

SCIENCE FOR THE PEOPLE

MAY-JUNE 1977 VOL. 9 NO. 3 \$1

BROWN LUNG

BLUES

cotton dust kills



Nukes in NYC
Sack Saccharin
Recombinant DNA
Abortion Clinic Strike

Sociobiology and Sexism
China Trip
Thoughts on SftP

CHAPTERS AND CONTACTS

Science for the People is an organization of people involved or interested in science and technology-related issues, whose activities are directed at: 1) exposing the class control of science and technology, 2) organizing campaigns which criticize, challenge and propose alternatives to the present uses of science and technology, and 3) developing a political strategy by which people in the technical strata can ally with other progressive forces in society. SftP opposes the ideologies of sexism, racism, elitism and their practice, and holds an anti-imperialist world-view. Membership in SftP is defined as subscribing to the magazine and or actively participating in local SftP activities.

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Cover

This issue's cover graphic is a drawing by Rachel Burger of Community Press Features. The drawing comes from a photograph of a textile mill workers leaving the plant, his clothes covered with the cotton dust that causes brown lung.

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about this issue

Preterm is an abortion and gynecology clinic in Brookline, just outside Boston. Lucy Matson's article tells the story of the Preterm workers' struggle to unionize for better working conditions and better health care for their patients. When it first opened, Preterm had a reputation for pioneering birth control and abortion services in the Boston area. It has become clear, however, that Preterm's interests are in doing "good business" rather than providing health care for women.

Poor working conditions — overworking of counselors, lack of flexibility in the kind of counseling individual workers are assigned to, no regular work schedule — hurt both patients and workers. The strikers have received tremendous support from the community and from patients who have refused to cross the picket line. Fifty workers have been able to keep their picket line going for five months, cutting the clinic's business by 50 percent. There is still no indication that Preterm is willing to sign a contract. While it is questionable whether such a clinic, run by a businessman for profit, can ever really satisfy the needs of women workers and patients, a strong union contract is a crucial step toward decent care and working conditions.

Michael Freemark's "Brown Lung Blues" is a study of one of the most widespread occupational diseases in the United States. Much of what Freemark writes could be applied to other issues of occupational health and safety. He points out that reasonable use of modern technology to clean the air in textile mills could significantly reduce the incidence of brown lung. But most employers resist spending money for workers' health; the government often helps employers by setting inadequate standards for safety. Freemark's explanation of why so little has been done to treat or prevent brown lung is widely applicable: medical institutions, run by successful businessmen, find brown lung an uninteresting disease; government and corporate power are combined to hinder union organizing; competition for a limited number of factories gives rewards to the region that demands least of employers.

Good health care for all people does not depend on more altruistic and more enlightened doctors, but on political change. Employers desire to maximize profit while minimizing costs; workers' health and safety is a cost, and so will be resisted by employers. Only when

workers gain control of their own workplaces will they be able to consciously determine the conditions under which they work.

In this issue we present another article critical of the so-called science of sociobiology. This reflects our continuing struggle to emphasize the fact that scientists are not disembodied spirits whose thinking on social issues is in any way dispassionate, objective, or neutral. Their thinking is as much subject to the social context of their lives as is anyone else's.

Throughout modern history, "scientific" theories of "human nature" have been developed in attempts to demonstrate the inevitability of a particular social and economic order. Whatever the intentions of the theorizer, these theories inevitably serve to legitimate those orders, to absolve individuals responsible for social injustice, and to undermine the will of those who seek a better world. Sociobiology carries with it all the trappings of another such theory, and accordingly, we will continue our attempts to point out its inherent political implications.

The Editorial Committee asked Pat Brennan to write a brief history of her experience in Science for the People and to give her perspective as a long-term (six years) member of the organization. We see this as a step toward connecting people's experience with political analysis in the magazine. In her article, Pat shows how she became slowly politicized through her involvement in SftP and how she learned most strongly from working collectively in action-oriented groups.

She sees, as we do, that problems remain in the organization: to the degree that people still use "right-wrong" rhetoric at meetings and in writing, such language will have an alienating effect on both women members and on people that we are trying to reach outside the organization.

It is clear that SftP's ability to speak to women members and to communicate effectively with people outside SftP depends not only on analysis but also on direct, nonalienating language and supportive group interaction.

We hope that other SftP members will send us similar articles which integrate the personal and the political.

letters

Dear SftP,

I was disturbed by Lorraine Roth's letter and am compelled to respond to her invitation for further debate. She implies that every good socialist should at all times adhere strictly to nineteenth century Marxian analysis, even when we recognize it as dogma in light of our real life experience. I feel this is a very limiting and, yes, male-identified analysis of socialism.

In other words, economic class struggle is not alone the overriding issue of our time. It is simplistic to believe that the alleviation of economic class divisions will naturally set into motion the "cures" for racism and sexism. Neither of those "isms" fit neatly into a class analysis, although they can be willfully forced to do so. They are both all-pervasive in nature and therefore demand special consideration in an economic struggle.

I am surprised at the choice of rape vs. racism as an example of attacking one problem while reinforcing another — a loaded topic. It can be equally well-argued that attacking the problem of racism with racial solidarity reinforces the problem of sexism. Black women continue to be victims of a male-dominated culture.

I am not insensitive to the issues of racist rape allegations, but does Margaret Burnham suggest that we ignore rape altogether for fear of offending the sensibilities of *some* black men? Truly, black men and women have been and continue to be unnecessarily persecuted while white men may often go unnamed. It is not my intention to minimize

the importance of racism, but to reiterate the importance of sexism in this issue. We cannot ignore the fact that rape, even when a manifestation of racial hatred, is in essence a victimization of *women by men*. Unfortunately it is still a reality that more often than not, rape accusations (no matter what race they involve, when and if women dare make them) are true. Consequently I fear that rape, (for example), if completely estranged from a feminist struggle, can continue to exist, regardless of economic system (who knows what goes on behind closed doors?).

Lorraine's insinuation that feminism is less interested and even inhibiting to a socialist realization is simply ill-founded and leads me to question the depth of her feminist sympathies. It also leaves me doubtful that any of us have any practical notion of what alleviation of sexism and racism truthfully entails. Yes, surely an integration of forces is necessary (and in fact exists to some extent — every member of every race and of either sex is a member of any one economic class). But I suspect to achieve a near-complete integration of various needs requires a certain amount of conflict. This brings to mind a quote from Frederick Douglas: "Those who profess to favor freedom and yet depreciate agitation, are men (and women!) who want crops without plowing up the ground." It is naive to believe that there will ever be satisfying socialist revolution without a healthy inner struggle that may at times strike us as divisive.

In the long-run feminism and anti-racism serve to raise the consciousness of the entire population — i.e., feminism is not intended for the sole "in vacuo" benefit of women, it seeks to free men as well. I believe we must continue to face the complexities of sexism and racism head-on without minimizing the importance of either one. We cannot assume that attainment of a classless society alone will leave us "happily ever after."

Sincerely,
Ronnie Rom
Middletown, CT

Dear SftP,

I was very interested in your last issue, with its two articles on community organizing in Mission Hill. I, too, have been living and working on Mission Hill for the last few years, and see our situation somewhat differently from either Howard Waitzkin or John Grady.

Howard Waitzkin's article is clearly over-optimistic, as John Grady points out. In spite of the initial successes of Roxbury Tenants of Harvard (RTH), Harvard and other institutions are still very much with us. The MASCO power plant is perhaps the most frightening hint of their future plans. Mistakes have been made by the community — serious mistakes. One of the most serious probably was the decision to accept the Affiliated Hospital

LETTERS, continued on p. 38.

BROWN LUNG BLUES

Michael Freemark

Brown lung is the most important, and least recognized, occupational disease in the Southern United States. Brown lung disables thousands of active and retired textile workers, yet for years the medical profession has denied the significance or even the existence of the problem.

What Is Brown Lung?

Brown lung, or byssinosis, is a chronic respiratory disease associated with inhaling cotton, flax, and soft hemp dusts. The initial symptoms are chest tightness, cough, sputum production and shortness of breath on the first day of every work week. Symptoms may disappear shortly after leaving work but recur each Monday after a weekend away from dust exposure ("Monday-morning chest tightness").

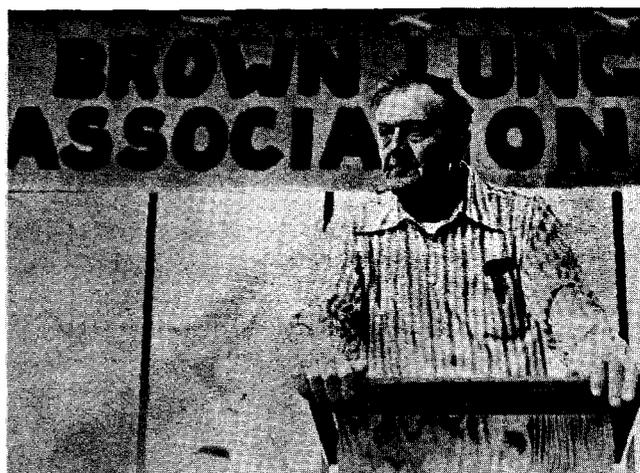
The illness is progressive: in the early stages of the disease, there is occasional chest tightness on the first day of the work week; as the disease gets worse, chest tightness occurs on other days of the week; eventually, brown lung leads to permanent incapacity. Brown lung, in its advanced stages, is similar to and is most often misdiagnosed as emphysema or chronic bronchitis(1,2).

Brown lung is a worldwide problem of great magnitude. In the US alone, there are an estimated 300,000 active textile workers constantly exposed to cotton dust. Several studies indicate that approximately 20-25 percent of those working in carding and spinning (preparation) rooms in the mill suffer from the disease. The disease is less prevalent (2-10 percent) in other, less dusty mill areas. Overall, brown lung affects between 25,000 and 35,000 active American textile workers and many more inactive and retired employees (2,3,5). The prob-

Michael Freemark is a member of the Durham chapter of Medical Committee for Human Rights (MCHR). He is also a resident in pediatrics at the Duke University Medical Center in Durham, N.C.

lem is particularly acute in the Southern United States, where textiles employ more than 25 percent of the total labor force in North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, and Tennessee.

It must be emphasized first and above all that brown lung is a *preventable* illness, *caused* by inhaling microscopic dust particles. Several studies have shown that the disease is related to cotton dust concentration within the mill. The incidence of the disease could be significantly reduced by using modern dust-control technology. Merchant, *et al.*(5) have suggested 0.1 mg/m³ as a "reasonably safe level" of lint-free cotton dust: the present Federal dust standard is 1.0 mg/m³.



Frank Blechman-Brown Lung Cotton Mill Blues



Opening and carding — the dustiest part of the mill.

There is evidence that the active agent in brown lung is the leafy bract of the cotton plant, which is harvested together with the cotton, separated, reduced to a fine dust, and dispersed in the mill, where it is inhaled by workers. The active agent may contain allergens, and/or provoke the release of similar substances from the lungs. Responses of the body's own immune system may play a role in causing the disease. The precise mechanisms which start the development of brown lung are still unknown and require further study (2,4).

Twenty to twenty-five percent of workers in the preparation rooms of the mill suffer from the disease.

Smoking may increase the potential effects of cotton dust on the lungs and increase the rate of illness and death related to dust exposure. However, neither smoking, mill fever, weaver's cough, nor mattress makers' fever (other acute, cotton textile-related respiratory conditions) cause Monday morning chest tightness; this symptom is specific to brown lung(2,5). And it is clear that brown lung does occur in textile workers who have never smoked.

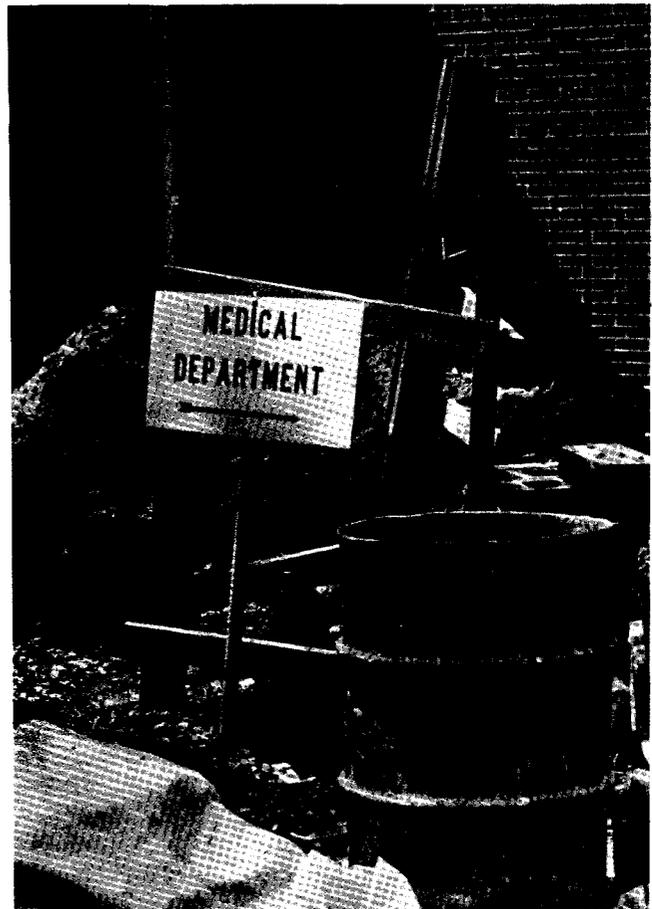
What Has Been Done About Brown Lung?

For the most part, the illness has been consciously ignored by mill owners as well as governmental leaders.

Brown lung was first described among flax workers in Italy in 1705. The disease was well known in Britain in the 1800's, and it was recognized that adequate ventilation in the mill could reduce the incidence of the disease(2). Brown lung was officially designated an occupation-related illness under British workers' compensation laws in 1941.

Nevertheless, American industry spokespersons denied the importance or even the existence of the disease. In a 1947 report, the US Public Health Service claimed that serious dust illness was hardly known to exist among American cotton workers. Researchers were often prohibited from entering the mills, and the first serious American epidemiologic study of brown lung was not completed until 1967(1).

The coverup has continued despite changes in legislation. The Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA), passed in 1970, established standards and guidelines for safety within the workplace and provided for plant inspection. Unfortunately, enforcement has been lax. For example, as of August 1975, only 17 of 124 textile mills in South Carolina had been inspected. Although 14 of these 17 mills were found to have dust levels which exceeded federal standards, the cost of non-compliance was trivial. T. Avery Nye, the North Carolina Commissioner of Labor, recently stated that the average fine for all industrial safety and health violations in North Carolina in 1975 was \$34 (*Raleigh News and Observer*, 11/10/75, p. 2). A North Carolina Public Interest Research Group report (12/75) indicated that no fines at all were assessed for 79 percent of all industry



Chip Hughes and Len Stanley-Brown Lung Cotton Mill Blues



The weave shop — heat, dust, noise and production quotas.

violations under the North Carolina OSHA inspection program.

Legislation passed in 1971 allows disabled North Carolina textile workers to get compensation for brown lung disease. However, the administrative procedures for obtaining compensation were clearly formulated to prevent workers from collecting these benefits. After being informed of the nature of his or her illness, the active worker must inform his or her employer within 30 days

that s/he plans to apply for compensation, and within two years must actually file papers to that effect. The worker with brown lung thus risks and fears demotion or dismissal at an early age in his or her attempt to obtain compensation. As a consequence only 38 workers, all of them retired, have yet received benefits.

Why Has So Little Been Done?

Brown lung is a disease of oppression; its tale is one of tragedy and violence.

The American textile industry began to develop in New England in the early 19th century, when cotton picked and harvested in the South was shipped North where textile production was more efficient and profitable. In the New England factory towns, workers were subjected to harsh working conditions, strict rules and regulations, long hours with low pay, and inadequate food.

Following the Civil War and Reconstruction, wealthy Southern businessmen began to invest heavily in the developing Southern textile industry. Economic depression in the late 19th century forced farmers to seek work in mill towns; and Northern capital was attracted by the promise of Southern labor which was "cheap", "contented", poorly organized, and unwilling to strike(10).

Working conditions in the South paralleled those in New England. Wages were low and actually declined while prices rose in the first two decades of the 20th century. Hours were long, the work routine was harsh, and living conditions were barely tolerable. Young children were frequently employed for strenuous and dangerous work. Moreover, the mill towns were essentially extended "white families" presided over by paternalistic mill owners who excluded blacks and other minority peoples (7).

The "stretchouts" (or "speedups") in the 1920's finally brought Southern labor to its feet. In order to in-

Boycott J.P. Stevens

Like the mills of other companies, J.P. Stevens mills are characterized by blatant disregard for bare minimal safety standards. North Carolina OSHA inspectors called in by the union at two plants in Roanoke Rapids, N.C. found that, over a normal workday, significant numbers of the 1,700 workers were exposed to more than 12 times the amount of cotton dust in the air permitted under the current maximum federal level. Some of these workers were exposed to more than 30 times the federal standard for shorter periods during the workday.

Like the rest of the textile industry in the U.S., Stevens is not unionized, except for its Roanoke Rapids location, where workers voted in a union over two years ago and have still been unable to get Stevens to sign a contract. Unlike other textile companies, however, J.P. Stevens has become the target for one of the largest union organizing drives ever. This is due to its being one of the largest textile employers in the South, but is also the direct result of its violently anti-union behavior, which has made it the nation's number one labor-law

violator. Stevens has been cited for violations by the NLRB on 15 different occasions since 1965, and has become the symbol not just of the struggle over brown lung, but also of the anti-union South in general.

The Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union (ACTWU), supported by the AFL-CIO, has called for an international boycott of Stevens products. The unions hope that the boycott, in conjunction with demonstrations and legal confrontation, will help achieve a breakthrough at J.P. Stevens, which would then pave the way for the unionization of the entire south. Most of J.P. Stevens products are marketed under a variety of names at the retail level, including the following brands of sheets, towels, carpets, draperies, and blankets: Utica, Beauticale, Tastemaker, Fine Arts, Merryweather, Finesse, Spirit, Forstmann, Yves St. Laurent, and Gulistan. For more information write ACTWU, 15 Union Sq., New York, NY 10003, or ACTWU, 930½ Roanoke Ave., Roanoke Rapids, NC 27870.

—Editorial Committee

crease profits, many workers were fired or laid off and the remaining labor force had to work longer and harder for equivalent or reduced wages. And there was no protection: prior to 1929, no Southern state had minimum wage legislation and four states had no workers' compensation laws(10).

In response to the stretchouts, Southern workers (often with the guidance of Communist Party members) began to organize. Meetings were held, schools for workers were sponsored and union activity was encouraged. Suddenly in 1929 textile workers in Elizabethton, Tennessee struck to protest low wages, dilapidated housing, high living costs, and growing work loads. Similar grievances were voiced by textile strikers from the Loray Mill in Gastonia, NC and by workers from mill towns throughout the South.

But the strikes progressed in similar fashion. Injunctions were brought against picketers, and state militia (often hired by the companies themselves) were employed to crush the workers' movement. Many textile workers were killed or imprisoned. Several company presidents refused to negotiate with the unions or made promises which were later retracted (7,10).

Company and state resistance, as well as overwhelming economic depression, spelled failure for the strikers, and subsequently union activity in the South fell dramatically. Union membership, once at 270,000, declined rapidly after 1934, until at present, North Carolina union membership is the lowest in the United States.* As a consequence, the average industrial worker's annual wages remain lower in North Carolina than in any other state.** And industrial abuses like the conditions which produce brown lung continue unabated and unchecked.

Unionization *per se* has not always provided an adequate solution. A twelve-year union drive at J.P. Stevens, the nation's second largest textile corporation, has been marked by intense harassment of workers and the illegal firing of 289 workers for union activity. (See box.) In September 1974, the Textile Workers Union of America (TWUA) was officially certified as the bargaining agent for employees at Stevens' seven Roanoke Rapids, North Carolina plants.† But no contract has yet been negotiated between workers and employers at Stevens; the corporation has given lip service to contract discussions but has shown no intention of reaching a

*Textile Workers Union of America (TWUA) represents 10 percent of all Southern textile workers.

**Textile workers are the lowest paid industrial workers in the nation, averaging approximately \$4400 in annual wages.

†Since 1967, the National Labor Relations Board has found Stevens to be guilty of unfair labor practices on 13 separate occasions, and has ordered the company to reinstate the 289 illegally fired workers with back pay totalling more than \$1.3 million.



Brown Lung Cotton Mill Blues

Textile workers imprisoned at Fort McPherson, Georgia, for picketing during 1934 strike.

viaable agreement. In other situations, Stevens has taken a more direct approach. In the summer of 1975, the corporation simply closed a Statesboro, Georgia plant which was unionized under court order. The complex and time-consuming National Labor Relations Board grievance procedures themselves work against effective union bargaining activity.

Brown Lung and Health Care Priorities

The lessons of brown lung also shed light upon the glaring inadequacies and the class nature of medical education.

Brown lung is the most important, and least recognized, occupational disease in the Southern US. For years the medical profession denied the importance of the disease; in contemporary medical schools, brown lung is presented as an "unusual" yet "uninteresting" respiratory condition. The sociopolitical and economic conditions which created and perpetuate this illness are rarely, if ever, discussed. This is characteristic of American medical education which on the whole emphasizes individual disease processes and acute rather than preventive care, and isolates medical illness from its socio-economic base.

This lies in stark contrast to medical education in the People's Republic of China, where students gain instruction in agriculture, industry, political economics and philosophy, history, foreign language (often English), preventive medicine and public health, and where 1/3 of the medical curriculum is devoted to life and work in factories and in the rural countryside. The

people of China are served by a health care system controlled by workers and consumers(12).

The trustees of American health care institutions are members of the upper classes(16). Several studies (Table 1) confirm the following conclusion drawn by Goldberg and Hemmelgarn(14) in their recent investigation of Detroit-area hospitals:

Hospital boards are dominated by business executives, members of the legal and accounting professions, and spokespersons for medicine and hospitals ... the consumer and the general community are very seriously under-represented. Obviously, hospital boards are not representative of nor do they reflect the composition of the community generally.

Board members of these powerful institutions exert a significant influence upon federal, state, and local health policy, and set funding priorities for health research and faculty appointments and promotions. Upper class trustees establish policies for medical education which prevent the examination of the relationships between medical illnesses (brown lung is one of many examples) and the political, social and economic conditions for which the board members themselves, or their class as a whole, are responsible. Indeed, the corporate class has a vested interest in maintaining and creating socioeconomic conditions (poverty, pollution, poor housing and nutrition, etc.) which in themselves breed illness. The health care industry "boom" — institutional expansion, skyrocketing costs, and technological overdevelopment — reflects this trend toward increasing domination of health care by considerations of business and profit.

Organizing for Action in North Carolina

The Durham, North Carolina chapter of the Medical Committee for Human Rights is an organization of health professionals and paraprofessionals, health workers and students, and health consumers united behind the following principles:

1.) Problems in health care are not isolated from other problems in American society. The health care system as a whole, based on profit, is incompatible with good health care delivery.

2.) All people are entitled to health care that is humane, comprehensive, preventive, continuous, and accessible.

3.) Health services and institutions should be democratically controlled by those who use them and work with them.

The illness has been consciously ignored by mill owners as well as government leaders.

4.) Good health care requires an end to racism, sexism, ageism, class discrimination, and elitism in the health care sector.

5.) MCHR is committed to action to effect these principles.

During the spring of 1975, the MCHR Brown Lung Task Force was created with the following goals:

1.) Brown lung screening of active and retired textile workers with an aim towards providing compensation for disabled persons.

2.) Education of workers and health care personnel with respect to the medical, historical and sociopolitical aspects of brown lung.

TABLE 1.

HOSPITAL BOARD COMPOSITION ACCORDING TO OCCUPATION

Study	Number of Trustees Questioned	Number of Hospitals Studied	Occupation (%)		
			Business	Professional	Other
A(11)	716	29	55	29	16
B(13)	9665	632	54.5	30.4	15.1
C(14)	530	34	55.1	30.0	12.5
D(17)	2043	224	52 a.	19	a.

a. This 52 percent figure does not include bankers who were the "predominating profession in the 'other' category."



3.) Encouragement of union activity by active textile workers as a viable means for ultimately preventing the disease within the workplace.

4.) Presentation of brown lung as a failure in medical education with emphasis on the class nature and structure of contemporary health care.

To begin to accomplish these goals, MCHR has presented a forum and slide show on brown lung to health care students in the Durham-Chapel Hill area. We are working to build a strong constituency of health care personnel committed to political change in the health sector. Recently, Brown Lung Associations led by retired textile workers have been organized in Greensboro, North Carolina; Spartanburg, South Carolina and Columbia, South Carolina. MCHR has

helped by offering educational and screening clinics which reached approximately 280 active and retired textile workers in Greensboro; Roanoke Rapids, North Carolina; Kannapolis, North Carolina and Columbia.

We uncovered 120 cases of brown lung, mostly in men who had been employed for more than twenty years

Above all brown lung is a *preventable* illness, caused by inhaling textile dust particles.

those with brown lung had never smoked. Only two workers had been previously diagnosed as having brown lung; other cases had been misdiagnosed as chronic bronchitis, emphysema, "breathing problem," "lung trouble," "unknown" and "none." We referred disabled employees to local doctors for treatment and followup chest x-rays. As of January, 1976, forty to fifty workers (all retired) have filed papers for compensation with the North Carolina Industrial Commission, but none have yet received compensation.

MCHR has supported union organizing as a first step towards decent working conditions, but the combination of big business and state governments anxious to keep big business happy will ensure that the fight is uphill all the way. Textile workers in the South and elsewhere need the support of concerned and organized health care workers. To help, write: Durham Medical Committee for Human Rights, Box 3434, Duke Hospital, Durham, N.C. 27710. □

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Don't Breathe the Air on Morningside Heights

Robert Hedges



Columbia University is planning to activate a nuclear reactor on its New York City campus. It is designed for teaching and research and would not produce power for either the city or the university. Even though it is small, rated at 250 kilowatts, it can be pulsed to 2500 kilowatts. The basic facility was built some six years ago, but the radioactive fuel rods have not yet been installed.

The Ad Hoc Committee Against Columbia's Reactor has been fighting the activation of this reactor for six years. We consider the reactor a *real threat* to the health and even the lives of the people living and working in this densely populated community. We have testified against the reactor in the courts, and before hearings of the Atomic Energy Commission. We took our case to the Supreme Court to petition for a writ of *certiorari* (a writ of a superior court calling up the records of a lower court) which would have required

Robert Hedges has lived in the Morningside Heights section of Manhattan for over twenty years, and is a veteran community activist. He has been a leader in the fight against Columbia University's reactor.

Columbia to conduct an environmental impact study. Unfortunately, we lost the decision with only Justice Douglas dissenting. This action cost us about \$2,000. An appeal for justice is not cheap.

We have also presented our case before many community groups, including labor unions whose members work for Columbia on Morningside Heights. We have supplied data for several articles on the reactor which have appeared in the *Spectator*, Columbia's undergraduate newspaper. We have circulated information to the Columbia teaching staff, not all of whom even knew about the reactor, and we also delivered a protest letter with 300 staff signatures to Columbia President William McGill.

We are now working with elected city officials to pass legislation which could block activation of the reactor. Recently, the New York City Health Department's Bureau of Radiation Control enacted an amendment to the City Health Code requiring Columbia to obtain a license from the city as well as from the federal government before the reactor could be activated. While this amendment will not necessarily stop the reactor, it does at least demonstrate that city officials are concerned

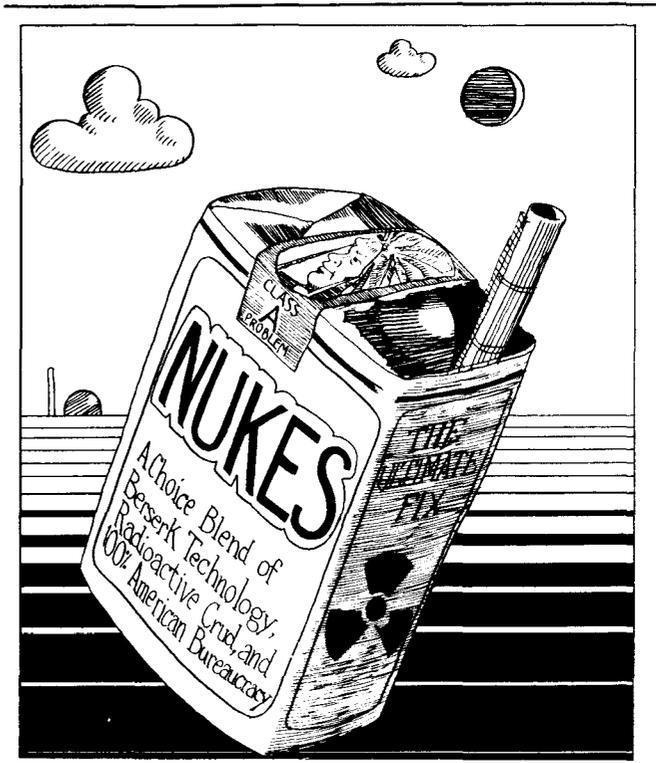
about the dangers involved, especially because they are to some degree responsible for the reactor's safe operation.

Why are we alarmed? Why have many of us who live near the reactor site spent so much time and money fighting it? Without even considering the possibility of a catastrophic accident, which would immediately release lethal doses of radiation into New York City, we believe that the reactor would endanger the health of our community even when operating normally. For example, Columbia has admitted that radioactive argon-41 would be released into the atmosphere through a stack or chimney built for that purpose. This gas would descend to street level where people would breathe it into their blood through their lungs. Columbia's engineering professors maintain that argon-41 is not a significant health threat because it would only be released in small amounts, and its half-life is only five hours. The gas does not, however, disappear entirely. Other sources of radioactive emissions include the heat exchange unit, radioactive wastes, etc.

We believe that any increased radioactivity in the environment is not good for human beings, and that the amounts of argon-41 expected to be released by the Columbia reactor *would* be a very significant health threat. Studies by Dr. Ernest Sternglass of the University of Pittsburgh, by Dr. Gofman and others, indicate that argon-41 could be especially dangerous to unborn fetuses and young children. These studies suggest that argon-41 can increase the incidence of stillbirths, leukemia, and death during the first year of life. In addition, the radioactive gas could effect the genes of adults of childbearing age, producing damage that would not become apparent for several years. The time lag between exposure to radiation and observable evidence of damage to health is similar to the lag for asbestos poisoning: People do not drop dead immediately.

All of these dangers would accompany the operation of a reactor in perfect condition, by human beings who never make a mistake. As we all know, nothing designed, constructed or operated by people can be guaranteed against human error. Recall for a moment the sinking of the "unsinkable" Titanic, the astronauts who died on the launching pad, the failure of the Teton dam in Idaho, and the Hindenburg explosion. The short history of nuclear power reactors already bears testimony to the fact of human fallibility. Many examples of near catastrophes can be found which are clearly assignable to human error in the design, construction and operation of nuclear power plants.

Columbia President McGill defends the reactor in the name of academic freedom. He claims that Columbia needs the reactor as a teaching tool for young engineers. But according to our information, only 20



students would receive instruction with the reactor. McGill's argument seems to be that literally thousands of people must accept a serious risk of damage to their lives in order that Columbia may bask in the "glory" of having a nuclear reactor on its center city campus, for the training of only a handful of students! This is another example of Columbia's elitist relationship to the community.

So far we have been successful at least in delaying the activation of the Columbia reactor. But we are up against the considerable power of Columbia University and the \$100 billion nuclear power industry. We welcome your support.

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Update

Columbia University was granted, in mid-April, a provisional permit by the Nuclear Regulating Commission (NRC) to activate a TRIGA nuclear reactor on its campus in New York City. However, the City of New York, through its Bureau of Radiation Control and Department of Health has denied a city license to Columbia! But this may not be the end of the fight if Columbia and the NRC decide to take the issue through the courts.

Recombinant DNA: Does the Fault Lie Within Our Genes?

Jon Beckwith

I have been doing research in bacterial genetics for the last 12 years at Harvard Medical School and I am a member of Science for the People. Over the last couple of years, we have been discussing in our laboratory how the recombinant DNA technique could make certain of our experiments much easier to do. However, as a result of these discussions we decided not to use this technique at all. This is not because the particular experiments we were talking about could be thought of as health hazards, in any way. Rather, my reasons were that I do not wish to contribute to the development of a technology which I believe will have profound and harmful effects on this society. I want to explain why some of us have arrived at this decision.

In 1969, a group of us in the laboratory developed a method for purifying a bacterial gene. We took that opportunity to issue a public warning that we saw developments in molecular genetics were leading to the possibility of human genetic engineering.(1) While we saw genetics progressing in this direction, we had no idea how quickly scientists would proceed to overcome some of the major obstacles to manipulating human genes. The reports on the use of recombinant DNA technology, beginning in 1973, represented a major leap forward. The result is that geneticists are now in a position to purify human genes. And proposals have already been put forward for the setting up of "mammalian DNA banks."(2) Further, techniques are being developed which will allow reintroduction of those genes into mammalian cells. These steps appear perfectly feasible.

In March 1977, the National Academy of Science held a forum on recombinant DNA in Washington, D.C. Several members of Science for the People, Jon Beckwith among them, spoke on the hazards of recombinant DNA. The Forum was marked by what the media have called "Vietnam era protest": several opponents of recombinant DNA from the People's Business Commission unfurled a banner which quoted Hitler: "We shall create a perfect race." On the same day that the Forum began, several organizations issued a joint statement in Washington opposing all recombinant DNA research.

There are still some barriers left to introducing genes into human cells, organs or embryos at the proper time or in the proper way. But these goals are not at all inconceivable and they may be achieved very rapidly (see reference 3). Whatever the current state of knowledge, to claim that the possibilities of genetic engineering of humans with this technique is far off is to totally ignore the history of this field.

In 1969, most scientists pointed to the impossibility of purifying human genes and claimed that such developments were *at least* decades off. In fact, they were four years off. Let's not be fooled again. Just as suddenly as recombinant DNA appeared on the scene, breakthroughs in "genetic surgery" may appear.

And when the day arrives in the near future when geneticists have constructed a "safe" vector for carrying mammalian genes into human cells, others will begin to use it for human genetic engineering purposes. There has already been at least one reported case in which there were direct attempts to cure a genetic disease in human beings with virus-carried genes(4) and in human cells.

But, why be concerned about human genetic engineering? There are, certainly many individuals and groups which have ethical or religious objections to any intervention of this kind in human beings. Possibly after widespread discussion within a society, those objections might predominate. I, personally, do not necessarily view all human genetic intervention as inherently to be opposed. But, I would rather point today to some concrete dangers of the development of recombinant DNA research by examining the scientific, social and political context in which it is proceeding. For that reason, much of what follows will speak to those issues rather than directly to recombinant DNA.

Scientific Developments

In the last 10 or 15 years, there have been advances in a number of areas of genetics which bring us to a situation today, in which *genetic engineering is already underway*. These include a variety of types of genetic screening programs in which it is possible to identify

genetic differences between people by examining cells of individuals.(5)

The approaches are: 1) amniocentesis, where the cells of a fetus obtained from a pregnant woman can be examined for genetic variations. In a small number of cases, these variations are known to cause serious health problems and suffering may be eliminated by giving the parents the option of aborting such fetuses. 2) Post-natal screening — when infants are screened after birth for genetic differences. Again, in a small number of cases, those variations may cause disease and treatment may be provided. 3) Adult screening — where prospective parents can be advised of the likelihood of their bearing children who might carry particular genetic variations. While each of these programs has proved beneficial to some individuals, they have also encountered problems, been controversial, and, in some cases, caused suffering to those screened. In addition, all of these programs raise the basic question of who is deciding who is defective, or even, who shall live?(6)

There are other developments which have received much attention in the press — e.g. the possibility of cloning genetically identical individuals and the attempts to grow fertilized eggs in the test tube and then implant them in a woman's uterus.

At the same time that these developments in genetic technology were taking place, there was also a growth in studies in human behavioral genetics. In the last ten years, there has been a resurgence of supposedly "scientific" research which claims to explain many of our social problems as being due to genetic differences between people.(7) For instance, there are the attempts to say that the inequality which exists in this country or the lower achievement of various groups, particularly blacks, is due to inferior genes.(8) Or the proposals that criminality might be explained by genetic differences between the criminal and the noncriminal — the case of the XYY male.(9) (By the way, one of the reasons that I suggest that genetic engineering is already under way, is that XYY fetuses have been aborted after detection by amniocentesis.) (10) In both these cases, the scientific evidence has been shown to be nonexistent and, in some cases, fraudulent. In addition, there are the more recent attempts in the field of sociobiology to claim biological and genetic evidence to justify the lower status position of women in this society.(11) It is a disgrace that this government continues to support such shoddy, groundless and ultimately harmful research.

Socio-Political Context

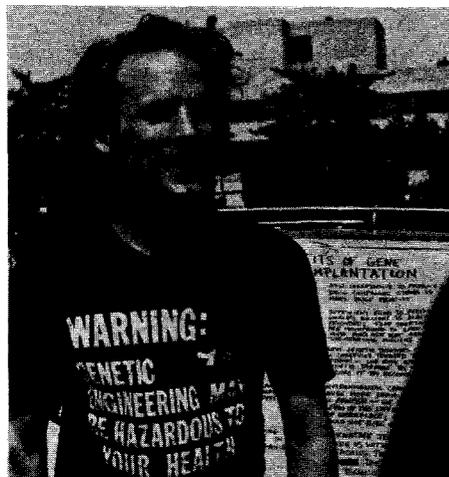
These genetic theories and the problems with genetic screening programs did not arise in a social and political vacuum. They have followed a period of intense social agitation and social disruption in the United States. After blacks, other minority groups, the poor and women demanded a greater share of the wealth and power in this society, the response arose that such equality is genetically impossible. The ghetto uprisings and other violent confrontations which occurred during this period are explained as being due to people whose genes are "off." The demands of the women's movement are met with the answer that women are genetically programmed for the roles they now occupy.

Another more recent example of this genetic approach to social problems lies in the field of industrial susceptibility screening.(12) Arguments have been appearing in the scientific literature and elsewhere that occupational diseases, caused by pollutants in the workplace can be ascribed not to the pollutants themselves, but to the fact that some individuals are genetically more susceptible to the pollutants than other individuals. So the argument goes, the solution is not getting rid of the pollutants, but rather, for example,



Graphic by Nick Thorkelson

Photo by Marc Miller



simply not hiring those individuals who are thought to carry the genetic susceptibility.

Now, clearly, whenever it is possible to warn someone of dangers he or she may face, that information is important. However, what is blatantly ignored by those promoting this area of research is that, in almost every case, nearly everyone in the workplace is at some degree of increased risk because of the exposure, for instance, to asbestos fibers. Yet, already, there are headlines in the newspapers such as the following: "Next Job Application May Include Your Genotype."⁽¹³⁾ A Dow Chemical Plant in Texas has instituted a large scale genetic screening program of its workers.⁽¹⁴⁾ Rather than cleaning up the lead oxide in General Motors plants, women of child-bearing age are required to be sterilized if they wish employment.^(12,15) It is a genetic cop-out to allow industries to blame the disease on the genetically different individual rather than on their massive pollution of the workplace and the atmosphere. This is the epitome of "Blaming the Victim."^(14a)

Rather than cleaning up the lead oxide in General Motors plants, women of child-bearing age are required to be sterilized if they wish employment.

The end result of these genetic excuses for society's problems is to allow those in power in the society to argue that social, economic and environmental changes are not needed — that a simpler solution is to keep an eye on people's genes. And thus the priorities are determined. For example, major funding goes to genetics research and into viral causes of cancer and a pittance to occupational health and safety. This distorted perspective is reinforced by the emphasis and the publicity that recombinant DNA research has achieved with its claim

for solving problems whose solutions are mainly not in the realm of genetics. Typical of the claims made by those promoting this area is a statement by biologist David Baltimore:*

How much do we need recombinant DNA? Fine, we can do without it. We have lived with famine, virus and cancer, and we can continue to.⁽¹⁶⁾

This is not a neutral or apolitical statement. The sources of famine and disease lie much more in social and economic arrangements than in lack of technological progress. Aside from the incredible claims for the benefits of recombinant DNA, this statement essentially opts for the status quo. Social problems, such as famine and disease, are taken out of the arena of political action and sanitized behind the white coat of the scientist and the doctor. Of course, we might have both social and medical approaches to such problems going on at the same time. But given the current struggle over solutions to these problems, such statements can only provide weapons to those who would like to maintain present power relationships and profits. What is opted for are the technological fixes, in this case, the *genetic fix*.

Recombinant DNA — The Genetic Fix

Let me give you some examples of how we may move from the present technological fix to the genetic fix, once recombinant DNA techniques have provide the tools. In the United States over the last few years, approximately one million school children per year have been given drugs, usually amphetamines, by the school systems, in order to curb what is deemed disruptive behavior in the classroom.⁽¹⁷⁾ It is claimed that these children are all suffering from a medical syndrome, minimal brain dysfunction, which has no basis in fact — no organic correlate. Now, clearly, there are some cases of children with organic problems where this treatment may well be important. But in the overwhelming majority of cases the problems are a reflection of the current state of our crowded schools, overburdened teachers and families and other social problems rather than something wrong with the kids. Imagine, as biochemical psychiatry is providing more and more information on the biochemical basis of mental states, the construction

*At the National Academy of Sciences Forum on Recombinant DNA, Baltimore responded to this section by acknowledging that proponents of the research had overdramatized the benefits. Their attitude had been that it was necessary to do this in order to justify the research to the public. Baltimore, by the way, has an interesting background, having been one of those most involved in opposing chemical and biological warfare research, having given one-half of the money from a prestigious award he received to Science for the People, and having supported Science for the People's struggle against XYY research in Boston. The divisions in the recombinant DNA struggle illustrate how political lines become sharpened when issues begin to hit close to one's own professional interests.

of a gene which will help produce a substance in human cells which will change the mental state of individuals. Then, instead of feeding the kids a drug every day, we just do some genetic surgery and it's over.

Don't forget that introducing genes into humans — genetic engineering — results in permanent changes. There is no way to cut the genes out. It's irreversible. At least, when protests were mounted in certain schools against the drugging of kids, the treatment could be stopped. That's not the case with the genetic solution. There's no going back.

Another example: A current idea, again without scientific foundation, is that aggression is determined by hormone imbalance. Males, it is said, are more aggressive than females because of the hormone testosterone or the absence of presumed female hormones. As a result, patients in mental institutions deemed aggressive are treated with the presumed female hormones.(18) But recently it has been discovered that there are genes in bacteria which will break down testosterone. Wouldn't it be a simpler, less costly approach to introduce such genes (in a functional state) into the "aggressive" patient? Maybe even social protest can be prevented that way. But what are the sources of aggression in this society? Isn't it possible that rather than hormone imbalance, it is social and economic imbalance — unemployment, racism, etc. — which spurs many people to "aggressive" behavior? And, while we're on the subject, would such genetic surgery be used on those in leadership positions in the society responsible for such atrocities as the Indochina War?

Similar approaches could be used to argue for gene therapy on fetuses, infants or on the workers themselves so that they can work in factories with high vinyl chloride levels. Given the sophistication of the new technologies, a new eugenics era may do even greater damage than the earlier eugenics movement (1900-1930).(19)

Conclusion

I would like to add a component to the benefit-risk discussion of recombinant DNA which has, for the most part, been ignored. This component is the risk of human genetic engineering to those without power in this society. Given the present social context, I believe these consequences are inevitable. It is not just the particular evils and damage to individuals I have mentioned in my scenarios that concerns me. The dramatic developments in this field, and the publicity it has received and will continue to receive, is already reinforcing the focus on the genetic fix. On the one hand, an atmosphere is being generated in which a variety of genetic approaches to social problems is accepted. And, as a corollary, social, political and economic changes are deemphasized. The priorities of the society cannot be allowed to be dictated by the technocrats and their technology. On the contrary, technologies must be developed only *after* social decisions that they are wanted and needed.

On this basis, I believe we should seriously consider whether recombinant DNA research should be pursued at all.□

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Thoughts on Long-Term Membership in SftP

Pat Brennan

A few months ago, a member of the *Science for the People* magazine editorial committee asked me to write an account of my experiences as a member of the organization for the past five years. One reason I was asked is because I am a woman and there's an effort being made to encourage more female contributors to the magazine. Another reason concerns the fact that an attempt is being made to print contributions of a more personal nature.

Part of my dissatisfaction stemmed from a sense of moral indignation at the inequalities that surrounded me. And in retrospect, this isn't surprising since religion had been a very important aspect of my upbringing. Indeed, many years of Catholic religious training at home and in school had left me with a rigid and perhaps overly moralistic view of the world. For me there was right and wrong and no in between. Before entering SftP I had spent some time questioning this rigidity. However, I had not questioned the basically religious attitude that societal problems are due to indi-

Pat Brennan has recently started teaching biology at a community college after a long period of unemployment. For the past year she has worked with two other members of Science for the People compiling articles from past magazines for a possible book.

viduals with corrupted moral values. I believed that the individual held complete control over her own destiny and that success or failure was almost completely attributable to special personal qualities and good hard work. I even accepted the idea that for a female to be successful she just had to strive twice as hard as a male and all would turn out well. Failure was due to personal inadequacy.

I first came to Science for the People in 1971 because of my dissatisfaction with teaching science outside of the social context. In the classroom I was dealing with science as if it were entirely separate from the real world of my everyday life and certainly not connected to the war and the dissent that was raging outside against it. At that time, I really didn't think about things from any well-defined political perspective of the Left. I did however have a strong sense of dissatisfaction and was quite elated to find a group of people with similar problems, concerns, and questions.

At first I was rather awed by some members who seemed not only to have thought about more fundamental questions than I had, but who had even developed analyses to provide some answers. However, despite my insecurities, I was drawn to these people since I felt that they shared my frustrated and angry feel-

ings. I started to come to meetings and in a short time became involved in the activities of an action-oriented subgroup, the Science Teaching Group. I felt comfortable in this group because it had an atmosphere of acceptance and a supportive toleration of people whose ideas were different or not yet sharply defined.

Today, I am still a member of the Science Teaching Group although over the course of five years I have worked with several other subgroups — some that were spawned by the Science Teaching Group and some that were not. I have been a participant with the Nutrition Group, a Guerrilla Theater Group, a Women's Group, the Steering Committee, and for a time, I was the paid Office Coordinator for the organization. All of these activities have contributed to the many positive changes I've experienced during this time.

In the course of planning conferences, developing alternative science curricula, demonstrating at scientific meetings and talking with other SftP people, I learned a great deal and slowly became politicized. I came to understand more clearly the class nature of this society and how my life and almost everyone else's is controlled by a miniscule percent of the population — those with the wealth and power. I learned that the



many problems of this society are not due to just a few evil-hearted and greedy people, but to the broader systematic problems of capitalism. I also learned how science reflects the values of that system; that it *is* political, not pure and neutral; that it is male, white, and generally applied to benefit the few and not the many.

Perhaps the most important aspect of my growth in SftP has been learning to work collectively in small groups. It is through this work that I have gained confidence in myself and my ideas and in the knowledge that people working together in supportive ways can indeed effect change. Through this work I have felt empowered.

Not all of my learning in SftP has occurred in supportive and painless ways. My exposure to Marxist jargon was not always pleasant. After I had joined the organization, over time, words like ruling class, dialectical materialism, imperialism, and bourgeoisie crept into my vocabulary. At first I didn't under-

stand much at all and was often quite angry at people who always spoke about organizing the common people but who spoke in words that *I*, a common person, couldn't understand. How could anyone expect to organize people if they spoke a foreign language? It seemed as if under these circumstances, there was no atmosphere of dialogue and friendship, but a caste system of those who 'knew' and those who didn't. As an example, consider the term 'political consciousness'. This is one of a whole slew of political phrases or catch words which I think have been seriously abused at times by members of our organization. For instance, I have heard the words 'political consciousness' used in a manner which serves to label people. If you hear that someone has a 'low' political consciousness, the tendency is often to write them off, dismiss them, or not listen to what they have to say. The result of such behavior seems to me to be the duplication of the elitism and hierarchical social attitudes which we are supposedly trying to fight.

There were times when I did not speak out for fear of being labeled something like 'not working-class enough', 'too individualistic', 'counterrevolutionary' or worst of all — 'incorrect'. In fact, sometimes I wondered if I wasn't replacing one kind of rigid dogmatism (Roman Catholicism) with another (Marxist-Leninism). As I observed persons who probably came from families far richer than mine talk in adoration terms of the worker, I often wondered how it would be if I brought my Uncle John, the railroad

worker, to a SftP meeting. How could he relate? Would his politics ever be 'correct' enough?

Despite the fact that it has been some time now since I have felt personally alienated as a result of the use of 'labeling', 'jargon', 'correct lining', or competitive overintellectualization within the organization, some of my fears remain. I am still concerned about its existence and the role it plays in keeping people — especially women — either out of the organization altogether or out of leadership positions within the organization.

Nowadays I perceive a reliance on political rhetoric to communicate ideas as a barrier which prevents people from dealing with one another at a personal and feeling level — ways of communicating which I believe women are strong in. Accordingly, verbal intimidation can be viewed as a means by which white middle-class males can continue to control and dominate many meetings, as well as the organization as a whole.

Despite my concerns and misgivings about language and how people in SftP relate to, and learn from each other, my commitment to the organization and its work remains strong. For me the positive aspects of my experience in the organization have been great. I have learned a great deal, I have grown and I have made a whole lot of good friends. So I intend to continue my work in SftP with the hope that we can learn to build a strong organization in which members can communicate, criticize, share and struggle together in humane and caring ways. □

WRITE FOR SCIENCE FOR THE PEOPLE!

If you're interested in a certain topic or field and have been thinking about writing something (or have something already on paper), please send us your idea, an outline or draft. If you have friends immersed in a certain issue that might interest our readership, have them get in touch with us — you might even want to send us their name and address so we can contact them directly.

We'd like to see some articles that provide a radical perspective on the following topics: *computer technology and political repression, artificial intelligence research, transportation systems in the U.S. and Third World, agriculture and agribusiness, uses and abuses of mass media* — and whatever else you can add to this list. Of course, we've presented and want to continue to present good articles on *women's health issues, occupational safety, nuclear power and alternative energy, jobs and the environment, science teaching, organizing in the technical strata*, etc.

CLINIC WORKERS STRIKE

In late August 1975, I took a job at Preterm, an out-patient abortion and gynecology clinic in Brookline. Having searched for a job since my graduation from U.Mass-Boston four months previously, I felt very lucky to be working at all and particularly in a women's health clinic. I began as a receptionist, learned the admitting officer's job, did some telephone counseling, and then in February 1976 began doing abortion counseling. At first Preterm seemed an ideal extension of my earlier commitment to safe, legalized abortion and to women's increasing awareness of, and control over their own bodies. However, as I learned the details of Preterm's operation I began to understand that good women's health care was not the clinic's highest priority.

Abortion Pioneers Turn Into Profit-Takers

Four years ago the Supreme Court recognized the tremendous public pressure in favor of legalized abortion. Today that right is threatened. Conservative legislators together with organizations like the Right to Life movement are attempting to overturn our hard-fought victory. These well-known opponents are, unfortunately, not the only cause for concern. Within the abortion rights movement are business people who see abortion as a respectable way to make a good deal of money. In this context the myth of feminist activism recedes quickly into the background as the familiar story repeats itself: workers versus management.

Preterm (short for *pregnancy termination*) began in 1970 as a research organization studying "the problem presented by the increasing population of the world, and the relation of contraception, abortion and sterilization to that population growth" (*Preterm Institute Progress Report 1975*, pg. 3) Harry Levin, member of the Rockefeller-funded Population Council and a small businessman in the furniture industry founded and directs Preterm Institute. In 1972, under his wife's directorship, Preterm, Inc. opened its doors as a gynecology clinic and within six months of the Supreme Court decision was providing first trimester out-patient abortions as well. Under the general auspices of the Institute, clinics have opened in Washington, D.C.; Cleveland, Ohio; Pittsburgh, PA; St. Louis, Missouri; and Sydney, Australia.

In the early days Preterm clinic in Brookline operated on a flexible basis. The counseling staff (85 percent of the people now represented by the union District 1199-Mass.) rotated through the various areas



of the clinic — doing telephone, gynecology and abortion counseling on different days.

The problems that eventually led to unionization became evident all too quickly. Time and time again groups of women were hired for full-time positions which decreased to part-time jobs once the training period had ended — and after they had already left their previous jobs. Another staffing practice only allowed a counselor a few hours' notice that she was to work on a particular day. Often this meant full-time hours but due to the technicality of the category, no full-time benefits. No regular work schedule was ever devised: you could work certain days one week and altogether different days and possibly fewer hours the next week.

The staff voiced its dissatisfaction in many ways. People spoke to Jane Levin individually and in several

KE FOR YOUR HEALTH

Lucy Matson

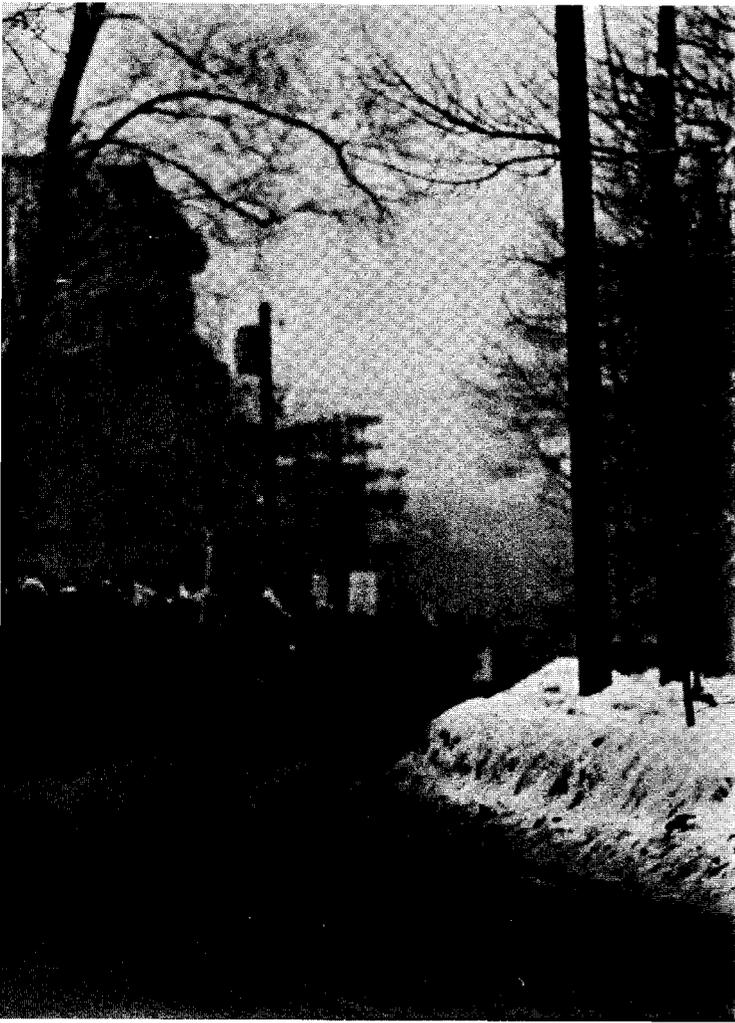


Photo by William Spurlin

all-clinic meetings. She responded to every wave of criticism with empty promises of improvement based on the supposed family-style intimacy of all the people who worked at Preterm.

Initial Union Rumblings

As far back as the spring of 1974, frustrated by Levin's attitude, employees began to research the possibilities of unionization. When the administration got wind of this they allayed people's concerns temporarily with promises of reform. Reform, when it came that summer, wasn't exactly what the workers had in mind. Employees were forced to choose between gynecology, abortion, or telephone counseling and stick with that choice.

The division of the clinic into independent units served two functions. It cut down on the group solidarity of the counselors since people who had worked together closely no longer saw each other, and it made people's jobs much more repetitive, which drastically increased the turnover rate. This compartmentalization not only hurt the counseling staff but the quality of health care as well. Patients were dealt with less as individuals with different needs and more as items in a long procession of telephone calls and birth control questions.

Matters went from bad to worse in November 1974. In order to keep business profitable, Preterm cut the gynecology clinic in half, firing seven counselors. Seniority was completely ignored in the firings. In fact, it had all the appearances of a political maneuver: Jane Levin's most outspoken critics were singled out for dismissal.

To Preterm, gynecology was not profitable enough. Abortion patients pay \$150 per procedure, while gynecology patients pay only \$30 at most.

Preterm's defense of these cutbacks was not without its logic: gynecology is not profitable. Abortion patients pay \$150 per procedure, while gynecology patients pay only \$30 at most. In cutting back the gynecology clinic, the Levins were simply responding as any able entrepreneurs would. Gynecology is not only less profitable than abortion, but it also has the effect of undercutting the abortion market. To expect Preterm to champion gynecological work is rather like expecting GM to encourage mass transit. Like the decision to divide the clinic into separate departments, this step placed business concerns squarely over patient care.

The Union Is Elected

Shocked and frightened by the changing character of the clinic, 70 percent of the employees joined District 1199 in November of 1974, about one month after the firings. After the membership cards were signed, 1199 contacted the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) to set up an election. On the eve of the scheduled election, in February 1975, Preterm challenged the right of everyone but counselors to vote, thereby reversing its



In order to keep business profitable, Preterm cut the gynecology clinic in half, firing seven counselors.

previous stance of cooperation with the wishes of the employees. The NLRB ruled in favor of all but five employees.

Although the outcome of Preterm's appeal to the NLRB did not decrease the size of the bargaining unit, it delayed the election. Between February and May 1975, when the election finally took place, management bombarded employees with anti-union literature. Arguments like "unions take away employees' freedom" and "male-dominated labor organizations have no place in a woman-run clinic" had no effect on the workers. Of the fifty people voting, only three voted against 1199. One of the last letters circulated by Preterm before the election foretold the subsequent course of contract negotiations: "Question: Will the law compel the clinic to reach an agreement with the union? Answer: Absolutely not! The Clinic does not have to agree to a single thing the union proposes so long as we bargain in good faith . . . We do not have to sign any contract which we do not believe to be in the Clinic's best interest." ("A Memorandum", May 5, 1975, pg. 2)

This overwhelming victory was followed by months of painstaking discussion about the contract proposals the union would offer. No one had previous experience in writing or negotiating a contract and the clinic's extensive hours made meetings difficult to arrange. Along with the usual clauses in union contracts (i.e., seniority, grievance procedure, maternity leave, wage increase, complete health coverage) the women at

Preterm demanded certain specific improvements: a ceiling on the number of patients any counselor would see in a day, pro-rated benefits for the part-time workers Preterm relies so heavily on, and promises that volunteers would not replace members of the bargaining unit.

Difficult Contract Negotiations

When negotiations began in December 1975, the union representatives (two 1199 staff members and thirteen Preterm employees) met with Preterm administrators, Jane Levin and Diane Richards, and their lawyer, Leon Kowal. Within the first few meetings Kowal made his position clear: he would fight tooth and nail against each and every request the union made. Such "extreme demands" as the right of 1199 to post notices in an employee lounge met with staunch resistance from Kowal.

On International Women's Day, March 1976, a member of the negotiating committee read a statement to the management committee, asking Kowal to refrain from calling members of the 1199 team "girls". He exploded, "If you don't want to be called a girl, don't act like one." The use of the word "girl," while not terribly important in itself, symbolized for the workers Preterm's attitude toward them and the union.

Later that day Eliot Small, 1199 president, had a conversation with Diane Richards, asking that she calm down Kowal. This attempt to smooth things over served as an excuse for Preterm to file charges against 1199

with the NLRB and to delay negotiations for three more months. The NLRB dismissed their case.

After four sessions in June, Kowal walked out of negotiations on July 12th, terming the eleven employees present at the session a "mob scene". That night, employees picketed Jane Levin's house. The next day Preterm received the union's thirty day strike notice. (Health care facilities are protected by the NLRB so that workers must submit first a thirty day and then a ten day notice of their intention to strike to make a work stoppage legal.)

In the following month employees turned to the community for support. Referral agencies received calls, asking them to question Preterm on its behavior toward the union. Two fundraising benefits, a large article in a local weekly paper, and an hour discussion of the labor dispute on a local FM radio station began the task of alerting the public to Preterm's anti-union tactics.

Realizing the worker's commitment to reaching a contract, Preterm agreed to involve the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service in negotiations, something the union had first requested in March. In retrospect this only seems a further stalling tactic: the clinic knew it would cease to function in the event of a strike and needed to placate workers long enough to gear up for a strike, though at the time it seemed a victory.

The first session with mediation took place in August 1976. The mediators asked 1199 to list all the agreements reached so far and those left to be worked out. The six agreed-upon clauses were offset by about twenty-five areas of disagreement. Included among the unresolved issues were: all economic issues, maternity leave, job training, staffing, the role of volunteers, and discharge with penalties.

Reprisal and Reform

Meanwhile, working conditions at the clinic continued to deteriorate. As early as May, abortion counselors had begged for new staff, unsuccessfully. By summer the situation was critical. Preterm continued to schedule sixty patients daily although the entire staff couldn't help each person adequately. If anyone called in sick the squeeze was even tighter. One Saturday five women waited for several hours, only to be told at the end of the day that no one could see them and they would have to reschedule.

In the gynecology clinic counselors were pressed to give up the practice of accompanying patients through the physical exam. They refused. So they found themselves trying to cope with as many as three patients simultaneously: racing from examining room to examining room to spend the essential minutes at the patient's side. In different form telephone counselors

Management's Attitude Toward Health Care

GOOD WORKING CONDITIONS ARE THE BASIS OF GOOD HEALTH CARE has been the principle around which the entire strike has centered. The strike has forced all of us to reconsider the kind of health care Preterm gives. I no longer feel that the care, even in the best of times, adequately meets the patients' needs.

Focusing attention primarily on abortion eliminates the possibility of complete preventive health care. The gynecology clinic as it now exists would more honestly be known as a family planning clinic. Common infections are treated and birth control methods are prescribed; anything more complex has to be referred elsewhere. Because M.D.s are not the only medical personnel, Medicaid will not cover Preterm's services and there are no deferred payments, so the many patients who use one of those financial arrangements for an abortion cannot be seen in the gynecology clinic. Fragmented health care decreases the effectiveness of what care you do receive.

In the abortion clinic patients pay \$150 *before* being counseled about their decision. If they decide not to have the abortion, they can get their money back but

too often the logic works, "Well, I'm here already so I might as well go through with it."

Racism has never been discussed although many of our patients are black and Spanish-speaking. The one Spanish-speaking counselor said, "On two different occasions I was asked to push sterilization on Spanish-speaking women. Once this had been suggested by an administrator, who hadn't even seen the individual woman's chart. I guess it was assumed Spanish-speaking women just had too many children."

Preterm's commitment to abortion stops with the legal right to have an abortion. In effect, the clinic supports the status quo, because it fails to question or seriously challenge the conditions which give rise to ignorance and poverty in our society. In fact, according to Harry Levin no one really is poor: "They say they can't afford an abortion . . . (but) even the welfare woman, or the domestic . . . the secretary, the clerk — maybe they can't afford \$150 today, but you say to them, 'O.K., let's turn on tonight, (we) need a lid of dope and (we) need 20 bucks'; and they'll go away and in half an hour they'll come back with 20 bucks . . . It's what you value" (*The Abortion Business*, pg. 53).

—L.M.

experienced the same speed-up. Often the number of phone lines open to patient calls exceeded the number of counselors by two or three.

Understaffing has occurred periodically throughout Preterm's history. Far from being the mistake of any particular supervisor, it seems to be a policy dictated by Jane Levin. Speed-up saves money. It also decreases employee endurance. The higher the turnover the more difficult organizing becomes. Through the summer of 1976 Preterm attempted to disgust the staff sufficiently so that the trouble makers would leave. They failed.

At the end of August a new coordinator was hired for the abortion clinic. Deborah Feinbloom brought many reforms to the clinic in her first weeks: a permanent work schedule, paid meetings, extra pay for extra work, paid job training. When she hired new staff she created as many full-time positions as possible. She scheduled enough counselors so that calling in sick did not throw the entire clinic into chaos. She has been Preterm's most efficient union busting tool to date. All her reforms had been demanded by union members for years. She instituted them in such a way that new counselors were convinced that the grievances of the union activists were due only to poor supervision.

The Strike Looms

Five negotiating sessions with the mediators led to few agreements and many angry outbursts from Kowal. The mediators failed to inhibit either his temper or his contempt for the union people.

There was one small victory. Embarrassed by public exposure on its lack of maternity leave provisions, management agreed to a maternity leave clause. While it was pleasing to have won this clause, Preterm's long opposition highlighted its whole attitude towards a union contract. Four months out of ten since the election spent away from the bargaining table, a complete disregard for union requests for information, no wage proposal at all — all these factors pointed toward the conclusion that Preterm never intended to sign a contract.

People began agitating for a strike. Innumerable telephone discussions, an introductory meeting for new staff (twenty-one hired in September 1976), a written history of the union struggle, and other efforts culminated in a strike vote and a notice telegraphed to Preterm that a work stoppage would begin Tuesday, October 19th, 1976.

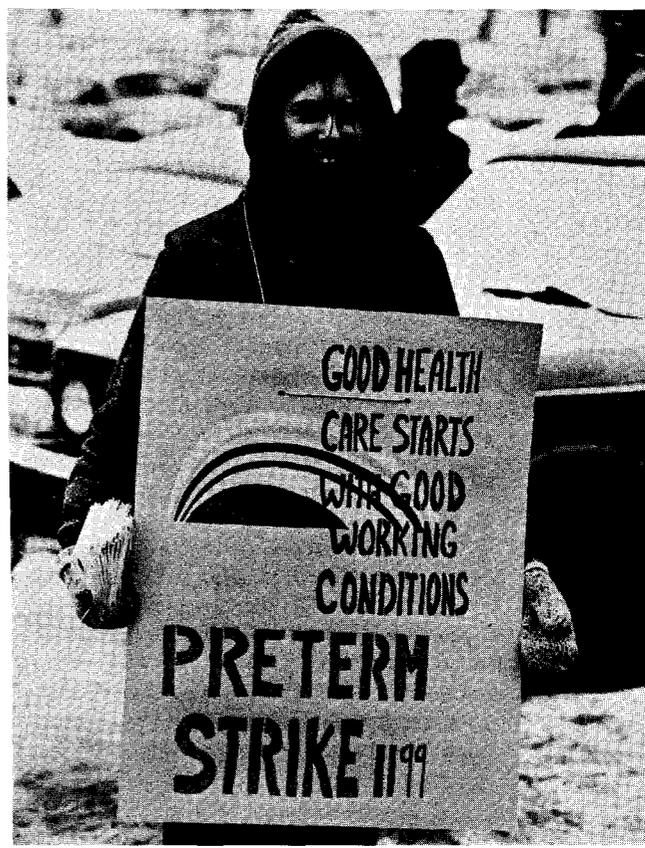
On October 15, the Friday before the strike, 1199 offered to submit all outstanding issues to a mutually agreeable third party whose decision would be binding on both sides. This would have averted the strike. Preterm, however, had no intention of averting the strike. The previous week they had placed an ad in the

Boston Globe classified section seeking every job category of the people due to strike. On Saturday October 16, group interviews for future strikebreakers (scabs) took place across the street from Preterm. And on Monday, the day before the strike, two future scabs conducted tours of the clinic for other prospective strikebreakers, while union members sat in the offices of the Federal Mediation Service.

Not surprisingly Preterm rejected 1199's offer of binding arbitration. Kowal gave two reasons: first, Preterm's relatively small size and its nonprofit status. The union representative replied that the settlement would of course not exceed Preterm's ability to pay. Kowal ignored this. Secondly, he said, Preterm is operated by people who have devoted their lives to it and they will not give up their control to some outside party. Kowal did offer four contract proposals at that time. One clause had already been agreed to, one was the present policy at Preterm, and two cut back on present policy. They offered to increase the number of hours employees had to work to be considered full-time. The union team felt betrayed — having made every effort to avoid striking, it had received a slap in the face by way of response.

At 6:00 a.m. on October 19th pickets began to arrive at the 1842 Beacon Street building. Preterm was

Photo by Ellen Schub



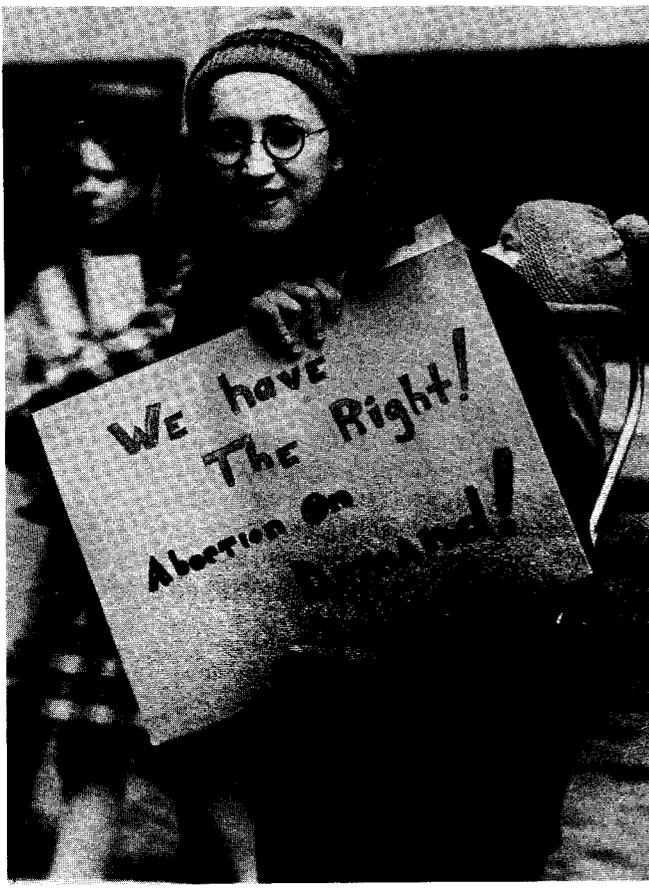


Photo by Ellen Schub

ready. Approximately twenty private-duty Brookline police, two photographers hired by the clinic, and a police videotaping team were on hand. At 7:30 the strikebreakers drove up in a school bus: those same twenty or so who had been hired in September. The police linked arms and although the scabs were frightened they made it across the picket line.

Persistence and Solidarity

During the first two months of the strike picketers succeeded in cutting Preterm's business down to about one-half of its prestrike level. Preterm's business has since risen to about 90 percent of its prestrike level. Nevertheless, the amount of community support has been overwhelming and has given the fifty strikers the strength to keep up a picket line six days a week, ten hours daily. Perhaps the most moving act of solidarity came on the first Saturday of the strike. Half the nursing staff refused to cross the picket line. Unprotected by union membership, they gave up their jobs rather than work inside Preterm.

Thirty separate arrests have taken place: the counts are as various as trespass, malicious destruction of property, disorderly person, assault and battery on a police

officer and failure to disperse. Every charge has been dropped.

Early in the strike Preterm began the process of getting an injunction against the picket line. In early January 1977 that request was denied, but only because 1199 promised not to do any of the things management alleges the union has done in the past. The clinic maintains a small police force on Saturdays (one policeman on weekdays) and they jump when Preterm so instructs them. However friendly the police seem toward the picketers, they have arrested people when told to do so and would undoubtedly testify in support of the Levins in the event of another injunction hearing.

Further complicating the picket line scene is the presence of a scab who tells patients that the clinic which strikers are referring them to is not clean and tries to convince them to go into Preterm. Another added attraction is the Right-to-Life movement who have set up their own picket line each Saturday since March 5th of this year. They tell patients "there's a real live baby inside you" and pass out leaflets entitled *Diary of an Unborn Child*, which concludes "Today my mother killed me."

On February 5th of this year, a tremendous amount of work by community supporters paid off in a demonstration of about one-thousand people. Marching past the 1842 Beacon Street building people chanted "How do you get good health care with the workers out on strike?" The two demands of the demonstration were a decent union contract for strikers and a return to comprehensive gynecological care at Preterm.

Contract negotiations occur about once a month, always at the union's request. Nothing startling has yet been worked out. In fact, the government, through the NLRB, alleges that Preterm has failed to negotiate in good faith with the union. The NLRB took Preterm to trial on February 28th. A final decision can be expected in approximately a year's time, at which point Preterm might be forced to reinstate all strikers, if it had not already done so.

At this time, the strikers need as much support as possible. Contributions and requests for information should be directed to Preterm Strike, care of Lucy Mattson, 362 Washington St., Cambridge, MA 02139.

Preterm, it seems, would almost rather go out of business than agree to a modest union contract. In addition to the police and legal fees, which must be astronomical, Preterm is presently engaged in saturating television, radio, and newspapers with their advertising. The amount of money they have poured into breaking the union far exceeds the amount they would have lost in agreeing to the original union contract proposals. The issue, clearly, is not money, but power. While happy to give benefits to faithful workers, the idea of treating employees as equal human beings with certain rights is completely abhorrent to Jane and Harry Levin. □

SACK SACCHARIN—DEFEND DELANEY

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) decision to ban saccharin generated a predictable reaction from the food and beverage industries, but also aroused the many consumers of this product (current U.S. consumption is 5 million pounds per year). Following hasty Congressional hearings, more than 100 senators and representatives were supporting legislation to reverse the decision. While the beleaguered FDA appears to be defending the public good (the FDA estimates that 1200 cases of bladder cancer per year could be expected from saccharin), there is a less flattering interpretation of the agency's position.

The ban was required by the Delaney Amendment, which excludes from food any chemical shown to cause cancer in animals. It is one of the few laws which do not equivocate on cancer and is soundly based on current, limited understanding of how chemicals cause cancer. A general relationship has not been established between dose levels of chemical agents and the resulting rates of cancer. Therefore, it cannot be assumed that the relation is not proportional at lower doses; in fact, in some plausible models of how cancer is caused, the probability of cancer *is* proportional to the dose level or concentration of the chemical. What this means is that you would get about the same number of cancers in a small population with a high dose of a chemical as you would in a population one thousand times larger with one-thousandth of the high dose. Furthermore, there is some evidence that the relation between dose and risk of cancer from saccharin *is* proportional over a wide range of doses (testimony of the Health Research Group before Subcommittee on Health, House Commerce Committee, March 21, 1977).

The FDA's position is based on the recent Canadian rat study, which used saccharin at high doses — said to be equivalent to a human consumption of 800 cans of diet soda per day. Based on the above reasoning, the results of the study predict 1200 cancer cases per year in humans in the U.S., at current use levels. This is a meaningful, conservative estimate of the hazard. The industry of course manifests no interest in such a precautionary approach.

Since its passage in 1958, the Delaney Amendment has not only haunted the food industry but has made the FDA's job more awkward: there is little room left for administrative "flexibility" on decisions which might damage powerful industrial or political interests. In fact, the FDA has been trying for years to produce scientific justification for removing the Delaney Amendment. According to then FDA Commissioner Charles Edwards, speaking about a new research center before the House Agriculture Subcommittee in 1971, "the Pine Bluff (Arkansas) testing facility will provide the scientific basis on which the Delaney anti-clause may be changed . . . the agency is locked into an 'all-or-nothing' box." According to Dr. Samuel Epstein of the University of Illinois, who has fought carcinogenic pesticides with some success, the FDA has continued this intention in recent years (*SftP*, July 1976, p. 4).

In response to public awareness of the hazards of food additives, the FDA announced plans in January 1977 for a toxicity review of over 2000 additives. This would be the first such review for many of these substances. This was the first step toward a showdown on the Delaney clause. Following earlier reaction to bans on cyclamates and Red Dye No. 2, the FDA clearly knew that the saccharin decision would blow the lid off the Delaney debate; the agency has already recommended that the law itself be changed, rather than legislating a specific exception for saccharin. Whether or not getting rid of the Delaney clause was a major *motivation* for the FDA decision on saccharin, that would certainly be the major *consequence* of the decision. In place of the Delaney clause, the FDA seeks to establish "safe" levels for known carcinogens, taking into account the benefits and the risks, including economic factors (i.e., profits). The handling of the saccharin decision has thus become a major threat to the public health. Rather than being extended to require thorough testing before commercial use, the law will possibly be gutted.

For the many people who depend on saccharin, there will probably be alternatives available soon. But we should all ask, "how did we get hooked on sugar to begin with?" Over the past 500 years, the western diet has come to include massive amounts of sugar, to the benefit of no one but the food industry, and with mildly disastrous effects on people's health. People are locked into lifestyles in conflict with their best health, faced with a "choice" of heavy sugar consumption in a normal diet or avoidance of sugar with the use of hazardous substitutes. For people who aspire to a "science for the people," the saccharin ban is a challenge: to reveal the true hazards to the people, to justify the Delaney clause and even stronger measures, and to place it all in the broader context. The FDA is a mediator of disputes between institutions which serve largely ruling class interests and has nothing to offer the people in this conflict except what we force it to offer.

—Bob Park

Sociobiology: A Sexist Synthesis

Barbara Chasin

During the 1960's — a time of great social unrest, questioning of basic American institutions, and a growing interest in socialism as an alternative — there appeared a spate of books on the theme that humans are only another species of ape. Konrad Lorenz, Robert Ardrey, Desmond Morris, Lionel Tiger and Robin Fox, as well as lesser known writers, try to convince their readers that animal studies are the key to an understanding of human social behavior.(1) War, violence, private property, inequality: all of the major negative features of capitalism are said to be natural and inevitable legacies from our primate origins.

We are descended from an aggressive species. Man emerged as a hunting animal ("man" is the correct word here). One of the main themes of the biological determinists is that the males of both the human and primate species carry the trait of aggressiveness. Male primates do the fighting, the protecting, the hunting, etc.; among humans males engage in analogous activities. From our earliest days, so the story goes, the man was the active, aggressive, subsistence-providing person, while the little woman cleaned the cave, cooked the mastodon and reared the kiddies. A charming picture but, in all probability, completely false. These authors *create* a never-never land, which they then "explain" with allegedly hard-headed science.

Biological determinism has been given a somewhat more sophisticated tone by Edward O. Wilson, Harvard biologist.(2) Wilson adds a veneer of genetics and mathematics to the crude assertions of his predecessors. Yet beneath the surface lies the same tired refrain, that our destiny is controlled by our biology.

In his magnum opus, *Sociobiology: The New Synthesis*, Wilson informs us that both the nuclear family and a sexually based division of labor are universal phenomena:

The building block of nearly all human societies is the nuclear family. The populace of an American industrial city, no less than a band of hunter-gatherers in the Australian desert is organized around this unit.... During the day the women and children remain in the residential area while the men forage for game or its symbolic equivalent in the

form of barter and money. The males cooperate in bands to hunt or deal with neighboring groups. If not actually blood relations, they tend at least to act as 'bands of brothers'.(3)

The same point is formulated in slightly different fashion, in Wilson's article in the *New York Times Magazine*:

In hunter-gatherer societies, men hunt and women stay at home. This strong bias persists in most agricultural and industrial societies and on that ground alone, appears to have a genetic origin. No solid evidence exists as to when the division of labor appeared in man's ancestors or how resistant to change it might be during the continuing revolution for women's rights. My own guess is that the genetic bias is intense enough to cause a substantial division of labor even in the most free and most egalitarian of future societies.(4)

Sociobiologists and Aggression

In his *New York Times* article Wilson cites a book by Eleanor Maccoby and Carol Jacklin, *The Psychology of Sex Differences*. The intent of the authors is "to sift the evidence to determine which of the many beliefs about sex differences have a solid basis in fact and which do not."(5) They conclude that there are two areas in which biological differences between men and women result in different behavioral characteristics. One is spatial-visual skills (which won't be discussed here). The other is aggression. Simply put, Maccoby and Jacklin claim that males are more aggressive than females and that this is biologically based.

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Most biological determinists use the notion of the greater aggressiveness of males fairly consistently to explain the "fact" that men are the doers, the makers of history. For example, Wilson concludes that even when men and women have "identical education and equal access to all professions, men are likely to play a disproportionate role in political life, business and science"(6) because of this difference in aggressiveness.

In their characterization of the relations between sex and aggression, Maccoby and Jacklin cover the range of arguments used by biological determinists on this issue. For this reason, and because Wilson uses Maccoby and Jacklin as evidence for his own assertions, a critique of their discussion is important.

To begin with, what they mean by aggression is never made very clear. (That is a general problem in examining this phenomenon: what is actually being talked about?) One central theme which Maccoby and Jacklin discern in aggressive behavior is the intent of one individual to hurt another; but, as we shall see, their definition changes when the data do not correspond to this particular formulation.

They cite four kinds of evidence for a biological basis for male aggressiveness: 1) a relation between aggression and levels of sex hormones, 2) similar sex differences can be found in man and subhuman primates regarding aggression, 3) sex differences in aggression are found early in life at a time when differential socialization cannot be occurring, and, 4) males are more aggressive than females in all human societies for which evidence is available.

Let us look briefly at each of these arguments.

1). Their evidence for the importance of sex hormones comes mainly from studies of rats and monkeys. Since humans consciously control their behavior to an extent unimaginable in a rodent or even a monkey, it seems very unsound to assume, where social interaction is concerned, that as animals do so do humans.

Looking at people, Maccoby and Jacklin do, in fact, admit that little is known about the relation between sex hormones and behavior. They refer to two studies. One is a report on testosterone levels of 21 young men in prison. The men with higher levels of this male hormone had allegedly committed more violent and aggressive crimes during adolescence. But to make their point, the authors of this particular study have to resort to a curious definition of aggression. Aggression, for them, includes not only such acts as murder and assault but *escape from institutions*.(7)

The most generous thing you could say about this research is that it is inconclusive. Furthermore, even if a correlation exists, the direction of causation is not therefore obvious. Hormone levels themselves have been shown to change as a result of experiences.(8) Maccoby and Jacklin do not even discuss this possibility.

The other study they use has a certain ludicrous quality. Seventeen fetally androgenized girls were compared to their eleven normal sisters. Fetally androgenized means that they received excess amounts of male hormones when they were fetuses. They had masculinized genitalia which were surgically corrected. But even after surgery "their behavior continued to be masculinized in the following ways: they much more often preferred to play with boys; they took little interest in weddings, dolls, or live babies, and preferred outdoor sports."(9) However, they did not fight significantly more than their sisters did.

We are asked to believe, on the basis of this tiny sample, that an interest in such things as dolls, weddings, live babies and sports is linked to our hormonal make-up. This is a highly dubious proposition. The girls, it should be remembered, were born with male genitalia and their parents were aware of their sexual ambiguity. This could have influenced their interaction with these daughters — but this possibility is not discussed.

2). The evidence on primates contains a great deal of oversimplification. Primates, even of the same species, differ from one another in their patterns of aggression, dominance, sex roles, etc. Baboons living on the plains do show the classic pattern of dominant males making decisions regarding troop movements, having privileged access to food and sex and acting as the protectors of the young. (These animals are featured prominently in a film on sociobiology entitled "Doing What Comes Naturally.") But what sociobiologists and Maccoby and Jacklin don't tell us is that Forest baboons display little aggression and no male dominance hierarchies. When troops meet, which is rare, the encounters are friendly. When danger is perceived, the males run up the trees leaving the females and young to deal with things on their own. The adult females are more likely to direct troop movements than are the males.(10) Thus, it is not at all clear that male primates are more dominant or aggressive than females.

But even if they were, we would not have an explanation of human social behavior. The behavior of primates does not automatically explain ours.

3.) Maccoby and Jacklin's third point — that sex differences regarding aggression are found so early that socialization can't account for them — is very difficult to believe. What is aggressive behavior in a new-born infant? Furthermore, there is evidence that differential behavior towards babies based on their sex seems to occur very soon after birth.(11)

4). Finally, there is the most important question of cross-cultural evidence. If we find that males are more aggressive than females in all human societies, there would be some reason to think this is a sex-linked characteristic. Maccoby and Jacklin use only two studies. One has to do with playground behavior in the United

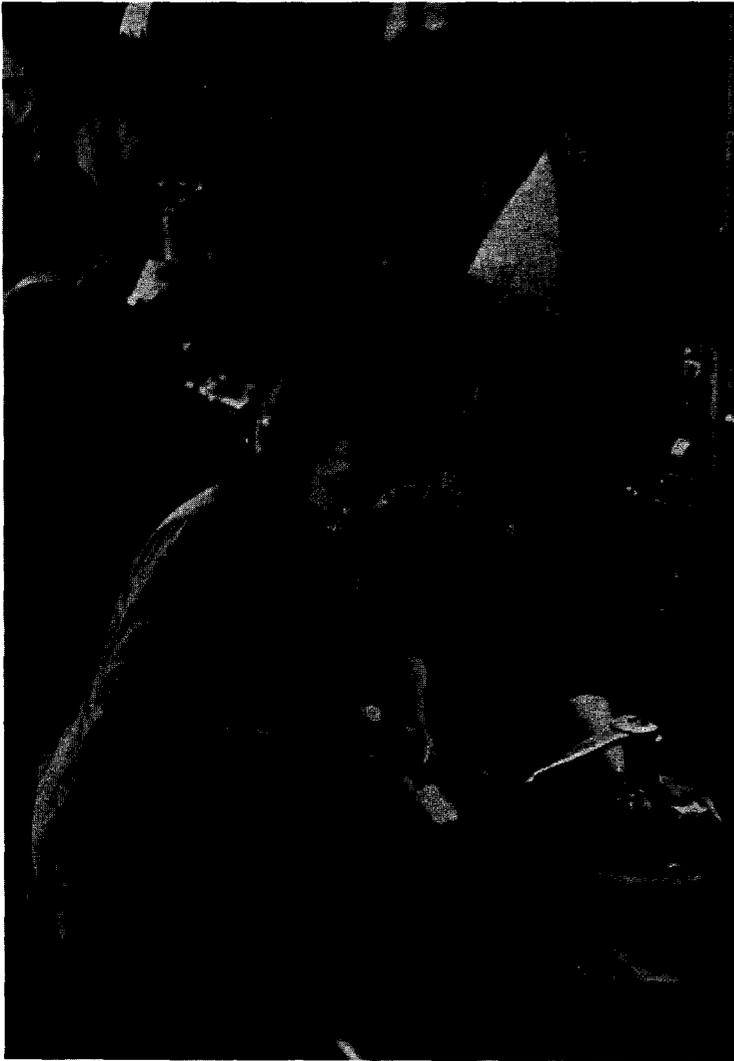


Photo by Marc Riboud

not discuss data that is inconsistent with their statements.

There are societies where neither sex is aggressive. Preliminary reports on the Tasaday of the Phillipines have noted the gentleness of males and females and their lack of anything resembling fighting. There is no war, no word even for war, nor is there a sexual division of labor. Such leadership as there is has at times been exercised by a woman.(12) In pygmy society too it is hard to find examples of males being more aggressive than females.(13) Ruth Sidel's descriptions of children in socialist China are worth citing here as well:

The emphasis on the People's Liberation Army and on defending the motherland stands in sharp contrast, however, to the lack of aggression you see in the children in their day-to-day life. That we never saw a child push another child, never saw a child grab a toy from another child, never saw any hostile interaction between children or between adults and children truly amazed us. When we asked about aggression at a kindergarten at the workers' village in Shanghai, we were told by the kindergarten teacher, Lu Shiutsung, that aggression is not a problem, because the children have already "received collective training in

nursery." She allowed that occasionally a child might be aggressive, but this usually can be handled through "education."(14)

Continuing, she notes:

What is so amazing, of course, in walking the streets of Peking or Shanghai, or visiting a commune or urban neighborhood, is that we never saw aggression among the children. No doubt it exists, but we never witnessed it. At one park in Hangchow, one of us handed a piece of candy to a boy of about ten; he immediately passed it on to his baby sister. He was then handed a second piece, which he passed to his mother. He kept the third piece; he had no one else to give it to.

Felix Greene noticed the same lack of aggression in children during his trip: "I have spent a lot of time watching children playing on the streets — little tots all on their own. They are endlessly in-

States, Switzerland and Ethiopia. Boys more often hit or push each other without smiling in each of these societies. The other cross-cultural evidence they use is based on Whiting's and Pope's discussion of data from six cultures. Maccoby and Jacklin themselves note that in this material there were few physical assaults of children upon one another and sex differences didn't account for these. But boys were more likely to engage in "rough and tumble play" (which is now synonymous with aggression; remember, the earlier definition was an intent to hurt), to have more verbal insults among themselves and to counterattack if physically or verbally assaulted. These studies of societies where boys and men are more likely to engage in some type of aggressive behavior than are girls or women hardly prove that men are *innately* more aggressive than women.

In each of these four arguments there is something rather dishonest, and this shows up rather consistently in the work of biological determinists. They simply do

ventive in their games — a piece of wood or a bit of string will keep them happy for hours. They never fight! *Why* don't they? They never snatch — never 'That's *mine!*' "(15)

Sociobiology and Sex Roles

The cross cultural evidence on sex roles is crucial and largely ignored or misrepresented in the works of the sociobiologists. There are societies, and one can argue that these were the typical human groupings for millenia, where there is little division of labor. But even where some division exists, it is far different from that portrayed by Wilson *et al.* Men and women may engage in different tasks but women are not confined to puttering around the campfire all day doing domestic chores.

Colin Turnbull spent several years living with the Pygmies of the Ituri forest in the Congo. He writes:

Between men and women there was... a certain degree of specialization, but little that could be called exclusive.(16) The woman is not discriminated against... She has a full and important role to play. There is relatively little specialization according to sex. Even the hunt is a joint effort. A man is not ashamed to pick mushrooms and nuts if he finds them or to wash and clean a baby. A woman is free to take part in the discussions of men if she has something relevant to say.(17)

Wilson does not make any reference to Turnbull's work on the Pygmies, but refers instead to his studies of the Ik of Uganda whose behavior is more congruent with a sociobiological model.(18)

Similarly, Patricia Draper's account of the !Kung Bushmen of the Kalahari desert reveals that the women provide from 60 to 80 percent of the daily food supply. Their gathering requires them to go quite a distance from the camp: eight to ten miles is not unusual. Women and men are equally likely to be absent from the camp. The women are skilled in understanding the meaning of animal tracks and provide invaluable information for the male hunters. The women also have the "ability to discriminate among hundreds of edible and inedible species of plants at various stages in their life cycle."(19) Furthermore, men are in no sense the dominant authority figures. The women control the food they collect to a far greater extent than the men whose kill is divided according to a rigid set of rules.

This egalitarian situation is changing as the Kung are being resettled with agricultural people and their whole way of life is undermined. These changes are important to understand (even though we cannot provide that understanding here). Explanations in terms of genetic characteristics or of hormones do not enhance that understanding. In the agricultural situation, the men ac-

quire certain kinds of responsibilities and chores that are not matched by those of the women, the mode of child rearing is changed, and so on. These are just two of the variables that are ignored by a biologically based form of analysis.(20)

Biological determinists do not deal with any of this data. While Wilson claims, for example, that data from the Bushmen support his view of human nature, he virtually ignores the material collected by Patricia Draper, and uses Richard Lee's findings very selectively. Lee is one of the world's foremost experts on the Bushmen and for all practical purposes Wilson ignores his work.

Why Do We Have Sociobiology?

While claiming to be scientific, then, Wilson, like the other biological determinists, makes no attempt to deal with material that does not support his theories. This is not science: it is propaganda, touted by the media not for its scientific merits but for its political functions.

Sociobiology's descriptions of what men and women do are wrong for the United States as well as for other societies. Wilson and those like him are attempting to convince people that women's place is really in the home. Yet women are an essential part of the labor force, one of the most exploited parts of the labor force in fact. For their exploitation to continue unchallenged, women and men must accept the idea that "women's work" is something secondary to their lives, something they should not really be doing.

Certainly some women spend most of their time in what Wilson calls the "residential area" but an ever increasing proportion do not and cannot. Only 24 percent of women were in the labor force in 1930, now 48 percent of women are working or looking for work.(21)

Capitalism needs women in the work force. Changes in the occupational structure with a lower proportion of industrial and manual jobs and a concomitant increase in office work has necessitated hiring people who are relatively educated but also willing to work for low wages. Women fit the bill. Women in 1960 were 97 percent of the secretaries, 84 percent of the bookkeepers, 96 percent of the telephone operators and 86 percent of the file clerks.(22) While the demand for women workers has increased, it has simultaneously become more of an economic necessity for even married women to work, to offset what would otherwise be a drop in their husband's real earnings.(22) In addition, the number of female-headed households has doubled between 1940 and 1975 and these women need to work as well.(23)

The work women do may be crucial but this is not reflected in their wages. According to Labor Department figures, the difference between an average man's

annual earnings and those of the average woman are now over \$5,000. From 1955 to 1974 the gap between men's and women's earnings increased by an amazing 74 percent. The typical white man working year-round full-time in 1974 earned \$12,343; the typical black man under those conditions earned \$9,082. Year-round full-time white women workers brought home an average of \$7,025, and wages for black women were \$6611.(24)

The women's movement and its gains are under counterattack, including direct political repression. Under the Freedom of Information Act, the F.B.I. has released a 1377 page report which chronicles its anti-feminist activities between 1969 and 1973. The Church Committee of the U.S. Senate, in investigating government intelligence activities, produced evidence that the C.I.A., military intelligence and local police red squads have also operated against women's groups.(25)

These figures reveal in statistical fashion a major aspect of women's oppression. The women's liberation movement has attacked and is attacking the exploitation that women suffer. All agree, whatever else their differences, that the situation must be challenged and a new social order built. There is energy, strength and organization among women. Links have been built and continue to be forged with other political groups and struggles. Many women have developed a new confidence in themselves and their own abilities in fighting the myriad forms of sexism.

Theories of biological determinism are yet another kind of weapon used to preserve inequalities. Biological determinists such as Wilson have not consciously decided to protect American capitalism from the threat of women's liberation, but their ideas are used by the people who control the media, the publishing industry, and the scientific and social scientific establishments. Those who create these theories are rewarded: they are given money and prestige. Ambitious students and colleagues see which way the wind is blowing and add to the proliferation of books and articles that so misrepresent the real nature of human beings.

The faults in our society, the injustices, the inequalities do not lie in our genes; they are rooted in social institutions, and class structure. All over the world people have challenged — with a growing success — sexism, racism, poverty, degradation and brutality. Cuba, Vietnam, China, Mozambique, Angola are not utopias, but they are supporting a real effort to remove inequality. Whenever people join together to create a new order, those benefitting from the old try to crush the people and their vision. They use weapons to kill, maim and terrorize; and they use theories to demoralize people, to convince them of their essential inferiority, and to reconcile them to the world as it is. But despite the damage that they can cause, despite their capacity to hold back genuine progress, neither the bombs, the napalm, the armies, the C.I.A., nor theories of biological determinism can stop the movement to build a new society. □

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MIDWEST REGIONAL CONFERENCE REPORT

A Science for the People Midwest Regional Conference was held in Urbana, Illinois on March 11, 12 and 13, 1977. Representatives from the Ann Arbor, St. Louis, and Chicago Chapters attended, in addition to members of the local chapter. An isolated individual from Fayetteville, Arkansas sent a letter, but could not come.

The conference began with each chapter outlining its history, major activities, and major problems. The following issues developed during this and subsequent discussions:

Analysis, Rhetoric, and Symbolism

One of the main revelations of the Midwest Regional pertained to the political and economic sophistication of the midwest membership of SftP. Since SftP is devoted to the political and economic education of people involved with science and technology, it became clear to the participants of this conference that a minimum political analysis must eventually be worked out, although individual opinion varied with respect both to the extent of analysis required and to the technical language which should be used. The group as a whole appeared to agree that the attempt to reach a broader mass of people could lead to dilution of both goals and analysis; but the perceived potential for sectarian isolation inhibited any suggestion of specific analysis, so the development of a precise set of unifying principles was postponed until more discussion had occurred within the individual chapters. Several people agreed to meet in Ann Arbor before the Eastern Regional to attempt to work out a tentative set of principles

and positions.

National Organization and its Nature

National coordination both on the chapter and on the subgroup level was generally favored. A member of the Ann Arbor chapter pointed out that a national organization already exists, and that the issue is not whether we want it, but whether we want to change it. An Urbana-Champaign chapter member emphasized the need for subgroup coordination in order to achieve nation-wide impact on any particular campaign.

There was general agreement that national organizing should be based on an explicit set of written principles, and that there be an ongoing process of communication and re-evaluation of these among chapters. A similar process was advocated for the development of a national position on any relevant issues that may later face us.

Chapter Organization and Activities

Division into subgroups is useful for attacking several different areas of interest at once, but communication within the chapter often suffers. The satisfaction of individual interest and the capability of attacking many problems at once, which organization into subgroups facilitates, carries with it the danger that subgroups will lose contact with each other and that subgroup members will lose sight of the wider objectives of SftP.

Often a small number of members within a chapter will tend to dominate discussion in a local chapter meeting. Ann Arbor chapter mem-

bers reported that by running their meetings with strict adherence to a "hand-raising" procedure instead of using a "free-flow" format, they improved group dynamics and efficiency substantially. The conference, in fact, substituted the former mode for the latter with good result.

The group agreed that well-defined terms, because specialized, must be used even if some people may characterize such language as rhetoric. A member of the Ann Arbor chapter pointed out that dismissing language as rhetoric very often is a convenient way of resisting its content. One or two members remained concerned that technical language might be overused and might unnecessarily intimidate people. A participant from Chicago warned that terms and tactics that breed factionalism can destroy hopes for coherent and effective organization. Although most participants were in favor of keeping the present logo many people felt that its use should be reduced.

Working with Others

The St. Louis chapter reported that two technicians in a virus lab there tried to start a "rap group" with other technicians around common grievances (e.g. technicians not being informed about the purposes of their work, safety hazards). They found other technicians extremely reluctant to participate in discussion. The Ann Arbor chapter reacted to planned recombinant DNA research at the university by leafletting the marketplaces and by setting up discussion groups in the community. They got a fair response, even though the facilities were even-

tually built. Such an ambitious attempt to educate a whole community requires a lot of energy, and unless members of the community itself become involved in the process, most of the work must be done by the initial organizers, emphasizing the need for close contact between SftP and other groups, in this case, within the community. Two of the participants recounted a successful coalition between themselves as scientists and several community groups in New York where they explained the technical aspects of a fire-fighting system which had been proposed to allow a cutback in funds for the fire department by a research group at a local laboratory. They stressed that providing "technical" assistance to political and community groups can bring SftP into closer contact with the community — "technical" in quotation marks, because if we actually want to demystify science, we must not function as Alternative "experts" but instead we must provide people with the ability to understand and control technologies which affect their lives.

Working with other radical groups was generally encouraged with the caveat that activities should be planned carefully beforehand. Ann Arbor described an action in which another group broke a previ-

ous agreement concerning tactics which led to the association of SftP with disruptive behavior of which the members did not in fact approve. They suggested that SftP simply leave an action when such a situation occurs.

Sexism and Racism

The most painful topic which the group discussed dwelt with the ever-present and undiminished problem of sexism. We spent a lot of time discussing the inherent sexism of typical midwest SftP group dynamics and the insufficient energy given to attacking sexism both within SftP and in the scientific community at large. Sexism within SftP reflects that of the scientific and technical stratum from which it tends to derive its base. Several strategies for dealing with the problem were suggested. No specific subgroup or caucus approach seemed acceptable. Again and again, we were forced to the conclusion that each member must continually examine the internal dynamics of the chapter. The conference generally agreed that internal difficulties could be attacked more easily if the chapter directed part of its effort toward analyzing and planning activities around the extreme sexism in science. The problem reappeared as each group

claimed that it did not at present have sufficient resources to investigate sexism within the university, and some participants pointed out the sexism implied in the priorities presently accepted by the chapters.

The presence of men and women (although the men far outnumbered the women) permitted some concrete diagnosis of the internal dynamics of SftP chapters. The same could not be said for the issue of racism, the analysis of which remained at an abstract level. In the midwest, at least, we clearly have not solved the dilemma of a pervasive, if uncoded, apartheid within science, which leaves SftP as a white group insensitive to the inherent racism of its dynamics and priorities.

The class composition of SftP and the resulting difficulty in developing solidarity with non-academic and "non-professional" workers came up again as an unresolved problem.

Closing Resolutions to Strengthen Midwest Ties

Participants at the Conference recommended that SftP chapters attend large technical and scientific meetings such as those of the AAAS and IEEE. The conference participants agreed to meet again in Chicago in September, 1977.



H lp SftP G t a B tt r Typ writ r!

As you can see, our only typewriter now is a clunky old portable that has the letter "e" missing. We have another clunky portable on loan. We'd like to get enough money together to get a good deal on a quality used office machine. Such a tool would not only help us do a better job in editing and revising the articles that appear in this magazine, but help all other aspects of our work: distribution, subscriptions, and local Boston chapter activities.

To help make this happen, please send whatever contribution you can afford to SftP at 897 Main Street, Cambridge, MA 02139. Make your check or money order out to Science for the People and mark on the margin or elsewhere "Typewriter!"

CHINA: A Trip Proposal

The idea of a second SftP trip to China first received serious consideration in December 1974. After a couple of false starts, a resolution was finally agreed upon at a Northeastern Regional Coordinating Committee meeting in September 1976 to make a serious attempt to generate the activity and support needed to develop a proposal to send to the People's Republic of China before the end of the year. Although we didn't quite make the deadline, the effort was a success and the proposal that follows was forwarded to China by members of the first trip delegation in mid-March of this year.

The political work that was involved in reaching an agreement on the goals and specific contents of the proposal underlined the need for a decision-making structure and a more adequate communication network within SftP. On the other hand it also demonstrated that a joint effort by five widely separated groups is possible even under the present structureless circumstances. The document below went through several steps of revision, each based on input from several groups and individuals and is more worthy of being represented as a national SftP proposal than any prior product of our organization.

Now come the tasks of preparing for the trip — and should we be fortunate enough to receive a positive response from the People's Republic — of selecting and making the post-trip work a success!

It is not too late for individuals and groups to begin to relate to the China trip work. Anyone wishing to become involved should write to: SftP China Trip, c/o Ted Goldfarb, 208 William St., Port Jefferson, N. Y. 11777, immediately.

It should be clear from reading the proposal that involvement will require a serious commitment of time and effort. Although we invite anyone who is interested to join us in making this venture a success, we are in particular need of progressive people with actual experience in agricultural work. We also hope that it is clear that there is much support work to be done by many more people than just the few who may be selected to go to China.

—Ted Goldfarb
Stony Brook SftP Chapter

In 1973 ten representatives of Science for the People spent a month in the People's Republic of China as guests of the Foreign Affairs Bureau of the Science and Technology Association. A book entitled *China: Science Walks on Two Legs* was written by the group and has been widely read. In addition, members

of the group have presented talks and slide shows, and participated in numerous discussions about their experiences.

Science for the People is an organization whose members are involved or interested in science and technology-related issues, and whose activities are directed at

exposing the class control of science and technology under capitalism. As part of this effort we try to promote an understanding of a non-elitist, broad-based science which might be created if science were connected to and controlled by the masses. In developing our understanding of such an alternative we know that we have much to learn from our Chinese comrades. Furthering the cause of friendship and understanding between the people of China and the people of the United States is an important aspect of this effort.

The responses we have received from readers of our book about science in China and from participants in our discussions and slide show presentations indicate that these activities have been very successful. This practice has taught us the need to stress the connection between the success of the revolution and its continuing consolidation under the People's Republic, and the development of a socialist organization of science. We have found, as others have noted, that many Americans — including a large percentage of those who admire China's achievements — ignore the Chinese explanation of the political, economic and social transformations which have made these remarkable achievements possible.

The activities resulting from the China visit have also served to heighten our own political awareness and to strengthen our organization. Discussions about the need for a visit by a second delegation, designed to further our understanding of the dialectical relationship between the development of science and the continuing revolutionary process in the People's Republic have been taking place for well over a year. During the past several months, groups have been meeting in California, Florida, Massachusetts, Michigan and New York to study this issue.

Looking over a newly-introduced elite strain of rice.

China Reconstructs



This process has resulted in a decision to propose a second trip. We are particularly interested in learning about organization, planning and decision-making at all levels of scientific activity, and how the political process assures the connection of these endeavors to the masses of Chinese working people. We have decided to focus primarily on agriculture because of its central role in China's development.

Our hope is to receive an invitation to send a delegation of twelve people who would spend at least four to six weeks in the People's Republic. We would prefer an invitation for sometime during the summer, or perhaps the early fall of 1977. (The project we are proposing is such that we could probably learn more during these months than during the winter.) We would like to spend at least four days in each place that we visit in order to obtain a more thorough understanding of what we see.

GOALS OF THE TRIP

The specific goals of the trip we propose are best described in terms of the post-trip political work planned by Science for the People. Some of the details of this work are presented below. Briefly stated, we envision an outreach educational effort directed primarily toward

American working people, rather than toward the professional-technical-academic sector. Since the vast majority of Americans relate to agriculture as city dwelling worker-consumers, rather than as farm workers, we would hope to look not only at agricultural production, but also at such aspects as distribution, food processing and nutritional planning. We hope to contrast the relationships between agriculture and science and technology in a socialist-based system with those relationships under capitalism. For these purposes we would like to obtain information during the course of the trip on such topics as the following:

I. Social Aspects of Production

- a. Control and organization of the production process, both local and central.
- b. Occupational health and safety of workers on farms and in the processing plants.
- c. Women in agriculture — production, distribution and planning.
- d. System of incentives.
- e. Who decides what to plant? (On the basis of what information?)
- f. Effect of the "three-in-one" concept of agriculture.
- g. Effect of mechanization on workers.
- h. Is agricultural work respected by those not involved in agricultural labor?

II. Technological Aspects of Production.

- a. Basic and applied research in agriculture. (Who participates? Where is it done? How are the results translated into practice?)
- b. Improving land fertility. (Soil conservation, crop rotation, use of fertilizers, etc.)
- c. Use of chemicals in soil improvement, in pest control and in food processing.
- d. Pollution control and use of wastes.
- e. Quantity and nature of energy inputs.
- f. Pest, insect and weed management. (Chemical, biological and other methods.)
- g. Irrigation.
- h. Mechanization.
- i. Regional self-sufficiency versus regional crop specialization.

III. The Organization of Distribution and Consumer Concerns

- a. How products get to urban consumers.
- b. Predictability of prices. (How will increased mechanization affect prices?)
- c. The distribution of products among teams, brigades, communes, etc.
- d. Food processing.
- e. Regional differences in diet. (How is this being affected by socialist development?)
- f. Nutrition. (How is nutritional information disseminated? Research in this area.)

PRE-TRIP WORK

The subgroups connected to Science for the People chapters which prepared this proposal and others which may form will prepare for the trip. This will include:

- 1.) Study of Chinese agriculture and politics: This would allow us to be more specific about the places we wish to visit and the sorts of questions we will need to ask.

2.) Study of American agriculture: Examination of the social and political structures of American agriculture is necessary to be sensitive to differences observed during the trip to China.

3.) Planning post-trip work: Detailed planning for the production of a slide show and the various writing and speaking projects, including contacts with local community groups. Efforts will be made to learn what specific questions American working people have about matters connected to our effort.

TRIP ITINERARY

During the trip, we hope to visit a broad range of scientific facilities including communes, factories, distribution centers, universities, research institutes and central scientific and technical planning bodies. We also hope to visit a cross-section of agricultural regions in China and representative cities. Further details will be worked out among the China groups during the pre-trip period. Should we receive an invitation we would be pleased to discuss the specific nature of our information-gathering activities with our prospective Chinese hosts.

POST-TRIP WORK

The means we would use to convey the information and understanding we gain from our trip will include:

1.) Production and distribution of a high quality slide show and script similar to the very effective NARMIC (North American Research on the Military-Industrial Complex) slide show which described the automated battlefield in Vietnam. We would offer copies of this show free or at a nominal rental to schools, civic associations, scientific societies and anyone else who might be interested. If possible, we would also produce an automated version with a tape of the script

which could be set up for continuous showing at large scientific meetings and other public places.

2.) The writing and publication of pamphlets for different audiences. One pamphlet could be designed for publication by the progressive press and could be sold in bookstores as well as through progressive outlets. A second pamphlet (or series of pamphlets) will be designed for elementary and secondary school children. This pamphlet will present an overview of Chinese agriculture and food distribution, how it differs from the U.S., and the political, economic and social implications of these differences. A third pamphlet, which will be advertised in U.S. agricultural publications, will be designed specifically for U.S. farm workers and will describe how conditions differ for their Chinese counterpart brothers and sisters. In addition, the writers of these pamphlets would condense the major aspects of the text to magazine-length articles and write them in a style that would make them suitable for publication in broad circulation journals that reach non-scientific and scientific audiences.

3.) Engaging in personal appearances in conjunction with local organizations, consumer groups, farm workers, schools and universities, depending on home location of the particular delegate.

4.) Writing a mass circulation paperback book similar to that written by the first Science for the People delegation. This project will depend on our ability to locate a publisher with a wide distribution network who is willing to allow us to control the editing of the final manuscript.

5.) A final possible project might be a technical book on agriculture in China written by a subgroup of the trip members who possess sufficient expertise.

DELEGATION PARTICIPANTS

The delegation will consist of twelve people. They will be selected from, and be representative of, the Science for the People groups that have been preparing for this project. The majority of the group will not be individuals who could be considered experts in agriculture although a few such people who have either academic or practical experience will be included. We expect the delegation to be made up of people with backgrounds related to a wide variety of scientific disciplines. All members will be expected to have engaged in a program of study related to the proposed project. To the extent possible, the delegation will be balanced with regard to sex, levels of expertise, skills related to post-trip activity, etc. Funds will be raised to enable participation by those who otherwise could not participate. □

Appendix SELECTION OF TRIP PARTICIPANTS

(not sent to the People's Republic)

The trip participants will come from four different groups of people: 1) those involved with China groups associated with SftP chapters, 2) those involved in SftP chapters which are too small to support actual China subgroups but are willing to help disseminate the results of the trip, 3) those SftP members who are not in SftP chapters but who have other affiliations with progressive organizations that can help with the outreach work, 4) at least two participants with practical farm experience, both with politics consistent with SftP.

We suggest that, since people in the first group will be best able to engage in all aspects of the pre- and post-trip work, they should constitute *at least* two-thirds of the trip participants.

Selection should be done in the following manner:

The National Organizing Committee (NOC) or some subgroup working with one or two of the participants on the first SftP trip should set quotas for each of the existing China groups as a function of its size and activity. These groups would then do a preliminary selection of their own members to fill the quotas. This preliminary delegation of at least eight people from category one must contain no fewer than three women.

The selection of people in categories (2) and (3) who have written to one of the China groups in response to ads in *SftP* magazine and the letter sent to all chapter contacts, will be done by the same NOC subcommittee mentioned above.

The selection of people in category (4) will be done by the same NOC sub-committee. All China groups should make an effort to locate potential delegates from this category.

All trip candidates will be selected on the basis of the following criteria: 1) past and present activity in SftP and other progressive organizations, 2) commitment to the development of the trip project and to preparing for the trip, 3) willingness to commit at least 10 hours per week during the 3 months immediately following the trip to make the projects happen, 4) specific skills like writing, photography, and public speaking, 5) at least two or three participants will be included who have expertise related to some aspect of agricultural science.

Everyone participating in the trip would be expected to devote considerable time and effort to producing the first of the several projects within two to three months after the end of the trip. Together with groups within SftP they would also be expected to work on setting up the distribution network to get our story to the people.

news notes

STERILIZATION AS TREATMENT FOR POVERTY

After nearly seven years, Norma Jean Serena's case against the Pennsylvania welfare system will come to trial in the next few weeks. Norma Jean Serena is a Native American woman who was sterilized without her knowledge, let alone her consent, in 1970 in a Pittsburgh hospital.

Even though she was not their client, the local County Welfare Department took it upon itself to illegally take away her three children for adoption and authorize a "therapeutic sterilization" against her will or knowledge. Why? The Armstrong County Welfare Department decided that because she was poor, because she was a native American, and because she lived with a Black man, that she was an "unfit mother." The sterilization procedure was authorized as a "medically necessary" treatment because "Norma Jean Serena . . . is suffering from the following ailment or condition . . . socio-economic reasons . . ." There are no county documents informing us if this medical treatment did in fact "cure" Serena's socio-economic condition, i.e., her poverty.

Serena is now suing ten professionals, the County Welfare Department, and a hospital, charging them with seven counts of conspiracy and other violations of her constitutional rights. If the case is won, it will be the first time that a court has decided that sterilization without informed consent is a violation of civil rights. Serena is bringing to trial a woman's right to control her own body, to live with whom she chooses, and to raise her own children. She is fighting the power of

racist welfare bureaucracies who control the lives of poor people both on and off welfare. Furthermore, her case has important implications for the thousands of poor, Black, Puerto Rican and Native American women who every year are sterilized without their knowledge or full understanding.

Aid to Serena's legal fund should be sent to Richard Levine, atty., for Norma Jean Serena, 4433 Osage Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19104. Further information can be obtained from Women Against Sterilization Abuse (WASA), c/o Carol Rogers, 5022 Newhall St., Philadelphia, PA 19144 Tel.: (215) 843-9457.

—from WASA, *Off Our Backs*

FDA CENSORSHIP?

A special investigator hired to probe allegations of corruption said FDA officials improperly sought to silence dissident employees who disagreed with decisions to approve new drugs. In one case, a doctor was transferred from an important job evaluating new drugs to one without responsibility. Some FDA officials, the investigator reported, lied under oath about the reason for the transfer.

—Boston Globe, April 21, 1977

NASA TO USE WOMEN IN WEIGHTLESSNESS TEST

"The National Aeronautics and Space Administration, criticized in the past for having no women astronauts, will use 10 women next month in a test of simulated weightlessness.

"For nine days the women, all from the San Francisco area, will be confined to bed to simulate weightlessness."(!??)

—*Washington Post*
April 2, '77

Complex's memoranda of understanding instead of going ahead with a lawsuit which could perhaps have stopped the hospital. Another was RTH's acceptance of the power plant, in order to ensure that the Mission Park housing would be built.

However, we should recognize that Harvard has also made serious mistakes. The power plant was so poorly designed that they had to fire the engineers and start all over again. Its cost has risen from \$56,000,000 to \$109,000,000 at the latest estimate. Although work on the excavation and foundations is moving ahead, the project still does not have final approval from the

Department of Environmental Quality Engineering. Opposition is growing in nearby Brookline, and within Harvard itself, and more lawsuits are being threatened. New avenues of opposition seem to be opening up every day. In short, some of us are beginning to cautiously wonder again if the power plant can actually be stopped.

Perhaps even more important, over the last few months there has emerged a sense of new unity and energy in the community. Mission Park housing is nearing completion, and therefore no longer threatened. This in itself may allow the community to unite more strongly against the power plant. After many years, the Back of the Hill seems to be finally making progress towards

reclaiming a large chunk of the community from the Lahey Clinic (Harvard is by no means our only enemy, just the biggest one). At a recent City Council hearing on Lahey, the large turnout and active support from all parts of the hill were impressive.

In short, it's true that we haven't won yet, but the struggle is by no means over, and we haven't lost either. Sometimes I think that, with the forces working against Mission Hill, if it was any other community, it would have been gone — totally defeated — long ago, but we're still here!

Mission Hill lives!

Chris Curtiss
Roxbury, Mass.

chapter reports

ST. LOUIS CHAPTER REPORT

We began this spring semester with an open, general evening "meeting" designed to let people around campus know we're around and what we're about. We spoke about SftP in general, and our chapter in particular — how we differ from other science-related groups (e.g., SIPI), what our activities have been in the last year, what we hope to accomplish in the near future, and so forth. Each member of the group, and each of the 20 or so new people, also talked about what she or he has been doing in science, what she'd like to do, why she's in or interested in joining SftP, etc. In a way this was another attempt to articulate relations between the personal and political; it was also just a way of getting to know each other.

It became clear that some people interested in SftP either work or take classes all day at the medical

school, so these people decided to form a group which could meet off-campus in the evenings. In order to maintain some ties between us, our SftP group and the evening group meet one Sunday a month. At our last meeting one of the topics of discussion was how to reach out to other people, especially workers, at the medical complex. One idea was to develop a radical-science annotated bibliography and distribute it, in order to publicize the existence of the group, give people who cannot make meetings an alternative (self-education through reading, or at least a step in that direction), perhaps raise issues for some who haven't given them any thought, etc. If you know of any other ways to reach out to science workers, especially in the medical field, and students, we'd sure appreciate hearing about them from you.

In the last several months we have been educating ourselves on the history and the issues in the recombinant DNA controversy. After much

reading and discussion we each expressed tentative positions on the matter, and it turned out that the group almost unanimously opposes any recombinant DNA research, on the grounds that in this particular society and in this historical period, the so-called benefits of such research will not be realized but the hazards certainly will. We are especially disturbed about private industry's doing such research. At any rate, our minimum position is that the research, if it is to be done at all, be done in one lab. We've more to learn on this, we know, and we intend to keep studying the issue. Recently we've had Gar Allen and the chairperson of the Biohazards Committee at Washington University come speak to us on the issues in this matter; our ultimate plan (so far) for this semester is to put together a public forum on the subject. Both Gar and the chairperson have agreed to speak if we decide to have them. This forum would be for the end of April.

In the near future we'll be having a talk and discussion with Mark Sheldon on technology in China. We'll also discuss what went on at the Midwest meeting of SftP chapters at Champaign-Urbana. We also

plan to discuss some fundamental concepts of Marxism, how they help and hinder our own developing theories and practices, how we can avoid being caught in stultifying orthodox positions, etc. We are at this point especially interested in avoiding the crude base-superstructure conceptualization of society, since this view seems to us particularly disastrous as far as understanding the actual and potential places of science and scientists in society.

This certainly doesn't cover everything we've been up to or hope to do, but we hope that it gives you an idea of some of our activities and interests. We should also mention that just as we did last semester, we've co-sponsored a few activities — most recently, a teach-in against the death penalty held at Washington

University April 2. We intend to maintain contact with other left groups on and off campus and to continue these cosponsorship ventures whenever it's appropriate and helpful.

That wraps it up for now; we'll try to keep you informed about what's happening here!

Your comrades,
Science for the People
St. Louis Chapter

CHAMPAIGN-URBANA CHAPTER REPORT

We have recently received a small amount of money from the student government in addition to those funds we had already collected through dues and members' contributions. We are now looking into the possibilities for sponsoring

films, slide shows and or speakers. We would appreciate any suggestions and information you can give us, e.g., do you have anyone coming this way later in the spring? do you have any films or slideshows, etc. available? (We have already arranged for Vinton Thompson to come here in the middle of April.)

We now have three groups working: A health study group, a military university study group, and a recombinant study group. A science economics group will be forming soon, which will lead, perhaps, to a pamphlet and or free university offering next fall. We are attempting to get a policy statement together and to publicize the sale of the Plato (computer teaching) system to Iran. A few people have begun to plan a newsletter.

Bob Hall

SCIENCE FOR THE PEOPLE: the magazine

SftP is published bimonthly and is intended not only for members, but also for a broad readership within the technical strata and for all others interested in a progressive-radical view on science and technology. The goals of *SftP* are to elucidate the role of science and technology in society, to enrich the political consciousness of readers, and to stimulate participation in concrete political activities.

The subscriber circulation of *SftP* is about 1,500, the total circulation about 4,000. The content of *SftP* derives largely from the experiences and interests of people who read the magazine. In seeking to "rely on the people", we urge everyone both to contribute to the magazine themselves and to encourage others to do the same. We are particularly interested in having articles written, discussed, or at least reviewed, collectively, when circumstances permit.

1. *Operations*: *SftP* is published through the activities of the Editorial, Production and Distribution Committees under the direction of the Magazine Coordinating Committee (whose members are drawn from the other committees). All committee members (part-time, unpaid and serving 6-12 months) and the Magazine Coordinator (part-time, paid) are from the Boston area except for some members of the Editorial Committee who are from other cities. All committees are accountable to the general membership by way of 1) the annual Northeast Regional Conference (the most regular and widely attended conference of *SftP*) which reviews the magazine and makes general policy, 2) the different chapters of the Northeast Region through the Northeast Regional Coordinating Committee, and 3) local chapters through selection, review and direction of their participants on the Editorial Committee. Nationwide representation on the Editorial Committee by active *SftP* members is encouraged.

2. *Material for Publication*: To be in accord with established guidelines, material for publication 1) should deal with issues of science and technology, from a radical perspective, 2) should raise the political awareness and involvement of the general readership, and 3) should stimulate activities of individual persons and groups and the formation of chapters, but should not generally have the character of an "organizing manual."

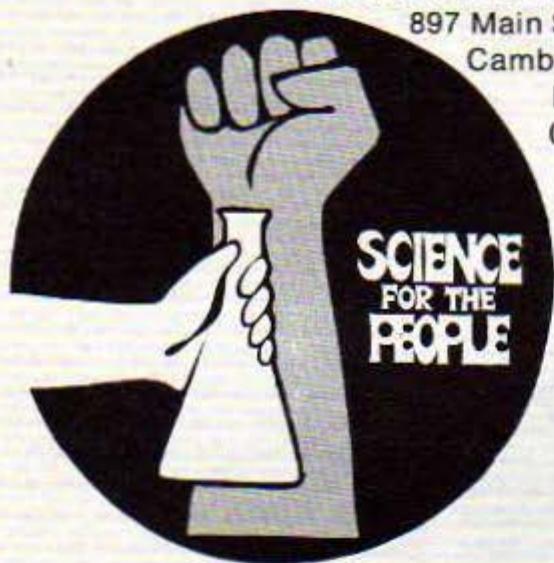
3. *Kinds of Contributions: Articles*. Good articles can evolve from our work and from community-based or other, political, investigation and activity. Topics may reflect research, teaching or other interests, and can take the form of book reviews, reports of events, or analytical articles. Writing done for another purpose often can be adapted for *SftP* and is welcome.

Procedure: 1) articles written for another purpose and roughly conforming to above guidelines: submit 3 copies along with a letter describing the article's origin, how it might be adapted, and whether the author(s) are willing to do so. 2) new articles: if convenient, send an outline of a proposed article so that the Editorial Committee can point out possible conflict with the guidelines and make suggestions concerning content, resource material, emphasis and magazine context. In this way, some assurance can be given that an article will be used. Writing articles collectively is encouraged. Submit articles in 3 copies. In attempting to give authors constructive criticism and support, the Editorial Committee expends considerable effort in reviewing articles and discussing them with authors. Final substantive editorial changes are cleared with authors. In discussing the magazine's content, in the "About This Issue" column, the Editorial Committee may point out unexplored questions, describe the range of opinion within *SftP* on a particular issue and draw some additional political interpretations of its own from the articles.

Current Opinion. Short, tightly argued positions on timely subjects are required for the Current Opinion feature. These contributions, including an occasional one from the Editorial Committee, should rely on facts and analysis generally accepted by the membership. It is the responsibility of the Editorial Committee to try to select those which best clarify the debate; this will include discussing changes with authors. Contributions should be 500 words or less, in 3 copies.

Other Contributions: Letters: contributions for continuing debate, commenting on previous magazine content, initiating new discussion, etc. News Notes: news items illustrating the social and political role of science and technology, especially reporting people's actions on these kinds of issues (300 words or less). Chapter Reports and *SftP* Activities: brief summaries having essentially assured publication, with editing. Graphics: all kinds, including cartoons, designs, photographs, etc., not necessarily original but with credits.

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