



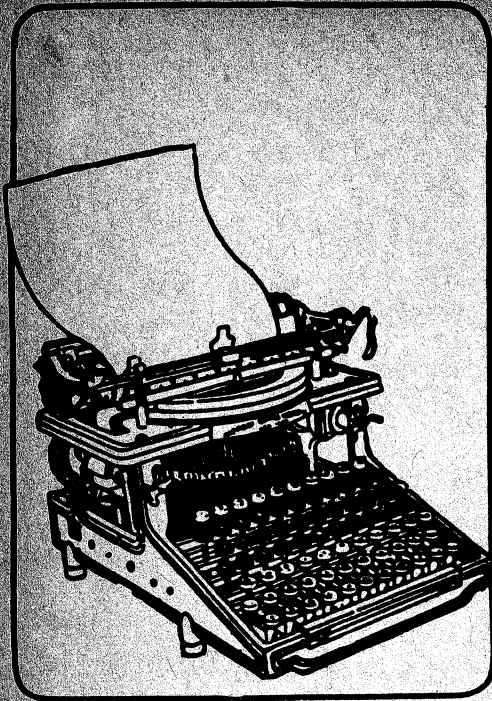
brother

75¢

No. 14-15

a forum for men against sexism

MEN
and
CLASS



LETTERS

SELF CRITICISM

I was very happy to receive the fall, 1975 issue, and to hear about the proposed issues (which I'm anxious to receive.) I found the statement by Brad Kress from Britain quite important.

My main reaction to reading *brother*, however, was to feel guilty. *brother* has been immensely important to me over the years. You've been constantly far ahead of my own personal/political development, and have forced me to think about issues of male supremacy and heterosexual privilege when I didn't really want to. I thank *brother* for that. Only recently — as I've made a deeper commitment to dealing with the politics of radical feminism, lesbian feminism, and gay liberation — have I realized how much I was resisting *brother* for very bad reasons.

I, for one, sometimes put down *brother* for its "hard line" — and I'm of the men who didn't make much of an effort to share resources or communicate with you. And now I see that the fault was mine and not yours. It wasn't that *brother* was too intimidating — it was that I was too intimidated (in other words, I was clinging to my privileges.)

So, please, don't get defensive and don't tone down your politics. You've done some incredibly important work — that I know has helped me (and many other men) more than I can say. Please keep us the good work.

Very best wishes to all of you. I look forward to the next issue of *brother*.

Bob Lamm

WOMEN'S WORK

I'm like the man who grabs and reads his wife's women's magazine before she gets a chance. No. 11-12 came today and it's wonderful. You have no idea (or do you?) how supportive and reassuring it is to a tired, discouraged feminist to see men working hard to become real people — and to make it a little easier for women to do the same.

One statement hit me particularly hard. It's in Paul's housework article, four pages from the back: "It's one thing to wash the dishes, another to clean the kitchen . . . *another yet to be the first to notice that the kitchen needs cleaning.*" (emphasis mine) This is the first time I have ever seen this acknowledged in print — and thank Paul for it. My God, is it ever another thing yet. It's also one of those insidious things that are so subtle that many, many women don't (or maybe won't) even see it.

That statement reminded me of an article I wrote for the *Pedestal* two years ago. I went back and reread it. What it says is as relevant to me and to all the women I know now as it was then; seen in a somewhat different light two years later, but every bit as real. I don't know what you have planned for upcoming issues. I don't know how much space you want to allot to issues which are now, finally, receiving attention other places, I don't know how you will react to the article, but I've enclosed a copy of it and would be really pleased if you would consider publishing it.

Brother is fine, fine. As a *brother*-reading sister, how do I sign off? I'm used to writing "In sisterhood." Somehow, "In brotherhood" doesn't quite fit. How about thanks and

In Personhood,

Frances Rooney

'GAY LIB RAG'?

I've shared *brother* with some male friends and acquaintances and received the following criticisms:

1) It appears biased towards being a "gay lib. rag", "do not want to be identified with this special interest group" — generally, men's lib viewed in much broader perspective.

2) "They (*brother*) haven't got themselves together" referring to the amount of material devoted to internal hassles and factionalism rather than being responsive to the readers' other interests. A strong complaint by all of "us". I have little interest in listening to your personal quarrels. I hear a definite plea "rescue us" — we can't get it together enough to resolve at least tentatively our hassles and risk a format. I feel strongly that you're caught up in your own needs so much that the readers' needs are being neglected. I see this as being self-defeating in spite of the time, energy, money and struggle you've contributed — it is a difficult project — on to us readers, please.

3) I like the personal account/experience and creative contributions. I would like to see more "research" based materials. Also alternative relationship styles — triage, open, homo- and heterosexual — many people are venturing in this area: what's coming from it? I would like to see a holistic approach to changing relationship styles/roles. I'm pissed at your outright vanity that you need to be "pro-feminist" — women are not helpless little things that need macho support as your theme suggests. I resent the on-going guilt trip you lay for men as being "oppressors." I believe we are all oppressed and would like to see emphasis placed on mutuality — in understanding how we are oppressed and what we can do to facilitate mutual support in growth towards equality.

Hang in there.

Richard Crowder, et al.

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The *brother* collective for this issue, no. 14-15, Men and Class, Summer 1976, included Michael Novick, Dan Poyourow, Michael Schaeffer, Barry Shapiro, Micael Tapia, and Andy Weisman.

EDITORIAL

MEN and CLASS

The spirit with which we at *brother* approached this issue of "Men and Class" is not that we have all the answers, but that it is very important to figure out what are the right questions to ask.

One question which we must ask if we are going to work effectively to end sexism and the system of sex-role oppression is, who benefits? In whose interests does the current system of restrictive sex-roles and the exploitation and subjugation of women work? Who played the key role in putting it into effect, and who plays the main role in maintaining it?

To approach the question from the opposite end, in a way, is to see this society, shot thru with **exploitation** — people with power expropriating (stealing) what other people worked to produce — **oppression** — people with power to define other people's identities, ideas, and cultures — and **alienation** — people being separated from themselves and from the things they produce and the relationships they build. What role does sexism and sex role oppression play in such a system? What would the liberation of women mean to such a system.?

It is in trying to answer questions like these that we came to the conclusion that men struggling to transform sex roles and sexism in themselves and in society, must develop a **class** analysis to have a real, lasting impact. And by the same token, men struggling against class exploitation must embrace the struggle against sexism, not simply as "women's issues," but also as crucial to ending all oppression and exploitation.

In whose interests does the current system of restrictive sex-roles and the exploitation and subjugation of women work? Who played the key role in putting it into effect, and who plays the main role in maintaining it?

For a publication like *brother*, it seems logical to begin this collective statement on "Men and Class" with some considerations about men, and then go on to look at the class questions these raise.

Most of the men reading *brother* share a feeling that the male sex role is oppressive, restricting and something of a drag. Many see that the role oppression men experience is actually rooted in the **oppressiveness** that role was designed to sustain against women.

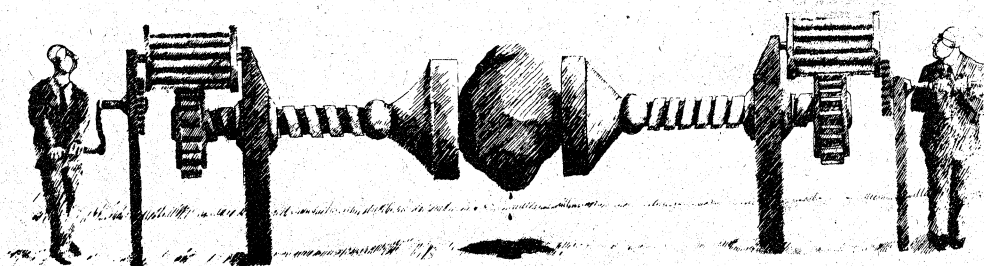
It's obvious that the "masculine" role exists in comparison and contrast to the roles assigned to women. But it's also true that not all men nor all women are forced into the same role. If we're talking about changing our roles, we recognize that sex roles change over time; they are historically determined by certain social, economic, and political factors. Sex roles also vary with cultures and with the overall form of social organization.

But on top of that, sex roles and how they are maintained vary with a person's position in society.

CLASS DIFFERENCES

It should be clear that men who play out their role with more chips, with some real power in society, are different from men whose arena for "proving their masculinity" is mostly verbal and manipulative, who are in turn different from those whose role is restricted to "bringing home the bacon" or proofs of physical strength or endurance.

Raising questions of class differences, like issues of sexism and contradictions between men and women, is always difficult. Those of us on the "oppressed" side of the contradiction, will often resist the consciousness of our oppression, either because we do not want to recognize our powerlessness, or because we have internalized a sense of our "inferiority". On the other hand, those of us on the "privileged" side of the contradiction will often immediately react to what is being raised as a "guilt trip."



Michael Sean Walsh

In fact we believe that the point of raising these issues in a clearly political way is exactly to defuse self-blame on the one hand and personal guilt on the other. We can begin to define collective, political responsibilities and strategies.

WHY AND HOW DO WE CHANGE?

We believe that sex roles cannot be changed, ultimately, by a purely interpersonal struggle, but that social struggle and social change is necessary. This requires a mass movement, in which men as well as women will struggle to wipe out sexism. We believe, and will attempt to show, that such a movement must be organized on a **class basis**. Men can come from a variety of places to see such a revolutionary movement as in their own interests.

Men who are exploited and oppressed will see that holding on to masculine power and privilege blinds us to our own real powerlessness in society, and by oppressing women identifies us with our oppressors and cripples our ability to unite as a class and end all exploitation. Men who have internalized our "inadequacies" and "queerness" as personal failure, will come to see this as part of a system of enforcement that keeps a privileged few in power. Men who have had a measure of privilege to experiment with sex role changes will see that this does not make us superior, but instead gives us a basis, in the sex-role oppression we have come to recognize, for fighting the **entire system** of class exploitation and sexism in which such roles are based.

WHAT IS CLASS EXPLOITATION?

Class divisions in society are more than a question of income, or lifestyle, or roles. Classes are determined by basic questions of **ownership** and **control** in society. A class

society is a hierarchy or pyramid, with the few on the top enjoying power and privileges at the **expense** of the many at the bottom. For instance, in the U.S. 5% of the population owns 95% of the wealth, and their control extends into other countries as well. It is also mainly the people on the very top who define what is normal or "natural" in a society, what is "right" and what is "wrong". Finally, it is mostly the people in this "ruling class" who have a measure of self-conscious **control** over social forces and processes, unless and until those of us who are numerous but powerless at the present, organize ourselves to change things so that we make them work in our own considered interest. (To do this, we would have to overthrow the class that currently is in power.)

The basis of this class division of power is primarily ownership and control of the **productive resources** of a society. On the basis of these private property rights in the U.S., a very small number of people — the monopoly capitalist or bourgeois class — have organized most of us into their paid or unpaid workforce, or assigned us to unemployment. In order to maintain their control of this system they have in fact extended their economic stranglehold over much of the earth.

The enormous stolen wealth appropriated from this socialized labor in the form of private **profit**, is used to establish, enforce, and sanctify the defining institutions of our society. Control techniques include ideological training at universities; advertising and the mass media; and direct repression and control by police, intelligence (spys) and "correctional" (prisons) and educational (school) agencies. The people who sit atop this international rip-off (**imperialism**) also rely on pre-existing forms of hierarchy and control to maintain their hold — especially feudal and patriarchal institutions.

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WORK

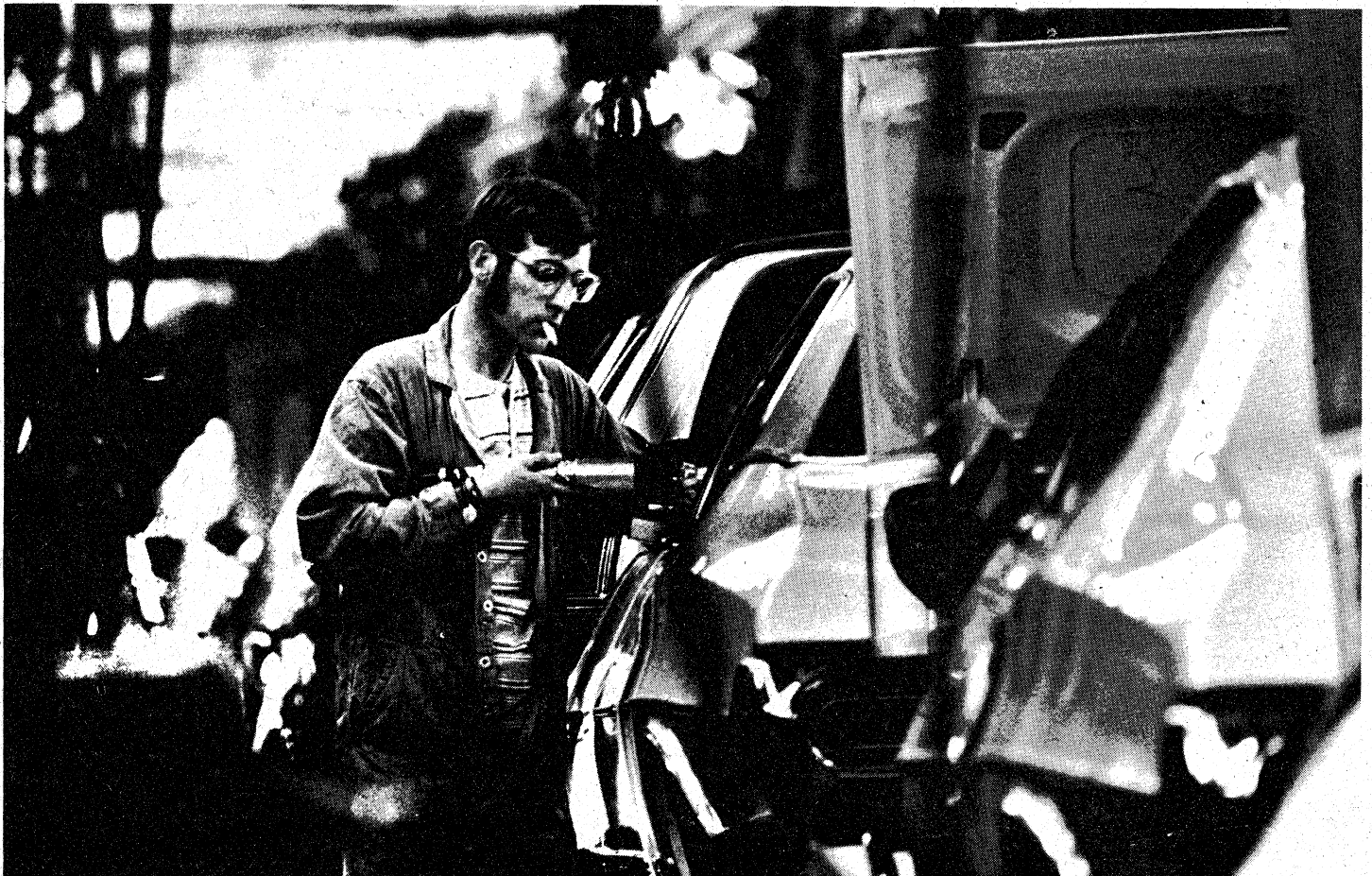
SEXUALITY AS CONSUMPTION

by John Lippert

I work at a Fisher Body plant over in Elyria, Ohio. And so I spend about sixty hours each week stacking bucket seats onto carts. I used to spend all my time here in Oberlin as a student. But I had to give up that life of comfort as it became financially impossible and as it became psychologically and politically a less and less satisfactory alternative. I still try to remain rigorous about my intellectual growth, though, and so I still take a few courses here at the College. Such a schizophrenic role is at times hard to bear psychologically and the work load is often staggering. But such a dual

lifestyle also gives me something of a unique perspective on both Oberlin AND Fisher Body. I feel this perspective is a useful contribution to this conference on men's sexuality.

I really hate being an auto worker. But I do need the job, and so I go back there every day. Working for Fisher Body is probably about the best deal I can make right now for selling myself to an employer. Compared to most other people in the society, the deal I've made is not a bad one. The secretaries who work for Fisher Body work harder than I do and they don't get paid as much. There are plenty of people out of



work who wish they had my job. And there are people starving to death all over the world who would take my job in a minute if they had the chance. I can't help feeling how "lucky" I am, and I know that the people I work with are feeling "lucky" also. And so in discussing my blue-collar experience at Fisher Body, I don't want to imply that I'm coming from the "hotbed of the revolution" or anything like that. I'm just talking about the fact that I have to go to work every day.

One of the things that really surprised me when I went to work for Fisher Body is that it really is hard to go to work every day. I don't know why that surprised me. At first I thought that everyone around me was pretty well adjusted and that I was still an irresponsible hippie at heart. But then I found that just about everyone I know at the plant has to literally struggle to go back to work every day. Again I was surprised, but this time also encouraged, because I made the very casual assumption that I could look to the people around me for help in facing the strain of that factory. But I soon found that there is nothing "casual" about this kind of support: it is incredibly difficult to find. I have lots of friends now, from all over Northern Ohio and from all different kinds of cultural background. But most of these relationships seem based on a certain distance, on an assumption that we really do face that factory alone. At first I had to look to see if it was my fault, to see if there was something in me that made it hard to have nurturing relationships with the people I work with. I soon found out that it is my fault, but that it is part of more general phenomena. I began to explore these "phenomena" as completely as I could: this exploration became as essential part of my struggle to go to work every day.

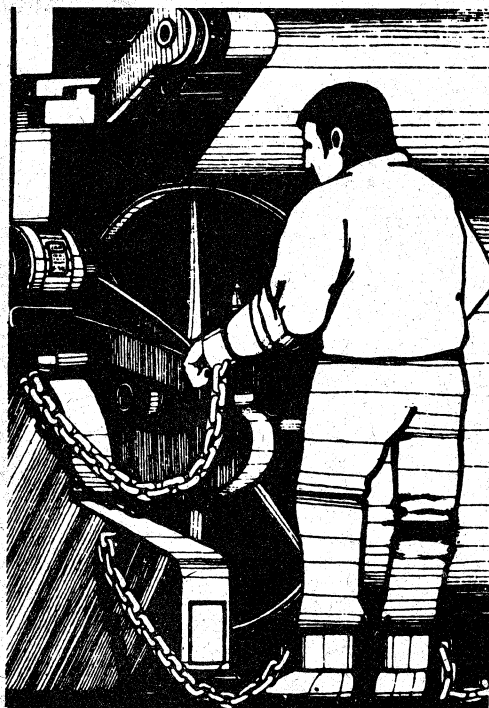
In trying to look at these barriers between me and the people around me, I was struck immediately with the kind of role sexuality plays in mediating the relationships of people in the factory. By sexuality I mean now both physical or sexual intimacy and sexual roles or stereotypes.

I spend much time working with men in almost complete isolation from women. I soon found that instead of getting or giving nurturance to these men that I was under intense pressure to compete with them. We don't seem to have any specific goal in this competition (such as promotion or status, etc.). Each member of the group seems concerned mainly with exhibiting sexual experience and competency through the competition. Past sexual history is described and compared in some detail; as a newcomer I was asked to defend my sexual "know-how" within a week of joining the group. Also, we try to degrade each other's sexual competency verbally, through comments like, "Well, why don't you introduce your wife to a REAL man." or "Well, I was at your house last night and taught your wife a few things she didn't know." But it is important to note that none of what happens between men in the plant is considered "sexuality". That remains as what we do with (or to) our women when we get home. And so even though homosexuality is generally considered to be some kind of disease, most men are free to engage in what seems to be a pretty basic need for physical intimacy or reassurance. This can be expressed very simply, though putting arms around shoulders or squeezing knees, but it can also become much more intense and ex-

plicit, through stabbing between ass cheeks or pulling at nipples. But all of this physical interaction occurs within this atmosphere of competition. It takes the form of banter, horseplay, thrust and parry seemingly intended to make the need for such physical interaction seem as absurd as possible. But even through this competition, it is easy to see that many, many men enjoy this physical interaction, and that they receive a kind of physical satisfaction from it that they just don't get when they go home.

My relationships with women seem somehow equally distorted. Entry of women into the factory is still relatively a recent event, at least recent enough so that contact between men and women is still unique, and very noticeable. Much occurs before words are even spoken. Like every other man there, I discuss and evaluate the physical appearance of the women around me. This analysis is at times lengthy and involved, as in "She's pretty nice but her legs are too long in proportion to the rest of her body." Of course this evaluation goes on in places other than the factory, but here it seems particularly universal and intense. Perhaps a reason for this intensity is that the factory is an ugly place to spend eight or ten hours a day, and attractive people are much nicer to look at.

I guess I really do get some sort of satisfaction from engaging in this analysis. But there is an incredible gap between the kind of pleasure I get when I sleep with someone and the kind of pleasure I get when I see someone attractive in the shop. And yet I behave as if there is some connection. Many men are completely unabashed about letting the women know they are being watched and discussed, and some men are quite open about the results of their analysis. Really attractive women have to put up with incredible harassment, from constant propositions to mindless and obscene grunts as they walk by. Men who call out these obscenities can't actually be trying to sleep with the





women they are yelling at; they are simply making the women suffer for their beauty.

In this attack they are joined by some older men who just don't like the thought of working with women. Many women have been told they ought to leave the factory and get a husband, and then they are told in some detail what they have to do to GET a husband! It is really difficult for women to work in that factory. In many cases women have merely added eight hours or boredom and frustration in the factory to eight or more hours a day of housework and childcare at home. And they have to contend with this harassment on top of all that.

But women are getting more secure in the factory. More and more now, men who are particularly offensive in this harassment are responded to in kind, with a flippant, "Up your ass, buddy!" In any case by the time I get close enough to a woman to actually talk to her, I feel like a real entrepreneur. By that time I've already completed my analysis of the woman's physical appearance, and in the beginning of the conversation we are both trying to find out the results of the analysis. And to reinforce this feeling of entrepreneurship, when I get back to the men I'm working with, I get all kinds of comments like "Did you tap it?" or "Are you going to?"

But one thing that really amazes me about my sexuality at the factory is that it has a large effect on my sexuality at home. I first began to notice this when, in the first week, I began to feel an incredible amount of amorphous and ill-defined sexual energy at the moment I left the plant. This energy makes the drive home pretty exciting and it influences my behavior the rest of the day. I often think something like, "Well, I have two hours before I go back to work,

and it would really be nice if I could get my rocks off before then." I found that dissipations of this sexual energy really does make it easier to go back. Also, I began to notice that my sexuality was becoming less physically oriented (as in just being close to someone for a while) and more genitally oriented (as in making love and going to sleep). Also, as household chores were becoming more formidable while working, I began to ask people who came into my house—and for some reason, especially my sexual partners—to take more responsibility in keeping the place fixed up.

In trying to understand how my sexuality was being influenced by the factory, this relationship between sexuality at home and at work became an important clue. Working is much more than an eight-hour-a-day diversion: it influences everything I do. If I'm not actually working I'm either recuperating or getting ready to go back. Because I confront this fact every day, it's not hard for me to image the changes in my sexuality as essentially in response to the fact that I have to go to work every day.

CONTRADICTIONS IN CONSUMPTION

Now there is an important contradiction in this "I go to work". When I'm at work, I'm not really "me" any more, at least in some very large ways. I don't work WHEN I want to; I don't work BECAUSE I want to; i don't work AT something I'd like to be doing. I don't enjoy my job; I feel no sense of commitment to it; and I feel no satisfaction when it's completed. I'm a producer: my only significant role is that I make money for Fisher Body. Now Fisher Body values me highly for this, and at the end of each week they reward me with a paycheck which is mine to consume as I like. But notice: I have to spend a large part of that check and much of my time off in preparation for my return to my role as producer. To a

(continued on p. 34)

GAY MEN AT WORK 1

TECHNICIAN IN TRAINING

For the past five months I've been enrolled in a vocational training program at a local junior college. Like most of the students here, I'm trying to deal with the survival problems I face by getting the education necessary for a job. The place is kind of a holding ground for large numbers of people who've pretty much been forced out of the present economy by unemployment -- veterans, women, and especially folks from the poor Black, Asian, and Mexican neighborhoods of Oakland, and people like me trying to get off welfare.

I have come out as gay with some people there, and have had the good fortune to be able to get in touch with some of the other gay people enrolled there, to rap about our common problems and support each other. There are plenty of problems. More than half of the people who started the electronics training program with me in February were forced to drop out, including a gay woman I knew in my math class.

The course of instruction as a whole seems more like a stumbling block to keep us from getting to a position where we can get jobs. But on top of that, my main instructor kept making jokes about women and gays, referring to dirty-joke jingles from the Navy, putting down the hairdressers enrolled in cosmetology, etc. This went hand in hand with his obvious racism, in his attitudes, his grading and so on.

Because I didn't want to mess up my rehabilitation program, I didn't confront him directly on it. Luckily, no one else seemed to laugh very much at his jokes, and so I wasn't in the position of having to laugh the loudest at fag-baiting to cover myself. And I was able to take part in a campaign being waged against racist cutbacks in classes and child care services at the school.

In class I did feel as a faggot I had to try harder. Most of the other men in the program had experience with electricity or electronics in the service or a previous job, but I had none and had always been very mystified by tools and mechanical processes and by 'science' in general. Also it was harder for me to speak up for what I needed or to confront the instructors if they weren't providing good training. I tended to be afraid that my problems with the course were just personal or individual. On the other hand the one or two guys who were sort of our spokesmen for our common gripes had put things forward in a way that I often didn't feel comfortable with.

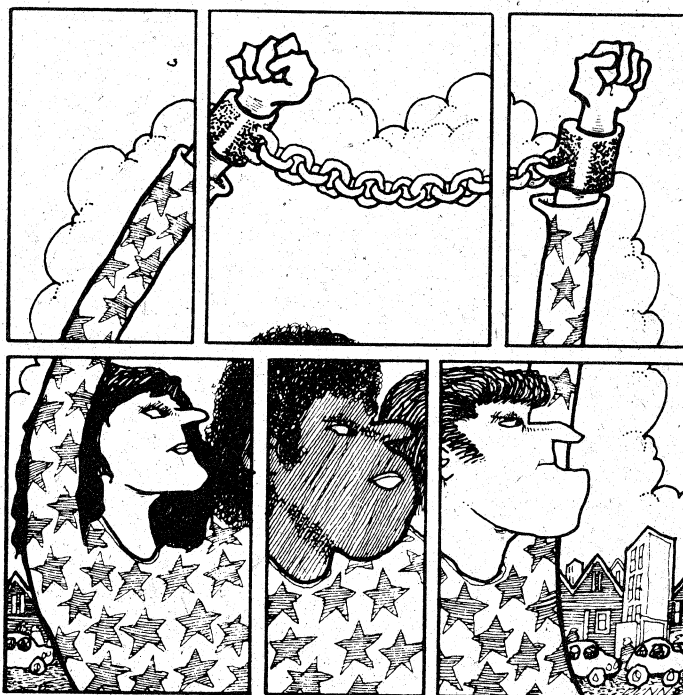
But when I came out to some of the people in the program, mostly the other men in the lab who I got to know pretty well, they all seemed to respect where I was coming from; for instance when I objected to a jingle about rape be-

ing used to remember the color coding on electronic components.

So I ended up not being so isolated, not having to fall into the trap of being singled as special or smarter or more refined than is often for gays in these situations, where we are played off against each other. We could cooperate about getting some changes in the course of instruction for the fall, and in helping each other fulfill some of the requirements.

Also I was able to talk with a Black man in the class who the teacher was riding pretty hard in a racist fashion, about how the teacher's heterosexism got my goat, and it turned out the two of us other similar problems, of having had breakdowns a couple of years before and being unable to work for a while, the result of internalized oppression. So because I could point out my own oppression I was able to relate to the other students rather than being boxed into the vulnerable position of "teacher's pet".

—Michael Novick



Louis Dunn

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

by Andy Weisman

Today on television, I heard Jerry Brown, the governor of California, giving a press conference about jobs and poor people. Not having much trust in this 'new age' politician and having a lot of interest in the subject, I listened more intently; I was wondering what he means to do about the problem of jobs, their availability and their meaningfulness. Gov. Brown started off talking about people and how they want to work, how work could give people a sense of self worth while keeping them busy and fed. Claiming to ease the tax burden and lower the crime rate, he called for more jobs. Well I sat there astounded! Jerry Brown isn't exactly the foremost champion of the wellbeing of the poor. I dug right into my chair and waited for the golden words to lead us out of poverty and alienation. They didn't come; what did come were lots of words hiding what to me were lousy solutions to the problems of the underemployed and underpaid.

Brown, like most politicians, seems to be worried about the anger of the people. The anger of people out of work, the anger of people who do work and get little out of their jobs or the life they live. He said if we don't put them to work, they may revolt or something. The meaning of his words became clearer. What he has in mind is a 'work for your welfare' program similar to what now exists in New York. There people in need of welfare are forced into jobs in return for their grant. Who are these people? For the most part, they are people of national minority heritage (Black, Latino, Asian), women, or other poor people. For most, their chances of finding good paying work or decent training is nearly non-existent. They are the people

who've been kept out of work through either racist or sexist hiring practices, so here the State has a ready army of people at its mercy to work at sub-standard pay with few or no benefits. For many women, this falls doubly hard. Women with families to support now have to split their incomes on travel to work and child care that is not state supported. The stereotype of a welfare recipient, that they are lazy or dishonest, is just not true. Most people on welfare aren't there by choice, they are often the last hired and the least paid. Many people on welfare or substandard employment are systematically kept out of the labor market. I don't believe it happens by accident, but so that they will be available when the people who control the industries need them, say in time of war or to use as a barrier against strikes or the strong demands of people who have jobs for better conditions or pay. Jerry Brown and others like him are trying to pass laws that further people in this situation of a worse lot in life. A system that forces people to work at jobs at substandard pay with little or no control over the conditions of their work or home life, is systematic oppression. Because of these and other reasons, we must all look closer at who controls the policies of hiring and firing, and how they are applied.

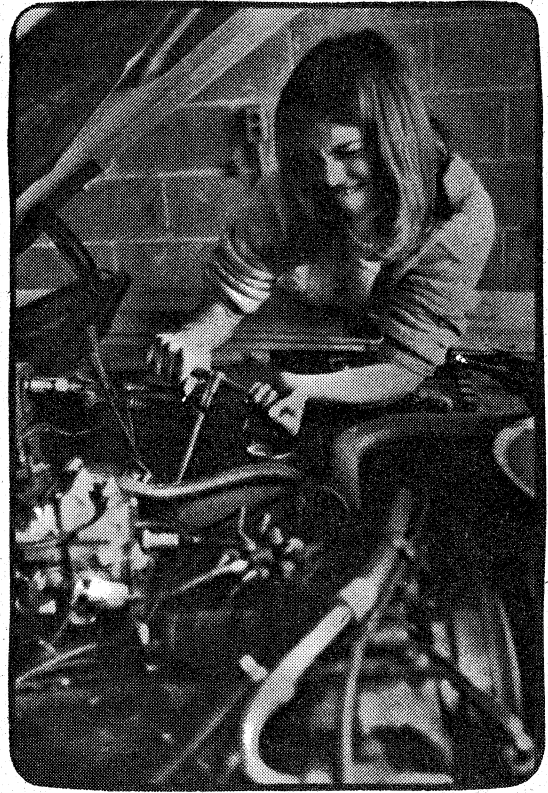
This is where a policy of affirmative action comes in, of seeking out people who have been excluded from well-paid work for jobs or training. But we also need to look at whether affirmative action really does what it was supposedly developed for, and does it serve as a way to rally people to deal with these problems.



In this discussion, I divide affirmative action into three main areas of attention. The first is the constructive things that I agree with. They are: 1) it exposes some of the real divisions between working people; 2) it helps to integrate the work force; 3) it opens up non-traditional fields of work; 4) it destroys some stereotypes about people and what kind of work they're fit for; and 5) it puts some control in the hands of workers over who gets jobs and who doesn't. The second area to examine is things about affirmative action that will be necessary in any economic system, such as a positive approach to racism and sexism. With more equality in the availability of work, the people who have been kept more limited should have first crack at some of the more responsible or pleasant tasks. The third and final area I want to look at is things that I am critical of about affirmative action policies as they are now applied. These are basically the way affirmative action has been raised amongst the working class; the way the bosses have been able to divide workers using affirmative action as an excuse. If affirmative action is supposed to better the position of the worker, what about a call for more and better jobs? In some ways affirmative action pits workers against each other rather than against the system that created the inequalities in the first place.



If you look closely at the paid workforce in the U.S. you will see that the better paying jobs belong to white well educated men. With the growing awareness on the part of women and Third World people, conflicts over quality and quantity of work have arisen. Some people have tried to answer these conflicts through affirmative action. In the U.S. as in the rest of the capitalist world, workers are divided by many means. At issue are pay, availability and prestige of work, free time and creativity and so on. Many people who sell their labor and do not control the means of production (the working class) look down their noses at others. For example auto mechanics tend to think office clerks aren't as good as they are. This makes it difficult for workers to feel much unity with each other. This is an area where affirmative action can help bring us closer together. It points out how people have been kept in low pay, low prestige jobs because of discrimination, and not because they aren't as high a caliber person. It will open up to people of different races and sexes work from which they've been traditionally excluded. I think this will show what false stereotypes we have of each other and bring us together as a class. As an



example, I'm an auto mechanic. Where I work there are three Black mechanics, two Italians, a jew and a woman. We are all the time having to deal with misconceptions and false images we have of each other. Every time one of we men have to ask Sally for advice and she can give it, or she helps us lift a transmission, poof -- there goes another lie, and often there goes another barrier to solidarity. By raising the question of who gets what jobs and which jobs are the so-called important ones, we can all relate stories of how we think things are. But when the statistics show that Third World people and women always end up on the bottom we have to face up to the inequalities. Our new experiences of working with people who used to be stereotypes helps point to some of the lies we've been trained to believe. As things stand now the people who own the means of production (the factories, offices, repair garages, etc.) can choose who they want to hire. So we have very little control of who we work with. By demanding more equality in hiring practices, we also gain some say in who we work with and take some power from our employers. What this may mean in the long run is that when the system fails to employ us all, we will then be a mixture of unemployed people and won't point to one sub-group as a scape goat, by saying, well, we have jobs, they must be too lazy. The chances to lay the blame on the system, where it belongs, will be greater. We can see how race and sex antagonism is cultured to keep us apart, and that in some ways we will be dealing a death blow to our exploiters by standing together and demanding affirmative action and equal opportunities and jobs for everyone.

Affirmative action also gives us some ideas about guidelines in building new systems of living. Myself I am a socialist. Many people who call themselves socialists believe that divisions between working people are all a matter of economics. Well, I believe this is basically true, but there are qualifications. The people who have profited by keeping us divided haven't been foolish. They have drilled racism and sexism into each of us to a far-reaching extent. They let some of us get a little better off than others. So in recent and not so recent history, when people who are socialist tried to make movements to change things, they made mistakes. They tried to recruit Third World people, and women; but the place of their failing was in not facing up to the different kinds of oppression each group had experienced, while emphasizing the common situation of poor and working people. For people of Third World groups and women this often meant being used or overlooked.

The struggle to overcome these divisions will take a commitment of people to understand the different kinds of oppression people have suffered and to put priorities on changing these relationships. What this means is a true affirmative action program that realizes the necessity to develop equality. We will have to face these different severities of oppression and make special efforts to ensure that people are represented more equally. Some of the things we will have to do is make sure that people who have been traditionally excluded from certain kinds of work start to get those jobs; that new housing will go to the people who have been kept in inadequate housing; that



special attention is placed on the education of people who have been given the least opportunity for learning. Jobs will have to be available to all who want them. People who have responsibility will have to come from the sectors who haven't been allowed much responsibility. In short we will have to take into our programs safeguards to insure and promote a movement towards equality and a redistribution to all those who have been kept as ready army of poor. This whole set-up of inequality serves as a stick and carrot; a little of the profit could go to workers who have jobs to keep them appeased, while the threat of someone ready to take their jobs keeps them in line. And just like within the U.S. there has been this division of labor to insure a supply of workers to consume goods, so

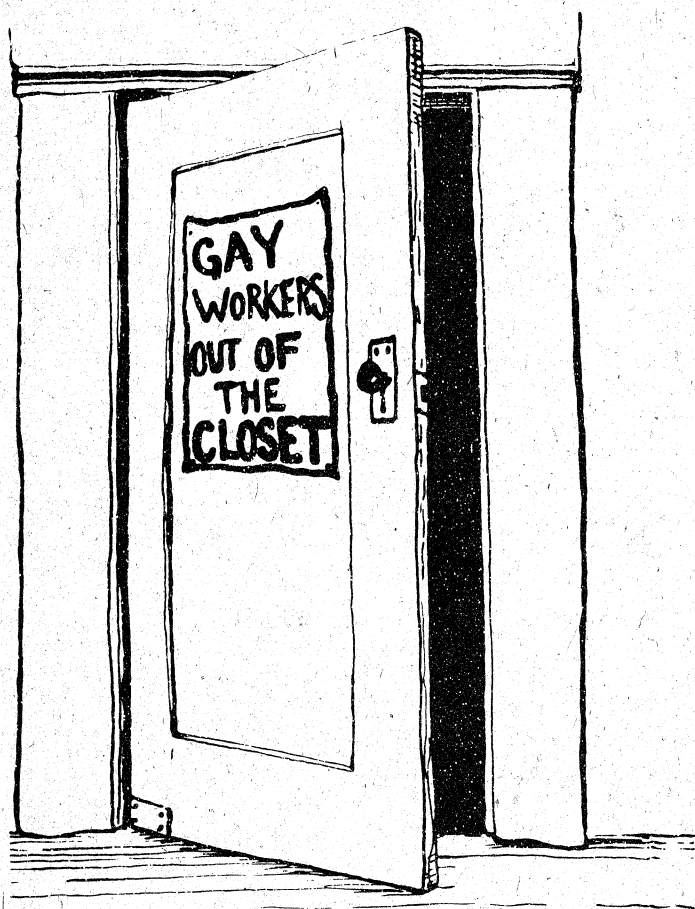
when we talk of making things more equal we must also take into consideration imperialism. Just as within the U.S. borders, workers have been divided, so have workers who suffer from U.S. imperialism and control by U.S. companies in other countries been divided. To insure a profit, capital needs resources and markets; it has to provide some jobs so people in turn can buy what is produced. But since you never earn enough to buy back the value of what you make, the corporate owners need to keep expanding their markets, sources of cheap labor, and cheap resources, and places to invest their profit; they ended up in Third World countries where mechanization hadn't fully developed. By going into these countries either by force with armies or just by economic control, these international corporations seized what they needed. Now people in the Third World suffer under conditions created by the capitalists or imperialists. It's sometimes hard to see, but these people are our allies in a class sense. When we think of changing our relation to production we can't ignore that much of the wealth of this country is a product of workers in imperialized nations. We can't say we are socialists and ignore the class implications of a socialist movement that doesn't attack imperialism. There would be class conflict if workers in the U. S. took control of production and still maintained imperialistic relations with workers of exploited nations. Also this same imperialism actually affects U.S. workers, with run-away shops for instance, when workers in the U.S. are put out of jobs because international imperialists take their industry to places closer to the natural resources closing down plants here. Basically when socialists talk of changing their class relationships, they can't ignore imperialism and affirmative action because without changing these systems we can't build class unity.

Affirmative action is not all positive. One of the weakest areas of affirmative action is that it does not talk enough about who will control the job market. This is an important area, because it affects the entire scope of the short comings of affirmative action. Without control of who gets hired and how many jobs are available, we as workers will still be at each others throats. Only now we will be more equally competing with other under conditions created by industry. An example is when you read about four times as many people needed applying for the same job. With affirmative action as it is now you have people set up under a point system, with those with fewer points not getting the job. This system divides workers and increases fear. Not because workers who have been systematically kept out of work are working, but because the number of people at decent jobs hasn't increased. Workers still are angry at each other. Fear of being put out of work because some guilty liberal wants to appease the poor has driven workers deeper into racism and the Ronald Reagan reaction. In some industries where the bosses tell workers "why you could easily qualify for the job and I'd hire you today, but you don't meet our federal equal opportunity codes", you'll find workers blaming the idea of equal opportunity. You will also find many of these same workers scabbing against unions who have supported affirmative action.

(continued on p. 14)

AT THE OFFICE

At work I often feel an outsider. On one level I was accepted as a 'good worker', yet no one ever asked me about my personal life. It was like it would be too threatening to them to know who I was. I'm sure people picked up that I was gay: I didn't suppress my naturalness, that is my 'effeminate' mannerisms. I also dressed real gay — earrings and pretty clothes. That I wore gay clothes makes me think of two things: 1) I felt somewhat secure about the position of my job, that I wouldn't be fired because I was gay, and 2) I feel good about my gayness, and that's neat.



My job is clerical work (I'm now on summer lay-off). I work mostly with women, both working class and middle class, and actually the first male in our whole department. Very often a lot of 'heavy' lifting chores were delegated to me, and this upset me. I'm sure at least half the women were capable of doing the chore, it's just that they'd been fucked-over to believe they "shouldn't." So feeling this intense stuff that I was supposed to be a 'man' really upset me often.

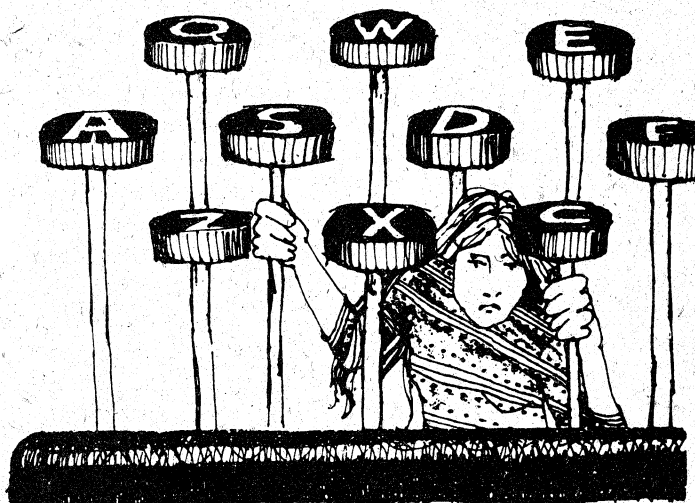
Most of the staff were women and maybe a third were blacks, chicanas and asians. Much of my sexism and racism came out in my thoughts as I related to these people. I was often freaked-out because I wanted to struggle about these oppressive attitudes of mine at work, but I had no one to turn to. I needed support at work to discuss these things. This leads me to think about other gay people at work.

OTHER GAY PEOPLE AT WORK

There were lesbians and gay men that I personally knew at the place I worked, but I didn't expect these women to relate to me much because it was hard enough for them being lesbians there. With the gay men I felt some real differences. They were more friendly than I to the straight men at work, and that freaked me out, because I have a hard time relating to straight men in a competitive, alienating work space.

They were also a lot more 'campy' than me. This means that they chose to deal with their tension and frustrations by laughing and joking a lot. I was more serious. Hence, we were uncomfortable around each other. Mostly I think we could have been more real, honest and supportive of one another, but work was too alienating for us. Also, we could not be physical with one another for fear of losing our jobs, or of being laughed at.

Yet I do feel good about working too. I am now self-supporting and feel real good about my identity as a working person able to sustain myself. Relating to different working people has made me realize a lot about what it feels like to experience the emotions and politics of being a worker.



If full employment in America means greater exploitation in the third world, we haven't done our job as a class. As things are now this country depends on it's holdings around the world to maintain big business profits. They claim that without this multi-national ripoff, many of us now working would lose our jobs. We can't permit our class to be divided by small wars or economic control over other nations. We can't permit this to happen not only because it is morally bad, but because imperialism creates conflicts between people, conflicts that will only end in wars for self-determination.

SOCIALISM

For example , I am an auto mechanic; if when talking to other mechanics about affirmative action and power over our work place, we specifically relate to the pressure, job hazards, and what it's like to be an old mechanic, I think people will be more willing to talk and listen.

Sometimes when I let myself dream I think of what it would be like working on cars or buses or trucks for people who appreciate my work while doing things I could appreciate also. Not worrying about flat rate time or the boss looking over my production sheet. Being able to stop and discuss problems we are having and sharing information. It seems like a dream. I have worked on a collective job and know how hard it is to work collectively. I think some of the difficulty has been that while trying to do an alternative venture the capitalist system around you defeats you in your isolation. I think that by working together as a class our dreams don't have to remain dreams. It is up to all of us who consider ourselves organizers to be real and respectful to people who haven't been believers and learn as well as try to teach.

QUESTIONS OF MEN AND CLASS

In our newsletter last fall, we published a "questionnaire" that was to be the basis for a survey and subsequent analysis of men and class. Response from our readers was negligible. Nevertheless, the questions we posed helped us and others to explore the connections between class position and sex role oppression, between economic exploitation and sexual repression, and between patriarchal capitalism and the price and privileges of sexism, especially as they are experienced by men. For this reason and because the readership of this issue will be larger and different from that of the newsletter, we are reprinting the questionnaire.

We at **brother** are interested in receiving your personal accounts. We would also like to get responses from groups organizing in workplaces -- offices, factories, stores and the fields, as well as prisons, the military, schools, and the home.

We'd like to know what kind of priority groups place on questions of sexism in their work, and how they relate them to economic class issues. We want to be able to list contacts and groups that are doing practical and political work around these areas and issues, so that people can begin to link up their struggles.

We at **brother** think it's crucial to draw links between the struggle against sexism and that against the whole system of exploitation, and to build concrete alliances among oppressed groups.

We hope that this and any future issues of **brother** will be a tool in building such unity in theory and practice, and hope that you'll support that effort by communicating with us around these issues and submitting material for publication.

☐ How old are you? ☐ Where do you live?

☐ What work do you do? ☐ How did you come to be doing it?

☐ What are your relationships like with co-workers?

☐ With superiors?

☐ What links do you see between the kind of work you do and your overall class background? ☐ Class position?

☐ Lifestyle?

☐ What do you think sexism means? ☐ Do you see sexism on the job? ☐ How do you feel about it? ☐ How does it affect you at work? ☐ Away from work?

☐ Could you talk about your family background? Do you feel connections between your relationships with your parents, or your brother or sister, and how you behave with or feel about people on the job?

☐ How do you feel when you leave home for work? ☐ On coming home from work?

☐ How does your job affect your home life? ☐ Your sexuality? ☐ What kind of tensions do you feel are aroused in you by your work? ☐ Do you use drugs or alcohol, or other ways to deal with them? ☐ Which?

☐ How often? ☐ Does it work?

☐ Does anyone else in your household work outside the home? ☐ Who does the house-work?





**Know thy enemy,
He does not care what color you are
provided you work for him;
he does not care how much you earn
provided you earn more for him;
he does not care who lives in the room at the top
provided he owns the building;
he will let you say whatever you like against him
provided you do not act against him;
he sings the praises of humanity
but knows machines cost more than men;
bargain with him he laughs and beats you at it;
challenge him
and he kills;
sooner than lose the things he owns
he will destroy the world.**

Poem from *Workers' Control: A Reader on Labor and Social Change* edited by Hunnius, Garson and Case. Vintage Press. It was first published in England as a political poster by the Black Dwarf in November 1968. Graphic from San Francisco Unemployed and Welfare Council.

IMPERIALISM

MACHISMO, CLASS & NATIONAL OPPRESSION

To begin this article, I found it important that my own history as a Latino-faggot be made clear. I was raised in East Los Angeles, Los Angeles itself, and La Puente. I was placed in a white gay foster home in Hollywood and consequently went to a white experimental college where I lived in close connection with a dyke separatist community. I became involved primarily with anti-sexist pro-gay work until I moved to San Francisco eight months ago. I became very involved with effeminism and sissy identified men, who grew up sissy identified as I did. Becoming more and more politicized in San Francisco, I got more in touch with my working class origins, and I realized it was racism, not sexism, which was primary in my oppression as a *mexicano* and as an effeminate faggot. Imperialism is now principal in my life as I realize more and more how pervasive racism is. I am learning more about feminism from Third World feminist women who feel imperialism must be banished before sexism can successfully be dealt with. And I see the need to examine not only my own personal history to understand my present situation, but the history of my people as well.

Through cultural imperialism and the rise and expansion of capitalism, whites have maintained power for centuries. I am referring primarily to white male supremacy. The Spanish, a Moorish European people, conquered the Indigenous People of the Americas, and through Cultural Imperialism, forced their cultural attitudes and values on them. The Catholic Church played an important role in perpetrating European values and ways on Indigenous people. The Indigenous People were robbed, raped of their culture, a Culture rich in spirituality and appreciation for the earth, a Culture depreciated to mere 'savagery' by Europeans that were out to conquer rather than nurture the Earth's limited resources.

The Indigenous People oftentimes worshipped androgenous Dieties and women historically shared greater recognition and appreciation. That is not to say that we must not be critical of patriarchal attitudes already existing in Indigenous America, yet it is important that the process of self-criticism coming from Indigenous people themselves be respected; criticism coming from whites is often tainted with racism. Too many times whites dwell on human



sacrifice as a symbol of indigenous cultures, for instance.

Human sacrifice was practiced by the Aztecs, and it is important to explore the conditions surrounding such actions. The Aztecs were a developed people. Yet the time of the Spanish invasion was a time of both Spiritual and Political decadence for the Aztec Empire. The people it was suppressing helped the invading Spanish conquer an already dying People. But the Spanish rule was many times worse than any crimes the Aztecs may have committed. Whites are very quick to forget that human sacrifice continues today, at the expense of all Third World people, for the white man's God of money and power, Corporate Capitalism and Imperialism.

RACIST CRITICISM

Another example is the way in which white people project the responsibility for strife as inherent in Third World people's culture. This become a method to mystify the source of the oppression of Third World people. This method of criticism lacks any form of self-criticism on the part of white people.

With the revolt of Latin America against Spain and eventual Independence, Spain began to lose much of its power during the 19th Century. During this time, the English continued, along with the French and the Portuguese, to exploit Africa and parts of Latin America. The United States was also in heavy exploits throughout Africa and the Caribbean Islands, and declared its intention to keep other European powers out of Latin America in order to preserve its own power there.



INTERNAL COLONIES

Within U. S. borders the U. S. government and corporations were sponsoring a campaign of Cultural Genocide and Imperialism, more severe than even the Spanish had on the Indigenous people of Mexico and South America. The merciless genocide carried on against Native American Indians by "the Americans" was only a prerequisite for what the Third World would have to endure in later years. It is imperative that people realize that this very genocide continues to this day on Indian reservations and other inter-colonized regions of the U. S.. Some of these areas are the colony of Blacks throughout the South, Chicanos and other Spanish speaking Peoples of the Southwest, *Puertorriquenos* in New York and elsewhere, Asians in San Francisco. Throughout every major city in the U. S., genocide, motivated by Imperialism and white male supremacy, continues.

Along with the rise of Capitalism in the U. S. came the rise of racism, for as Malcolm X said, "You can't have one without the other." Gross notions of white male supremacy spread like fire throughout the Third World as the white rulers continued to plunder these "under-developed" and "Culturally Depraved" nations. What is so superior about a race or society that historically has thrived on death, on a culture lecherous of two-thirds of the world's people? False notions of superiority perpetuates racism in the same way that sexism has perpetrated the notion that women are on this earth to produce workers, workers to be exploited by corporate capitalism.

THIRD WORLD WOMEN

Third World women, as well as working class white women have been encouraged to produce a surplus of workers until recently, when the surplus began to 'burden' the white imperialists with demands for adequate jobs, proper medical facilities, and housing and child-care facilities for all working women. The lack of adequate day-care facilities for third world women is a blatant tactic to keep Third World women from organizing against imperialism. The U. S. is currently sponsoring a campaign to control the surplus of workers by forcibly sterilizing Third World women here and abroad. In Puerto Rico alone, which is a direct colony of the U. S., one third of all women of child-bearing age have been sterilized. U. S. sponsored genocide, justified by racist and sexist attitudes, continues and is escalating.

With the rise of Liberation movements throughout China, Vietnam, Angola, Guinea-Bissau, and the Middle East, and the concurrent rise of liberation struggles within the inter-colonized regions of the U. S., the U. S. is attempting to tighten its grip on South Africa (Azania), Rhodesia (Zimbabwe), and throughout the entire southern tip of Latin America. The American dream is a nightmare for all Chileans tortured and murdered by the U. S.-

dialectics racism

To think of you
is to think of rage
without
direction
We call it fascismo

To think of you
brings my stomach to boil
to boil
as if to cleanse you
from my soul
We call it resistencia

How were you
so misled
to think me
the enemy
to think me
powerful
We call it sangre oprimida
or powerlessness

To see you
means anger
anger in knowing

I cannot point my finger at you
and say
You are the oppressor

You are only his mouth
and I will pledge my life
to cut out his heart

We call it **Revolucion.**

Micael Tapia



puppet regime of Pinochet. On the other hand, against the example of the growing success of socialist Cuba only 90 miles south of the U. S. a blockade has been established with hopes to starve the Cuban people into surrendering their right to self-determination.

With the rise of Third World liberation struggles comes a rise of opposition from the ruling class. Racist ideas are

GAY LATINO ALLIANCE

used to justify and win support for this oppression. I will try to illustrate one common form of racism among people opposed to sexism. Its escalation is an important form that should be criticized and corrected so that the common oppressor of all people, women, and men, --- the ruling white male supremacist --- can be brought to justice.

Latinos (Latin men) have always been characterized as the worst exercisers of sexist behavior and attitudes which originate from Latino culture. I will illustrate how, again, this is a racist and intentionally misleading assumption. At one point, overt sexist behavior was referred to as "male chauvinism," a term which has general connotations, unlike "machismo" a term which has very specific Latin connotations. As a Chicano, I find it



imperative to criticize the racist and flagrant misuse of the term *machismo*. *Machismo* is not in itself a cultural ethic for Latinos, but more so a product of imperialism and colonialism. I am alarmed when I hear white people refer to sexist behavior as "How macho!" or when a white man refers to his sexism as macho behavior. On the contrary when a white man is being sexist, he is exercising his assumed birthright to oppress all Third World people and all women. His assumptions on property and power are not assumptions Latino men can make. Latinos are not born with white male privilege. *Machismo* is an act of overt power over Latinas and less *macho* or effeminate men, but it is power coming from powerlessness. White women are also affected by *machismo*, but it is Latinas that suffer the most.

The more politically conscious Latino men become, the more we will be able to see that *machismo* is our trade-off for a false sense of power, a trade-off for a history of genocide and class oppression. Since Latino men and Latinas are oppressed by a common force, racism, issues involving sexism are done in mixed groups. A basis for unity already exists within Latin culture, a basis that allows sexism to be dealt with by a different strategy than some whites propose. The basis of unity among Third World people is fighting imperialism, first to insure adequate *survival* for all oppressed people throughout the world. Latinas know that racism has created an intolerable form of sexism for her to live with, yet she also

realizes that the worst form of sexism is the pervasive and oftentimes impersonal sexism exercised by white ruling men, a sexism that affects the lives of all Third World people and all women.

It is conclusive that until capitalism is banished, racism will go on. As long as racism goes on, *machismo* will continue to affect the lives of Latinas. All racism carried out by whites in this nation justifies the white ruling class to continue its campaign of imperialism. The working class and middle class are in this respect acting as mere puppets of the ruling class; it is the white ruling class which should bear principal responsibility for intolerable sexism, not Third World men, or as you habitually say "the *Macho*."

Strategies to combat oppression, implemented by privileged white groups are always subject to critical analysis. It is important that progressive whites learn a viable strategy which can liberate all oppressed people. I propose that white men begin to make a conscious effort to correct their racism. White people can start by thinking twice about their incorrect usage of the term *machismo*. Through a conscious effort on everyone's part we can begin to demystify what form of oppression affects most people and implement strategies that will end the current stigma on Latino men and reach instead the source of all oppression, white/male supremacist corporate capitalism and Imperialism.

Micael Tapia.



MICHAEL KRAUSS



Michael Krauss, a friend, brother, and comrade to many of the people who have worked on **brother** since its beginning, died on June 29th/1976, when his bicycle was hit by a car. Michael was a vocational nurse, a member of the Puerto Rican Solidarity Committee and was in the June 28th Union, a socialist, pro-feminist, anti-imperialist gay men's group.

Michael was a person who had taken a firm class stand in the struggle against the rulers of this society, and had dedicated his life to winning liberation for all oppressed people. He was a warm and engaging person as well.

Over 300 people from different areas of Michael's life attended a memorial service that shared the grief people felt at his death as well as the strength and understanding people had gotten from his life. Michael had flaws like all of us, but as for many of us what was primary in his life was his struggle to change. What was especially true for Michael was the way in which he struggled constantly on many fronts, as a gay man, a health worker, and as someone deeply committed to fighting racism and imperialism. Michael understood the ways in which he was shaped by history, and was part of a movement of working and other oppressed people to reshape history.

Although he never worked on **brother** himself, Michael was involved in interpersonal struggle and political work with many of us over the years. He was involved in some of the earliest men's groups in the Bay Area, including the monthly men's meetings that grew out the Bay Area Regional Revolutionary People's 'Constitutional Convention, which eventually produced **brother**. Some men on the paper lived with Michael here in California; others knew him from even further back, from Chicago where he went to college or from New Jersey where he grew up.

In his own life and in the work he did, Michael provided inspiration for many of us, especially in the connections he drew between the struggles against racism and sexism and for a socialist society. He was always striving to deepen our understanding of the imperialist system and of the correct political basis for unity so that we could act together to overcome and replace it. He will be sorely missed.

A fund has been set up in his name, the **Michael Krauss Memorial Fund for Medical Reconstruction in Vietnam**. The **brother** collective strongly urges all readers, although they may not have known Michael personally, to contribute to this fund, by sending a check in c/o

Health-PAC
558 Capp St.
San Francisco, CA.

The group of men and women, co-workers of Michael's, who worked on the memorial and helped set up the fund felt that the cause for which the money collected will be going — helping to meet the medical needs of the war-ravaged Vietnamese people in their socialist re-construction of a unified country — is especially appropriate because of the many lessons Michael learned from the Vietnamese national liberation struggle. These were lessons he applied in his work as a gay man, a health worker, in his struggle against racism, in the prisoner-support movement, and as a committed anti-imperialist.

IMPERIALISM

We will be referring, in this and coming issues of **brother** to the system we live under as "imperialism." I'd like to explain briefly just what I mean by that word, and why I feel that its use to describe the U.S. system is justified and in fact important. Like many other "political" words, "imperialism" has been overused and misused, debased into rhetoric. We have been made to think that as a concept, it is boring, and as a reality, something distant from our lives. I think it's important to reclaim it, and I want to explain why I am an "anti-imperialist."

IMPERIALISM AS A SINGLE SYSTEM

Since the Vietnam War, most of us have come to recognize the U. S. as having an empire. There are obvious internal and external colonies, like the Native American people and Puerto Rico, military puppets like South Korea, a long and ugly record of military and espionage intervention in countries like Chile, Guatemala, Iran, and the Dominican Republic. We have seen Henry Kissinger flying to every corner of the globe to prop up racist and repressive regimes like South Africa.

But imperialism is more than that; it is the system under which we live here at home: it is a worldwide economic and political order. The recent political and economic crises are beginning to drive this home. The rising prices and unemployment gripping us began with the deficit financing

of the Vietnam War, and are also a reflection of a systematic crisis of an economy that is guided by the profit needs of a few giant monopolies, rather than people's needs for the humane use of our productive capacities. The noose which the big banks have tied around New York City in order to protect their loans are a case in point. But in the face of the severest economic crisis since the Great Depression, cut-backs are not limited to New York: welfare and social services, child care, jobs programs, and health care are being eliminated all across the country, because the big corporations have no profitable use for our work, and no desire to pay the social costs of the resulting economic devastation of our lives and of local governments.

We have seen, here in the Bay Area where **brother** is produced, the domestic meaning of imperialism. Under the leadership of companies like the Bank of America and Standard Oil, a Pacific Rim area has been mapped out for exploitation. This area includes our coast, Alaskan oil, and Chilean copper, and extends to Hawaii, the Phillipines, S. E. Asia and Japan. It is headquartered in the San Francisco financial district.

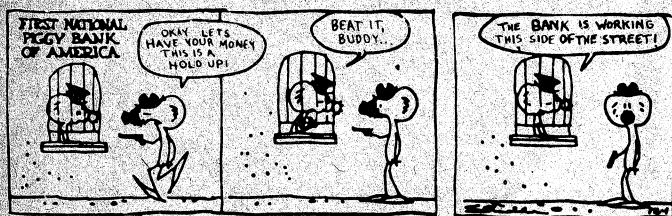
As a result, we have seen the construction of Bay Area Rapid Transit, a fixed, commuter-type train system, to reorganize all life in the Bay Area around the needs of a few corporations. Neighborhoods like the Mission District in



San Francisco are distorted by sky-high property values, to force out the residents, mostly Latino, and make the construction of high-rises for middle management white collar workers profitable. Gays in the city are harrassed as part of a police strategy to clean up for tourists. Fields are plowed under in the East Bay for housing developments, and a Chicano area like Union City is swamped with white suburbanites and left with an under-developed (ripped-off) ghetto, with its agricultural base destroyed. This is a duplication, within the U.S. of the process the government and the bankers and industrialists have carried on throughout the Third World.

REPRESSION

Imperialism also means repression and the destruction of our democratic rights, exposing the bi-centennial clap-trap for what it is. The roots of Nixon's attempt to apply C.I.A. techniques to his domestic political opposition lay in his repression of the anti-war and black liberation movements, and of the struggles for national liberation and independence in Cuba, Chile, Greece, Spain, and Angola.



The total corruption of our political system — and the giant monopolies have been the highest bidders since Carnegie and Rockefeller organized the first oil, steel, and railroad trusts — is reflected in the bribery of governments and political parties on a global scale carried on by Lockheed, Gulf Oil and others. And where the carrot to the local rulers does not work, the stick of torture and assassination against the masses of people is used, not only in Brazil or Mozambique, but also against Native Americans, and eventually others here in the U.S.

IMPERIALISM AND SEXISM

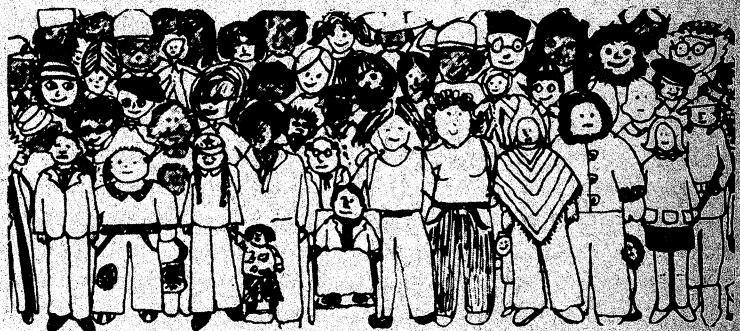
The system we live under is in crisis from top to bottom. The economic class system and the racism and national oppression which are part and parcel of imperialism, are linked up with the exploitation of women. We saw rape used as a conscious political weapon in Vietnam. We have seen in turn how the women of Cuba, Vietnam, China, Mozambique, and other countries have organized themselves to struggle for their emancipation as women as part of a struggle for survival, national liberation and the construction of socialism in their homelands and throughout the world. The Popular Front for the Liberation of Oman for instance, a movement to liberate a small nation on the Arab Gulf, has declared that any man who considers himself a revolutionary must be a feminist; and this is an understanding they have developed and put into practice while fighting a protracted armed struggle against local Arab reactionaries and the Shah of Iran, who are supported by British and U.S. imperialism.

In this country, we can see how some women, some gay men are being wooed by some sectors of the people who now control this society. But in looking at our true interests, we can see that these same corporate rulers oppress us, as part of a generally powerless mass, but also in special ways, such as the enforcement of a male-dominated form of heterosexuality as a system of social control. Gay men for instance are often victimized and exploited by the organized crime element of the imperialists, who in fact were closely tied to Nixon's domestic CIA offensive.

ONE STRUGGLE, MANY FRONTS

What the absorption of all of our society and of much of the world economy into a single system of exploitation called imperialism means to us, however, in the long run is the possibility of victory. It means that we can unite with many forces to achieve our liberation.

Men struggling against sexism can begin to choose our allies and enemies, to see our work in a world historical context, and to draw a line between ourselves and our oppressors, who are also the exploiters of most of humanity. We can begin to transform the way we deal with each other and with other social forces. We can help to spread a consciousness that 'masculinism' as an ideology and practice among oppressed and exploited men is self-defeating. It alienates us from each other and turns us against women by making our relationships into power games patterned like the hierarchical social relationships of society. We also need to learn a lot, about how racism divides and weakens us all, and how the material differences of a racist system, and racist practice and blindness by otherwise progressive white people, have prevented the development of a fighting unity and kept us all in bondage.



We cannot put an end to sexism in the kind of exploitative, controlled and demeaning society that imperialism is. What we can do is ally with women, with black, latino, and other working people, and with the liberation fighters in all the countries our rulers try to rip off and in the countries who have successfully broken away from the U.S. yoke and begun to build socialist systems. Together we can achieve a total transformation of society on the basis of equality and mutual benefit and an end to all exploitation.

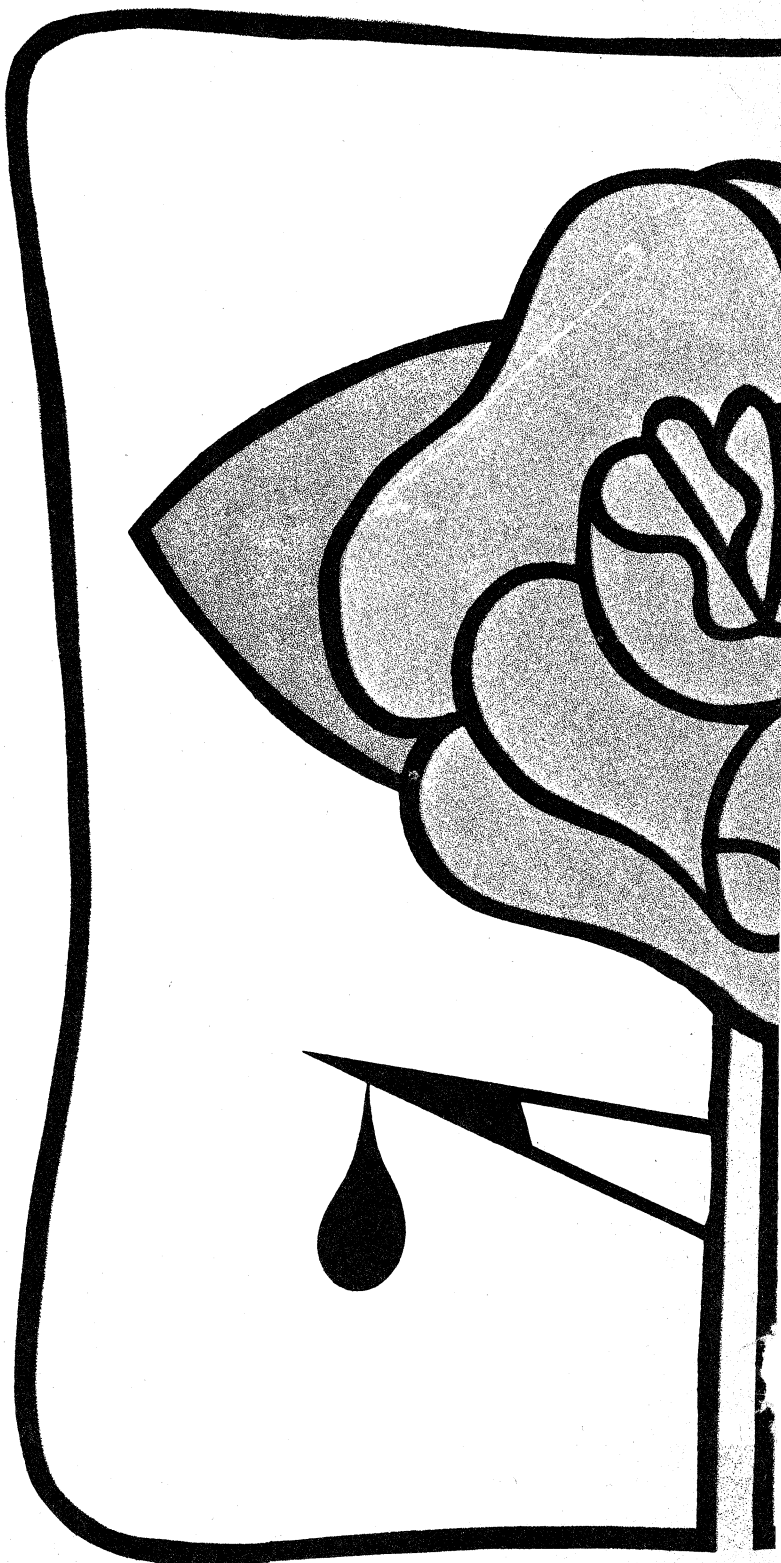
CUBA: GAY AS THE SUNSHINE

We have just returned from a brief visit to Cuba, where we spent five weeks working studying, and touring the island. We were able to see many aspects of Cuban life, and we were favorably impressed. The Cuban people are in the midst of a revolutionary process of world-wide historical significance. We went in sympathy with the Cuban revolution, and came back, based on our experiences there, even more committed to defending it against attacks by the U. S.

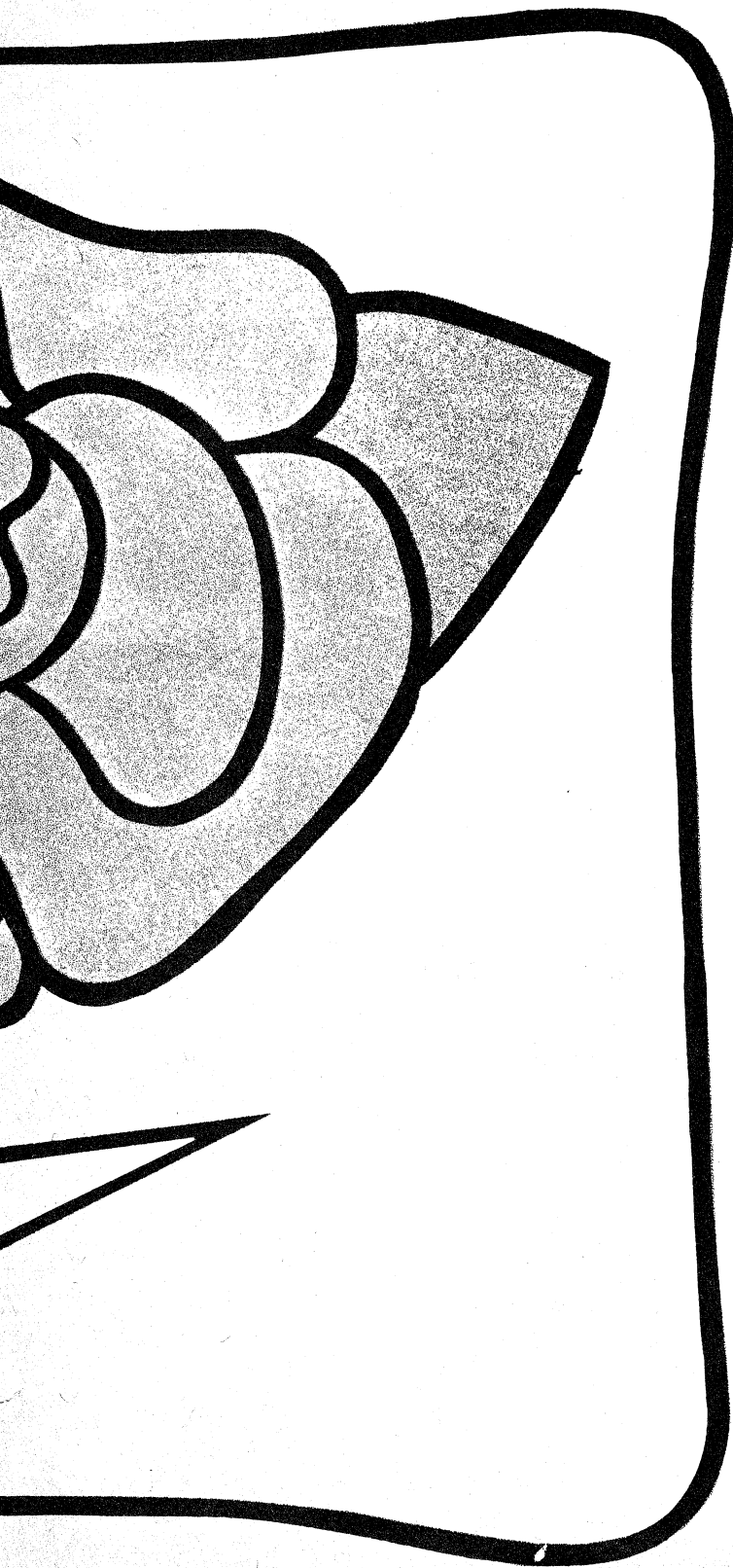
During our stay, we made efforts to locate lesbians and gay men so as to obtain reliable information on gay life in Cuba, which in the U. S., has been confused by conflicting reports and ignorance. We spoke with a number of gay men and lesbians, probably not enough to make reliable generalizations, considering the sometimes conflicting impressions we recieved, yet enough to give us some idea of what is going on there. Most of the gay people we met in Cuba supported the revolution and felt that as Cubans they were benefitting from it.

We feel it's important to share the information for two reasons: first, because of the unsubstantiated rumors of particularly bad treatment of gay people in socialist countries; and second, because of the doubts that many gay people express as to how they may benefit from socialism. As the theme of this issue of *brother* is class, we thought it important to discuss the situation of gay people in a society where work is organized differently. In Cuba, the working people control production for their own needs; much of what they produce is rationed so that all may share equitably. In Cuba, they say: The children are our only privileged class. Cubans are conscious of having thrown off the yoke of an oppressive power, and are now concerned to control their own destiny, and are engaged in a conscious process of transforming their society. Strong feelings of solidarity with other struggling people, such as in Chile, Angola, and elsewhere in the Third World are expressed and acted on. The ongoing campaign to equalize the position of women in Cuban society took a recent big step forward with adoption of a "Family Code" which explicitly requires men by law to share equally in all housework. So to understand gayness in Cuba, we must understand the whole country and people and their history.

Previous to the 1959 Cuban revolution, under Battista, when Cuba was a neo-colony of the U. S., homosexuality was illegal and carried severe penalties. Cuban gays were often victimized by the Mafia and by U. S. tourists. The whole development of an urban, westernized type of gay subculture in Cuba hinged on the existence of Havana as an imperial city within under-developed, agricultural Cuba. After the Revolution, the new government cracked down on homosexuality in its attempt to eliminate mafia-run brothels, including those where gay prostitutes were



CUBA: ALLEGRE COMO SU SOL



terribly exploited) and other mafioso activities which plagued Havana and other large cities. Homosexuals got caught up in this period of strict law enforcement.

According to our contacts it was very difficult to be gay in the early sixties. We attempted to verify the rumor which dealt with forced labor camps for gays during this period. Most of our contacts denied the existence of these camps, while one or two thought they had existed but been closed down by Fidel in the mid-60's; and one or two thought we were referring to the homosexual wing of Cuban prisons.

Apparently the laws and prosecution of homosexuals eased somewhat in the late sixties, coinciding with the general easing of restrictions due to Cuba's increased economic and social stability and the destruction of the last remnants of active counter-revolutionary forces. Since that time, attitudes towards gay people have not changed significantly. There exists no law that per se forbids homosexuality. The official position of the Cuban Communist Party is that homosexuality should not be encouraged. The one law which has repressive effects on homosexuals is the public scandal law. This law criminalizes any behavior which in any way would create a public scandal. Considering the unsympathetic attitude of most Cubans toward homosexuality, any public homosexual behavior can be treated as a breach of the law. So in a sense all gay activity is legally confined to the privacy of one's home. This is actually quite similar to the legal situation of gays in some areas of the U. S. Other places in the U. S. are much more repressive.

We found that most gay people knew of streets, restaurants, or public squares where other gays frequented.

The gays we met knew plenty of other gay people, and some were demonstrative or affectionate in public.

We found that gay people held a wide range of feelings towards the difficulties they encountered. Some gays felt quite repressed by the public scandal law. Others said the law didn't present problems for them. Some gays were fearful of the police and quite secretive with their actions and words. On the other hand, we met some gays who were quite open about their gayness. We felt the differences could be accounted for in at least two ways: first, personality differences helped some gays function more easily; second, in certain cities the public scandal law may be more or less stringently enforced.

Havana is a mecca for gay people. It is considered more exciting and lively. It is full of gay life. We were told that many gays in Santiago de Cuba, the second largest city, move to Havana, which is possibly why we were told that there were many gays in Havana and few gays in Santiago. Santiago also has the worst housing shortage of any of the Cuban cities, which may contribute to the immigration pattern.

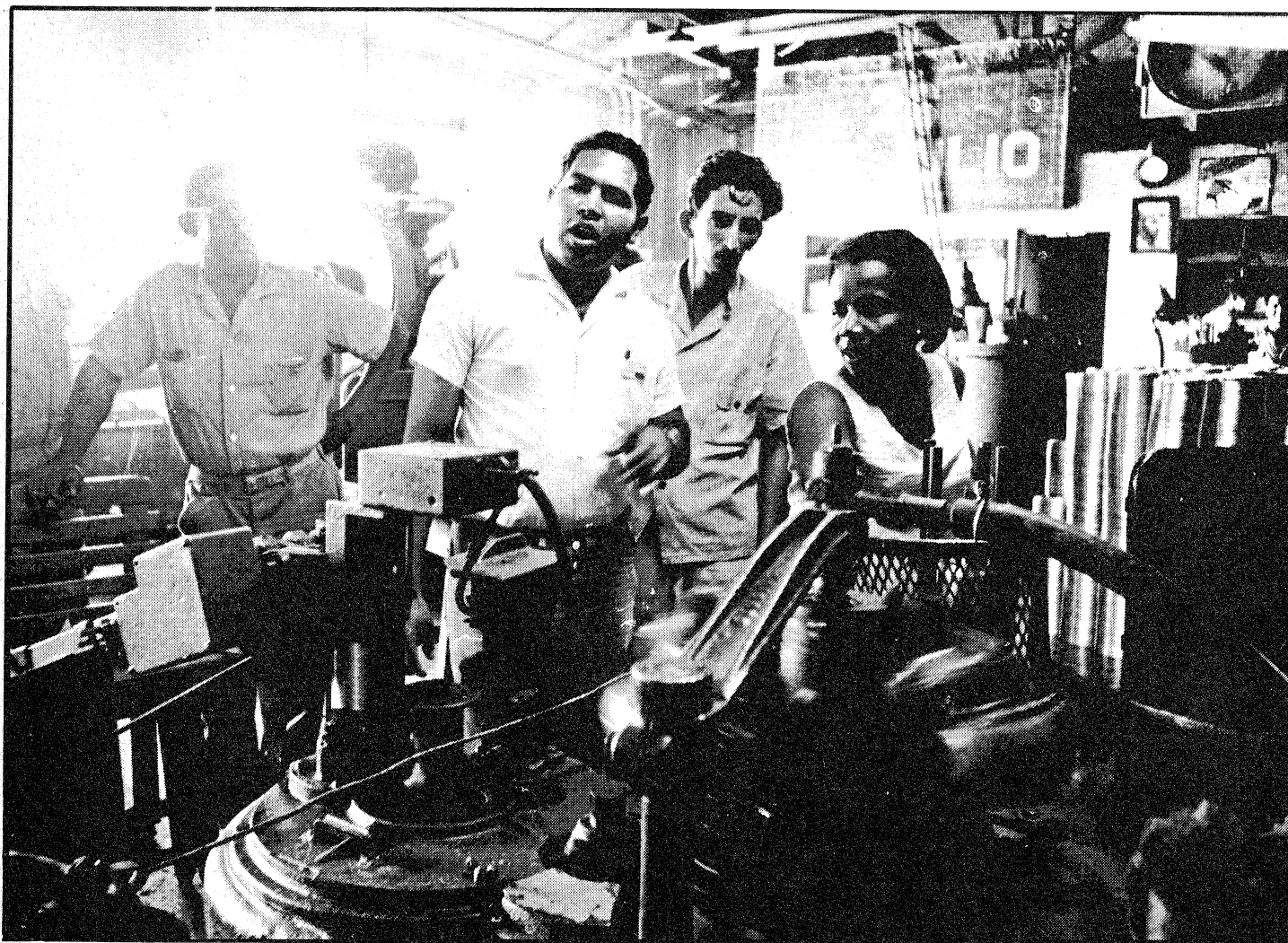
The housing shortage in Cuba is a tremendous problem

for the entire country, and is experienced in a particular way by gays. Married couples are given preference in the distribution of what little housing is available. Single people, with occasional exceptions, remain living with their parents until they are married. This can create terrible family conflicts between a gay individual, who can only be gay in the privacy of the home, and the parents, who generally share the unsympathetic attitudes prevalent in the society. In light of this, many gays get married to a gay member of the opposite sex as a matter of convenience. Thus they increase their chances of obtaining their own housing and furthermore gain the facade of respectability.

Despite the repression and hardships described above, gay Cubanos have been making tremendous progress. The political, economic, and cultural conditions have so progressively improved and have altered every Cuban's life. This is precisely the reason why the majority of gays we met supported the revolution. However much gays have encountered difficulties as gay people, the overall effect of the revolution has been a progressive event in their lives. Thus, we would like to mention just a few of the recent achievements from which gay people also benefit.

Perhaps the most important achievements have been in the area of economic development. Unemployment, which before the revolution averaged over 25% of the work force, exists no longer. More people are working, more jobs exist, and people are guaranteed the right to work. By increasing the labor force, the country produces more, and the entire population receives the additional material gains. (Of course, no bourgeois class hoards or shares in the economic gains.) Cubans now have more money and can buy more consumer items. Industrialization, once impeded by the landowning class and the agrarian nature of the Cuban economy, is growing steadily, promising a diversified economic and further economic gains in the future. Furthermore, the peasants now own the land they work.

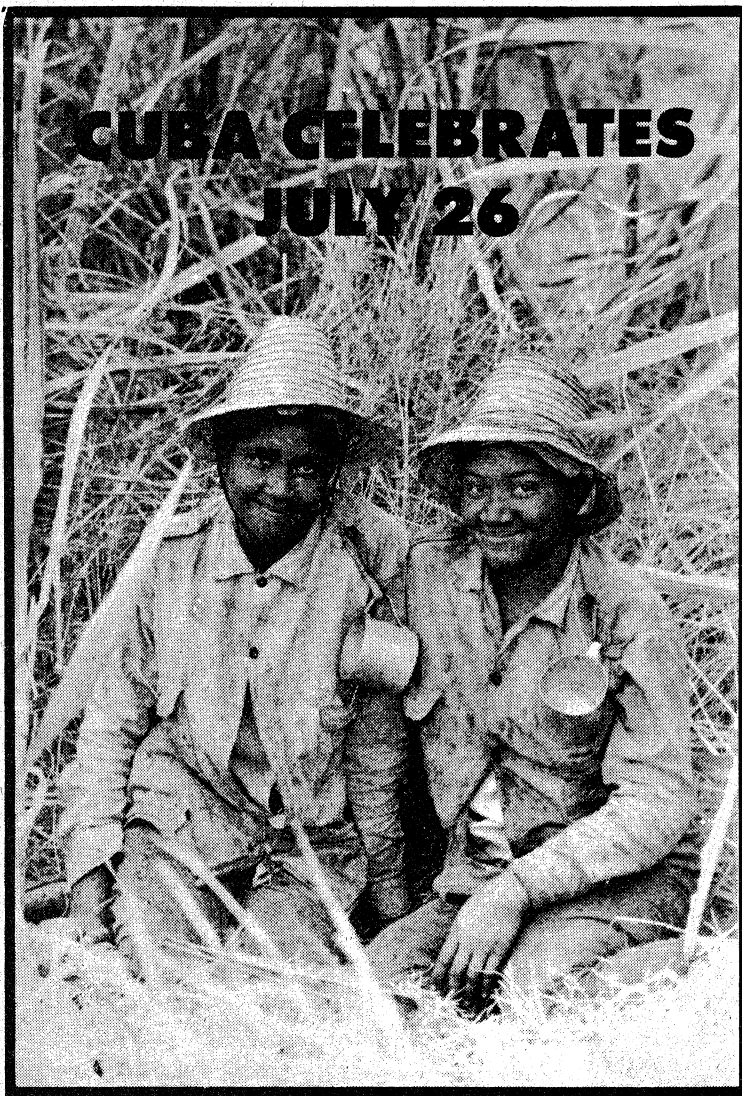
Women have especially benefited in the economic sphere. Almost 40% of women are now wage workers and paid equal wages to men. They have their own political organization, the Federation of Cuban Women (FMC) which is a mass organization of the Cuban Communist Party and plays a tremendous role in the creation of political and economic policies and legislation. The government, taking the lead of the FMC, has actively



Workers in a Cuban tin factory, Havana

— LNS

CUBA CELEBRATES JULY 26



pursued greater participation for women in all spheres of economic and political life. Government day care centers have been created to facilitate the entry of women into the work force. So too have the government and FMC attempted to alter certain traditional sexist attitudes towards women and have tried to rectify many of the injustices besetting women, even to the extent that the family law code stipulates that a husband must perform half of the household duties. Divorce, abortion, and birth control are all easily available to women.

Health, education, and welfare have all remarkably improved. Previous to the revolution, health care was restricted only to the urban wealthy. Disease and infant mortality, especially in rural areas, was astronomically high. Now health care is free and clinics exist even in the most remote rural areas. Schools have been built in the rural areas, where almost half the population lives, and the rate of literacy for school age children has risen from 50% to over 95%. As for welfare, the country no longer has unemployment, poverty, and beggary. There are no taxes: the government runs on the profits from the sugar factories which once went to wealthy capitalists.

Almost everyone over age 14 is incorporated into Cuba's unique and rather unorthodox political process. Thus everyone gets a sense of political involvement and community control. Most Cubans belong to community organizations which foster community involvement. They are also encouraged to join artists or writers workshops. Recreational activities abound. Sports and musical events are free.

Racism has been practically eradicated. The people now describe themselves as latinafricanos. Racism of any kind is illegal.

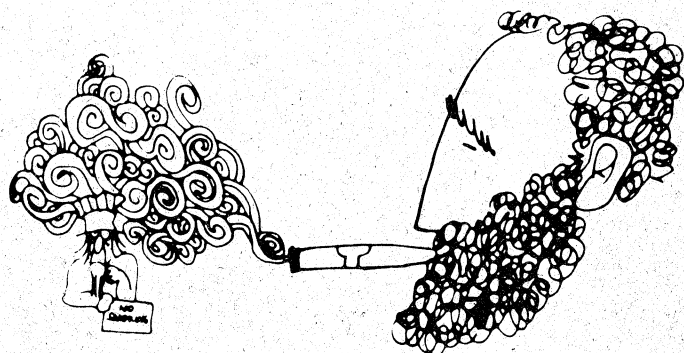
We found that two of the biggest problems now facing the Cubans are the housing shortage and food rationing. The government is actively attempting to build more housing and bolster food production. If the progress in construction and food production continues at the present rate, both shortages should be eliminated within 10 years.

Gay Cubanos have made tremendous political, economic, and cultural progress in the last 17 years. At the same time, we acknowledge that gay people have additional difficulties beyond those encountered by the heterosexual majority. In the final analysis, gay people have seen the Cuban achievement as a positive force in their lives, as Cubans and as gays; they support the revolution. Perhaps one can best understand their position if one sees them as patriotic citizens first and gays second, which of course is quite opposite to the way many gays in the U.S. see themselves.

The future for Cuban gays is still young and so is the revolution, and many believe the situation will improve. Many gays belong to the Young Communist League and other gays are rumored to occupy high positions in the Communist Party. We asked gays how we could best support them. One gay man, among others, replied "You can support us by supporting the revolution."

We feel that the Cuban revolution is in the benefit of gay Cubans as well as the large majority of the population. Thus we strongly support the Cuban revolution and urge all U.S. citizens, including gays, to support the revolution and help break the malicious economic blockade imposed by our government which impedes Cuba's economic development.

**HASTA LA VICTORIA SIEMPRE
VENCEREMOS!**



WORKPLACE ORGANIZING

During December 1975, as a member of a socialist gay men's group, I participated in a general leftist conference in the Bay Area focussed on a number of questions facing the revolutionary movement.

On the second day of the conference, women's and men's meetings took place. This reflected a political commitment to struggling against male supremacy as part of the working class struggle. It was understood that men have to do such work as well, especially in organizing among other working class men. The discussion then was on the role of men in the struggle against male supremacy, and concretely, on how men were dealing with such issues in their organizing work, especially workplace situations.

We had some criticism and self criticism about how child care responsibilities were being handled. (Up too that point only parents, gay men, and conference organizers had signed up for child care.) This resulted in non-gay men/fathers accepting immediate child care shifts for the rest of the conference. Then the men's meeting broke down into four smaller groups, all focused on five issues. These were:

1) Sexism, male dominated culture, and men's attitudes towards women; how these were an obstacle to working class unity and how to struggle with them.

2) Heterosexism, and anti-gay attitudes among non/gay male workers; how they are a barrier to unity, and how male organizers can deal with them.

3) How to challenge institutions of male supremacy, especially in the workplace.

4) How to relate to women's leadership or its absence in on-the-job struggles.

5) How to connect workplace issues with home life in struggle with male workers, so as to affect oppressive sex-roles more broadly, and to connect to workers' real life experience.

In the small group I was in, we had a real cooperative discussion that drew on people's concrete organizing efforts and experiences on the job.

SUMMING UP

We summed up some of the following conclusions about the agenda items:

1) Organizers need to be conscious and assertive in dealing with sexism and male chauvinism, not only reactive to "wisecracks". It's possible to bring the issue up, to relate to a general cultural and social awareness of "women's liberation" and the issues it provokes. By showing respect for fellow workers and gaining their respect, it is possible to call other male workers on a lack of respect they show women. Also, and perhaps obviously, such attitudes will change through actual social struggle and in response to women's changing roles. For instance, in cases people had been involved in, women took leadership in strike situations or effectively held down "men's" jobs; men's attitudes then had changed substantially and progressively. This change should be encouraged.

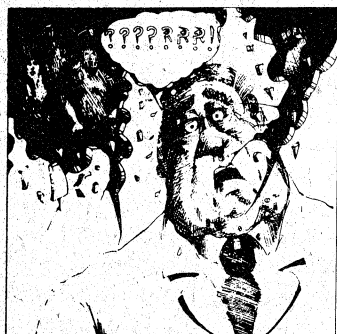
2) Heterosexism (oppression of gays), and the anti-gay attitudes of some male workers, were seen as a definite obstacle both to unity of all workers and to the development of real class consciousness. Male workers who feel powerful because they weren't "pussies" or "cock suckers" are still identifying with their privilege and with their oppressors, rather than identifying their own real exploitation.

It is important to recognize situations where the isolation of gay workers and their oppression by fellow workers resulted in their destroying any solidarity with other workers. In this way, gays are sometimes forced into "fink" roles.

One success people had was in raising the issue first in a general way, as part of a union contract struggle. By working first with respected rank-and-file leaders of the union, they won people to support non-discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation as a contract demand.

— *Health Rights News*, Black Lung Association





WORKING CLASS DIRECTION

3) A main strategy for dealing with institutions of male supremacy was seen to be campaigning around "affirmative action" as a way to break down a sexual as well as a racial division of labor. We generally agreed that it was crucial not to be trapped into a liberal reformist position. Instead we would link worker-controlled affirmative action hiring or promotion, or worker agreements to share layoffs or down time on a more equitable basis than strict seniority, to workers fighting for power over the rest of their jobs and working conditions. This can be part of a political struggle for jobs for all, and of a revolutionary perspective and strategy that working men can develop in their own interests. This was seen as a way to break down white male workers identification with their short term interest as a narrow social unit, which is a resistance to class consciousness.

4) The main lesson men had learned about working with women, where women's leadership of job struggles had not emerged, was to make opportunities and space for women to get together and begin to speak out on their grievances and concerns. It was also seen that men had a responsibility to *listen* to women actively and openly, in a non-patronizing way.

5) Briefly, we saw the struggles we ourselves were going through in the home around sex roles, child care, etc., as being meaningful and important to fellow workers. Talking about them in a way to generate more honesty on men's part would enable men to recognize the personal as political. It might also make space for gay male workers to come out.

CONCLUSIONS

In getting back together and summing up, I heard some of the following points from the other groups:

We need to avoid the development of contradictions between anti-racist and anti-sexist demands. We need to develop a material analysis of sexism and gay oppression and how they divide the working class. Men need to see "women's" issues as their own as well. "Shining on"

sexism or heterosexism tended to lead to an economist (a-political, bread and butter only) or elitist (these workers will never be able to understand these issues) kind of organizing. It was felt that a cross-class men's union or men's group approach to dealing with these issues would be incorrect. However, the left must provide a real alternative, confronting sexism in a substantive, substantial and class-conscious way, not only internally through the participation of women and gays, but also through actual organizing work and the development of a program. Gay men and gay workplace organizing have an important role to play in this.

SEXISM AND IMPERIALISM

In general the conference was surprisingly open to the struggle around male supremacy and heterosexism. I say surprising because of my previous involvements with the left, which did not find such openness, and because the conference *organizers* seemed to view women only as a constituency to be won to a narrowly defined "anti-imperialist" program (a view many participants found too limited). Overall, the conference was a tremendously encouraging revelation on the extent to which at least some segments of the anti-imperialist and Marxist-Leninist white left in the Bay Area has made strides in dealing with its own male domination, and in taking on the struggle against male supremacy and gay oppression as serious political responsibilities. I believe this transformation has resulted from the increasing leadership role of women within that movement, and the development of an analysis that places the liberation of women and of gays clearly in the historical context of struggling to overthrow imperialism and build socialism. This in turn reflects lessons learned from China, Vietnam, and many African national liberation struggles in which the emancipation of women and the development of women's leadership within the oppressed classes, have been crucial throughout the revolutionary process.



WAGES FOR HOUSEWORK

Women's Struggles and The Politics of the Male Role

Many of us share common experiences which have shaped our struggle against the lives we are forced to live as men in North American society. The most obvious of these experiences is the impact on men of the struggle all women have been making to challenge the female role imposed on them by capitalist society both inside and outside the home, and to re-define their needs as women on the basis of their own power.

A second fundamental experience for us has been the struggle of black people internationally which, by challenging the 'black role' imposed on them, has forced us to come to terms with our specific position as *white* men within the overall organization of capitalist society.

While the struggles of women and black people have brought us to define ourselves as *white* and *male*, most of us have also been struggling against the role the system imposes on us as white men; at work, at school, in the family (as sons and fathers) and in the community, we have refused in all kinds of ways to submit to our expected role.

It is all this self-activity within different sections of the working class — both our own activity, as well as that of women and blacks — which underlies the fact that today we are defining our own specific position within capitalist society as *white men*, and are trying to better understand, and struggle against, the role in every aspect of our lives. While the struggle of black people remains an essential reference point for our struggles as white men, it is especially important in the context of this article to acknowledge the struggles that we and other white men have been making against our role, both at work and school as well as under the impact of women's struggles, because our role as men in the different parts of our lives is an organic whole, as is our struggle against the lives we are forced to live in capitalist society.

The very fact that in recent years many young men have had the time to struggle for different relationships with women, children and other men reflects our collective power to refuse this time to the system which forced our fathers to submit most of their time to work to enable our families to survive.

WOMEN BRING THE STRUGGLE INTO OUR PERSONAL LIVES

The first form women's struggle took for us was their struggle for autonomy from men, so they could redefine their own needs independent of the female role imposed on them by capitalist society. By uncovering and struggling against the way their lives are shaped by their role of servicing men's and children's needs, women have brought the struggle into our personal lives, thereby destroying the separation men had made between the "political" and the "personal". At the same time, while women politicized their personal relationships with men, they made clear that women's role vis-a-vis men is not the result of a personal arrangement between the individual men and women, but in fact reflects a broad division of labor along sex lines imposed by the system, as seen in women's "specialization" in housework and child care for no pay in the home and in well-defined job markets for low pay outside the home.

**A Statement of
The Struggle Against Work Collective
P.O. Box 38, Station E
Toronto, Canada**

Women's refusal of their societal role of servicing our needs forces us to make difficult, often painful, changes. But it has also made possible and necessary for the first time for men to relate to each other's needs and to provide each other with personal support. Also, when we discuss our personal experiences with other men, we discover that we have all had similar experiences as boys and men, which makes clear to us for the first time that my way of relating to women, my male role and masculine personality, are not just my individual problem, but are rather the product of a whole socialization process men undergo from birth to maturity.

MEN DISCOVER THAT THEIR PERSONAL LIVES ARE POLITICAL TOO

The discovery that our personal lives are *also* political is an important breakthrough for men to make. At the same time, because we have explored the male role in relation to women in isolation from our role at work and school, we have had great difficulty actually seeing the connecting link between our "political" lives at work and school, and our "personal" lives, where women most immediately struggle against us. Thus disconnected from our role at work and school, the only focus for understanding and struggling against the male role seems to be in our "personal" lives. So some men have concluded that *only* personal change is important, while other men acknowledge the need for both political and personal struggle, but without being able to make the connection between them.

Many men who have been active in men's groups and activities have been expressing increasing dissatisfaction with this separation between the "personal" and the "political", and particularly the tendency of some men to equate "men's liberation" with personal change alone, in isolation from the rest of our lives.

In the political perspective which we want to develop in the rest of this article, the material basis of men's power over women and of men's and women's roles both inside and outside the home is identified as being in the sexual division of labor in which men work for a wage and women work without a wage servicing men's needs to enable them to continue functioning as waged workers.

Women within the growing movement for wages for housework for all women have laid the material basis on which this "hierarchy and dominance" rests. In the process, these women have provided the framework for understanding the relation between women's oppression and men's oppression. As Selma James, a spokeswoman for this movement, has put it:

A hierarchy of labour power and a scale of wages to correspond. Racism and sexism training us to acquire and develop certain capabilities at the expense of all others. Then these acquired capabilities are taken to be our nature and fix also the quality of our mutual relations.

(*Sex, Race and Class*, 1975, p. 14.)

At the bottom of this hierarchy is a "hitherto invisible stratum of the hierarchy of labour powers — the housewife — to which there corresponds no wage at all."



By attacking directly the unwaged condition of the work performed by the mass of women, the Wages for Housework Movement is not simply attempting to add a few dollars to the lives of each women; much more signifi-

cantly, their struggle undermines the foundation on which the capitalist system rests: the free labor expended by women in the home for the direct benefit of men and children, and for the ultimate benefit of the system. Since Marx, it has been known that the capitalist social relationship is:

essentially command over unpaid labor.... The secret of the self-expansion of capital resolves itself into having the disposal of a definite quantity of other people's unpaid labor. (*Capital*, v. I, ch. 18)

THE FUNCTION OF THE WAGE

The wages for housework perspective has also brought to the fore the crucial function that the wage plays in the capitalist organization of society. It is around the acquisition of a wage, in fact, that our lives are largely organized; and not only our lives, but also the lives of those who have to depend on other people's wage, such as wives and children.

This reality has been articulated very clearly by George Jackson:

One's entire day centers around the acquisition of the wage. The control of your eight or ten hours on the job is determined by others. You are left with fourteen to sixteen hours. But since you don't live at the factory you have to subtract at least another hour for transportation. Then you are left with thirteen to fifteen hours to yourself. If you can afford three meals you are left with ten to twelve hours. Rest is also a factor in efficiency so we have to take eight hours away for sleeping, leaving two to four hours. But — one must bathe, comb, clean teeth, shave, dress — there is no point protracting this.... The man who owns the factory or shop or business runs your life; you are dependent on this owner. He organizes your work, the work upon which your whole life source and style depends. He indirectly determines your whole day, in organizing you for work. If you don't make any more in wages than you need to live, you are a neoslave.... If you're held in one spot on this earth because of your economic status, it is just the same as being held in one spot because you are the owner's property.

(*Soledad Brother: The Prison Letters of George Jackson*, 1970 Bantam Book edition, pp. 190-91.)



George Jackson

On the other hand, the struggle of women and blacks against their wagelessness (this point is elaborated in *Sex, Race and Class*) has forced us to acknowledge something that we, as white men, have always taken for granted: the social power that the wage confers on those who command a wage. Certainly every waged worker is fond of the "warm glow" in his/her pocket on pay day. More than just warming the pocket, however, the pay-check gives its owner access to a variety of commodities and services which would otherwise be inaccessible. More importantly, this allows the owner of a pay-check to establish, and exert control over, a whole range of relationships with individuals as well as with the society at large.

Clearly, therefore, the wage is not merely an "economic" entity; rather, we see wages as a measure of the *relation of power* which exists between workers and capital, i.e., as the price we have been able to wring from the system in exchange for submitting to its control over our lives, both on the job and outside it.

Furthermore, the social power inherent in the wage means also the power to refuse the unpaid labor which capital seeks to impose as our life condition. One is reminded of the auto worker who, when asked why he showed up at work only four days a week, replied: "I can't get by on only three days pay." This remark illustrates how the widespread practice of absenteeism represents a struggle by workers to take back for themselves part of the time they are forced to spend on the job.

But not only does the wage define the power relation between waged workers and capital, it also defines the power relations between waged and unwaged workers, women in particular. This reality is clearest in the command



our pay-check gives us over the unpaid labor of housewives. By uncovering the fundamental importance that this relation of power has for the maintenance of the capitalist system, the wages for housework perspective has been able to give concrete significance to the hierarchical division of labor around which our society is organized. It shows how this mechanism of social control is based fundamentally on sexual, racial, age and nationality differences, thus forcing us to see "sex roles" not merely in terms of attitudes and behavior, but in terms of power relations within the working class. To quote again from *Sex, Race and Class*:

The social power relations of the sexes races, nations and generations are precisely...particularized forms of class relations....They are particularized forms of indirect rule, one section of the class colonizing another, and through this, capital imposing its own will on us all. (p. 14)

SEXUALITY AS CONSUMPTION

(continued from p. 8)

large extent, I don't consume so that I can feel some satisfaction or something like that. Now I consume so that I can go back to work and produce. And that is part of my consumption which I actually do enjoy is influenced by my work in that what I enjoy has to be as completely removed from my work as possible. I build elaborate and often expensive systems (such as families, stereos, or hot rods) into which I can escape from my work each day. And this is as true of my sexuality as it is true of the stereo. I consume to escape each day, the car I consume to get back and forth, or the soap I consume to wash the factory's dirt off me when I get home.

There is an important adjunct to this: the specifically asexual or even antisexual nature of the work I do. For the last three months my role of producer has consisted in stacking bucket seats on carts. That's it: nothing more and nothing less. Many parts of me are stifled by this type of work; we've all read about the monotony and so on. What is relevant here is that whatever dynamic and creative sexual energy I may have is ignored for eight hours each day and at the end is lost. I have to spend much of the rest of the day looking for it.

ALIENATED SEXUALITY

But notice: already I have lost much of what seems such a part of me. My sexuality is something which is no longer mine simply because I am alive. It is something which I have to look for and, tragically, something which someone else must give to me. And because my need to be sexually revitalized each day is so great, it becomes the first and most basic part of a contract I need to make in order to ensure it.



The goal of this contract is stability, and it includes whatever I need to consume: sex, food, clothes, a house, perhaps children. My partner in this contract is in most cases a woman, by now she is as much a slave to my need to consume as I am a slave of Fisher Body's need to consume me. What does she produce? — again sex, food, clothes, a house, babies. What does she consume for all this effort? — all the material wealth I can offer plus a life outside of a brutal and uncompromising labor market. Within this picture Within this picture it's easy to see why many women get bored with sex. They get bored for the same reason I get bored with stacking bucket seats on carts.

But where did this production/consumption split originate and how does it exert such a powerful influence over our lives? The essential conflict is that we really do have to go to work and we really do have to let our employers tell us what to do. There's nothing mysterious about this. People who will not or can not make a bargain similar to the one that I have made with Fisher Body are left to starve to death. If we are unable to convince ourselves of this by looking around this room or this College, we need only to expand our observation slightly. Furthermore, Fisher Body and other employers have spent decades accumulating bureaucracies and technologies which are marvelous at producing wealth but which leave us with some awfully absurd jobs to perform. We have no say in deciding the nature of these jobs: they are designed only from the point of view of profit maximization.

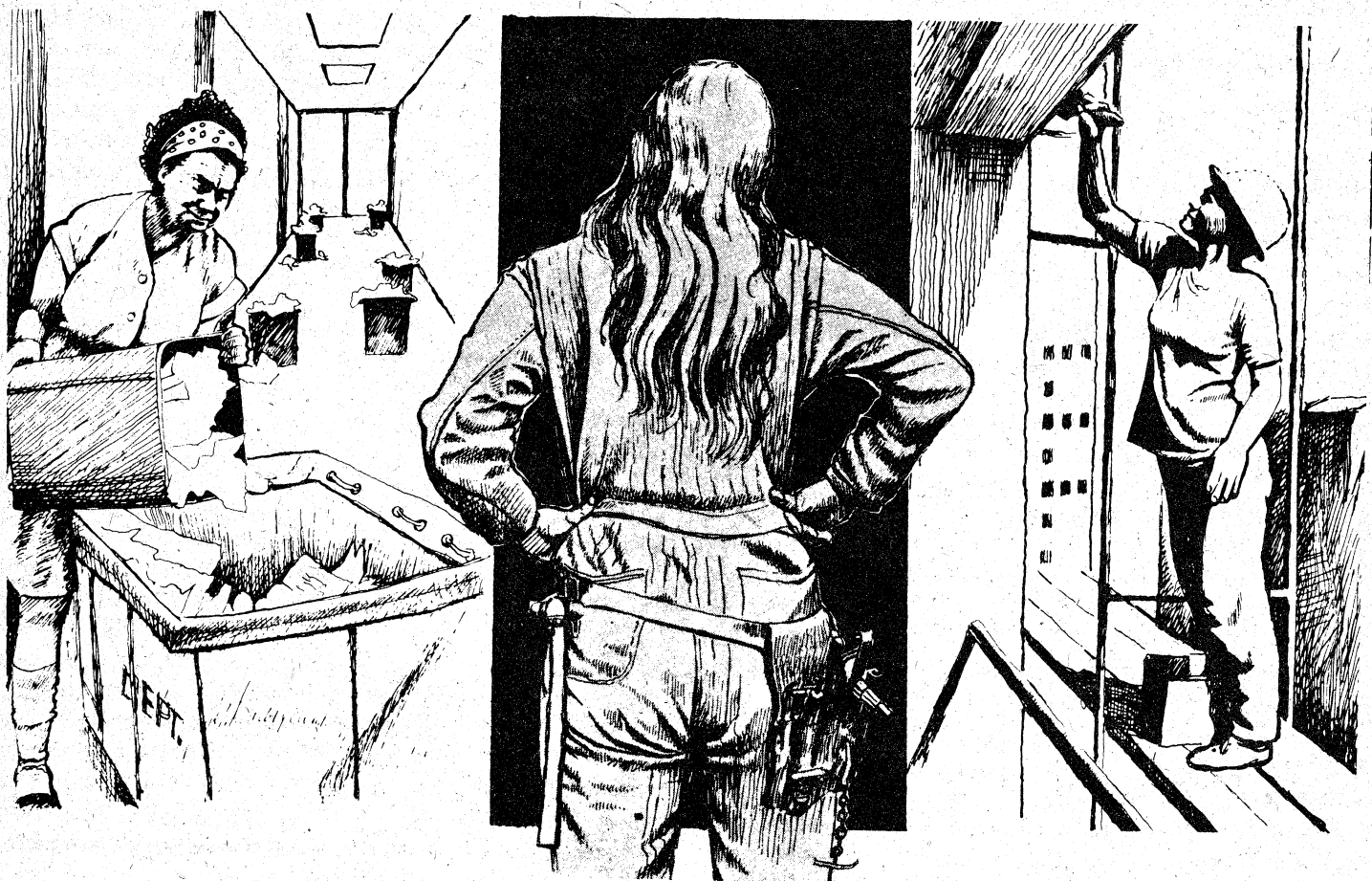
But to question the economic power of Fisher Body is to question most of what is essential to our lives. If we are to have an adequate look at our sexuality we must begin with these observations: that our sexuality is largely influenced by

Within this picture it's easy to see why many women get bored with sex. They get bored for the same reason I get bored with stacking bucket seats on carts.

two relationships which are universal in our society: that as producers we are forced into roles which we cannot design and which ignore our sexuality precisely because it is an unprofitable consideration, and that as consumers our sexuality becomes a pawn in our need to escape from the work we do and our need to return to work each day refreshed and ready to begin anew.

Now what is the power of the conclusion we have just made? It is a conclusion which was reached through the exploration of day to day experience, but at this point it is an intellectual abstraction which leaves much out.

At this point, the conclusion is general enough to apply equally well to blue and white collar workers (the main conflict is that we really do have to go to work). The conclusion doesn't attempt to explain every detail of the life of every worker. It does, however, attempt to describe a certain dynamic to which those lives respond and certain boundaries within which those lives occur. This conclusion is necessary for us in this conference if only from the point of view of intellectual clarity: we can hardly proceed unless we are aware that we as men and the College as an institution play a particular kind of role in society. Self awareness sufficient



even to include the discussion of sexuality is a form of consumption that is simply not available to the mass of the people in our society. And it is to their time spent as producers that we owe our own extravagant consumption.

But what is the political significance of the conclusions we have reached? That is, can our discussion of sexuality affect the evolution of Fisher Body's power over us? For today, the

...as producers we are forced into roles which we cannot design and which ignore our sexuality precisely because it is an unprofitable consideration, and that as consumers our sexuality becomes a pawn in our need to escape from the work we do and our need to return to work each day refreshed and ready to begin anew.

answer seems no, that for today Fisher Body is incredibly strong because the majority of people who work for it are basically committed to their jobs. And so all our efforts to confront our sexuality must remain essentially a response to that power; we are concerned primarily with giving individuals tools for trying to fight for their survival in a society based on their/our self-alienation. But this is still "progressive": it is the ability of Fisher Body to alienate

those it employs from themselves that is its greatest strength. But we need only consider individual survival for a moment to see that it can only be sought in the long run in a collective consciousness which is capable of challenging the power Fisher Body has over our lives. And this is why we need to confront our sexuality: because our sexuality is based on competition between men and at best a distorted communication between men and women, it will make building that collective consciousness an incredibly difficult task.

In a short time, we in the United States will feel the need for that collective consciousness much more sorely than we feel it today. The Third World is in revolt and the U.S. economy is in the midst of an economic collapse which rivals the collapse of the Thirties in proportions. As a result, we face massive unemployment in this country and the awesome prospect of battles between different groups of people fighting for the "privilege" of working for Fisher Body. If people see that it is only Fisher Body that can gain from such a battle, they may decide not to fight it. And if people see that a victory for Fisher Body means inevitably a return to a lifetime of alienation and oppression inside offices and factories, they may decide to fight instead for the right to control their own lives.

MORE LETTERS



LEARNING SEX ROLES

There is no question that class position is a fundamental determinant of sex role style.

It is a mistake to believe that all men learn their sex roles the same way regardless of class: the difference is the consciousness of the real power-powerlessness.

I grew up in an upper-middle class family. My father was an engineer for Caterpillar Tractor Co. in Peoria, Illinois and my mother was a housewife, who also had money from inheritances. We belonged to one of the local country clubs, had two cars, a house with a view and lots of trees, and were living the "good life" of the American dream in the 1950's and early '60's.

I learned my male role early playing cowboys and indians, army, and most of all sports. Many sections of Peoria were rough and tumble working class areas where fighting was a major part of being a man. But out in the suburbs and among the upper classes I never fought anyone physically. I learned that other avenues were open to me through academic achievement and class leadership as well as swimming (which was a sport dominated by upper middle class "country club" types). I learned that I didn't need to prove my manhood by beating someone up because I could dominate more easily through school activities. Also since I was physically small, my chances of success in football or street fighting were minimal.

So my male role was outwardly different, but similar underneath to working class boys. I felt the need to be strong, independent, successful, "at the top", and competitive with other boys.

But because of my class background and parental prodding, I was able to channel myself differently than most boys. This is not to say that my sex role was "better" than more physically aggressive, outwardly "macho" behavior, only that social class affects the outer forms of masculine roles.

Jack Fleck

"the male hormone"

I had the good fortune to read your latest issue of *brother* (No. 11-12) the other day and really enjoyed it. In an article entitled "The Male Hormone" the author, Paul, reviewed an article published in the New England Journal of Medicine in 1971 by a group at the Reproductive Biology Institute in St. Louis in which a correlation between low to low-normal levels of plasma testosterone and homosexuals is described.¹ Paul stated in his article, "It is a potential tool in the service of heterosexual male dominance and if there are chemical links discovered they may be used eventually as shock treatment . . . to destroy and dehumanize gay people."

My purpose in writing to you is to amplify the article Paul wrote. Since 1971 many researchers have attempted to duplicate the findings of the St. Louis group as regards plasma testosterone and homosexuals versus plasma testosterone and heterosexuals. No one has been able to duplicate the 1971 findings by the St. Louis group. In fact, four articles have been published since 1971 showing no correlation between plasma testosterone and one's sexual orientation or activity.² More importantly, one of those four articles was published in the New England Journal of Medicine in 1973, the same journal that published the 1971 study.

In conclusion, I wish again to say how much I enjoyed your magazine and would hope you continue your interesting articles. Paul stated in his conclusion, "we should still be very wary of such 'science'. It is not objective." The essence of the objectivity of science is in the reproducibility of its findings. And as of August 1975, the results of the St. Louis group stand as just that: the results of a group in St. Louis, not as Science the world around.

John Howard, M.D.

¹Kolodny RC, Master WH, Hendryx, J, et al: Plasma testosterone and semen analysis in male homosexuals, *N Engl J Med* 285: 1170-1174, 1971

²Tourney G., *Biol. Psych.* Vol. 6: 23, 1973
Birk, L., *N Eng J Med* 289: 1236, 1973
Doerr, P., *Arch Gen Psych.*, 29:829, 1973
Brodie, H.K., *Am J Psych*, 131:82, 1974

MIT MEN'S BIBLIOGRAPHY

I was somewhat disturbed to see on page 11 of the issue #13 that Scott Wirth is selling copies of our Men's Studies Bibliography (with additions) without our knowledge or permission. The collection has grown substantially since Scott's visit and I hope we'll get equal billing in your "declassified ads." ads."

Thanks.

David S. Ferriero
Assistant Humanities Libr.

David Ferriero sent me a copy of your comment on the MIT collection. I'd like to add my note to his.

The MIT Men's Studies Collection began as gifts by Joe Pleck and Robert Fein. It grows by further gifts of money and articles. We are very glad you like it and find it useful but let me make several points.

I'd feel good if you credited Pleck and Fein and Ferriero and MIT when you write about it. Those three men and my boss really deserve some credit and like everyone else, need it.

The MIT collection is now twice as big and is available for use. The bibliography is completely updated and much improved and we sell it at cost: \$1.50.

Thanks for your help.

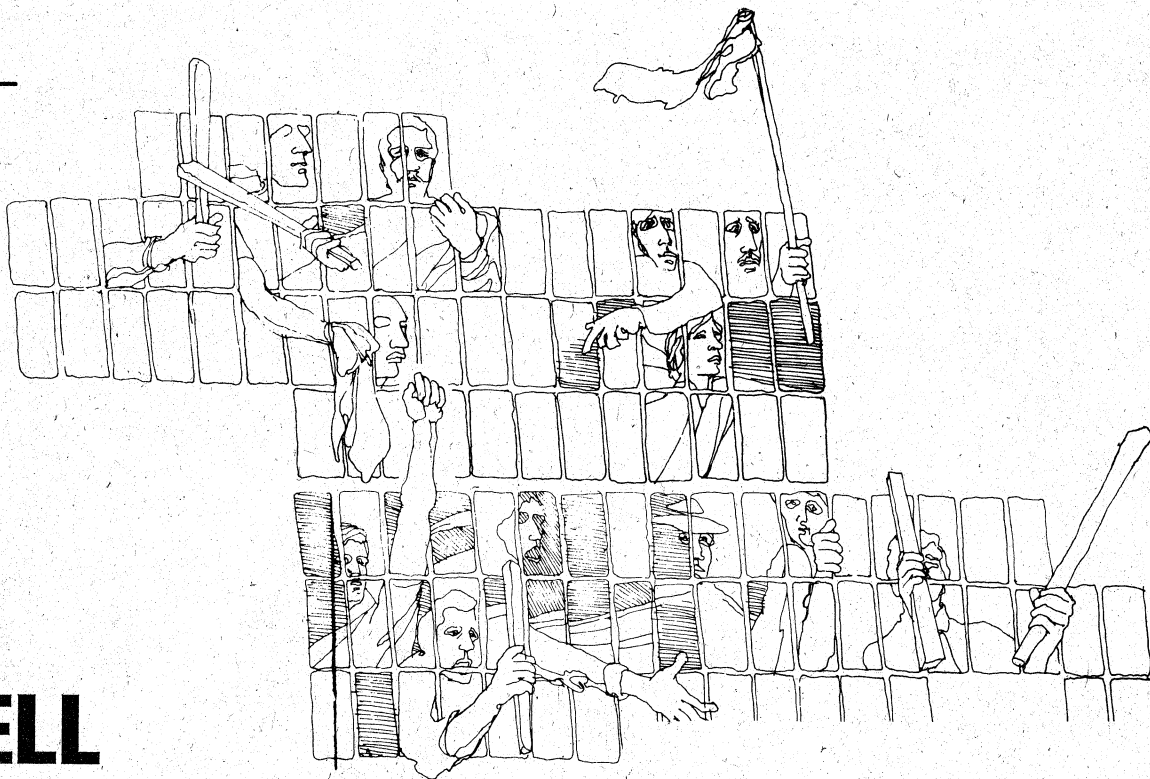
Sincerely,
Mary Rowe
Special Assistant for
Women and Work,
Office of the President

BROTHER APOLOGISES

Thank you for your notes setting the record clear on who is to be credited for acquiring and making available the MIT Men's (and Women's) Studies Collections and Bibliographies. Through a series of copy edits, obviously the wrong sorts of economies, Scott and Barry came to eclipse the actual collectors and supporters of the collections, including yourselves (Mary Rowe and David Ferriero) as well as Robert Fein, Joseph Pleck and others, and of course MIT itself.

We hope these acknowledgements and apologies remedy any disservice our earlier omissions caused.

Sincerely,
the Editors.



FREE RUCHELL

MAGEE: VICTIM OF CORRUPTION

I am the victim of judicial corruption. Millions of people fail to realize the truth. The judicial vampire (monster) values the blood of the people. People who refuse to see the monster, through ignorance feed it. However the awareness of this (reality) by the progressive forces gives us the strength to penetrate the heart of the monster with the almighty revolutionary sword.

My search is for support by progressive groups throughout the country, in an effort to bring about radical legal changes. Many so-called revolutionary people seem to tremble or to fear presenting the truth of my plight or the truth of other cases. I get the impression people are faking: In fact I let them know when they come with their never-ending excuses. I don't believe the communities should be left to the mercies of the monster into whose hands they have fallen. Keep the struggle rolling until we have pierced the monster's heart: this is the only way to keep it from growing new destructive heads, in order that mankind will at last be content, secure and at peace.

Hidden beneath the surface of the false news media image is the truth of my illegal imprisonment. I've applied for a writ of *habeas corpus*, challenging my original Los Angeles Superior Court conviction as being unconstitutional. The California Attorney General is before the Federal courts with known false records and fraudulent returns (legal papers -ed.). What they're trying to continue to do is cover up the facts: of my court appointed attorney having entered a false insanity plea, that was then used to trick a jury into convicting me, in July 1965.

In May 1965, an insanity plea was entered in my behalf without foundation, over my specific objection. In July 1965 I was gagged and chained in the presence of the trial jury for objecting to the jurors hearing such a plea. The

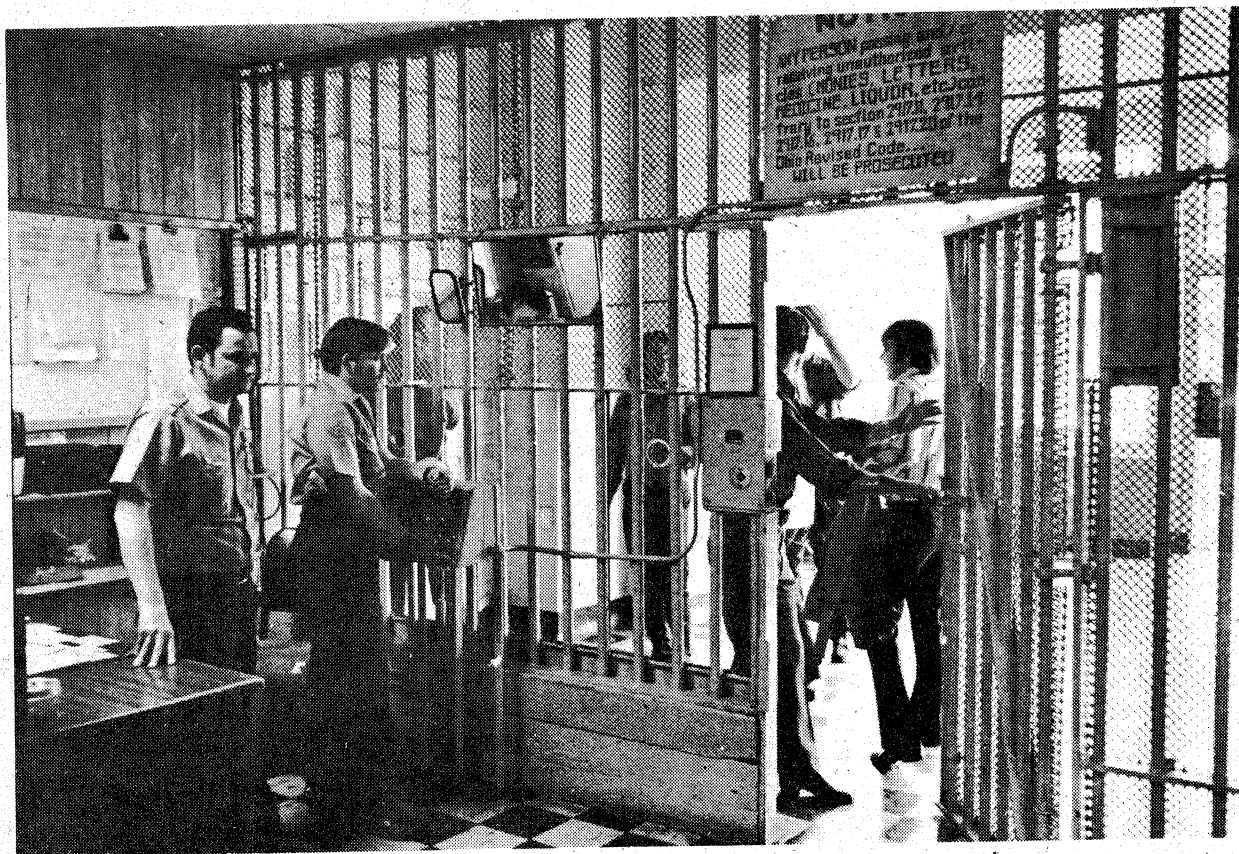
District Attorney said he would prove that I, Magee, had robbed and kidnapped Ben Brown for \$10.00; then before the jury, found himself claiming that I had committed a crime but wasn't guilty by reason of insanity. *While the jury was deliberating*, the court ordered the plea withdrawn, yet the jury returned with a *guilty verdict based on that plea*. Court spectators (later) showed up in court under the belief that I was getting a new trial, because they witnessed the court say that since it was withdrawing the plea, *that I would get a new trial if the jury returned a guilty verdict*. The Attorney General is now presenting false documents, trial transcripts, and suppressing the records of my May 1965 plea hearing, and not reporting the court's promise of a new trial.

I recently sent \$340 for a transcript of the May 1965 hearing. It was returned saying no court reporter transcript of such a hearing exists. They apparently forget that the Attorney General used and cited the May 1965 hearing in a November 1971 return to a writ I had filed.

I pleaded guilty to a kidnap charge in San Jose, even though the San Francisco jury found me not guilty in March 1973, to avoid going through another jury trickery conviction and fraudulent transcript attack by the attorney general and his agents.

The attorney general and the district attorney use the courts and press to claim I am legally in prison and deceive the public. The worst crime I am guilty of is not having any parents or living relatives that I communicate with while being attacked by these cowardly pigs. Therefore I urge you in the name of press freedom and access to legal rights in court, to publish this letter.

PRISONERS SUE FOR RIGHT TO READ *brother*



Notice of Motion and Affidavit to U. S. Marshall Service, Bronson La Follette, Attorney General of Wisconsin, and all parties to the case of Bach, et al (prisoners) vs. Schmidt et al (prison authorities).

Submitted by Donald G. Kemp also known as Nguyen That Thanh (imprisoned U. S. Vietnam War veteran).

1. I am a prisoner at Wisconsin State Penitentiary, unjustly convicted of Murder-1, serving a mandatory life sentence. . .

2. I believe the issues in this case are representative of my interests as an inmate . . .

5. At approximately 9:00 AM on April 24, 1975, I received a communication from Assistant Warden Carl Manthe, . . . a copy of a rejection notice sent to *brother* for issue #11-12 for "violating rules and regulations of the prison and being detrimental to the rehabilitation of an inmate, prisoner or parolee in the custody of the prison."

7a: *brother* appears to be an ordinary source of reference and information for gay and bisexual communities . . . an informative organ of the individual and collective efforts to promote and express the theory of anti-sexism . . . the efforts of *brother* extend into the straight community . . . to

encourage solidarity among the various movements which oppose sexism . . . *brother* is not a pornographic publication. The issues I have seen depict no sexually prurient or obscene graphics. I see no displays of human or bestial reproductive instrumentation, nothing spread or hanging. I see no ads for battery powered dildoes, lifesize rubber mannequins, condoms that glow in the dark or cherry flavored vaseline. *brother* is very clearly an important element in support of the theory of anti-sexism, and is in fact the only publication I have seen which promotes unity among the anti-sexist movements of all sexual cultures.

7b: *PLAYBOY, et al*, dwell under the premise of sexual liberation, but incite and encourage sexual degradation. The spirituality of all sexual cultures are . . . absorbed, distorted and spat out as status objects . . . the woman is depicted with virtually no identity other than as a 'slice of tail.' . . . I see ads for battery powered dildoes, . . . flavored jellies for application to sexual organs, as well as for stimulative and contraceptive devices whose safety and legality are highly questionable . . .

The sexist theories perpetuated by *PLAYBOY* are clearly detrimental to the development of moral and sexual

spirituality in any individual or culture ...

7c: I oppose the theory of sexism and the application of sexual oppression ... I submit I am capable of determining without outside assistance, which publications I shall select to read and whether such publication is detrimental to my 'rehabilitation' and development.

7d: (Prison authorities have imposed) arbitrary policies governing prisoners as a class ... They maintain sub-human conditions for family relationships, repressive visiting rules, vicious opposition to conjugal visits. Gay prisoners are prevented from receiving materials relating to their culture ...

(These same authorities) approve movies for showing in the prison which depict sexism against women, beating,

rape, extortion, and women being tortured by prison guards ... One, **SAVAGE SISTERS**, incited racial as well as sexual abuses; in one excerpt were depicted the ultimate in racist-sexist terrorism --- race vs. race, sex vs. sex, sexual torture, racial-sexual prejudice between women, all occurring in a military prison cell. Said film was approved for showing by the same authorities who rejected **brother**. How ironic that at the same time **SAVAGE SISTERS** was being shown, prisoners who wanted to express support and solidarity for Jo-an Little, were forced to do so through their families ...

Based on the content of this complaint, I move this court to (issue) a temporary Restraining Order to prevent the named respondents from enforcing the prohibition on **brother**.

WANTED FOR WRITING TO PRISONERS

The following prisoners are interested in corresponding with sincere people on the outside, without regard to race, creed, or sex, who are mainly willing to keep up the correspondence and share information and understanding with the prisoners.

AT LONDON, OHIO PRISON:

P. O. Box 69, London OH 43140

Foster R. Hazelwood, 140-631

Jack Abrams, 143-145

Dale E. Knece, 140-694

Sam Peterson, 143-188

Edward Siler, 141-804

Daniel Hinson, 141-070

Robert Murphy, 143-112

(all at the same above address)

AT LUCASVILLE OHIO PRISON:

P. O. Box 787, lucasville oh 45648

George Vaughn (K-5-27) 140-337

James Craig, 139-280

Marcus Mike Taylor, 141-628

Marvin E. Harris, 000-161

P. O. Box 221, Apt. 3-7-4

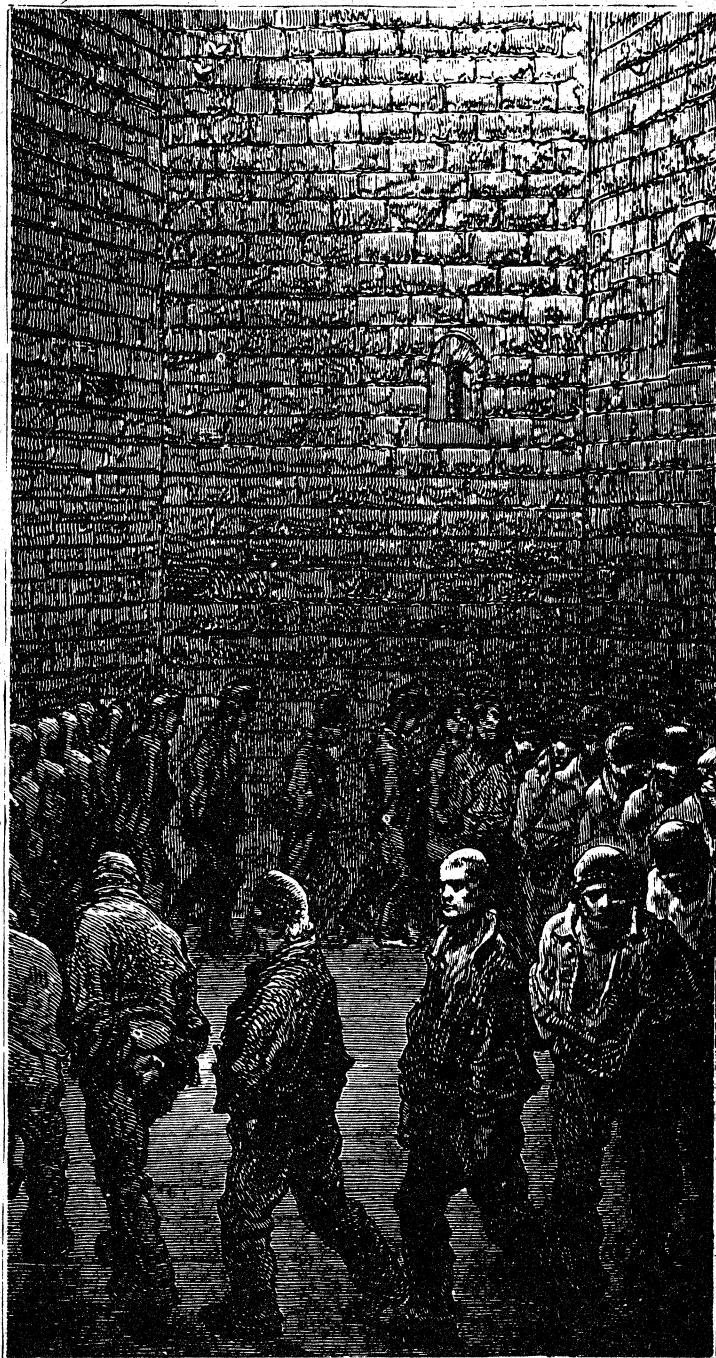
Raiford, Fl. 32083

Jerry Pena

P. O. Box "B" 19124-A

Folsom Prison

Represa, Ca. 95671



REVIEWS AND CRITICISM

SURVEYING SEXIST ATTITUDES

When the brother collective first met to plan this issue of *brother*, one theme that we discussed and particularly wanted to address was that of how work and class position influence the content, form and expression of one's sexism. We were interested in exploring the different manifestations of sexism and in seeing whether certain types consistently occurred within certain classes and certain groups of workers. To do this, we tentatively planned to conduct a survey. However, on examination of previous surveys on sexism, their weakness becomes evident. Yet there is something to be learned by examining the weaknesses of these surveys: we can better understand how sexism manifests itself within groups and classes, and how we may properly combat it.

The basic problem with previous surveys lies on the researchers' reliance on respondents' attitudes. The researcher administers a questionnaire dealing with attitudes on sexism, gathers them, compiles the data, and using these statistical gems confidently draws rather questionable conclusions. In the extreme, one or two researchers have statistically proven the elimination of sexism. Unfortunately, I personally disagree with their conclusions as well as their methods or survey research and their theoretical analysis.

Attitudes are not a sufficient element for evaluating sexism. Sexism manifests itself both in attitudes and in action. We all know that what people say and do are often two different things. An experiment by the psychologist, La Pierre, best illustrates this point.

In 1934, a year of tremendous anti-Chinese sentiment, La Pierre, interested in the consistency between attitudes and actions conducted an experiment using a couple of Chinese descent and a WASP couple. Together, the two couples crisscrossed the U.S., staying in altogether 184 establishments. In only one instance were the Chinese couple denied lodgings. Later, after the traveling was concluded, La Pierre addressed letters to all 184 of the establishments and asked "Will you accept members of the Chinese race in your establishment?" 91% of the respondents replied that the couple would not be welcomed. La Pierre concluded that people's attitudes and actions are not necessarily consistent. Subsequent studies have supported La Pierre's findings; there are many hypocrites.

Two phenomenon are partly responsible for this division between attitudes and actions. First, many persons fail to understand sexism in all its manifestations. Without a comprehensive understanding of sexism, inconsistencies between attitudes and actions are more likely to occur. For example, a man may uncritically think of women as weak and inferior, yet consciously forego many of the old "chivalrous" actions, such as opening doors, because of their sexist nature. Conversely, there are men who believe in women's equality and yet unconsciously treat women as objects. Both these examples are due to a lack of a comprehensive understanding which would eliminate inconsistencies.

The second phenomenon is frequently referred to by psychologists as "image management". Image management occurs when one tries to project a particular image. We all, to varying degrees, utilize image management to achieve certain ends. We manipulate how other people see us and think of us, often exposing only the most impressive sides of ourselves. Usually there is a reason for the deception: one may want a job, or a lover, or esteem... This tendency for deception extends into the realm of sexual politics. Thus, we find individuals who treat women in a generally non-sexist manner while inwardly harboring sexist attitudes. These individuals may not believe in sexual equality, yet by image management may, to their advantage, appear that way. On the other hand, we find men acting in a sexist manner among themselves so as to project heavy masculine images, when individually their attitudes and actions may be of a relatively non-sexist nature. Therefore, where with the first phenomenon (inconsistency based on unresolved contradictions) we find confusion leading to the division between attitudes and actions, with the second phenomenon (image management) we find manipulation as the cause of inconsistencies.

Attitudes and actions often do contradict one another. It seems ridiculous to assume that people are or are not sexist by obtaining data solely on attitudes. Thus, had the brother collective conducted a similar survey, our findings would have been painfully ambiguous. For example, had we found that wage earning men express publically more sexist attitudes than do salaried or self employed professional men, we would not be able to determine whether wage earning men are more sexist or whether professional men, who presumably have had greater exposure to the women's movement have learned to manage their images. And perhaps the professionals behave in a generally more sexist manner—we have no way of knowing! It is plain that attitudes are not a complete nor always helpful indicator.

However, we should not be unrealistically skeptical of these surveys nor the progress that has been made against sexism. Substantial gains have been made in some fields, such as some labor markets and in the behavior of many individuals. And many more gains must come if overt and subtle, attitudinal and behavioral sexism can be wiped out. But no one should conclude that sexism is on the wane simply from a survey on the attitudes of middle-class college students, their teachers, doctors and dentists. That would be untrue, misleading, and possibly detrimental for the anti-sexist movement.

Nor should we abandon the effort to change sexist attitudes. Attitudes can and often do shape behavior as behavior shapes attitudes. That people have begun to re-evaluate and change their sexist attitudes is a truly substantial gain. But we must remember that, just as attitudes and action must be assessed to observe sexism, both sexist thought and behavior must be fought to ultimately eliminate sexism.

MEN'S LIVES:

A REVIEW BY JON SNODGRASS

Men's Lives is a 43 minute color documentary shown as part of the "Men's Change" segment in the *Women Emerging Film Series* at the Los Feliz theater in Los Angeles. Also shown to an overflowing crowd was *The Club*, a very funny, animated cartoon about an aristocratic men's club in which "members" are penises. *The Club* clearly establishes the absurdity of sex roles by reducing them to their anatomical root. I wish, however, that it had said more about penis power. *Un Chant D'Amour* was Jean Genet's beautiful and erotic film about gay love in prisons, frustrated by heterosexism, separate cells and guard brutality, forced to brutality, forced to take its expression purely in imagination. And there was *Work*, a Marxist analysis of mostly Black auto workers, which was oblivious to women's labor.

Men's Lives is the story of, and a film made by, two Antioch students who return to their hometowns to interview a variety of people about men and masculinity. They seek an understanding of the people and the process which brought them to manhood and they question the male role. The filmmakers were originally participants in the Oberlin College conference on masculinity, *Snakes 'n' Snails 'n' Puppy-Dog Tails*, held in the Fall of 1972. Both the film and the conference are productions of the men's liberation movement.

The film is an accurate, and in parts, a touching account of what it is like to grow-up male in N. America, particularly if one is also white, heterosexual and middle class. It shows



small boys fighting on playgrounds and learning to hate girls. It shows adolescents saying they love football for the kill and hot cars for the sexual thrill. In general it shows how men are trained to suppress affect and release aggression.

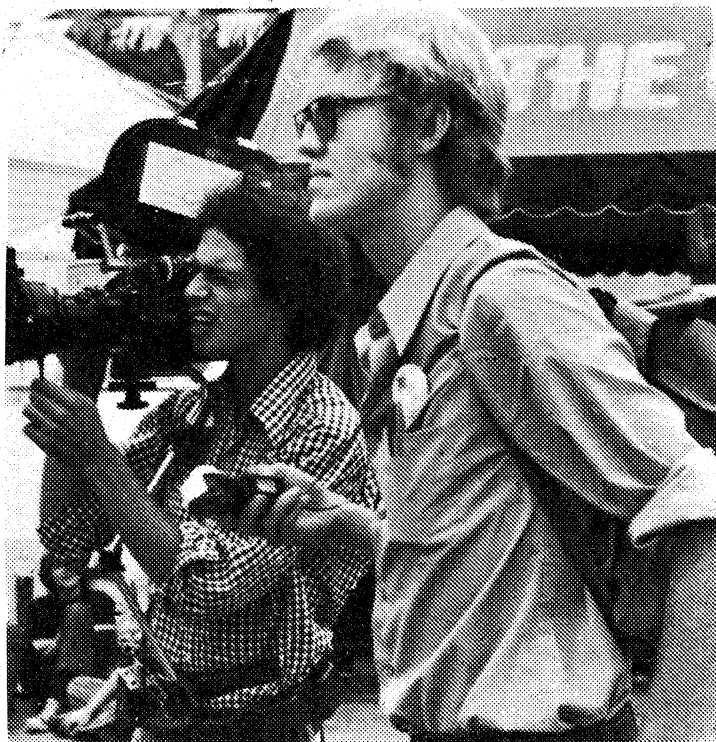
But the film's exclusive concentration on the limitations of the male role constitutes its greatest weakness for it completely neglects the benefits. Early in the film a black child states that she would rather be a boy because "boys have more fun," but male privilege is not explored. Thus, the film is one-sided, emphasizing what is bad about being a man and now what is good. It assumes that straight men and women are equally oppressed. This position implicitly denies that sexism exists by denying the hierarchical structure in which men dominate women. If growing up male "is just as worrisome and wonderful as growing up female," which is the theme communicated to one reviewer and presumably to most viewers, then there would appear to be no reason for a women's movement. Thus, this male perspective is a negation of feminism.

Just as *Men's Lives* ignores the subordination of women, it excludes the oppression of male homosexuals. The film is only about heterosexual men's lives. Since exclusion reflects not only an absence of consciousness but an exercise in power, *Men's Lives* is anti-gay. It consistently assumes that all men are straight — that the only desirable relationships are male-female in character. In the few instances in which male homosexuality cannot be excluded by the biases of the

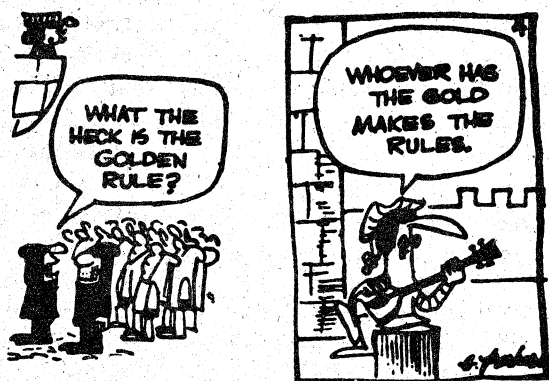
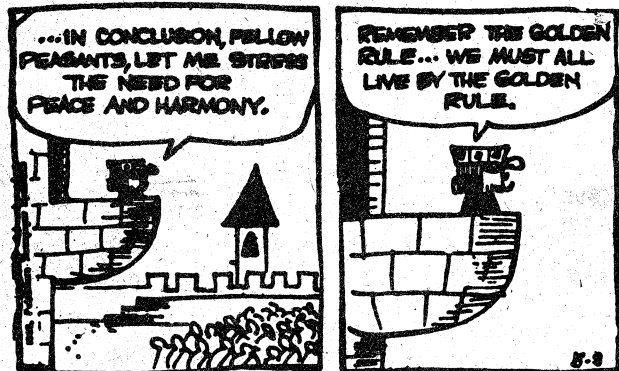
filmmakers, it is forced to surface by the comments of those who are interviewed. For instance, a young man tells us he is stereotyped for being a dancer and gymnast, or a father implies that hugs and kisses won't affect his son's "maleness." However, the subject of gayness in men is unacknowledged and unexplored.

One striking feature of *Men's Lives* is the large number of Blacks in the film. While this is effective in demonstrating that Black men have experienced patriarchy and are therefore sexist too, this stress on the sex role identification of both black and white men, leaves out the social context in which Black's have experienced racial oppression. Thus, it fails to take into account Black men's history of being treated like boys by whites. White men must comprehend that there is another dimension beyond "maleness" in *Black men's lives*.

In addition to lacking an awareness of women's, gay and racial oppression, *Men's Lives* has no class consciousness. There are numerous scenes of working men, but work is seen as a requirement of masculinity rather than the function of the working class under capitalism. This perspective completely ignores women's work inside and outside the family as part of the female role. Here the Marxist analysis in the film *Work* and the male liberation analysis in *Men's Lives* exactly coincide. Seeing only male labor the films perpetuate women's oppression by assuming women's work is negligible.



Filmmakers Hanig and Roberts



Men's Lives and men's liberation literature are often politically naive, probably a result of their author's more comfortable origins. Consequently what is class oppression is often mistaken for sex role oppression. Men are seen as as oppressed by masculinity, not by a ruling class. By sex role, however, men are actually oppressors and the benefactors of sexism. Straight men are only alienated from their full human potential by sexism, not "oppressed" by it. If straight men are conceived as oppressor and oppressed, then the word, and the power relationship, and the feminist struggle lose their meaning.

One of the connections between capitalism and masculinity is competition, so toward the end, *Men's Lives* alludes to a "competitive, aggressive, profit oriented society" as the cause of it all. Several jump shots show us the executive boardroom, the masses, a computer, red tape, even Henry Kissinger, but the analysis in terms of capitalism, patriarchy or both is mystified and fleeting.

To conclude, *Men's Lives* is anti-woman, anti-gay and anti-working class. It accurately portrays, however, the socialization and quality of life for one class and sex in society. And it reflects the kind of resistance men exert when threatened by the women's liberation movement. Men assert that they are oppressed equally by their masculine "conditioning." This makes them the victims, instead of the perpetrators, or a sexist system. This film demonstrates the need for men to recognize and give up their privilege rather than defending it.

A REPLY TO SNODGRASS

by Barry Shapiro

Because Jon Snodgrass is one of the most politically and intellectually responsible writers on men's issues that I know, I was shocked, incredulous, and angered by his scathing review of the documentary film *Men's Lives*. He showed so little appreciation for what the film actually achieved that he often fell short of reasoned criticism, frequently straining logic to its limits to find fault with it. His observations were so marked with innuendo and untenable assertions that I urged the **brother** collective not to publish it. After much discussion and debate we agreed to print it and a response to it. I have discussed my criticism of Jon's review with him and with the film makers, Josh Hanig and Will Roberts. My criticism is aimed at advancing our thinking on the issues of men and class and sexism and not at one-upmanship.

THE SOURCE OF CRITICISM

Frankly, I think that Jon tended to take the film to task for not being the sort of film he would have made. His passion and talent for radical analysis and criticism of the men's movement is well known. Nevertheless, his use of the documentary as his vehicle for that criticism is misguided and sometimes intolerable. For example, when Jon writes that *Men's Lives* and men's liberation literature are often politically naive, probably a result of the authors' more comfortable origins," he is poisoning the wells, that is, making prosperity a *prima facie* cause for suspicion.

Jon owes us more evidence if he is to make the charge stick that "*Men's Lives* has no class consciousness."

Is it that Hanig and Roberts prove themselves to be disrespectful of working class men? Do they *talk down* to them? Or speak disparagingly about them? No! In fact, working class men are not talked *about*. They speak for themselves and reveal both their class consciousness and the retreat from the struggle against the ruling class that is suggested by that consciousness.

Gerald, the assembly line worker at Dayton Rubber & Tire Company tells us, "The Company just wants my labor. They don't care if we're effective in helping the world. But, look, I'm just a working man. I don't know about these things." I think we know that he *does* know about *these things* but is afraid of his own anger about them. A family man with several children, he understandably shrinks from acting on his consciousness of *these things*. "You asked me if I drink. I do. And sometimes," he confesses a little embarrassed, "too much." He goes on explaining what we have suspected. "It's a weakness to let your emotions bother you. You can't let them get to you!" Why? we wonder. Is it just a quirk, a peculiarity of masculinity this inability to express emotionality? Or is it because you would be likely to lash out against the bosses and owners, who organize your life around their profit motives, close down the plant or take it over!? The answer is not given. the viewer must draw his/her own conclusions. In this respect the documentary

is more like a work of art than a political tract. And for showing such tact, Snodgrass attacks the film for having "no class consciousness."

ON CRITICISM

Like many of us, Jon Snodgrass was politicized by the anti-war movement of the sixties. And like so many others he was turned off by the hard line, the unassailable self-assuredness of some activists and organizers.

His own own history should have given him sympathy with the men tentatively approaching the men's movement, yet his criticism of *Men's Lives* is so ruthless (without love) and high-handed, that it discourages men who have not yet seen the film from bothering to view it, and makes those who did -- and liked it -- feel unsure, perhaps mistaken, shallow, or even stupid for not having noticed the flaws he attributes to it. This plays into our tendency for internalized oppression -- our feeling that we are never really right or good enough. Achieving the correct analysis, the right line, becomes another performance demand on us, another area in which we come to fear failure.



NEGATING THE NEGATION

I object to Jon's "deduction" that *Men's Lives* contributes to a "negation of feminism" by advancing the "male perspective" that "there is no reason for a women's movement." Just because one reviewer wrote that "growing up male 'is just as worrisome and wonderful as growing up female'," Snodgrass is not entitled to presume that most viewers get that message. Nothing in the film argues for or suggests 'ignoring the subordination of women.' In fact the very opposite seems to be the case.

THE GAY QUESTION

Similarly, I take issue with his criticism of the film as anti-gay, even though I agree that *Men's Lives* does not deal adequately with gay men's oppression.

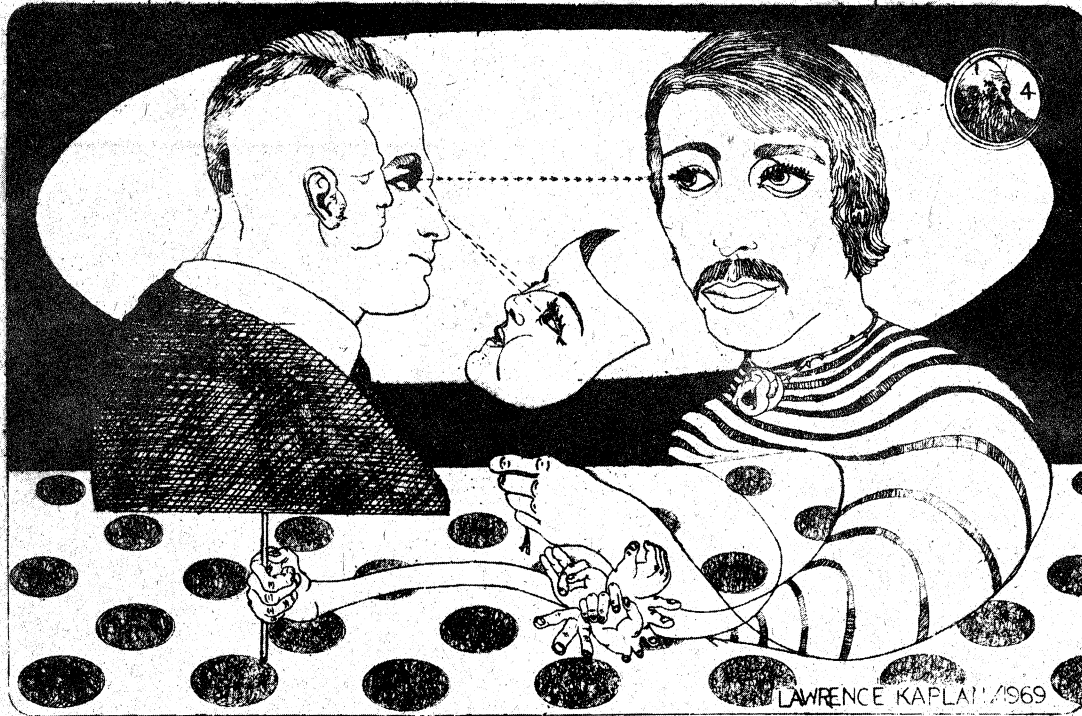
Its failure to take up the issue is the film's most serious flaw as a relatively comprehensive account of growing up male in the U. S. today. So much social enforcement of establishment prescribed masculine

behavior is achieved through the perpetuation of homophobia, that it will be necessary to attack gay oppression in order to ultimately topple patriarchal power.

Hanig and Roberts know this and take responsibility for the decision. They report that when they presented the slide show on men's lives, the predecessor to the film, the portions that received the most antagonistic reaction were those dealing with gayness (no surprise). In order to reach the widest audience and have the greatest anti-sexist impact, they omitted the issue from the film. While I can understand their motivation, I cannot applaud their decision, but neither can I join Jon in decrying the film as anti-gay. Not being adequate in something is not the same as being against that thing. The dichotomy is too forced.

MIRROR, MIRROR, ON THE WALL

Through the documentary technique of interviews, the men in the film hold up mirrors to themselves and we catch reflections or ourselves in them. They express many of our unconscious sexist values clearly and without apology. The similarities are startling. We aren't being accused, defense mechanisms aren't being triggered.



Rather we are aided in getting in touch with ourselves. Not being on the spot or watched for our reactions, we tend to take in the insights, digest them and prepare an integrated personal response to our own self-inquiries. This is a virtue of the film that Jon just glosses over.

Nor does he credit the movie for the attractively packaged consciousness-raising, organizing tool that it is. On almost every occasion of the film's showing that I've attended, audience discussions followed and men, working class and Third World men especially) talked more openly about themselves, their privileges, and problems, than one

usually hears.

RACISM

I think that Jon is simply glib in accusing the film of not having an awareness of racial oppression. Bob Dunn, a black professor at Antioch is interviewed and tells the viewer of the bind that young black men find themselves in. They receive double messages: "Put your shoulder to the wheel and work hard, then you'll succeed; then they go out thinking that they are somebody, and no-one will employ them."

Dunn's analysis of the black man's plight in racist America here and elsewhere in the film is clear, careful and to the core.

CRITICAL ZEAL

It is Jon's zeal for criticizing the men's movement for its failures to properly attend to many of the pressing social-political issues of our times -- sexism and hetero-sexism, racism and classism -- that brings him to the excesses of criticism of *Men's Lives*. He fears that through the defense method of me-too-ism, (we men are oppressed too, just like you") that men will neglect the range depth and seriousness of the qualitatively different disadvantages of

women, gays, Third World people and the white working class. I respect him for his commitment and vigilance. If his criticism of the film didn't 1) have the potential for discouraging men and women from seeing it altogether; 2) didn't disparage the efforts and successes of its makers, and 3) intimidate and confuse those -- like me -- saw it and liked it; then I wouldn't feel compelled to spend so much time taking him to task.

Let's see if we on the left can break the habit of turning our successes into failures, and get better at giving positive criticisms and appreciations to each other when deserved.

EDITORIAL: MEN and CLASS

(continued from p. 5)

SEXISM AND CLASS OPPRESSION

Sexism (male supremacy, the exploitation of women, and its associated oppressive sex roles) is a key feature of any class society. The subjugation of women through an exploitative sexual division of labor, and the related beginning of private wealth, marked the beginning of class society. So sexism preceded capitalism, and will to a certain extent, as is already historically evident, continue after it under



socialism, which a **transitional form of class society**, aiming consciously at a classless or "communist" society, in which sexism and all other forms of exploitation will be eradicated. One of the reasons sexism is so long-lasting, and why it must be overcome to end class exploitation, is that male supremacy is a very "democratic" form of oppression, in which masses of men can identify as being on top. This tends to stabilize the other forms of oppression with which it is bound up.

What gives us the possibility of putting an end to sexism is that male supremacy and sex roles react to and are transformed by changes in the production and economic relations of a society, and by the increasing centralization of real power and wealth through the successive stages of slavery, feudalism, capitalism and imperialism.

HISTORICAL CHANGES

Consider the changes that the family and its sex roles have gone through during the course of the development of capitalism. The family once was an extended environment of people related by "blood" almost all of whom were engaged in productive work in the home, whether on farms or in craft work. It was only the introduction of the factory system, based on technological developments that enabled the capitalists to advance from controlling commerce to con-

trolling industry, that introduced a division of labor which split the world into "home" — where the woman was confined — and "work" — where the man was organized into an industrial army. Women's work, since it did not earn a capitalist wage, was no longer "real" work.

Sometime around the time of Marx and Engels and the first Communist International, the need for capitalists for labor power had grown so great that the families of working people were pulverized still further. While women directly controlled by capitalist men in bourgeois families were "liberated" from all work, women and children of the working class were absorbed directly into the factory system as laborers.

Such a policy was clearly suicidal, as it would have destroyed the working class on whom the capitalists depended for their existence. This is because the **unpaid work women do actually reproduces and sustains the paid labor force**. So, enabled by the increased international scope of their operations and use of colonies as sources of materials markets and labor, and confronted by workers organized for reforms and potentially revolution, the capitalists engaged in their first large scale **social engineering**. They undertook to consciously control the mass sexual division of labor and sex roles.



BOURGEOIS PATRIARCHAL FAMILY

A bourgeois-type family was engendered among many working people: women and children were once again restricted to the home and assigned a role within a social arrangement of doing unpaid work to maintain male workers and bring up new generations of workers.

Although women in increasing numbers head their own households and in even larger numbers are again in the paid

work force earning incomes essential to their own and their families' survival, this image of the family and this theoretical sex-role division of labor is maintained because it provides the capitalists with sustenance labor from women at no direct wage cost, and because it justifies paying working women lower wages, thus holding down men's wages as well.

It is against basic social forces like these under a private profit system, that we must weigh our interpersonal and other struggles at transforming sex roles.

Consider another issue closely related to sex roles and the family — homosexuality and its position in society. Homosexual behavior is obviously as "natural" as any other form of human or animal behavior, widespread and confined to no historical period, social strata, culture or religion. Yet attitudes towards homosexual behavior vary greatly, in different classes, ethnic groups, or historical periods.

GAY OPPRESSION

Increasingly in western Judeo-Christian society since industrialization, urbanization and the kind of social forces operating on the family which we described above, homosexuals have become a self-aware, self-conscious and identifiable minority (though homosexuality is not restricted to people who define themselves as gay.) There are gay people in all classes and cultures, and in fact the Kinsey studies of the U.S. a generation ago show a slightly greater degree of acceptance of gays among working class and Black people than among "middle class" and white.

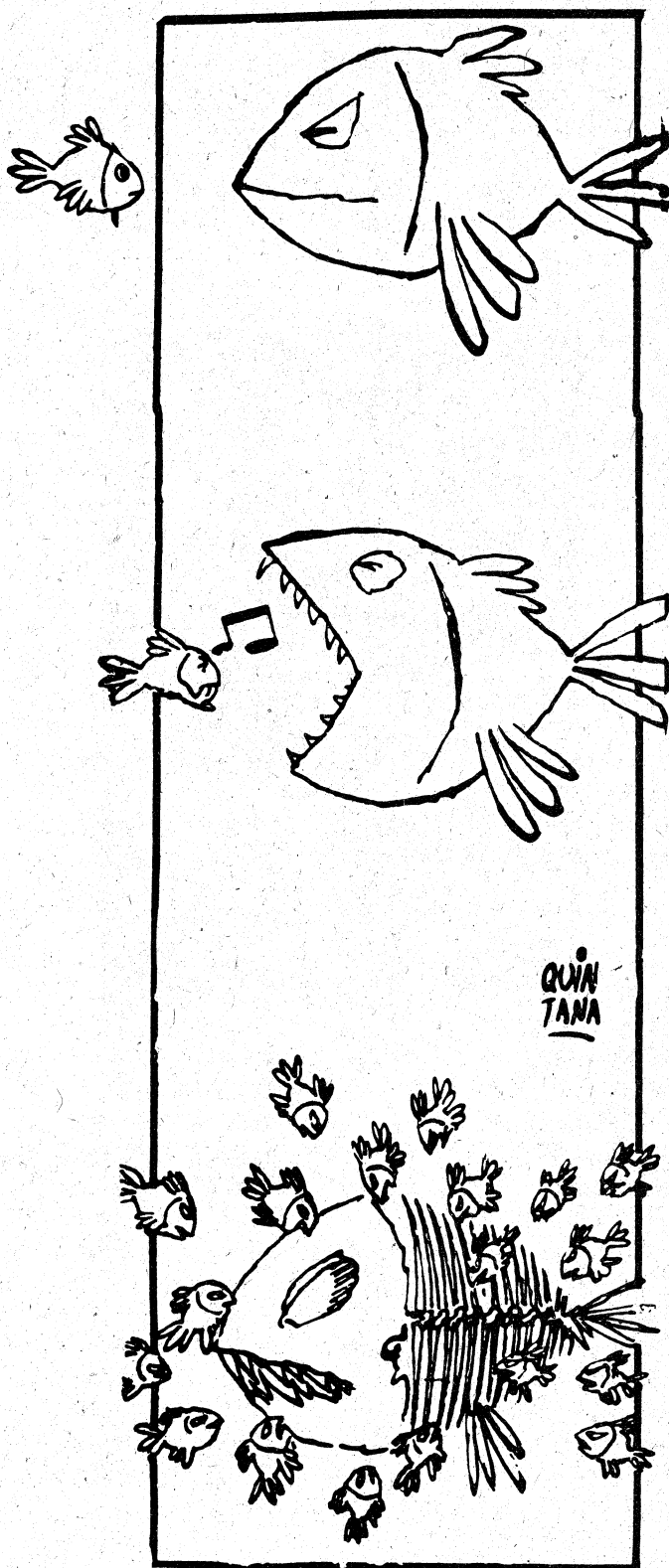
Class privileges and divisions certainly exist among gay men. 'Coming out,' living an integrated 'gay' lifestyle among both gays and non-gays, has been more or less of a student, hip, or professional privilege, based especially on job security. For many gay men, an alienated sex life and a gay life that tends towards roles assigned by the larger society still go hand in hand with an alienating job.

Part of the liberation of those of us who are gay depends on our interpersonal struggle for self-acceptance and solidarity. But gay men are increasingly seeing that how we treat ourselves and each other and how we are treated by society, is bound up with male supremacy and class exploitation.

Gayness has been made a metaphor for oppression, especially in the lives of working men. A man who "gets fucked" at work, has only himself to blame for not "covering his ass". Working class men will resist facing their powerlessness and oppression in order not to be "un-manned".

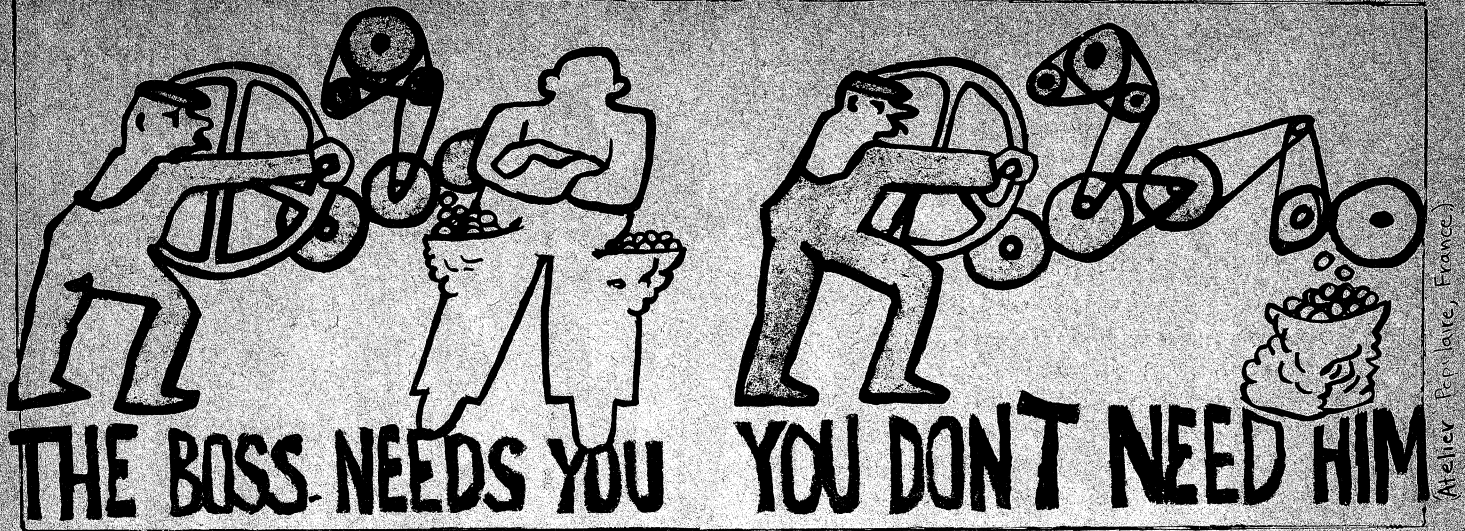
The oppression of gay people, especially lesbians, is a strong component of the enforcement system for sexism and sex roles oppression, reaching beyond self-acknowledged gays in its effects, because it is used to keep women in line, and is internalized by non-gay men.

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POLITICAL AND SOCIAL STRUGGLE

Yet it is exactly out of such restraints and forms of social control, out of the contradictions between people's real class position and their ideology, out of the contradictions between our socialized productive capacities as a society and the



emotional and material poverty in which we are confined, out of the material and technological developments that expose the injustice of patriarchal relations between the sexes, that the social structure develops which will transform all this. Bound in the shackles of sexism and class exploitation, a new world is striving to be born.

The increasing agitation and movement among men around sex roles, then, is due to a kind of pincers movement. Caught between the uprising of women from beneath and the absorption of real power by the ruling class above, many men find ourselves with a role that feels primarily meaningless and restrictive.

Much of our male power is false or self-defeating. It only serves to tie us in to an identification with our male oppressors. The personal is becoming increasingly politicized by our rulers, as sexuality, for instance, becomes an instrument of public policy through media manipulation. Our response must be to identify with women and colonized people rising up against their exploitation as our allies, to recognize our common interest in their fight.

It is "false consciousness" for men to seek to end their own oppression or exploitation by attacking those who are lower in the hierarchy. Because it is not women who are victimizing us; but rather that class of (mostly) other men who depend on the enforcement of masculinity as well as femininity to produce an obedient labor force. Men who identify as patriarchs (against their own interests) with their exploiters; who internalize oppression and fear of failure, and so deny their own pain and reality; who "prove they can take it" by destroying themselves for their bosses profit, cannot help make the revolution that will with end sex role oppression along with the class exploitation on which it is based.

DEVELOPING A PROGRAM

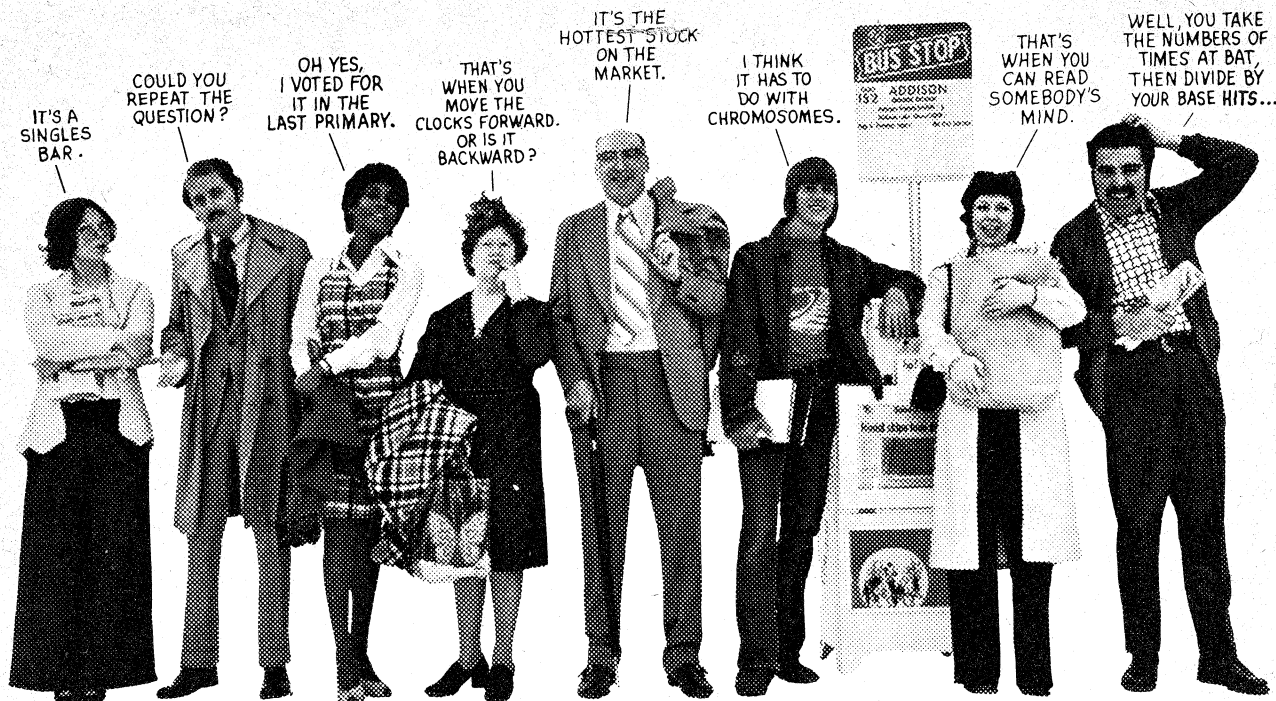
We at **brother** believe that a **program** must begin to emerge from men's anti-sexist, anti-sexrole oppression

activities, as well as within the developing left working class movement, that will begin to expose the interconnected nature of these oppressions, and challenge concretely the social forces and classes that maintain them.

Such a program can begin to develop trust, cohesion, and unity among the oppressed, to resolve the contradictions among us, to break down the fear and competition that divide us from each other as well as the internalized forms of oppression that leave us divided against ourselves. Such a program must develop on the basis of an "ideology" (worldview) that enables us to perceive, understand, and determine how to change reality, and a political line or strategy that clearly identifies the forces in operation at this moment of history. We need to deal with the mass hierarchies and exploitation of a class society like U.S. imperialism, and also with the way that hierarchy and exploitation is reflected and reduplicated painfully in our own lives.

In order to deal with interpersonal alienation, sexual objectification, and masculine (or feminine) competitiveness, we must deal with alienated labor and commodity economic relations in which people are only factors of production, or consumption. We cannot build unity among oppressed men or women without dealing with the **racism and national oppression** which those who rule have used as a key tool to keep the oppressed divided against each other.

We are not in this editorial going to propose further specifics for such a program. But we think its development is an important task in the coming period for men struggling against sexism as part of a revolutionary movement. We must define who are our enemies, and who are our allies, and what are the root causes of the oppression we experience. And we need to begin to act on the conclusions we draw. We at **brother** want this paper to be a part of that process of clarification and development, and hope that others will use it in that way.



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