

TELEVISION

'Who's Who' on prime time

Haven't you been wondering what Billy Carter's really like? On Tuesday night, Jan. 11, we got a chance to find out on "Who's Who," CBS' new spinoff from "Sixty Minutes," one of the 10 most watched shows on the networks.

On "Sixty Minutes" Mike Wallace and Dan Rather have made a certain thick-skinned, investigative zeal their stock in trade; they ask paid killers how they feel about their work and Jimmy Hoffa's foster son if he knows where Hoffa is. Rather, who is chief-editor of "Who's Who," jumped right in with a big one to Billy. "They say you bill yourself as just another southern redneck, Billy. Is this how you think of yourself?"

Right in the Carter tradition Billy did a Thoughtful Pause, then broke into a 90-watt smile. "Well, I guess I don't know exactly what a redneck is." Billy next applied another family talent: without addressing the question again he moved neatly onto both sides of the fence, making it clear that he was and wasn't a redneck.

His CB handle is "Castiron," which, he explained, had to do with his stomach. "Guess I can drink most anything in any combination 'n be okay the next day." Billy allowed as how he drinks six or seven cans of beer a day, a lot while hanging around his gas station, which serves as a local men's club. He also told Rather that he was a Wallace Democrat, but that "you have to stick with kin;" so when Jimmy ran, he did.

Then Rather moved in on Billy in his Plains office, the man who runs the peanut business, even though he is allergic to peanuts. Billy has built up the business considerably since taking over in 1970. This more thoughtful Billy was worried that his "redneck pose" had "created some sort of Frankenstein monster."

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We also got to hear "Ms. Lillian" say that "maybe I loved Billy the most." Billy was "the baby" by more than 10 years. And we learned that Billy failed English four times, which flunked him out of Emory University, yet reads at least three books a week.

With a careful blending of cosying up and prying, Rather succeeded in letting us know a lot about Billy, probably more than Billy would have cared for us to know.

"Who's Who," it seems, will hit hard at personalities with the same energy that "Sixty Minutes" hits at important and unimportant controversy. Chances are that Americans will go for it. We do love to talk about people.

Then Barbara Howar, Johnson administration social luminary turned author, took us to an exclusive girls' boarding school in Connecticut. She didn't come up with anything too startling (the girls denied that there was any snobbery in their school), though the piece had interesting implications about what constitutes a quality education: their entire day is filled with planned activities and work; the absence of boys decreases competition, increases interest in work and caring for each other.

If at times Howar and Kuralt had trouble puffing up their material, it wasn't because they didn't give it all the journalistic virtuosity they could. Kuralt

spun out lots of cute phrases about shopping carts, such as "Nature abhors an empty shopping cart." At one point, after Howar had attempted to get her quiet, intelligent interviewee to say something "newsworthy," she threw up her hands and asked, "Don't you ever get the crazies?" The girl responded that she did, sometimes, in fact that she had just last week.

In its early days, the book publishing business sold more fiction than non-fiction. Now, non-fiction sells far better. No doubt this had something to do with what the public wanted. Perhaps the television industry will go the same route. In any event, it's clear that Americans now want all the "People" sections, magazines, and television shows they can get.

If this has the effect of tuning us all in, in more depth than at present, to real aspects of contemporary history, then the phenomenon is a good thing. If the seduction is accomplished with gossip and "human interest" prying, better that way than no way. Probably the show will continue to tiptoe adroitly along the thin line between "provocative" journalism and spice to convince us it is a respectable entertainment.

Coming up on "Who's Who" is an in-depth interview with Andrew Young in which Rather asks him a question that many have wondered about and few dared ask: did Young sell out by taking the post of U.N. ambassador? And if that's too political a subject, there will be other material. This week, in answer to a listener's question, we heard that Liz Taylor has put up the big diamond ring Richard Burton gave her for sale. Purpose: to help finance her new husband's budding political career. Tune in next week, folks....

—Jane Melnick



Photo by Tom O'Sullivan

THEATER

Interracial mime troupe writes collectively

In a turn-of-the-century saloon the women leaders celebrate pulling themselves and their men together to sustain a long strike in the Colorado copper mines. The scene is taken from "False Promises," the latest musical-extravaganza by the San Francisco Mime Troupe.

The Mime Troupe has been around for over 10 years. It first became integrated during the mid-1960s and now includes blacks and Chicanos, men and women. "False Promises" is their first effort to convey the complex political theme of mul-

ti-racial unity. The play was the culmination of eight months of collective historical study where the Troupe acted out each scene and evaluated its political content and psychological reality.

The results make for a groundbreaking piece of theater, even though some might say that the play tries to pack too much—history, music, comedy, politically "apt" one-liners, tragedy and vivid characters—into one night of drama.

After a 20-city tour of "False Promises," the Mime Troupe is now back in the Bay Area.

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IN THESE TIMES OPINION

Lawrence Klein: Carter's man behind the scene

"Unless entrepreneurs can be brought to look upon the entire system and their responsibility toward it, the Marxists will be correct."

By James Livingston

In his justly famous book, *The Keynesian Revolution* (2nd ed., 1968), Lawrence Klein wrote that "there is nothing more tragic than an economist floundering in the field of economic policy because his theory is confused." It is an arresting observation, because Klein was Jimmy Carter's principal adviser in the field of economic policy.

While he declined the chairmanship of the Council of Economic Advisers, he will remain as a senior adviser to the Brookings Institute, the private policy-formation body that has had significant influence over public economic decisions. In addition, as a past Carter adviser and close associate of Charles Schultze, Carter's CEA head, he will remain an influential consultant to the Carter administration.

Klein does not likely view himself as a tragic figure, so an examination of the general theoretical framework he employs should give some insight into the economic policies that can be expected from the Carter administration—and perhaps into the orientation of the herd of experts and academicians presently being assembled in the executive branch.

►Capitalism may destroy itself.

Klein, 56, has moved easily in the top circles of higher learning, where academia and business intermingle—where the experts, the servants of power, meet their masters. From the mid to the late 1960s, Klein was a consultant to the United Nations' Committee on Trade and Development, the state of New York, E.I. DuPont de Nemours & Co., and A.T.&T. Besides his present association with the Brookings Institute, he is Benjamin Franklin Professor of Economics at the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School.

But Klein is no mere lackey of corporate interests. As a young man of 26, he was a member of the Communist party. More important, he remains a thoughtful and creative economist who has no illusions about the moral or ethical superiority of private enterprise—like Keynes before him, he finds claims to that effect to be quaint at best. According to Klein, fascism is simply the "worst stage of capitalism" and is possible even in the U.S. "unless we are successful in bringing about Keynesian reforms or a socialist economy."

Unlike Keynes, he has learned a great deal about modern capitalism by taking Marxian economics seriously. Indeed, after mathematically reconstructing Marx's famous reproduction schemes, he concluded that "except for small random error, workers and capitalists have, in fact, behaved as the Marxian model says they behave." One could argue that the powers of Klein's continuing defense of Keynesian economics comes from his ability to use and learn from both models of thought.

As Klein sees it, "unless entrepreneurs can be brought to look upon the entire system and their social responsibility toward it, the Marxists will be correct" in predicting that capitalism will destroy itself. This is why he finds Keynes so useful. In order to look upon the entire system and interpret it properly to entrepreneurs, professional economists need a

theory that grasps the essential characteristics of modern capitalism.

Klein holds that Keynes' *General Theory* is unique in this respect, because it is built around the observable trend towards a chronic shortage of profitable investment outlets—in other words, because Keynesian theory focuses on the problem of surplus capital or the difficulty of "making savings pass into investment" at full employment rates. Klein stresses

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this Keynesian puzzle because once its importance is admitted, the use of the government's fiscal powers to supplement private investment and maintain employment at acceptable levels can be defended on theoretical as well as practical grounds.

This is why Klein asserts that "in pure economic logic, there is no reason why we cannot achieve full employment in peacetime." The problem, he understands, is to convince entrepreneurs that this economic logic is consistent with their interests. "Many capitalists," he states, will strongly oppose most of the effective measures in the Keynesian arsenal, because they "do not see the proper relationship between their own position and that of the system as a whole."

He does not find the recent past encour-

aging, because, as he observed in 1971, "the American economy limps along at less than full employment in peacetime and rises to full employment levels of activity only during a major war." But Klein believes that war is neither the only nor the best solution to the anarchy inherent in private profit-oriented methods of resource allocation.

Klein does not believe that socialist planning would necessarily be inferior to capitalist methods of resource allocation. In fact, he has written that "people in this country, at our present state of civilization, have vast unfulfilled desires; furthermore, we have the economic resources with which to fulfill these desires. Why should we not use these resources to fulfill these desires? In a socialist economy we would use these resources as fully as is physically possible. We have the desires, and we have the resources, but the people with the desires are often unable to influence the people with the resources."

►Executive planning is necessary.

And yet Klein is not a socialist, unless admiration for the symmetry and efficiency of economic planning defines a person as such. He is a (left) Keynesian who understands perfectly that the "Keynesian policy is, indeed, a conservative one because it aims to conserve free-enterprise capitalism." Klein feels that capitalists can be brought to true class consciousness, from whence they can properly judge the "relationship between full employment and their own profits." With the help of such an enlightened capitalist class, a Keynesian regime can combine aggressive fiscal policy and incentives to greater investment in an agreeable full employment recipe.

Klein believes, accordingly, that central planning of full employment fiscal policy in the executive branch is necessary to avoid inflation and economic instability. He cites the lack of flexibility in "Congressional debating techniques" as the primary cause of the inflation and general confusion that have accompanied deficit spending in the past—inevitably, he says, Congress is too slow to intercede with appropriate tax programs when inflationary pressures appear.

If Congress must continue to preside over fiscal policy, Klein suggests that a peacetime version of the Office of Price Administration might have to be established to stabilize prices: "We found during the war that the truly efficient way of preventing runaway inflation was through direct controls. These controls are also adaptable to peacetime."

►Is a corporate state needed?

It is no accident that Klein's administrative model is a wartime executive agency, for he is preaching state capitalism—a hybrid system of extensive public subsidies to and administrative "controls" on private enterprise, which, in the U.S., reached its highest stage of development during World Wars I and II. The Keynesian approach, he reminds us, "visualizes the state as the balancing force that serves

only to supplement the behavior of individual capitalists."

In practice, of course, this means that the state enforces the cartelization of the corporate economy and subsidizes the restriction of production. Under the state capitalist dispensation, public monies must also be used to create vast markets for weaponry and other equally useless goods. As Klein recently pointed out, each dollar deducted from the defense budget cuts gross national product by twice that amount.

This sort of earnest activity and crackpot realism invariably comes in the name of "stable" prices, "reasonable" returns on investment, and whatever passes for full employment at the moment. It is conducted under the auspices of executive agencies that are free of the "slow and cumbersome" debate that goes on in Congress—free, that is, of any responsibility to American citizens except as these are defined as corporate entities.

Klein's programmatic thinking is certainly ambitious. But then, he feels that the dismal performance of the American economy in peacetime demands bold innovation. He is right, of course. Yet it is fair to ask whether the consolidation of the corporate state toward which Klein's theory leads is necessary, or even adequate under present circumstances.

Without doubt, we need fresh thinking about American economic problems and possibilities. But if humane and creative economic experts like Lawrence Klein still believe that the conservation of corporate capitalism through executive manipulation of economic controls and fiscal technique solves current problems and defines future possibilities, it is time to look elsewhere for ideas.

It is time, in other words, that the American people were brought into a serious discussion of capitalist methods of resource allocation. On that basis, they will be able to decide for themselves between state capitalism and socialism. They might then be able to think of professional economists as Lord Keynes would have liked, "as humble, competent people, on a level with dentists."

James Livingston is a graduate student in American history at Northern Illinois University.

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