

BOOKS

and the important woman Zane meets is herself.)

As I read the novel, I frankly dreaded the moment when Zane would finally meet the movement. Having tried myself to dramatize the exhilaration of this kind of involvement, I feared the writing would reduce itself to inarticulate gasps and forceful, but ineffective, pronouncements. It turned out exactly the opposite. From a merely well-made novel, *Burning Questions* rises (at a few points, at least) into an inspired novel through Zane's total commitment to the women's movement.

In the most brilliant chapter, Zane, full of doubts but having already arranged for the baby sitter, wanders into an early meeting of the Third Street Circle, roughly equivalent to the Red Stockings. There the other women feed hungrily on the most ordinary details of her life as a wife and mother. The most confusing and embarrassing elements in her past suddenly make sense as the group feels its way towards a theory of "oppression."

The scene—each woman exposing her secret life—is shown

elliptically, like the most effective love scenes. Eyes meet, arms encircle, lips touch and the curtain goes down. We are awakened from this night of love by an FBI informant's report—the icy, clinical description of the same passionate meeting.

Zane becomes a militant feminist. We accompany her to the Miss America pageant in Atlantic City. And we dash back to the getaway car after spray-painting, "Death to Male Supremacy" on the women's entrance to the Harvard Club.

Despite her new militancy and new busyness, Zane never doubts the inherent rewards of motherhood. It is, I suppose, Alix Shulman's failure as a novelist that she is unable to incorporate the children as characters. Instead she has to stop the story to remind us, in a little lecture, that children are born not only demanding, but lovable.

The current co-option of the movement is epitomized in a "publisher's luncheon" in which Zane is being asked by a formerly anti-feminist male editor to write a book of "firsts": first woman astronaut, first wo-

man cabinet member, first woman jockey.

"First hangwoman," she thinks, "first Pope."

I'm quite certain that *Burning Questions* will be trashed in the *New York Times*. (I suppose that's what you get for trashing the Harvard Club.) And probably by a woman reviewer who believes liberation means a full professorship for herself. There was a time when that wouldn't have mattered, a time when we had our own means of communication and made our own best sellers. (And *Burning Questions* is at least as well written as Shulman's best-selling *Memoirs of an Ex-Prom Queen*.)

But since our own channels are jammed with static, our air waves just beginning to be cleared by papers like *IN THESE TIMES*, I feel it's my responsibility to let you know, no matter what you read in the *Times* or *Newsweek*, you'll love *Burning Questions*.

—Barbara Garson

Barbara Garson is the author of *All the Livelong Day: The Meaning and Demeaning of Routine Work*.

—the men, the union, the company and the events leading up to the Great Steel Lay-off—with the world in which he grew up: the campus revolutions of the '60s.

"I think the deepest needs of my friends here (in the mills), the things that require radical changes, are the same kind of unclear things that once made me want to wear long hair and raggy clothes, that made me rebel against the Vietnam war and ask the most basic questions about my own life."

Packard also writes well and his book/essay leaves the worker/reader with something to ponder.

Staughton Lynd's book is designed "to help you deal more effectively with the law when the law is against you, and to get more accomplished when the law is on your side." Lynd, who was a distinguished American histor-

ian until he was blacklisted for visiting Hanoi on a peace mission, is now a labor lawyer in Ohio and a regular columnist for *IN THESE TIMES*.

He has used his considerable talents not only to put complicated matters in simple, accurate terms, but also to organize his little book for maximum usefulness. His afterword is eminently worth repeating:

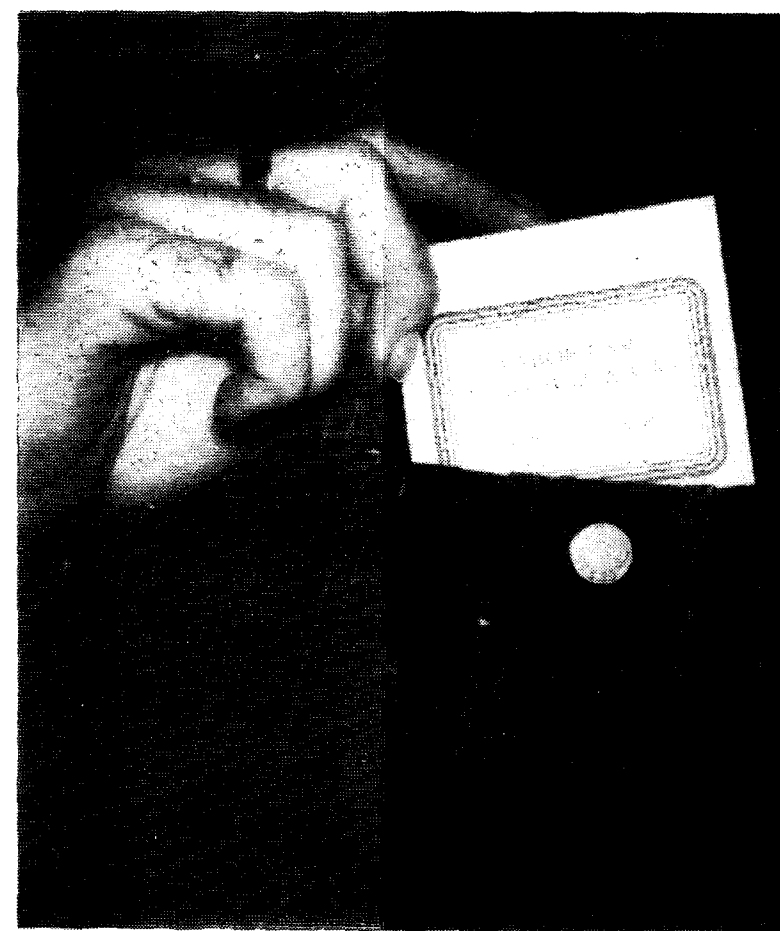
"The best way to think of the law is as a shield, not a sword. The law is not an especially good way to change things. But it can give you some real protection as you try to change things in other ways."

Singlejack Books may be ordered from the publishers at Box 1906, San Pedro, CA 90733. Their next projected publication is about telephone workers.

—J.S.

NON-FICTION

A brave new venture in the tradition of Haldeman Julius' little blue books



Ken Firestone
LONGSHORING ON THE SAN FRANCISCO WATERFRONT

By Reg Theriault, 32 pp., 75¢

STEELMILL BLUES

By Steve Packard, 32 pp., 75¢

LABOR LAW FOR THE RANK & FILE

By Staughton Lynd, 64 pp., \$1.50

One piece of good news in the gloom dark world of publishing is the appearance of a new line of small—really small!—books put out by Singlejack, a new small press in San Pedro, Calif.

They are in the tradition of the Little Blue Books, published by Haldeman Julius (editor of the *Appeal to Reason*), which were

printed in Girard, Kan., and sold for a nickel in the 1920s and '30s. There were hundreds of titles. The list included everything from philosophy to "how-to-do-its," authors from Karl Marx to Louisa May Alcott and Marie Stokes to Victor Hugo. They could be bought singly, or by subscription to a series, and the venture was so successful that it can be said to have provided self-education to the American working-class of its time.

The Singlejack Little Books are the same size, better made, higher priced (even considering inflation), and have a slightly different perspective. Here is the publishers' statement of purpose:

"We are all starved for images

of ourselves, for identity and for aids to communicate the condition of our lives and the good in them. But the millions who do the so-called unskilled, semi-skilled, craft and even professional jobs in America's workplace are seldom if ever represented fairly in the popular literature and media of the nation.... Thus, the value of the contribution made by a majority of the citizenry is robbed of visibility and recognition.

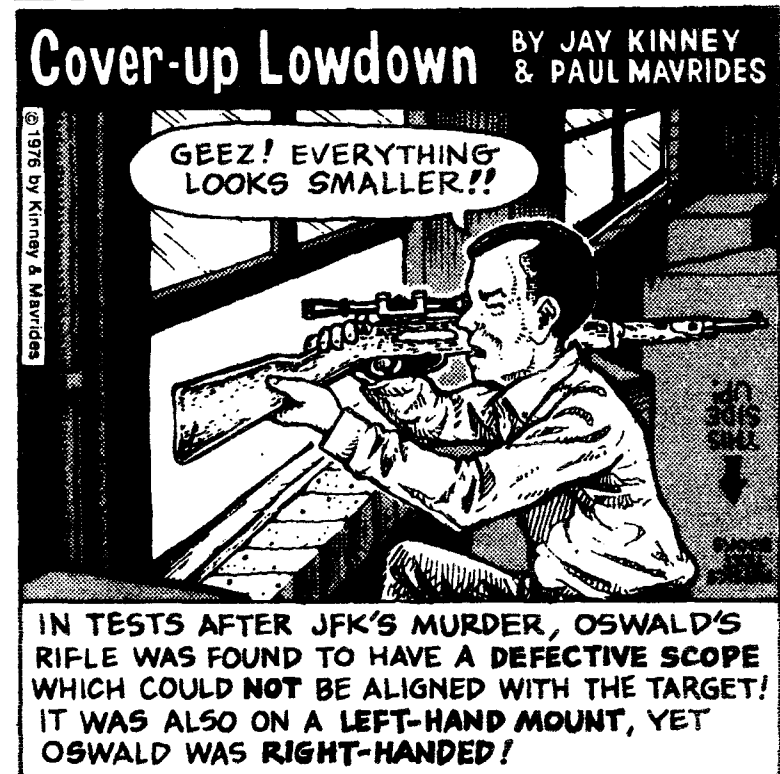
"The Singlejack Little Book effort is primarily directed at the publication of writings about work...written by the people who are doing it...and to writings designed to provide ideas that working people will find of practical use..."

"The shape and size of Singlejack Little Books is determined by the ease with which they fit into work shirt, blouse, apron or pants, and skirt pockets and purses."

Another note explains the term "singlejack" as derived from the jargon of hardrock miners in the American west and later from that of IWW organizers who "used it to describe that method of organizing where dedicated advocates are developed one at a time on a highly personalized basis—as between partners."

The first two Singlejacks are highly personalized accounts of work done by the writers. Reg Theriault has been on the San Francisco waterfront since 1959—long enough to see the industry transformed (but not reformed) by automation. He writes well and the material is absorbingly authentic.

Steve Packard, author of the book about the steel mills at Gary, Ind., was in them for only six months, observing while he worked and comparing the scene



Most ambitious upfront political comic in years

COVER-UP LOWDOWN
By Jay Kinney and Paul Mavrides
Rip-Off Press, San Francisco

Does the left have a sense of humor? Is it possible that the "underground comix" of the '60s brought forward any major satirists to the disillusioned '70s? Lots of folks who once had grand hopes for a New Left "counter" culture would be inclined to roll their eyes and moan at these questions. But not Jay Kinney. He wants to prove that radicals can be serious about their tasks without deserting either the cultural heritage of the '60s or their ability to laugh at themselves.

Still in his 20s, Kinney is an old hand in the comix field. His own series of books, *Young Lust*, is among the most durable in a field of fly-by-night publications. By Kinney's own lights, that has been a platform for a radical and feminist critique of existing sexual standards and their reproduction in "love" comic books and pulp magazines. If the results have been mixed, Kinney's own good intentions are not in doubt. He has been working in a political vacuum, finding his own way during ideological hard times.

Cover-Up Lowdown is the most ambitious, upfront political comic in years. Half reprints from a series of Kinney and Mavrides syndicated in college and com-

munity papers, *CULD* is replete with spiritualist messages from J. Edgar Hoover, a Total-World-Conspiracy Moebius Flow Chart and two lengthy tales mocking (or is it vindicating?) our own paranoid conspiracy-consciousness.

Occasionally, but only occasionally, the joke wears a little thin. Mavrides and Kinney have, at their best, uncovered the truest source of humor—the need to laugh so as not to cry—and have thereby moved beyond the light humor of the television celebrity roast, beyond the heavy-handed pathology-for-its-own-sake of the *National Lampoon*.

Cover-Up Lowdown is not only for the left. Its mixture of comedy and political critique has a wide potential audience, and may yet serve as a proto-type for a socialist agitational form to get the message across to millions as the printed word alone cannot do.

—Paul Buhle

Paul Buhle, publisher of the one-shot *Radical American Komiks* (1970), now edits *Cultural Correspondence*, a left popular culture and humor magazine.

Copies of *Cover-Up Lowdown* can be obtained for 95¢ plus 30¢ postage from Rip-Off Press, P.O. Box 14158, San Francisco, CA 94114.

BOOKS

Great Soviet goalie on hockey as it is played there and here



THE HOCKEY I LOVE

By Vladislav Tretiak with
V. Snegrin, translated by
Anatole Konstantin
Lawrence Hill & Co., Westport,
Ct., 1977

In the fall of 1972 all-star hockey teams from Canada and the Soviet Union met in an extraordinary world-class competition. For the first time the finest players of the USSR faced instead of the customary Canadian amateurs, superbly talented professionals of the National Hockey League.

It was supposed to be no contest. North American hockey buffs granted that the Soviets were finely conditioned and displayed excellent team work but thought they lacked players with the individual brilliance of an Esposito or a Cournoyer. Also their goaltender was believed to be too young and inexperienced to turn aside the Canadians' booming shots.

The experts were wrong.

The USSR won two and tied one of the first four games played on Canadian soil. Team Canada redeemed itself by winning the final three games, all played in Moscow, all decided by one goal, all among the best games ever played. The Soviets had established their presence, and the shape of world hockey was irre-

versibly changed. (Since then Canadian pros have met the Soviets in five series of which the Soviets have won three. Contests between the best Canadian and Soviet players now appear to be a permanent part of the hockey season.)

At the center of the Soviets' remarkable efforts was Vladislav Tretiak, the 19-year-old goaltender whose experience and ability had been questioned in 1972. It was Tretiak, playing with intense concentration and the agility of a gymnast, who offset the Canadians' attacking skills in 1972, and it was a mature Tretiak who anchored the Soviets' eventual victories, earning praise as one of the finest goaltenders in the world.

Tretiak's brief autobiography, *The Hockey I Love*, recounts some of the highlights of those games. More than this, it is a portrait of a dedicated and often self-effacing athlete—motivated, not by the lure of an extravagant contract, but by national pride and competitive zest.

Tretiak focuses on the years from 1974 to 1977 though he also writes of his youth and the rigorous training regimen he followed. A student at Moscow's Institute for Physical Culture, Tretiak is deeply serious and astutely intellectual about sports in gener-

al, goaltending in particular. His writing at times is stiff and slightly pious. This may be the fault of the translation, or it may reflect a stereotypical Soviet earnestness. But this drawback is more than compensated by Tretiak's honest criticism of himself, his teammates (like the cocky Boris Alexandrov), and the Canadians' hockey style. The contrast between Soviet and Canadian hockey styles, I suspect, will be that part of the book that most appeals to the hockey public.

Soviet hockey, as Tretiak describes it, is precise, controlled, and highly disciplined, marked by the use of short, crisp passes, constant puck movement, and intricate offensive patterns. On attack, the Soviets carry the puck deeply into the offensive zone, passing up long or poorly-positioned shots to wait for the best possible opening. The emphasis is always on speed, teamwork, and passing.

Canadian pros play a more individualistic and free-wheeling game. In recent years, the quality of passing has sadly deteriorated, and they have been content simply to shoot the puck into the offensive zone. One player then tries to outskate or outmuscle the opposing defenseman, to feed the puck in front of the net or back to the points. This style of play re-

quires sharp physical contact and long slap-shots. It makes up what it lacks in finesse with rugged fore-checking and spirited play. It is not inherently "dirtier" than the Soviet style, but the extra physical contact does lead to more fights. (Hockey fights are highly ritualized and rarely lead to serious injury.)

In my opinion, the Canadians have much to learn, or more precisely relearn, from the Soviets. I am not convinced that the Canadian style is "unimaginative," as Tretiak claims, nor hopelessly brutal. The stress on hard physical play is rooted in the history of North American hockey and continues to attract legions of loyal fans. It is unlikely that the precise and technical Soviet style would have anywhere near the same popular appeal. But the roughness of Canadian play has its legitimate critics. Some Canadian pros play the game like "schoolyard bullies," and Tretiak has a right to apply that label. When frustrated and beaten, too many Canadian players exceed the bounds of sportsmanship.

Tretiak, however, does not answer the Canadian claim that the Soviets retaliated with covert spearing and butt-ending, practices considered by Canadian hockey ethics far worse and far more dangerous than hard checking and even direct fighting. And I still cannot bring myself to accept Tretiak's interpretations, shared by many, of the Soviets' 1976 loss to the premier bullies of the national Hockey League, the Philadelphia Flyers. I have no love for the Flyers, but on that night they played with atypical restraint and beat the Soviets because of superior discipline and patience.

These disagreements, however, did not detract from my enjoyment of the book nor my admiration for Tretiak. *The Hockey I Love* should appeal, not only to hockey fans, but to a wide reading public.

—Gary Kulik

Gary Kulik has been a hockey player and is presently a graduate student.