

Nossiter's solution to world inequality is renewed growth in the North. He argues that an "incomes policy"—an informal pact among government, business and labor to guide wages and prices—could increase growth while lowering unemployment and limiting inflation. Growth in the North would weaken the demand for protection against Third World manufactures. Growth would (he argues, probably too optimistically) strengthen primary commodity prices so Southern exports would earn more. Inflation-free growth would lower interest rates, giving the debtor nations some relief.

But Northern growth by itself (as Nossiter recognizes) will not be sufficient to narrow the chasm between the First and Third Worlds. The trillion-dollar debt already exists; if the increased Southern income just goes right back to pay interest to New York or London banks it is hard to see what has been gained. And even if the debt repayments were somehow to be sharply reduced—a prospect unlikely without either a financial crisis in the North or militant joint action by the South—the Third World would probably at best return to the status quo of, say, 15 years ago. That was a South with growth in some countries (Brazil, for instance) which did not reach or change the lives of most Brazilians. Statistics from that time lied. When Ferdinand Marcos' income went up, the official figures also showed a rise in the per capita income of every poor Filipino sugarcane cutter.

Nossiter also underestimates how much the hostility of the West, particularly of the U.S., hinders genuine, balanced development in the Third World. Growth that benefits everyone in the South will require transformations in old ways of thinking, of working, of controlling property. But the U.S. is not only hostile to avowedly revolutionary governments in places like Vietnam, Angola and Nicaragua, but also to much milder experiments—like the democratically elected governments of Salvador Allende in Chile and Michael Manley in Jamaica. That kind of American pressure, which does not hesitate to include military intervention, must end if the Third World is to have a chance.

Probably the greatest strength of Nossiter's book is his persuasive insistence that improvement in the South need not be at the expense of people in the North. He convincingly explains that it is possible to work toward a new international order that could serve the needs of both working people in America and sugarcane cutters in the Philippines. It is only the big arms dealers, the multinational companies and the leading banks that are threatened by that cooperation.

James North, the author of *Freedom Rising*, is working on a book about the Third World debt crisis.



When steel mills close the shock waves often seem more devastating than in other major shutdowns.

Banded together by steel community ties that bind

Rusted Dreams: Hard Times in a Steel Community

By David Bensman and Roberta Lynch
McGraw-Hill, 250 pp., \$17.95

By David Moberg

MOST STEEL MILL TOWNS, even the mill sections of a large metropolis like Chicago, generate a thick web of personal and social bonds. Usually, thousands of families depend on a single employer. The rhythms of changing shifts can link steelworkers to each other while isolating them from the rest of the community. And union solidarity, however weakened it may be, still knits together the blue-collar steel community. So when steel mills close, as they have done so frequently in recent years, the shock waves often seem more devastating than in other major shutdowns.

David Bensman, a labor studies professor at Rutgers, and Roberta Lynch, a writer and organizer who is now on the staff of a public employee union, capture the feeling of the steel community both when it was intact and later when it was shattered. But in their narrative—centered on the closing of Wisconsin Steel and the virtual shutdown of U.S. Steel's South Works in south Chicago—they also diagnose the ills of the industry and offer some prescriptions. *Rusted Dreams: Hard Times in a Steel Community* is a brisk, compelling introduction to a major social and economic problem; it's both analytical and full of the personal pain and frustration suggested by the book's title.

The authors describe how Wisconsin Steel was mismanaged—pushed into a precarious state by its owner, International Harvester, which then sought to get rid of it to avoid accumulated pension and other contractual obligations to workers. With a questionably arranged array of public financing, the mill was bought by a tiny firm, Envirodyne, which had no steel experience. Then, just as the title was transferred, Harvester provoked a long, bitter strike at factories that accounted for 40 percent of Wisconsin Steel's revenues. At this point, Harvester and Chase Manhattan suddenly foreclosed on the mill to take their collateral, leaving workers to suffer benefit losses due to a bad deal struck by their independent union.

Stealing: In 1982 U.S. Steel demanded local concessions from workers, on top of industry-wide wage concessions, as the price for building a new rail mill that promised to preserve South Works' dwindling labor force. The company eventually won the new work rules and got state aid to meet pollution requirements. But a year later U.S. Steel demanded more from workers, the city and the state. Many doubted that U.S. Steel intended to live up to its end of the continuing blackmail. The workers said no, the rail mill was cancelled and the mill dwindled to a few operations.

There were protests against concessions at South Works and fights to restore lost benefits at Wisconsin Steel, but the community and unions never launched the kind of struggle to save their jobs and the mills that took place in Youngs-

town, Ohio, or the Pittsburgh area. Bensman and Lynch point to a divided union legacy: the bitter fights for unionization left some militant traditions, but it also taught others to be cooperative and subservient. That latter strain was reinforced by

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the dominance of conservative union leadership for decades after World War II, when the Steelworkers union was intimately meshed with the Democratic Party machine.

The industry and the machine: Machine-style politics of individual solicitation of favors rather than collective organization for common goals dominated the community and, to some extent, the union as well. The contrast is

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epitomized by steelworker insurgent Ed Sadlowski and the area's former alderman and the head of the city's Democratic Party, Ed Vrdolyak (whose law firm shared responsibility for Wisconsin steelworkers' bad deal). Yet despite the importance of the machine's politi-

cal influence, the failure of workers—or the community—to do more remains partially unexplained. Was there nothing they realistically could do?

Bensman and Lynch point to slowed growth in steel demand, mismanagement (including failure to concentrate modernization in a few mills) and new competition (both foreign and domestic) as the main underlying problems for the industry. In the late '70s and early '80s it faced high interest rates and a strong dollar. Although various government subsidies and trade protection schemes have been adopted over the years to help the industry, the authors argue that these measures failed because they were piecemeal and never based on the conviction that preserving the steel industry—and manufacturing—was a national priority.

The solution offered by Bensman and Lynch is to expand demand (such as spending less on the military and more on steel-related infrastructure), restrict imports (including steel-using indirect imports such as automobiles), ease credit and support research. They would impose an "import tax" equal to the differential between U.S. wages and overseas competitors' pay (although many European countries already have higher wages but sell competitively here). Basically, they want to raise steel prices and profits so that private investors will find steel attractive. But they also argue for public participation in corporate decisions and for contracts between private business, government and unions to modernize, invest, relax work rules and temper wage demands.

This program is an improvement on current policy and the laissez-faire, what might be described as the "let-the-Koreans-sell-us-steel" approach. But there are some nagging questions left. Why, if we are going to have public assistance and a voice, shouldn't we simply have public ownership? If oligopoly and protection from competition have doomed steel in the past, what will prod a new oligopoly, protected from foreign competition, to innovate and be efficient? How will they replace the arrogant, incompetent managers plaguing much of the industry? What happens to their plans for increased export of industrial goods when the price of steel goes up dramatically for U.S. manufacturers? Is there an investment strategy that makes sense without higher prices? Should the emphasis be on a crash development of new steelmaking technologies—many already well advanced in research—that could cut costs drastically?

Rusted Dreams can be read as a many-sided study of the steel industry, but it is also equally valuable as an exploration of blue-collar life and politics in the '80s. On both counts it offers a realistically small glimmer of hope despite the grim immediacy.



Grammy-winning producers Terry Lewis and Jimmy "Jam" Harris top the pop charts.

Producers Lewis and Jam: radio monsters popping up in Minneapolis

By Michael Welch

JANET JACKSON DIDN'T MAKE Flyte Tyme Productions good; she just made them famous. Had Flyte Tyme's Terry Lewis and Jimmy "Jam" Harris decided not to produce her album, the only thing about their careers that would have been different is the amount of publicity they would have gained. Though Jackson's *Control* album certainly hasn't hurt the Flyte Tyme pocket-book a bit, either.

Clearly, these Minneapolis studio masters enjoy more visibility than any other producers in music, but largely because they appear in one of Jackson's videos and have recently won a Grammy for their production. And most of the people who know them from those bits of exposure may be unaware of their two-year stint with The Time, the Prince spin-off band. But that's OK. A couple of good-looking guys like Jam and Lewis obviously like to see their pictures in magazines like *Rolling Stone* and on TV, but they don't need the media attention.

As far as musical success goes, what could be better than having people love your songs no matter who sings them? They've written "I Didn't Mean to Turn You On," "Just

Be Good to Me," "Innocent," "Saturday Love," "Tender Love," "Diamonds," "Keep Your Eye on Me" and Jackson's recent hits, "Nasty," "Control," "What Have You Done for Me Lately" and "When I Think of You." They've produced records for The S.O.S. Band, Herb Alpert, Cherrelle, the Human League, Alexander O'Neal, Klymaxx, The Force M.D.s—too many to name. They like challenges, too—an upcoming project is an album with Pia Zadora.

Top of the pops: The result of all this activity: Flyte Tyme was the top singles publisher on both the black and the pop charts in 1986. As the NAACP pointed out in a recent scathing, if incomplete, report, blacks have a limited number of

Rather than move to the coast, they stayed in the Minneapolis slow lane.

career opportunities in the music world (i.e., the number of blacks in the business end of music is not nearly commensurate with the number of black artists). In light of

this fact, the success of Jam and Lewis—as both artists and businessmen—is even more impressive. Their tight control over every aspect of their work has paid off.

Plain and simple, Flyte Tyme knows how to make good, infectious music that sells, sells, sells—and gets airplay, airplay, airplay. But Lewis and Jam are much less introverted than some of their contemporaries—namely Prince and

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Jesse Johnson—and they make little effort to erect a facade of mystery around themselves. They appear to be musical magicians to others, but most of their success comes from a diligent work ethic and an acute awareness of how they fit into music in 1987.

Or don't fit in.

Rather than try to succeed by playing a game with rules that are necessarily slanted against blacks, Jam and Lewis have worked outside the usual confines of the music business. They run a family-style organization—choosing who they work with on the basis of personal relationships rather than sparkling resumes or fire-eyed business acumen. They keep their record-label contacts to a minimum while freely

associating with artists and writers. This approach, seemingly backward in today's amoral business climate, has worked magnificently for Flyte Tyme. In addition, it has allowed them to remain in the Minneapolis slow lane, rather than moving to neurotic L.A. or manic Manhattan.

Coming up together: In the late '70s, the two friends from grade school were first musically united when keyboardist Harris joined Flyte Tyme, a band led by bassist/vocalist Lewis. But Flyte Tyme never got that many gigs because only a few clubs would book them, even though they played all the popular black tunes of the day.

Harris remembers only two Twin Cities clubs that consistently booked black bands: "The Nacirema on 40th and Fourth Avenue and the Elks and that was about it," he says. "You could play at the Fox Trap every once in a while, but no, I mean, there were not a lot of clubs. At that point there were quite a few bands: I had a band called Mind and Matter. Terry had, of course, Flyte Tyme; there was a group called The Family—not the one on Paisley Park—a group called Quiet Storm and...I mean, there were a lot of black groups and about three clubs to play."

The shortcomings of the local club scene at a time when bands like Flyte Tyme were trying to make their mark explains why Minneapolis has such a high profile in the international music scene now. Prince chroniclers have commented on how smart the kid was to not play around Minneapolis, instead taking his act straight to the major labels and making his shows special events.

But Prince and the acts that followed him (The Time, Jesse Johnson, TaMara, et al.) went right to the top because nobody at the bottom—local radio, press and clubs—would give them the time of day. Twin cities accountants, managers, label representatives and assorted hangers-on (who are, almost without exception, white) gladly share in the glory that black artists have brought to the area, but they were nowhere to be found back when Jam and Lewis, among others, were struggling to get gigs.

Funky town, gotta move on: This ignorance of what local black musicians were doing bothers Harris in retrospect, but at the time Prince set an example that inspired other acts. The Flyte Tyme band had been playing around the Midwest for about seven years. "But what really got us motivated," says Harris, "was the fact that Prince had just up and got out of here. And we said, 'That's the way to go.' So rather than pouring all your money that you'd make from gigs into band equipment, you'd put it into going into a studio and doing a demo tape. It just changed everybody's

perspective."

Hence, Minneapolis became noted for its black musicians because of what the city *didn't*, rather than what it *did*, do for them. Some observers of the Twin Cities scene have bemoaned the lack of a musical "Great White Hope," but from Harris' perspective, white rock bands haven't become commercially huge partially because they could get gigs in town.

For the black bands, he says, "There was not a plush thing, where you could set your equipment up and stay in a club for two weeks...and make three bills, four bills a week. If you were doing that and you were comfortable with it and you got to play and the girls were coming up to you and you could get some free drinks...for the black bands, that wasn't it. But for the white bands that could do that...why would you want to leave that to do something else?"

Clearly, the white bands didn't have what could be called a "plush" situation, money-wise. Yet there were local labels such as Twin/Tone and clubs that wanted to do business with them. White bands could play anything from power thrash to synth-pop and still get by, while the black groups had to aim for mainstream and mass appeal.

A Princely boss: But Prince has been more than an example to Lewis and Jam; he was also their employer. Working with the *wunderkind* they learned that you have to place equal emphasis on the words "music" and "business" if you wanted to make it to the top. Prince drives his projects hard, and Harris often notes how he could make them sing things they didn't think they could sing, play things they didn't think they could play, and then make them dance, too. Prince, who eventually booted Lewis and Jam out of The Time when their own production jobs began conflicting with the band's gigs, isn't often compared to a high-school football coach, but he does inspire a definite self-confidence among those who work with him.

Jam maintains that Flyte Tyme doesn't feel the need to compete with their old boss. "When I pull out the charts and I look at the competition, I'm looking at 100 artists," he says. "Prince may have two songs, Jesse may have a song. We got Alexander; I'm worried about Luther Vandross, Freddie Jackson...I'm worried about that, I'm not worried about Prince's shit. Prince's shit, to me, is always going to be good. I'm Prince's biggest fan. He's the baddest mother-fucker around, to me—simple as that. We don't get a prize for beating Prince."

Despite the clean, razor-sharp sound of Flyte Tyme's work, their music is anything but sterile. Their studio is remarkably low-tech considering the high production values they maintain. But these two