguely defined and meaningful only to its members is, as we've seen, in an unusually good position to defend its members against managerial control. It is also one which is likely to bring out everything in the managers' arsenal of worker manipulation. Programmers may be critical employees, but critical or not, the whole carefully contrived balance of managerial superiority is endangered if programmers can function perfectly well without programmer managers. From the managers' point of view, it is vital that programmers be located within the hierarchical structure of the employing organization in order to effectively control them.

If the conventional devices of external control–close managerial supervision or the structuring of the organization of work itself–are not effective, one alternative is to substitute internal for external control. "Professionalizing" programmers becomes a handy way of pulling off the trick. We get some idea of this from observing where the major discussions of programmer professionalization take place and who typically does the discussing. Most such discussions take place in the pages of DATAMATION or INFOSYSTEMS or other trade journals. If these are read at all, they are read by managers and not by programmers. In the same manner, the organizations actively engaged in a systematic effort to promote professionalization are virtually all industry organizations, e.g., the Association for Computer Machinery through its Special Interest Group for Computer Personnel Research. On the other hand, if a survey of mine is representative of the general programmer population, working programmers neither read trade journals nor belong to any occupational organizations.

How can managers use "professionalism" as a way of getting programmers to police themselves? Part of the answer has to do with the historical origins of professionals and part has to do with the way managers have modified the original concept to suit their own ends.

The Career of a Myth

The occupation which most of us have in mind when speaking about professionals is that of the physician. There is good reason for this. Physicians (as well as lawyers and pharmacists) emerged as a distinct occupational group for the first time only during the Middle

Ages. Before physicians became physicians they were simply barbers who also applied bloodsuckers for the relief of assorted aches and pains. The appliers of leeches gradually organized themselves into occupational organizations patterned after those of their fellow small tradesmen and artisans–the guild. The role and subsequent influence of the guild organization are very important. All guilds, whether of barbers, masons, weavers, or physicians, had a few basic functions: (1) to restrict entry into the occupation; (2) to eliminate competitive practices among guild members; and (3) to enforce monopoly control over the performance–and the rewards–of the services of guild members.

Medieval guilds were, in other words, made up of independent, self-employed entrepreneurs, who defined not only the content of their work but the conditions under which it was performed. Because they were small businessmen, guild members, including physicians, exchanged their services for fees, i.e., they sold them to those who could afford to pay. By doing so they re-enforced the existing inequalities of the society of which they were a part, providing important services to those who had the means and withholding them from those who simply needed them but could not afford to pay.

Physicians, because they dealt with something as critical and emotion-charged as life and death, found themselves in a particularly happy position. Although they were little better than witch doctors, they could cajole, intimidate and deceive people about their health and their very lives. And since they ministered largely to the rich, the rich rewarded them not only with money but with special privileges as well. Gradually, they acquired the legal, i.e., state-enforced, right to first certify new practitioners and then to grant exclusive licenses. All of this, of course, strengthened their monopoly on the health business. In the meantime, the abilities of physicians remained akin to those of their barbering ancestors until well into the 19th century. Even then, the real advances in science which eventually turned medicine into something more than black magic were made by non-physicians, e.g., the discoveries of Pasteur, which were stoutly resisted by the certified and licensed practitioners who perceived the discovery of sepsis[3] as a threat to their "professional" dignity.

Contemporary physicians, to give credit where it is deserved, have gone beyond their predecessors and reconciled two contradictory tendencies. Starting in the 19th century they have absorbed the genuine scientific progress which began flowing at the rapid rate to which we have grown accustomed *and* they have perfected the guild as an organizational form unmatched by anything in the Middle Ages. Their monopoly control of the product (health services) is virtually complete, having either destroyed useful and legitimate competitors, e.g., midwives, or reduced them to marginal practitioners of a disreputable trade, e.g., osteopaths, or placed them firmly under their collective professional thumb, e.g., nurses.

It is important to underline the implications of these historical roots of professionalism. They arose at least as much out of a desire to protect monopolitic privilege as a desire to extend useful knowledge (and to protect it against charletanism); they arose to protect the vested interests of what were essentially self-employed small businessmen, not highly skilled employees; and they ultimately helped re-enforce great social divisions by providing vital services to those on the top rather than those on the bottom. By the nineteenth century, when the first body of scientifically-based knowledge was only just starting to become part of the physicians' tools, the basis of their "professional" status already had been long established by virtue of their *political*, not their occupational, skills.

The programmer reading this may feel a trifle disturbed that the professional status managers have in mind for her/him has such unsavory origins. But a moment's reflection will be enough to demonstrate how irrelevant the occupational organization of small businessmen is to people who are overwhelmingly employees. It may therefore be of small comfort–very small comfort–that the image of the professional that managers have in mind is different in some subtle but significant ways from the historical reality.

It should be clear why managers, even as they push professionalism, can't really tolerate programmers who resemble the prototypical physicians. Managers have therefore changed the definition of professional which, from their perspective, has all of the advantages of the old guild-like organization and none of its disadvantages. Professionalism for programmers, as it has emerged in management literature, means: the establishment of universal job descriptions and standards, formulated, of course, by personnel managers; common training programs; and a common certification process. On the other hand, the managers' image does *not* include certification by an authority controlled by the programmers' peers, but one controlled by their employers. It does *not* include licensing, nor, finally, does it foresee under any circumstances making independent entrepreneurs out of programmers. Management's vision, in other words, is of a profession without professionals.

The reasons are clear. A profession without professionals would allow managers to have their cake and eat it too. Job performance standards would be established–presumably at high "professional" levels–but the standards would be established by the managers, not the professionals. In effect, the managers' notion of professional programmers is one which gives them and not the programmers the power to define what programming is.

The Myth of a Career

In practice, management has found some creative ways of imposing its particular vision of professionalism on programmers. Chief among these is the fragmenting of the programming task, hierarchically arranging the newly created fragments to parallel the conventional hierarchy

which characterizes the rest of the employing organization, and then holding up "advancement" from one fragment to another as a form of "professional career." Largely as a result of this, the programming activity is no longer undertaken by programmers. Instead, a whole list of new sub-occupations has emerged whose boundaries—and actual tasks—are vague and overlapping. Aside from whatever advantages it may or may not have for efficiency, increased productivity and so on, the division of labor created in a programming installation thus provides a distinct hierarchical structure masquerading as a career line for newly "professionalized" programmers. Managers have thus killed two birds with one stone: the personal aspirations of programmers can be channelled along clear-cut—if artificial—career paths and managers have been given a device that will enable them to make sure that they and not programmers will remain in charge of programming. Tasks have been broken down and are presumably more easily monitored, while at the same time the hierarchical structure of these tasks gives back to the manager his traditional carrot of controlling individual advancement in the organization.

The trick is not a new one. School teachers until recently were kept in line by having them do it themselves. They were the classic example of how external regulation was made unnecessary by internal regulation based on abstract notions of a "professionalism" which had flexible meanings.[4] While it meant one thing to teachers (doing a good job) it meant another to their administrators (rejecting unionization and doing what they were told). The experience of school teachers is of immediate relevance to programmers. Teachers, like programmers and unlike physicians, have been from their beginnings employees, not independent entrepreneurs. Their training, certification, and licensing are not in their hands but ultimately in the hands of their employers. Again, this is similar to what is being proposed for programmers and just the opposite of what is true of physicians. Like programmers, too, the demands of their employers are vague, constantly changing, but always informed by a desire to standardize.

The professional career ladder being manufactured for the programmer thus emerges as a white-collar variation of the assembly-line techniques of employee manipulation. Fragmenting the work and calling the fragments a career line inserts programmer employees into the conventional corporate organizational structure; it also provides a thoroughly internalized regulatory device, the desire to "advance up" an artificial career ladder.

The critical question now is how will programmers resolve the emerging contradiction between their self-interest and management's desire to facilitate a self-regulated workforce of programmers. Will the resolution take the form of passive acceptance of management's version of "professionalism" while working conditions, hours and wages deteriorate? Will it take the form of a narrow trade unionism which calls itself professionalism but which seeks to defend the remaining special privileges of programmers to the detriment of other workers? Or will programmers begin to identify their self-interests in common cause with other workers who confront the same management -- the secretaries, keypunch operators, janitors, machine operators, and production workers? The latter course of joining with other workers will occur only if politically conscious programmers actively struggle for it; otherwise some form of management-inspired professionalism is the only alternative. Although less virulant than sexism or racism, a professionalism which grants special privileges and status to a few skilled workers is one more weapon in management's arsenal of divide and conquer.

P.K.

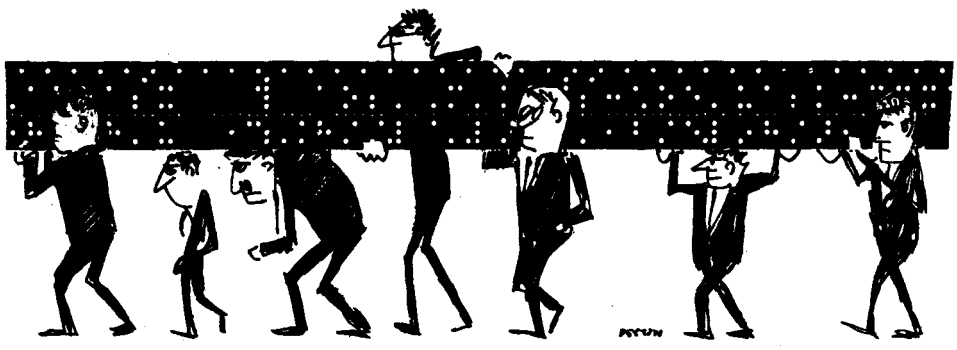
FOOTNOTES

[1] It can come as something of a shock to employees how matter of factly managerial discussions of the workplace and even the "engineering" aspects of the production process are couched in explicitly manipulative terms. Talk of "increased productivity", "efficiency" and so on, has very often little to do with producing more product for less investment, but with ways of making sure workers don't get out of hand. A useful review of some of the "classic" approaches to worker manipulation can be found in Peter Blau and W. Richard Scott, *Formal Organizations*, Chandler Publishing Company (San Francisco, 1962).

[2] Gerald M. Weinberg, *The Psychology of Computer Programming*. Van Nostrand Reinhold (New York: 1971).

[3] A poisoned state caused by absorption of bacteria from a region of infection, into the blood stream.

[4] Now that school teachers have seen through the device and have begun to unionize, their administrators (managers) have had to fall back on the older industrial methods of structuring the work to use against the workers. "Contract teaching" and the so-called "voucher system" are the educational establishment's version of the assembly-line and piece-work.



S&P ACTIVITIES

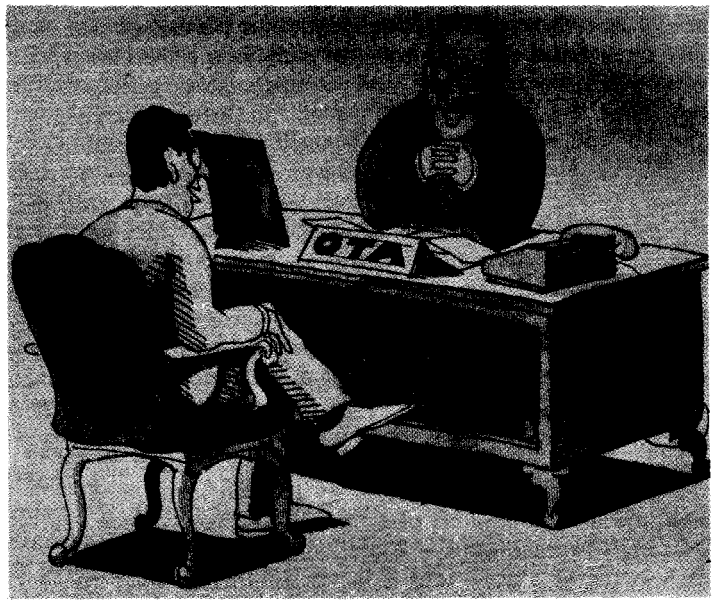
COMPUTERS FOR PEOPLE ORGANIZED IN CHICAGO

Last summer a number of us began to work as a support and education group in the area of computers. Some but not all of us were members of SESPA; we included people in math and sociology as well as computer workers.

So far, we have worked on two specific projects: development of a mailing list program for processing the mailing lists of community and movement groups; and data management for a research group that has compiled a data bank on the Chicago area power structure. The mailing list program is quite technically sophisticated: output can be in the form of printed rosters, gummed labels, and 3 x 5 cards. The list can be sorted and sublists can be selected from it. A variety of groups are using it (paying by cost of computer time and materials), and have learned some data processing techniques, including preparation of punched cards and a brief introduction to programming. The power structure data bank is also progressing well.

At the same time that the specific technical projects have been developed in a satisfactory manner, we have been less successful in our own organizational growth and political education. A number of personal tensions in the group have not been resolved. Therefore we were not able to integrate new people into the group. Our weekly meetings were often unproductive. In part, the most constructive way we were able to deal with the personal tensions was to avoid working together and instead to allow a high degree of division of labor in the group, with each person acting as an "expert" in a narrow field of competence. This way of dealing with personal tensions prevented us from learning new skills from each other. Ultimately these internal problems also kept us from developing other applications which we had planned, such as text editing services for groups with newspapers or newsletters, health clinic record handling, modeling of urban service systems, and short courses on programming and the politics of computing. At this point the group may split into small project oriented sub-groups.

Below is a statement of our goals; we still think the idea of a computer education and support group with the type of commitments outlined in our statement is a good one.



Why Computers For People

Science for the People means the explicit recognition of the political nature of science in this society.

Science for the People means access for all people to useful human knowledge.

Science for the People means the alliance of those who presently have access to scientific knowledge with movements for fundamental social change.

(Originally printed in *New Morning*) Berleley SESPA

What do we mean by "access for all people" and by "an alliance between scientific workers and social movements"? Why have we selected computer technology as a crucial area to work with people for change?

The computer field is in many ways typical of present patterns of control over technology and modern industry, but presents special problems and advantages for us. Access to computers is limited by the fact that they are expensive to buy and maintain (at least for the time being), and can be afforded only by corporations, government agencies, universities and other rich and powerful institutions; buying time on someone else's machine is also expensive. Few technological fields are more envel-

oped in a mystifying cloud of jargon than the computer field. Government agencies, credit bureaus, and other institutions deliberately act to keep people away from technology, leaving it to be used to exploit people and to maintain and extend the power of such institutions (thru data banks and similar mechanisms which are used to centralize power and harass people).

Computers differ from other technologically advanced forms of production in that they process information rather than raw materials. Thus computers, unlike oil refineries or steel mills, are potentially usable by the people in a direct way.

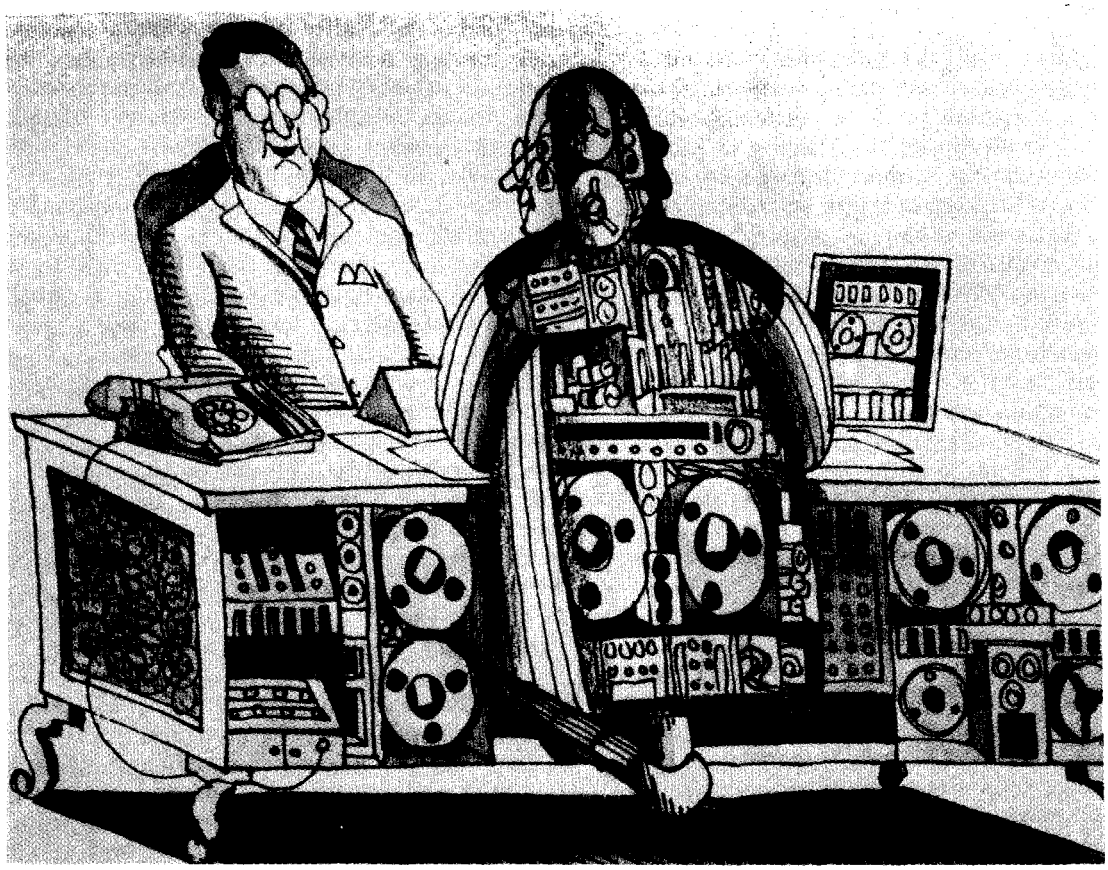
At the present time our ideas for an alliance are:

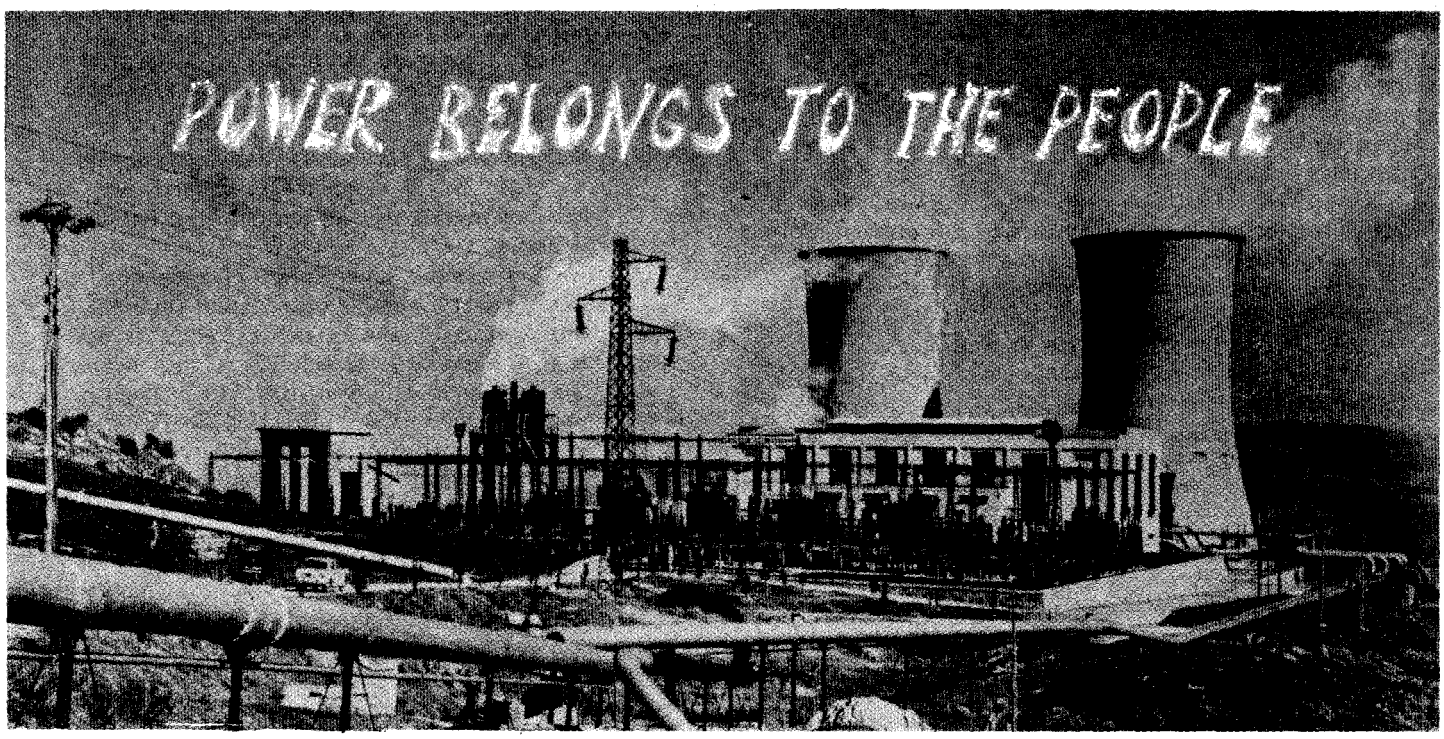
First, we want to teach people about computers because we are interested in this area. We want to retain our identity as scientific workers because we believe that these skills are of importance in political action and because we enjoy using them.

Second, we want to work *with* movement groups, and not to work for them as subservient technicians or as condescending technocrats. We are fully engaged in political struggle ourselves. This means that:

1. We want to contribute to planning projects, including discussions of their political content and goals.
2. Since we hope to demystify computers, we plan to teach the details of the technical operations to people with whom we are working. Ideally, our goal is to make ourselves expendable in our role as "experts".
3. We welcome the exchange of criticism and feedback with people in the course of our work.
4. We are ready to explore the political consequences of the technical procedures which we are explaining. This means that:
   a) We will join in examining whether computers can really help a group realize its goals—we will not assume that all technological innovation is useful.
   b) We will examine how the use of computers might affect a group's organization since the introduction of computers may centralize power in the group or decentralize it, may reduce the amount of busywork that had previously played a role in the group's division of labor, and may allow those people with access to the computer to carry out more efficient communications. We will not ignore these possible political consequences, nor subordinate them to technical details.

Third, our concept of "alliance" is expressed in an effort to build new political relations that are prototypes of those we hope to achieve in a transformed society. In this case, our alliance of politically aware technical workers with other movement groups can serve as a model for people-serving technical innovation in a new society, and as a model for roles for technical workers in such a society.





Stonybrook Science for the People organizes against Long Island Lighting Company

When the "energy crisis" hit Long Island, the misuse of science and technology was staring everyone in the face. The need for clear analysis of the economics and politics of the shortage was apparent. There were particular local issues (pressure for offshore drilling near Long Island for example) which suggested that we would have to do our own research and writing. Our study group spent several weeks reading and discussing relevant texts and articles. We learned that the New York City group was thinking along similar lines so we got together for a discussion, but ended up deciding to write separate leaflets to fit our local conditions.

Our initial intention was to distribute the leaflet to motorists waiting in line for gasoline. We reasoned that this captive audience would be in the ideal state of mind to learn who to blame for their plight. We hoped to involve interested non-members (students and non-students) in the distribution effort. We would provide briefing sessions for the distributors and perhaps win some of them to join our Science for the People (SftP) group. As initially conceived, our "energy project" would have been exclusively an educational effort. About the time we were working on the final draft of "Long Lines, High Prices– Who Is To Blame", we began to think along more ambitious political lines. Perhaps an analysis of the power of the Big Oil Monopoly might create a feeling of impotence unless we could direct the readers of our leaflet to some concrete project that could demonstrate that mass movements can still win.

Our solution was to look for a local energy-related issue that we could organize around. We would hand out our "fuel crisis" leaflet together with an announcement of some meeting, demonstrations or other action that the reader could relate to–but what issue to choose?

A brief search turned up a winner. The Long Island Lighting Company (LILCO)–the local electric power monopoly–was demanding a 19% overall rate hike. (Actually more like 35% for the small user). This would be the 6th rate hike in four years! The justification was that LILCO's stockholders were being threatened by a small decrease in their huge tax-free dividends because people had been responding to the "energy crisis" by using less electricity.

Armed with this information alone we began our publicity campaign by distributing our "fuel crisis" leaflet along with an announcement of a forthcoming Public Service Commission (PSC) hearing on the rate hike. The PSC is the N.Y. agency created by the state to give the impression that the utilities are being controlled in the public interest. It consists of five commissioners with $35,000 salaries appointed by the governor. As might be expected these "public servants" have been much more responsive to the needs of the utilities than to those of the consumer. Even when their hand-picked staff has advised against a rate increase the PSC has invariably given the utilities what they asked for.

At the hearing we met members of Citizens in Action, a group from the other end of Long Island who were also organising a movement to stop LILCO. We exchanged information and agreed to join forces in this struggle. We learned some new facts:

1. Of LILCO's 30 largest stockholders 29 are holding companies controlled by big banks.
2. LILCO's directors are also directors of the banks from whom they borrow money on short-term, high interest basis.
3. LILCO benefits from a "fuel adjustment factor". A law passed in 1908 allows N.Y. State electric utilities to purchase the fuel they need for running their generators at any price and to automatically increase the rates charged to consumers to fully offset any increases in their fuel cost. This factor alone has resulted in a 50-100% increase in electrical rates depending on usage. (We understand that similar "adjustment factors" exist in many other states.) Since the banks that own LILCO also have large interests in the oil companies it becomes clear why LILCO made no effort to shop for cheap oil—in fact, it was clearly in their interest to collude with the oil monoplies in pricing policies that result in LILCO's fuel costs rising much more steeply than direct fuel prices paid by the average consumer.
4. LILCO uses a rate structure which is based both on the amount of power consumed and the type of consumer. The people who consume less, (mostly low income persons) pay much more for each kilowatt hour than the affluent ones who consume more. Industrial users are favored with the lowest rates of all. In addition to squeezing the poor and middle income people this pricing policy encourages wasteful use of electrical power.
5. LILCO has actually bribed customers with $150 bonuses to switch to electrical resistance heating. False advertising and phony estimates result in many trapped Long Island homeowners now paying more than three times what they were told they would have to pay only a few months ago! (Not to mention the ecological folly of encouraging the proliferation of inefficient all electric homes.)

With this additional information we began organizing for the next PSC hearing. This one was jammed with irate consumers. We collected names of those who would be willing to withhold part of their electric bills. The response was overwhelmingly positive and we had the benefit of our initial contact list of 300 names.

Since then the campaign has continued to grow. Our meetings, held every other week, have been attended by many people who have never considered participating in any organized movement before. At these meetings we discuss the struggle and provide educational background information on who owns LILCO and in whose interests it is managed. In general, all this has been well-received.

We have focused the campaign on three goals:

1. Defeat the present LILCO rate hike request!
2. Eliminate the automatic fuel adjustment factor!
3. Establish a new rate structure called "life-line", which would provide the first 300 kilowatt hours per month (minimum needs) at a very low flat rate—say $5. Larger users would pay higher rates.

Another goal, the muncipalization of LILCO has been raised and has generated some controversy in our SftP group. It has been pointed out that city-owned or cooperatively owned electric utilities in other parts of the country charge considerably less than comparable privately-owned electric companies. On the other hand it is clear that "public ownership" under capitalism usually means control and profits for the same banks and corporations that own the private electric companies. Our tentative decision on this matter is to support a municipalization effort if it develops but to take every opportunity to point out the differences between true social ownership and government ownership under capitalism.

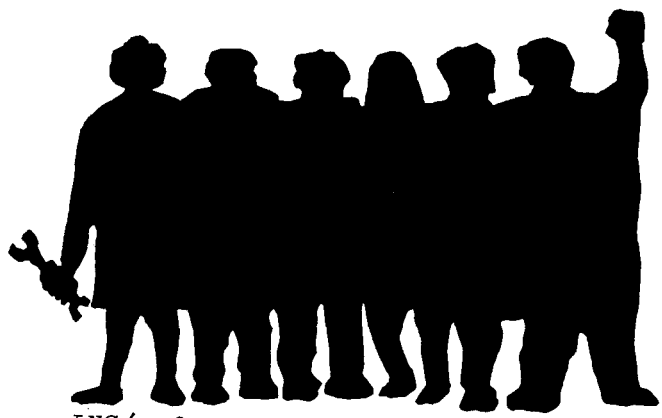
Our principle tactic in this struggle has been to convince people, through direct contact, leaflet distribution and the public media to withhold part or all of their electric bills until our demands are met. We have attracted attention to our cause by holding a mass street rally and by picketing a LILCO stockholders meeting. (Both of these events benefitted from good local press coverage.) Our present effort is to develop local groups that can attract attention by picketing neighborhood LILCO offices, setting up information tables in shopping centers, etc.

The evaporation of the "fuel crisis" (after prices nearly doubled) has undermined our gas line distribution of our energy leaflet, but we have found that the people who are outraged about LILCO are very receptive to information linking electrical price hikes to the practices of the oil monopolies.

It is too early to judge whether we will win our struggle against LILCO. Regardless of the outcome we are convinced that our participation has been worthwhile. We certainly have been successful in making people aware of the contradictions which exist when the primary motive of management is higher profits, rather than serving people's needs.

Also, we have learned an enormous amount about what people on Long Island are thinking, outside our academic environment. From the people who live and work on Long Island, we are learning how to distribute information, listen to suggestions, and implement action.

T.G. for Stonybrook SftP



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ACTIONS AT NSTA CONVENTION

The theme of the National Science Teachers Association (NSTA) convention held March 15-19, 1974 in Chicago was "1984 Minus Ten and Counting". While many of the NSTA session topics referenced values, teaching aids, futures, the future of humankind, and to a lesser extent, issues of science in society, it was clear that the NSTA wasn't concerned about the real possibilities of 1984, ala Orwell.

Science for the People (SftP) working with the Committee Against Racism (CAR) was present for the third organized NSTA action. In contrast to the 1972 action we had a low profile at this year's convention. We were not official program participants, and our pre-convention planning was limited in scope.

One major theme ran through all of our activities. We attempted to communicate our analysis of the social and political aspects of science in general, and specifically racism, sexism, and classism in science and science teaching. Particular emphasis was placed on discussing Jensenism and tracking in schools. This emphasis was carried out in two of our counter sessions and through literature distributed. Further, we tried to make contacts with science teachers throughout the country in order to implement a dialogue concerning the need for integrating political and economic factors in science teaching.

Activities

We distributed about 2,500 leaflets on the first and second mornings of the session outlining our activities and positions on racism, sexism, and classism. The activities we outlined included forums; monitoring exhibits for evidence of race, sex, or class bias; and attending NSTA sessions for the purpose of challenging racist, sexist, and classist presentations.

Friday evening, the first day of the conference, we met to discuss plans and draw up a schedule for staffing the literature table and attending sessions in a less random fashion than the first day. We also decided to hold an open meeting Saturday evening in order to discuss issues to raise at Sunday morning's Issues Committee meeting. We hastily developed a leaflet and sequestered a room from NSTA the next morning.

Our Saturday evening issues meeting attracted only three non-SftP people. One teacher had come because he had seen the sexist cartoon printed in our critique of the IIS biology curriculum in "Science Teaching" issue; he was using the curriculum containing the cartoon and had never noticed it. He wanted more information on sexism, racism, and classism, etc. in science curricula. Our discussion focused on how we could expose these issues in the class and ended in the decision to present two issues to the NSTA "Issues Committee". The first resolution called for an end to racism, sexism, and class bias in the classroom; a condemnation of racist ideology; teacher boycotts of racist, sexist, and classist textbooks; and laws prohibiting the use of IQ tests and tracking based on such testing. The second resolution asked the NSTA to open up the selection of issues and officials to voting by membership.

On Sunday morning, a number of us took part in an interesting and potentially productive experience with the NSTA issues committee. The chairperson announced that the committee was presently preparing statements on six issues: 1) women and science education, 2) accountability, 3) use of animals in classroom, 4) academic freedom and studies linking intelligence, race, and IQ tests, 5) other standardized tests and 6) science fair rules and regulations. He then broke the participants up into discussion groups headed by the committee members.

Generally, the small groups spent a great deal of the time discussing how decisions are made on NSTA stances, in general with no participation of the rank and file. The committee had been working on resolutions for several years and had a hard time getting the board of directors to approve anything. Also, the very conservative current president, Trowbridge, was about to take over what is now a very liberal issues committee, and its members expect to be removed. The 74-75 president Rutherford is very liberal while the 75-76 one, Blumenfeld, is much more conservative.

Blumenfeld, who came to one group, is trying to squelch the Issues Committee's stand on accountability. That subject, which seems to be the latest educational concern, is being legislated in a number of states. It refers to a process whereby teachers are responsible for the success of their students. Students are to be tested at the end of every school year and if the appropriate number fail, the teacher may be fired. Apparently, the NSTA membership is overwhelmingly against this, but Blumenfeld said it was going to come anyway, so NSTA shouldn't rock the boat.

Participation in NSTA Sessions

Our attendance and participation in the NSTA sessions was sporadic and poorly planned. The following is a brief summary of the content and our participation in some of those sessions.

An open discussion on values in science education showed those science teachers attending willing to discuss topics such as science ideology, competition and other socially programmed values and owning class interests regarding science. Our participation in the session was fruitful as we were able to raise points, discuss them and develop further contacts.

Speakers in a session on career awareness and training, gave the impression that they were developing plans to channel students into job slots. These plans were presented in a social and political vacuum; however, we were able change the discussion orientation when, in a question period, one of us raised social and political issues.

Apparently, the U.S. Department of Labor is extensively funding studies of "career awareness".

A lecture, by Francoer of Farleigh-Dickinson, on Genetics and the Future of Man (sic) contained scientific misinformation, sexist remarks and a condescending attitude toward the audience. He talked about the average intelligence in the country being lowered by poor people who breed faster than the more intelligent.

NSTA alloted only 20 minutes (fourth out of four papers inside one and one-half hours) for the one anti-racism lecture by Archey Lacey of New York City University. Our presence at this very small meeting consisted of asking a few political questions and distributing leaflets.

Self Criticism

Although the negative aspects of our actions are obvious throughout the report, further discussion of several of them is necessary. Our table was in a very inconspicuous location. We should have exerted ourselves to locate the table near the registration area. In the future, this should be a priority.

SftP activities were very poorly attended, if at all. Part of this was likely due to our lack of publicity. We had no posters and no mention in the official program. In addition, our general distribution leaflets might have been too long; our leaflets were both position statements and announcements. Next vear it would seem advisable to be listed in the official program and to supplement that publicity both through posters and brief leaflets. Detailed leaflets might be prepared for specific sessions. A second problem with our activities was the location of our session room; it was in an obscure section of the hotel (courtesy NSTA).

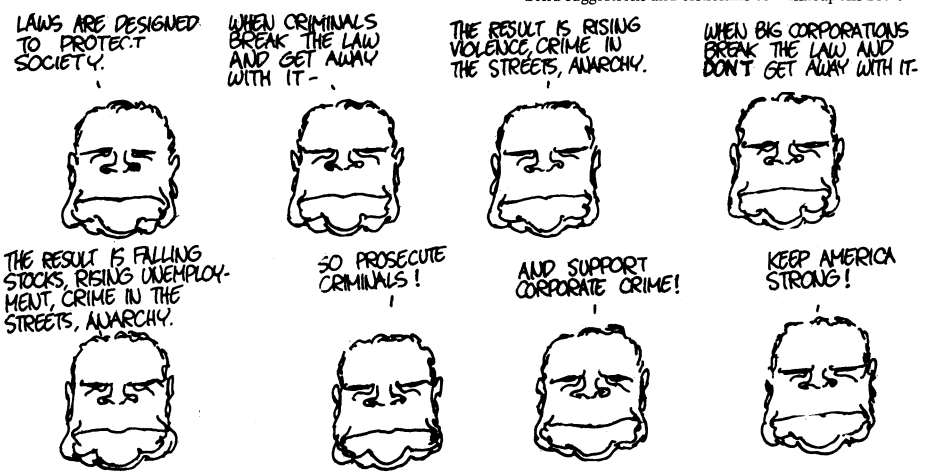
Our attendance at NSTA sessions was sporadic and mostly random. As a result of this and the small number of SftP there, we were unable to confront the real pigs, i.e. the genetics speaker and the energy panel. Next year's plans should include research into speakers and topics beforehand so that attendance may be planned appropriately for large and small sessions.

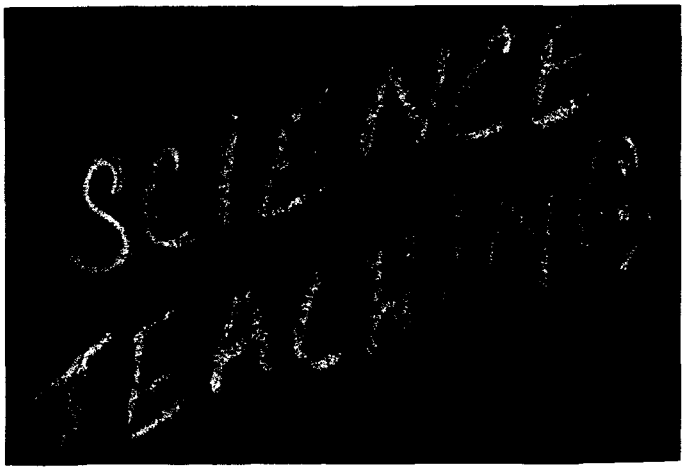
One main criticism we received from people surveying the literature was that the literature was a negative attack on numerous problems facing this country and provided nothing constructive. It was noticed that even in our discussions at the lit. table, politics (socialism) was very low key or nonexistant; and this is the main constructive element. Further discussion is definitely needed to decide whether or not we are going to be up-front about our politics at these conferences! Another thing we neglected to do was hold discussions about politics and tactics of our actions.

Some positive aspects of our activities are that we sold a great deal of literature, particularly the Science and Society pamphlets for use in classrooms. We developed a sense of how the NSTA functions in terms of taking stands on issues, and furthermore we developed a sense of some of the issues that are being pushed in education, e.g., accountability, career awareness, values, futures, etc. Certainly one of the positive aspects of our NSTA activities was the stimulating experience for those of us who had not been involved with NSTA or high school teachers. Contacts were made with science teachers from various parts of the country. In addition, the convention provided incentives for the formation of a science teaching group in Mpls/St. Paul. There are a number of issues that could be organized around with teachers, e.g., racism and sexism in text books, accountability, IQ testing, and tracking.

We invite criticisms of this report (activity) and suggestions for future planning. One suggestion we have is that those interested in planning next year's Los Angeles conference should make themselves known early and begin planning as soon as possible.

Send suggestions and criticisms to Minneapolis SftP.





We are initiating a special page on science teaching as a regular feature. This first installment is based on a letter which describes a political approach to teaching science and math at a New York State University–and the struggle to defend it. The program at Old Westbury is designed with the recognition that future "scientists must be fully aware of the social responsibilities they bear" and "must know the political and social implications of their decisions." We feel this program is especially noteworthy because of all the areas it integrates: science and politics, learner and teacher, basic and advanced studies, practice and theory.

S.T.G.

You asked about how we are struggling with the teaching of nature's science and math at Old Westbury. First of all, Old Westbury is comprised of 75% Black, Puerto Rican and Asian students and 20% white working class students. Their average age is 27. We are a youthful faculty, also largely Third World. We do not have departments; we have program areas (Science & Technology; Politics, Economics and Society; Health Sciences and American Studies; Comparative History, Ideas and Cultures; Communicative and Creative Arts and Education). Faculty members are recruited into one of these areas but are not confined to teach solely in that program. Hence, the teacher as well as the student gets a well rounded view of education and society.

Clearly, we are dealing with people who have been mashed out of any curiosity, much less seeing the necessity of Science and Tech. They all have been told in one manner or another that they cannot understand math and the sciences because they lack the intelligence. We have to, initially, de-educate. We are very fortunate to have a Black mathematician who has–during his 12 years of teaching Black and Puerto Rican children–developed a pedagogy which produces 3rd graders passing 9th year statewide math exams. This success was not the exception, but the rule! So he decided to try to teach adults in a similar manner and begin to eliminate the uptight math teacher.

We do not separate arithmetic from algebra for our most elementary course. From there a student is introduced to a three semester development of Calculus, Algebra and Trig. We are currently working on ways of using the computer as an assistant to the flesh-and-blood teacher. We feel that it is vital to have personal contact with students who are super-alienated from science and science-people.

In Elementary Math Analysis (Precalc/calc) students work on termpapers in the applications of math to all the sciences or on a historical, biographical, or mathspecific topic (what is matrix algebra and how is it used; archeaology, halflives, logs and exponents). The major emphasis is to get the student to read and analyse different texts, journals and essays so that by the time they get to the third semester much of the work will be done on their own and the teacher would be a friendly advisor and tutor.

The more advanced math courses are 85% independent study with papers being the major form of evaluation. The students would form, for example, a Complex Analysis collective and decide how much to cover beyond the minimum suggested by the teacher and whether or not there will be team or individual papers. The teacher would provide the group with a textbook, journal and essay list, guidance and help over the rocky areas with one two hour lecture a week or more–upon the suggestion of the students.

What we have in design but not operation is that a student coming into Science and Tech. goes thru a (political) process of getting a general overview of S&T and how the different parts overlap and how they work for a racist-capitalist society as well as how they work for developing socialist societies. Then the student would spend two to four years concentrating in some specific or general field within Science and Tech. In the senior year students present their project paper to the juniors, seniors and faculty. The project paper must make sense. We are not concerned with (as the bourgeois scientists are) how well one can mystify others with esoterica and science for science's sake.

But I have painted an ideal picture, far from reality. We are fighting for survival against a liberal-facade incompetent reactionary racist administration who feel obligated to destroy what little we have built over the past three years. At this point we are losing. We are losing because the state, of course, supports the revision and the students are not politically educated to the gravity of the situation.

The faculty is 55% Third World but it is unanimously united in the struggle against the state and the administration. I have never worked with or heard of such a united faculty. Believe me, it wasn't this way initially; but in the course of COW's development racism and individualism have been somewhat minimized because of a larger contradiction: the elimination of an educational process that was starting to *educate correctly*.

S.A.

LETTERS

This letter was in response to our solicitation of articles on radical practice, and was accompanied by the article on page 12.

Dear Editorial Collective,

. . . In case you need an upper, I'll pass on a comment made by James O'Connor (author of *Fiscal Crisis of the State* and probably the most original Marxist scholar I've met). In a bibliography of radical journals, he called our humble mag "excellent and underrated." So you're reaching someone.

Actually, I can agree with O'Connor's opinion after the [March, 1974 issue on IQ]–it was one of the best pieces of radical science I've ever seen. But I'm also in total agreement with the statement decrying the academic, theoretical tone of the whole thing, and am thus pleased by the thrust of [the issue you are putting out].

In struggle,
Joe Bowman,
Madison Collective

Dear friends,

Congratulations on your IQ issue. I took the liberty of quoting from the article on the Eugenics history. It's extremely useful information. I have incorporated it in a chapter on "Train the Teacher to Fail" in a forthcoming book. One or two important criticisms:

> There is the implication that the IQ test is something more than just an *achievement test.*
> More importantly, it poses the alternative (never actually stated but implied) that due to *environment*, the child of the Third World or the poor is indeed inferior. *This is the basic lie!*

Annie Stein

Dear SftP,

First: We liked the [March] issue very much. And we want 75 copies to use for political education amongst our friends and enemys. And this isn't because our article is there but because all the articles are really fine, and we feel proud to be part of it. . . As far as we're concerned this issue should be the standard reference for the academic part of this [IQ] business for some time to come.

Second: We're disturbed by some of the points raised by the editorial collective about the issue. The fact that the whole editorial collective (4/5 anyway) didn't know the organization and weren't members of SESPA is disturbing organizationally and reveals serious weaknesses (which seem very basic at this point) in SESPA. It's no wonder that the collective felt alienated and exploited. This in fact seems to have been the case and the editorial collective's feelings are understandable and correct.

However, the bitterness and disappointment that the collective expresses about shit work seems to be used for a more substantial political attack. By saying that "the class base of SESPA is all too obvious, the majority of SESPA members work in white academic circles and speak to other academics rather than the working class," and by saying, "what good is a $50 vocabulary and the big ideas if nothing is done and no one is moved," the editorial collective is expressing in political terms the frustrations and difficulties we all feel and try to deal with in advancing the level of our political work. Essentially the collective is making us feel guilty for not being able to come up with solutions to a problem that the collective itself doesn't know how to answer. . .

Not only that, the particular form of this attack, namely, using the occupations of many SESPA members to belittle the efforts of these people to work effectively and to advance politically is a form of sectarianism. In the words of the Stony Brook chapter it is sectarian to put down without principled criticism the efforts of other groups. By principled criticism we mean concrete suggestions for advancing the level of the work.

For example, there is an article on the Committee Against Racism apparently written by one of the members of the editorial collective. If this represents a possible direction for productive work then the editorial should have said so directly. And if there are "other fronts" to be explored they should have been spelled out. This would have formed a basis for constructive political struggle which would have helped the growth of both the collective and SESPA as a whole. Instead the membership is trashed, depriving both of an opportunity to grow.

Now, trying to follow our own advice, this is how we have been thinking of how to proceed. We have been collecting names for a mailing list, over the last two years, of people who have written letters attacking Jensen in magazines like *Science, Nature, Psychology Today, etc.* Generally, the attacks are ill-focused and miss all the basic political points raised in this issue of *SftP.* (That is why the issue is so strong. It puts everything together all in one place–it's so good). So we will send copies to everyone on this list. It amounts to about 50 people. Then we thought we would try to get on WBAI, WRVR, etc., maybe channel 13 (*never* to debate) to try and teach as many people as we can what's going on. We've written two friends to see if their departments would invite us to speak. One has come through. And that's it. We think it's not much and yet it's a lot somehow for this. What we need is a way to move on the offensive. What should we do?

love and struggle,
Joe and Susie

On April 28, 1974 a meeting was held in Boston to discuss the future direction of **Science for the People** *magazine and the role to be played by the magazine coordinator. Members of the Boston chapter were joined by others from the Northeast region. This report includes background material provided by the Magazine Coordinating Committee and an account of the meeting. We encourage discussion and response from all members.*

Background

SftP magazine began as an outgrowth of the anti-war movement and since its inception in August 1970, has appeared regularly and dependably every two months. As the anti-war movement faded and political perspectives have deepened the magazine has tended to reflect these changes. During these few years, *SftP* has been the main voice of dissidence within the scientific and technical workforce. For those who felt isolated and estranged from the established practise of science and technology, it has provided a voice for their alienation and an organ for their political development. Our organization has undergone a positive shift in its political orientation, a shift from predominately anti-war to a more long term anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist one. The magazine has been an important element in the shift. Its articles have brought out the systematic nature of the misuse of science and technology and has sought to challenge the dominant ideology of science and in our society.

Responsibilities of The Magazine Coordinating Committee

The responsibility of producing the magazine currently rests with the Magazine Coordinating Committee (MCC). The MCC, which began in July of 1973, is composed of people who have served on past editorial collectives and who are willing to put their primary political activity into *SftP* magazine. The MCC is responsible for the long term planning, production, and distribution of *SftP*:

1. Determining the long term focus and direction of the magazine by specifying the kinds of articles and taking steps to generate such material.
2. Establishing General Editorial Policies and Principles by specifying the process by which *SftP* magazine is produced and taking whatever steps necessary to make *SftP* activity a politically responsible and rewarding experience.
3. Selecting and aiding editorial collectives. Although the production of each issue rests with an editorial collective chosen by the MCC, the MCC has the responsibility of helping out the collective members, teaching technical skills where necessary and responding to questions or requests for help or advice.
4. Determining the format of the magazine by maintaining continuity in the form and appearance of the magazine in typesetting, layout, and design convention, in length and frequency of publication.
5. Increasing the distribution of the magazine by planning, initiating and coordinating efforts to increase the readership of the magazine. These efforts should be consistant with the focus and direction determined for the magazine and include advertising and enlisting the help of SESPA/SftP membership, broadening bookstore and library distribution etc.

These responsibilities require major input from the greater membership such that the magazine reflects the position of the organization as a whole. In spite of its success, many people feel that *SftP* has not realized its full potential. In response to a request by the Boston Area Steering Committee, the MCC formulated several proposals regarding the future of the magazine.

Future Directions

The political perspective which underlies these proposals is the conviction that the struggle to achieve socialism is going to be a long one, that it must mobilize the majority who work but enjoy few privileges, that it will be fought along class lines in a way which recognizes and deals with sexism and racism, that it must provide a vision of how our energies can be constructively used. The focus of the magazine should be to help bring the scientific and technical workforce into the struggle in alliance with other strata. To that end the Magazine Coordinating Committee proposes that the magazine be directed

to a much broader constituency—to those who do the nitty-gritty of scientific and technical work (engineers, technicians, computer people, low-level researchers, students, etc.) and to those who are struggling against professionalism and oppressive uses of technology (prisoners, free clinics, etc.) While material will still be about the misuse of science and technology, the focus will be on the struggle against this misuse, and how it relates to the broader political struggle against capitalism.

The following proposals originated with the Magazine Coordinating Committee and were amended and added to by the meeting:

1. That the magazine be directed as outlined above, with the emphasis for the future being on:
   (i) More timely articles.
   (ii) Articles focussing on job conditions, alienation, struggles around work.
   (iii) Articles focussing on struggles against oppressive science, technology and professionalism.
   (iv) Material which unites and identifies the above with other political struggles, which provides historical perspective, which raises questions of strategy and practise. This might be in the form of regular features, for example, News Notes, Working Class history, Book Reviews, Aspects of Racism, sexism, elitism etc.
2. After each issue of the magazine appears, the MCC will arrange an open meeting to discuss the magazine; other chapters are encouraged to do the same.
3. The meeting also recommended that the Magazine Coordinating Committee periodically formulate and present long term plans for the future of the magazine to the national membership.

These proposals were voted on and accepted by the Boston Chapter. We emphasize that these votes represent a tentative solution by the Boston Chapter only and that this subject requires ratification and input from the national organization.

The Magazine Coordinator

For the last year, *Science for the People* Magazine has had a full time paid magazine coordinator, Al Weinrub, working for it. Al is leaving at the end of May. [See announcement in the magazine of March 1974]. This means not only that another coordinator has to be selected and the means for doing this discussed, but also that this is a good time to review the role played by the coordinator.

So far the responsibility of the magazine coordinator has been to work with the Coordinating Committee to organize and coordinate the planning, production and distribution of *Science for the People* magazine. More specifically, the coordinator has assumed the principle responsibility for drawing editorial collectives together, helping them to conceptualize their magazine, teaching them the technical skills of designing a magazine, preparing it for the printer, and organising the mailing of the magazine once it is ready for distribution. On a more long range level the coordinator has attempted to organize groups of people to write, solicit or otherwise generate articles for the magazine. In working with the magazine Coordinating Committee on these kinds of activities the coordinator's role has been to increase the group's efficacy by coordinating its work, for example in writing reports, formulating plans, drafting positions etc.

However, the present Coordinator has worked approximately seventy hours per week on these activities. This is undesirable, not only because it is unreasonable to expect someone to devote this much time to the job, but also because it places too much responsibility and power in the hands of one individual. It was the opinion of the meeting that in the future much of the routine work now done by the coordinator should be taken over by the magazine Coordinating Committee. Thus, although the future responsibilities of the magazine coordinator should still include the provision of fundamental support for editorial collectives and the Coordinating Committee in the production of the magazine, the coordinator should be free to do long range planning, to solicit new material and to increase the distribution of the magazine.

The meeting accepted the proposal from the Coordinating Committee to hire a new magazine coordinator to replace Al Weinrub. The Committee proposed that the final selection should rest with the MCC, since it was essential that its members be able to work closely with the new coordinator. However, while this view found some sympathy in the meeting, several people present felt that in fact the position of coordinator is not simply one of an employee of the Coordinating Committee, but also one that holds considerable political power. The coordinator not only deals with the Coordinating Committee, but has contacts with the rest of the organization. While it was felt that it will certainly be possible to find some formula for selection that will take into account both the wishes of the Coordinating Committee and the membership as a whole, the meeting decided to shelve the problem temporarily. The Coordinating Committee was directed to formulate specific proposals on the method of selection of the coordinator and on the *accountability* of the Committee to the *national* membership. This being so, those present agreed to allow the Coordinating Committee, for this occasion only, to select a coordinator for the next six months, on the understanding that more acceptable procedures will be available in the future.

The Coordinating Committee then chose Sara Lennox as coordinator starting June 1st. Sara has been a member of the Coordinating Committee since last September and has demonstrated a serious committment to the magazine and to the organization as a whole.

If we are to be an effective political organization the magazine must have input from outside the greater Boston area. With this in mind we would like to reemphasize the necessity of the national membership participating in planning the future and to take an active role in the production and distribution of the magazine. MCC

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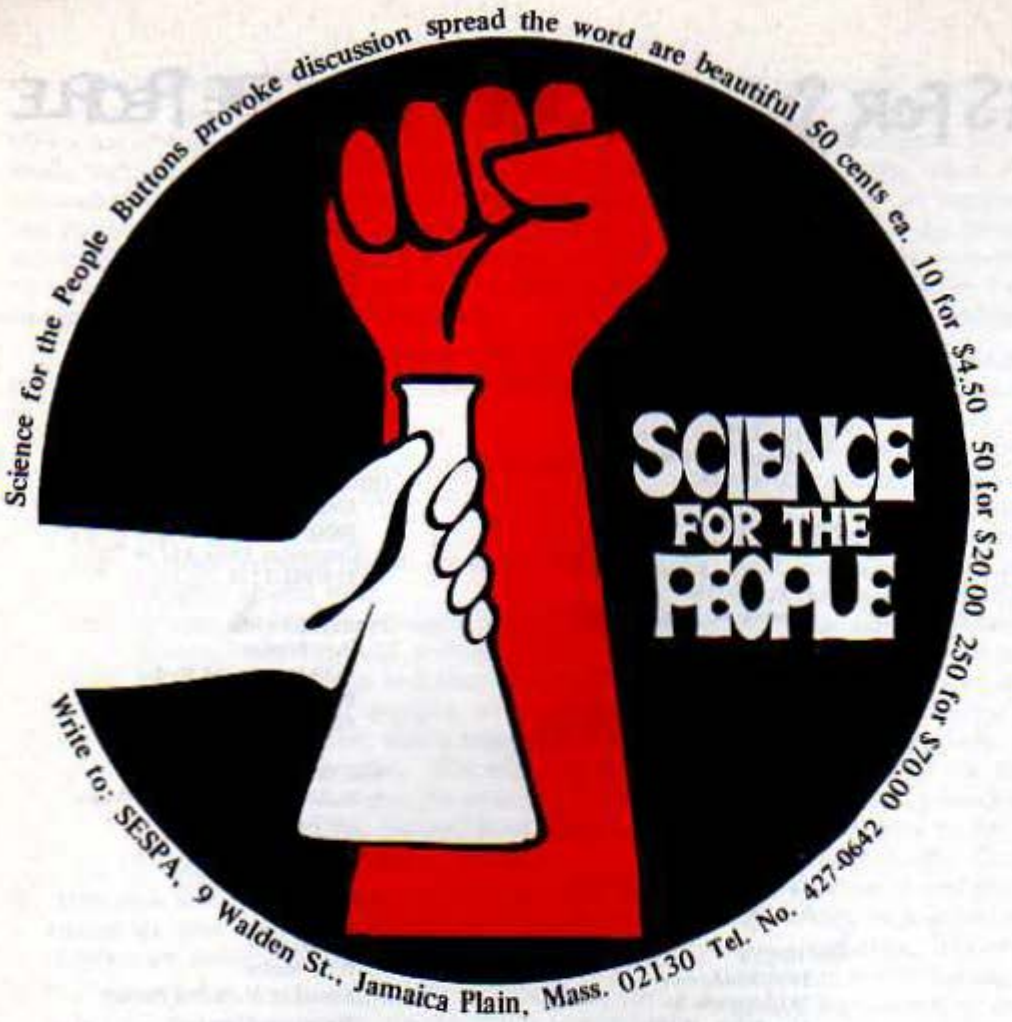

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SUBSCRIPTIONS TO *SCIENCE FOR THE PEOPLE* AND MEMBERSHIP IN SESPA

SESPA is defined by its activities. People who participate in the (mostly local) activities consider themselves members. Of course, there are people who through a variety of circumstances are not in a position to be active but would like to maintain contact. They also consider themselves members.

The magazine keeps us all in touch. It encourages people who may be isolated, presents examples of activities that are useful to local groups, brings issues and information to the attention of the readers, presents analytical articles and offers a forum for discussion. Hence it is a vital activity of SESPA. It is also the only regular national activity.

We need to know who the members are in order to continue to send *SCIENCE FOR THE PEOPLE* to them. Please supply the following information:

1. Name:

   Address:

   Telephone:

   Occupation:
   (if student or unemployed please indicate)

   If you are working, do you work in industry [ ], government [ ], university [ ], other _____

2. Local SESPA chapter or other group in which I'm active:

3. I am enclosing money according to the following scheme: (a) regular membership–$12, (b) indigent membership–less than $12, (c) affluent or sacrifice membership–more than $12, (d) completely impoverished–nothing, (e) I have already paid.

4. I will sell ___magazines. This can be done on consignment to bookstores and newsstands, to your colleagues, at meetings. (If you want to give some away free because you are organizing and can't pay for them, let us know)

5. I am attaching a list of names and addresses of people who I believe would be interested in the magazine. Please send them complimentary copies.

6. I would be willing to provide technical assistance to community, movement, or Third World groups in the areas of:

Please add any comments on the magazine or SESPA or your own circumstances. We welcome criticism, advice, and would like to get to know you.

SEND CHECKS TO: SESPA, 9 WALDEN ST., JAMAICA PLAIN, MASS. 02130