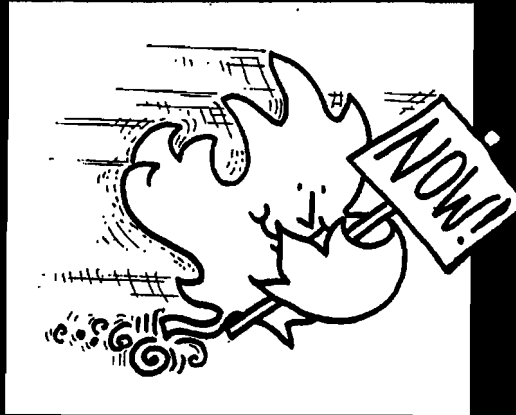


**Naming  
the Moment**  
Political Analysis for Action



A Manual for Community Groups

**Deborah Barndt**

**Carlos Freire, Illustrator**

**The Moment Project**

**Jesuit Centre for Social Faith and Justice**



## Preface to the Second Printing

### The power of a moment

Midnight, Jan. 15, 1991. As I write this, it is less than two days away. Never has the concept of 'the moment' provoked such profound and frightening reactions. Around the world, people await the 'dead-line' set by the United States for Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait 'or else.' 'Or else' is not clear to anyone, but the possibilities are daunting. Between the moment that this is being written and the moment it will be published and read, we may be thrust into a full-scale global war.

Now, as never before, we confront the reality of our interdependence on this earth. We recognize the connections between the food we feed our children and chemical warfare on another continent, between the Rambo movies we watch and the attitudes and actions of our leaders. And we find ourselves hanging precariously between feelings of powerlessness and determination to act, between despair and hope.

This is the second printing of the **Naming the Moment** manual. The first printing has sold out, just over a year after we published it. It is clearly responding to a deep need that Canadian groups are feeling for more ongoing political analysis and for more cross-sectoral collective action. We who have developed The Moment Project over the past five years are pleased that our concerns find resonance with others.

### Recent critical moments

And yet, a year of new political developments also offers perspective on the ideas within these pages. As author, I am aware of the holes in our analysis and the limitations of our approach. Events continue to shape our growing consciousness and, in turn, to shape the questions we ask:

- **October 1989.** The crumbling of the Berlin Wall and developments in Eastern Europe have challenged us all to redefine the kind of democratic socialism we are working for. This manual only hints at the need for more visioning; we need to bring the question to the forefront.
- **December 1989.** The Montreal massacre of 14 women students 'for being women' has exposed the deep core of misogyny in our patriarchal society. Some feminists have suggested that the moment process needs to better link the personal stories of daily oppression with our analysis of structures that oppress us.
- **July 1990.** 'Oka' is now a profound cultural symbol recalling the aggressive response of Quebec provincial police and the Canadian armed forces against the Mohawk people and the new strength and clarity of First Nations people fighting for self-determination. The structural analysis in this manual does not sufficiently acknowledge the brutal process of colonization in our history and the survival over 500 years of the native spirit, which is now teaching us all new ways of thinking about our relationship to the earth and to each other.
- **September 1990.** The surprise election of the New Democratic Party in Ontario has forced community activists to re-evaluate their relationship to the government and to assess what kind of 'free space' this particular political moment offers for our various causes.

### Developments in The Moment Project

Our own process has perhaps reflected some of the shifting forces described above. Since the first printing, we have grounded the **naming the moment** approach in the ongoing life of social change groups across the country:

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- In June of 1989, over fifty activists went through a three-day training program in the **moment** methodology, applying the analysis to issues ranging from racism and poverty in Toronto's core to solidarity programs with southern Africa and Central America.
- The 1989-90 Moment Workshop series involved teams from 13 Toronto groups in learning and applying the moment process to their work.
- In November 1990, we launched a Training for Trainers Program called 'Multiplying the Moment,' with 18 participants who are now designing their own training events with various sectors.
- The 1990-91 Moment Workshop series was co-sponsored with the Ontario Coalition for Social Justice, in an effort to link our cross-sectoral monthly analysis with actions being taken by popular groups loosely joined through the Action Canada Network.

## New questions

Some of the questions that have emerged from these gatherings:

Who speaks for whom? How can the voices of those most affected by a struggle be heard and their leadership heeded?

How do we link local struggles against poverty and racism with work of coalitions against a global restructuring of the economy that continues to put profits before people?

What is the role of the spiritual dimension of people and communities in our efforts to create a more just society? How do we integrate heart and head in our analysis?

How do we guard against a mechanical application of the **moment** methodology and encourage creative adaptations that grow out of and respond to specific peoples, places, struggles?

## Making the moment their own

We are most heartened by the groups in different parts of Canada who have taken some of the tools suggested here and created their own processes and practices. Some we hear about indirectly, others have shared their adaptations with us.

- The Popular Education, Strategy and Training group (PEST) in Vancouver involved activists from many sectors in analyzing the GST and developed a model workshop on the Corporate Agenda which has been multiplied many times over.
  - Native students at Trent University have used the **moment** process to examine 500 years of colonial occupation and the actions of First Nations People toward self-determination.
  - The Toronto Committee for the Liberation of Southern Africa (TCLSA) ran a series of training workshops in **moment** methods for anti-apartheid groups, involving a South African activist who then organized a similar 'State of the Nation' workshop series inside South Africa.
  - Coalitions of social change groups have emerged from workshops of **moment** analysis in Kingston, Ontario, and on Vancouver Island, B.C.
  - I had an opportunity to use this process with the board of the Highlander Center in the Appalachian region of the U.S., where preparation for the Persian Gulf war was heavy on the hearts and minds of American educators and activists.
- It is in these various practices of political analysis that we are developing a deeper understanding of the struggles we are engaged in, the actions we are taking, and the educational processes that will help move us closer to our goal of a more just society that is anti-racist, anti-sexist, and democratic in economic, political and social terms.

Hopefully, this manual can continue to be a catalyst in this process. The strengths that people have found in the **moment** approach include:

- the valuing of structured reflection among activists;
- the integration of questions of race, class, gender;
- the creative tension between structural and conjunctural analysis, integrating work at short and long term goals;
- the exploration of the 'free space' each moment offers, a more dialectical view of constraints and possibilities;
- the participatory and collective nature of the process;
- the integration of emotional and cultural expression;
- the cross-sectoral gathering, linking issues and groups.

## Thanks to persons

Finally, I'd like to address another weakness in the first edition. The acknowledgements referred to over 100 community activists who contributed to the collective development of the **moment** methodology. I have been a spokesperson for a project which is owned by many others, who should also be credited for the ideas in this book. I am, therefore, including here the names of participants (groups and individuals) in the first five years (1986-1991) of **moment** workshops, to make more palpable this sense of collective effort.

*Shelly Acheson, Janice Acton, Dinora Aldana, Christine Almeida, Rick Arnold, Mike Balkwill, Kevin Barrett, Dominic Bellissimo, Elaine Bishop, Jules Bloch, Elizabeth Bosma-Donovan, Don Bouzek, Bonnie Briggs, Elaine Brindley, Lisa Bunting, Bev Burke, Linda Burnside, Kent Buse, Stephen Bush, Carrie Butcher, Jill Butler, Pedro Cabezas, Jenny Cafiso, Bob Carty, Chris Cavanagh, Lilian Caviglia, Carol Cayenne, Pat Chauncey, Christina Chu, Marjorie Cohen, Fiona Connelly, Janice Conway, Mary Corkery, Rosemary Coulton, Joe Curcio, Ferne Cristall, Stuart Crombie, Gerald Curry, Michael Czerny, Alex Dagg, Bill Darnell, Tania Das Gupta, Bob Davis, Lynne Davis, Susan Davy, Sabera Desai, Alice DeWolff, John Dillon, Cory Doctorow, Suzanne Doerge, Barbara Donaldson, Tim Draimin, Angela Drake, Eleanor Dudar, Janice Dunk, Grace Edward Galabuzi, Carolyn Egan, Fran Endicott, Lorraine Endicott, Rachel Epstein, Nancy Farmer, Liz Feltes, Charles Fernandes, Margot Fish, Deirdre Fisher, John Foster, Steve Foster, Carlos Freire, Deirdre Gallagher, Kerry Gearin, James Gerome, Jojo Geronimo, Margaret Gittens, Amy Go, Eve Goldberg, Amy Gottlieb, Jane Gurr, Sister Gwen Smith, Marlene Hammer, Marnie Hayes, Colleen Heffron, Jane Henson, Carmencita Hernandez, Jim Hodgson, Dennis Howlett, Sandy Iverson, Anne-Marie Jackson, Anna Jacobs, Johan Jacobs, Carl James, Yvette James, Keith Jardine, George Kaperaneas, Bernie Keating, Rosemary Kennedy, David Kidd, Sandra Kowalchuk, Joan Kuyek, Liisa Laing, Frances Lankin, Ruth Lara, Jane Larimer, Eddie Lee, Patricia Lisson, Simon Liston, Doug Little, Salome Loucas, Susan Lussier, Dawn Lyons, Colin MacAdam, Carol MacGregor, John Maine, Ana Maria Santinoli, dian marino, Judith Marshall, Lynne Martens, D'Arcy Martin, Tammie Mayes, Judy McKinley, Meri McLeod, Pam Millar, Cathy Moggeridge, Pierann Moon, Chris Morry, Ruth Mott, Rudy Munn, Eva Murray, Evelyn Napier, Liisa North, Martha O'Campo, Michale O'Kane, Vicki Obedkoff, Adongo Ogony, David Orfald, Harry Oswin, Louise Owen, Rhonda Payne, Ito Peng, Maureen Perlmutter, Sara Peters, Gord Peters, Fred Plain, Susan Prentice, Heather Quirt, Thomas Rahn, Gloria Reinberg, Diane Roberts, Kirk Roberts, David Robertson, Maria Rosa Pinedo, Heather Ross, Jenny Rossi, Ann Rowan, Carol Rowland, Julie Salverson, Matt Sanger, John Saul, Ann Scott, Schlomit Segal, Ligia Segura, Yasmine Shamsie, Michael Shapcott, Jim Sheppard, Ed Sheridan, Kate Sigurdson, Scott Sinclair, Kristine Sisson, Linda Slavin, David Smiley, David Smith, Zubeida Somani, Andre Sorenson, Patricia Spinner, Sandy Steinecker, Sheila Stewart, Keith Stewart, Ed Sullivan, Rhonda Sussman, Julia Tao, Barb Thomas, Betsy Trumpener, Teresa Valde, Mariana Valverde, Judy Vashti Persad, Susan Walker, Tom Walsh, Jane Warral, Sharlynn White, Laurel Whitney, Helen Woolridge, Linda Young.*

## And to organizations

It is also important to note the different community groups that these individuals represented, which reflects both the organizational bases and the cross-sectoral nature of this work.

*ACTRA, Alliance for Employment Equity, Applied Psychology Dept. of the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, Arcadia Housing Cooperative, Balkwill & Associates, BASIC Poverty Action Group, BC Ad Hoc Committee for Social Solidarity, Birth Control and VD Information Centre, Canadian Union of Education Workers, Canadian University Service Overseas – Toronto, Canadian Crossroads, Canadian Friends Service Committee, Canadian Council of Churches, Canadian Action for Nicaragua, Catholic Committee on Development and Peace, Catholic Children's Aid Society, CBC Sunday Morning, Central Neighbourhood House, Citizens for a Safe Environment, Coalition Against Free Trade (Ontario Coalition for Social Justice), Committee for the Advancement of Democracy in the Philippines, Communication and Electrical Workers Union, Coop Housing Association, Cross-Cultural Communications Centre, Davenport-Perth Community House, Disabled People for Employment Equity, Doris Marshall Institute for Education and Action, Ecumenical Coalition for Economic Justice (GATT-Fly), End Legislated Poverty, Faculty of Environmental Studies – York University, Falstaff Community Association, Foodshare, George Brown College Community Worker Program, Grindstone Youth Coalition, Ground Zero Productions, Horizons for Friendship, Houses Opening Today Toronto, International Centre, International Ladies Garment Workers Union, Jesuit Refugee Service, Jesuit Centre for Social Faith and Justice, Jewish Women's Committee to End the Occupation in the West Bank and Gaza, Kawartha World Issues Centre, Latin American Women's Collective, Mayworks Festival for Working People and the Arts, Metro Labour Education and Skills Training Centre, Mixed Company Theatre, National Action Committee on the Status of Women, Native Studies Dept. of Trent University, Native Canadian Centre, Neighbourhood Legal Services, Nishnawbi Aski Nation, Oblate Conference, Ontario Public Interest Research Group, Ontario Council for Agencies Serving Immigrants, Ontario Environment Network, Ontario Secondary School Teachers Federation, Our Times, OXFAM, Parents Against Poverty, Parkdale Project READ, Parkdale Community Legal Services, Participatory Research Group, Participatory Policy Advocacy Group – MacMaster University, Pax Christi, Pay Equity Commission, Peace Brigades*

*International, Political Science Dept. of York University, Pollution Probe, Popular Education Strategy and Training, Pro-Canada Network, Public Service Alliance of Canada, Queen's University, Race Relations Dept. of the Toronto Board of Education, Scarborough Foreign Missions, Second Look Community Arts, South Riverdale Community Health Centre, St. Christopher House, St. Stephen's Community House, The Meeting Place Drop In Centre, Tools for Peace, Toronto Board of Education, Toronto Disarmament Network, Toronto Committee for the Liberation of Southern Africa, United Church of Canada, VIGIL Refugee Support Network, Women Plan Toronto, Women Working with Immigrant Women, Women's Studies Dept. of University of Toronto, Women's Press, Women's Health Sharing, Woodgreen Community Centre.*

While it becomes clearer how collective an effort this has been, I still take final responsibility for the interpretations offered within these pages.

Deborah Barndt  
Toronto, January 14, 1991

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# Acknowledgements

The Moment Project has from the start been a collective project. It has involved over 100 community activists in monthly **naming the moment** workshops and in training workshops with groups applying the method to their own work.

This manual, as an outgrowth of The Moment Project, is thus the product of many experiences and conversations over the past three years. There are some individuals, however, who should be credited for specific pieces of the manual:

- Patricia Wagner of the Institute for Popular Democracy in the Philippines for the definitions used on pages 7 and 8;
- John Dillon of GATT-Fly for the presentation of ideas synthesized on page 11.
- Erna Stultz for the original version of the graphics reproduced on pages 17 and 18, first appearing in **A New Weave** (See Resources).
- Pamela Millar of Pollution Probe for reviewing the synthesis of her group's experience on pages 55-59;
- Ann Rowan of OPIRG for the reflections on page 74.

The following people offered critical comments on the manuscript before its final editing: Christine Almeida, Rick Arnold, Bev Burke, Michael Czerny, Deirdre Gallagher, Jojo Geronimo, dian marino, and Denise Nadeau.

Rebecca Kneen and Sandra Kowalchuk have helped in the preparation of the manuscript at various stages of production.

Rick Arnold and Bev Burke joined Carlos Freire and myself in the developing the overall design and outline.

The collaboration with Carlos has been very special, built on three years of working together to translate ideas into images through the publication **The Moment**. Far from an afterthought, the visuals in this manual were a dynamic part of the writing and production.

I offer special thanks to the Jesuit Centre, and, in particular, to Michael Czerny, S.J., for giving birth and constant support to the specific approach to political analysis for action which we call **naming the moment**.

The deeper inspiration for this work comes from the people and groups who are fighting on a daily basis for a more just society. We both incorporate their experiences and feed this back to them as a potential tool for educating and organizing for social change.

As readers and users of this manual, you are among these people. The continual line you will follow through these pages represents our constantly moving and changing history. The lively maple leaf is a symbol for the conscience and the critical eye that you and others bring to this work, and to our collective efforts.

Deborah Barndt  
The Moment Project  
Jesuit Centre  
Toronto, Ontario  
May, 1989





## Introduction

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This moment: it is unlike any other moment in time. How can we understand what it offers so that we can make the best use of it?

How have people used moments in the past to push toward greater social justice?

### **One community's experience**

In the neighbourhood where the Jesuit Centre is located, a local metal factory (once a U.S. subsidiary) spewed lead-laced fallout into the yards of community residents for

over forty years. In the early 1970's, residents began organizing to rid the area of lead pollution.

Through many years of hard work, they developed their own understanding of the problem as well as their organizational capacity to fight it. Based in a community health centre, and with the support of the local MPP and the Metro Labour Council, concerned citizens pressured for blood-level testing. A dangerous level of lead was found in young children.

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The community got further support from independent doctors and scientists who confirmed their findings. These groups pressured a reluctant Ontario Ministry of the Environment to order the lead factory to stop work. The company also gathered its allies: their lawyers, a multinational lead lobby, and their own medical experts. The stop work order was set aside by the courts.

A provincial inquiry resulted in some structural changes curbing the pollution by the factory. Still the lead remained in the soil at a dangerously high level in over 1,000 properties in the neighbourhood. Children risked their lives by playing in their yards; family gardens produced poisoned vegetables.

Community-based environmental and occupational health committees continued their fight. Their goal, quite simply, was to 'get the lead out.'

An important 'moment' arrived in the mid-1980's: a liberal provincial government came into power, initially coupled with an accord with the NDP. There was finally the political space to push for more definitive action.

The provincial Minister of the Environment was personally committed to the residents' cause. In June of 1987, he pledged that the Ministry would remove the topsoil of a thousand properties, and he pressured the company to help pay the costs.

The moment was ripe for this action because of a particular combination of factors. The new government officials in power were more sympathetic. But this support had been built over time through thoughtful organizing by community activists.

They were ready to act because they had laid the ground over many years. They researched, took actions, deepened their knowledge and sharpened their organizational skills. They built alliances with groups in the community, the labour movement, the scientific community, and the government. They developed their *political analysis for action*.

They knew how to name the moment and how to use it to achieve their goal: to get the lead out.

But they also knew that the fight didn't end there. The immediate goal was won, but the broader goal of making the community truly healthy required a long-term commitment.

The Soil Replacement Project offered opportunities to educate about other neighbourhood pollutants: the burning of PCB's, odors from a soap factory, a refuse-fired steam plant. This victory became a building block for organizing other bigger battles in the future.

And so one community has been naming and using moments for social change. This manual is for groups working on their own issues in similar ways.




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## Our starting point

The experiences described in these pages have grown out of a process in which community activists have been asking these questions:

- How can we be more effective in our educating and organizing?
- How can we break down the barriers created by our work on single issues or in specific sectors?
- How can we construct a bigger picture of what's happening - economically, politically, culturally - in Canada?
- How can we keep up with shifts in forces reflected in current events?
- How can we develop a clearer analysis of forces and events that leads to more effective strategies for action?
- How can we anticipate changes so we can prepare for them and not just react to them?
- How can we maintain sight of our long-term objectives while working for short-term goals?
- How can we build a broad-based movement for fundamental change in Canada?

In 1986, the Jesuit Centre launched The Moment Project with a series of monthly workshops. We have been grappling directly with the above questions through a process we call **naming the moment**.

## Who could use this manual

Many have joined in this questioning - activists in the women's movement, church groups, native rights organizations, labour unions, immigrant organizations, the

peace movement, environmental action groups, community service agencies, solidarity committees, health centres, community college and university activists, coalitions organizing for a fair refugee policy and against free trade.

It is for such people that The Moment Project offers this manual, in order to:

- share what we have learned so far;
- introduce the method of political analysis for action called **naming the moment**;
- encourage community groups to adapt the ideas to their own work.

## Canada in these times

This project reflects a particular moment in Canada's life as well. It is 1989 and a free trade agreement with the United States has come into effect. A regressive refugee law has just been implemented. Provinces are reacting to a Supreme Court decision not to ban abortion. Racism has become more blatant following police killings of blacks and the denial of native land claims.

This is a moment when the gap between the rich and the poor in Canada is widening. The interests of big business and multinationals are consolidating through free trade, cuts in social programs, privatization, and deregulation.

At the same time, many popular groups have been broadening their bases as well as joining forces to combat the deepening injustice.

These specific battles of the present have shaped the development of this process of analysis. They appear as examples in these pages.

## Our deeper commitment

As we enter the 1990's, many of these issues will still be with us, while some will be replaced by new ones. What will remain is our ongoing resolve to use these moments and moments to come as opportunities for the longer term process of building a broad-based social movement for fundamental social and economic change in Canada.

That is the major commitment underlying this effort: to deepen our collective awareness, to sharpen our organizational skills, to create a new Canada. To do this, we have to be more critical in our analysis, more creative in our educating, and much more collective in our organizing for change.

## How the manual is organized

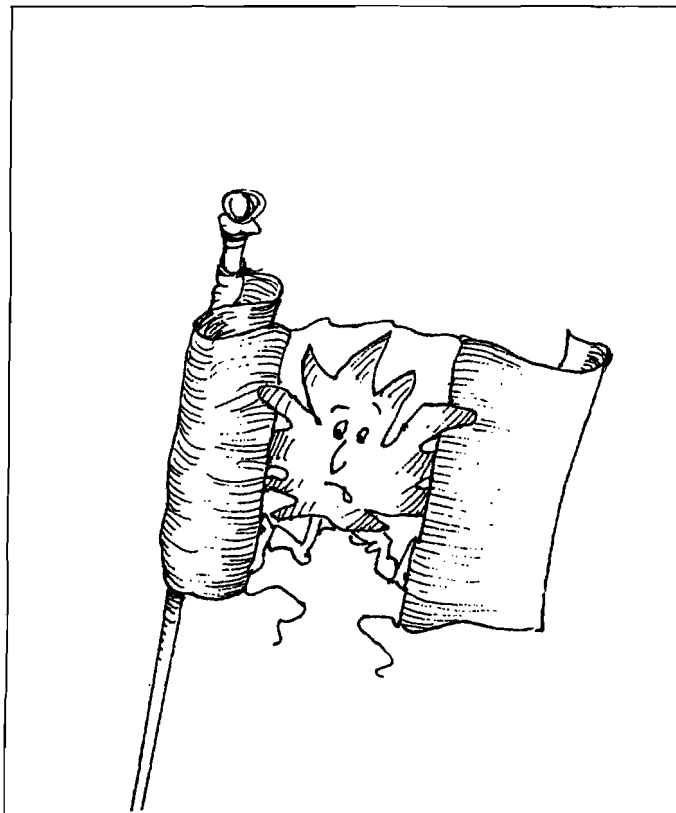
There are five sections in the manual. In Chapter 1, the idea of political analysis for action, or **naming the moment** is introduced. Chapter 2 reviews the history of the concept and situates the practice in current social movements in Canada.

The method of **naming the moment** is described in detail in Chapters 3 and 4. In Chapter 3, the four phases of the method are defined and illustrated with examples. The phases are put together in Chapter 4, with two applications of the method - one focused on local environmental issues, the other analyzing the free trade battle.

Chapter 5 suggests ways that groups might integrate the **naming the moment** process, or political analysis for action, into the daily life of their organizations. The importance of linking analyses across issues and across sectors is also emphasized in this chapter.

We hope that the ideas and experiences presented here will serve as catalysts for discussion and planning by groups working for social change.

This is not a finished product, but rather an evolving process. It awaits your critical thought and creative adaptations!



# 1

## An Idea - A Practice

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### Defining the concept

**Naming the moment** – what does it mean?

What makes this moment unique? There is a particular relationship of actors, of events, of forces that affect your actions at this point in time. They limit what we can do right now, but they also offer possibilities for action.

To make the best use of this moment, we need to understand how the different forces come together at this time, at this 'conjuncture.' The practice of regularly assessing these forces is called in some places 'conjunctural analysis.'

The term is not very common in Canada, sounding more like an eye disease or an academic activity. So we call the process **naming the moment**, or political analysis for action. Because it helps us clarify what this moment offers

and helps us develop strategies that make the best use of this moment. Its ultimate aim is more effective action for social change.

One person who participated in our workshops described it this way:

"Conjunctural analysis, or political analysis for action, is a rigorous examination of the balance of social forces in a given moment that can help us acting in ways to advance our long and short term goals."

In the words of other participants, **naming the moment** involves "looking at the web of different forces," "figuring out who's mad, who's glad, and who's sad," "suggesting where things are headed and what can be done," "determining opportunities for action."




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Notes

## Stating our assumptions

In doing this kind of analysis, we assume that:

- our social situation is filled with contradictions, or tensions, between social groups and within them;
- history is made as these groups or forces come into conflict and resolve conflicts;
- some groups have power and privilege at the expense of other groups;
- this oppression is unjust and we must stop it;
- if we want to participate actively in history (and not just observe it), we have to understand the present as well as the past;
- we can learn to interpret history; evaluate past actions, judge present situations, and project future scenarios;
- because things are always changing, we must continually clarify what we are working for;
- to be effective, we need to assess the strengths and weaknesses of our own group and of those working with and against us;
- at any moment, there is a particular interrelationship or 'conjuncture' of forces (economic, political and ideological);
- these power relationships shift from one moment to another;

- when we plan actions, our strategy and tactics must take into account these forces and their interrelationship;
- within the present conditions, we can find the free space which this moment offers;
- we can identify and seize the moment for change!

## Structural analysis as the base

**Naming the moment** is based on 'structural analysis.' But it is different, too. Structural analysis helps us identify the underlying power relationships and the deeper contradictions that determine the structure of our society in the long term. Political analysis for action helps us look at a given moment or conjuncture to understand how current social forces move together to affect our strategies in the short term.

If we focus only on the structural elements, our understanding may remain static and lifeless. We won't see how things change as forces shift. On the other hand, if we look only at the personalities and events of the moment, we may lose sight of the deeper issues and the longer-term battles.

This tension between our daily work on short-term goals and our longer term efforts to change an unjust system is central to **naming the moment**.

The story on the following pages illustrates this relationship and clarifies the terms used here.





CONJUNCTURE



STRUCTURE



STRATEGY



TACTIC

Notes





Notes

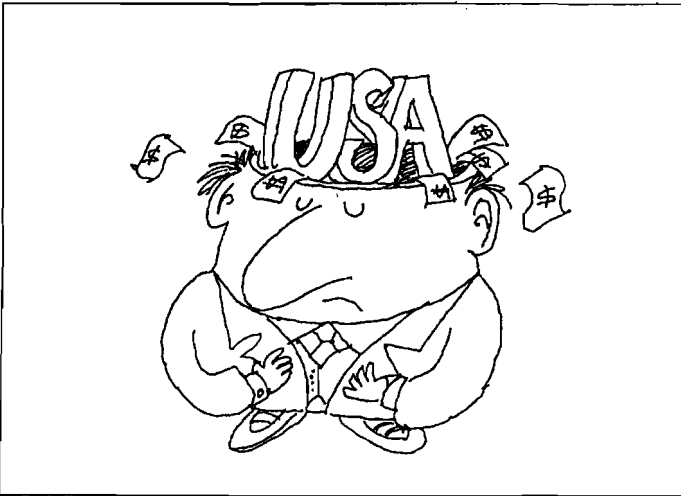
## A brief structural analysis of Canada

How would we describe Canadian social structure? Let's examine three of the major features of the system we live in: it is part of the western industrialized **capitalist** world; it has always been **dependent** on foreign powers; it is a **liberal** democracy.

### Capitalist

The economy is run by market forces; private ownership predominates. A small minority are the owners who decide what will be produced, where and for whom.

The key economic sectors are resources industries and finance, with a growing service sector. The majority of Canadians relate to this economy as salaried workers; 38% are unionized. Over one million are unemployed.



### Dependent

Since French and British settlers first imposed a market economy on the indigenous population, Canada has depended on foreign powers.

Canada is now dependent on multinational capital in general and on the United States in particular. In 1986, for example, 76% of our exports went to the U.S. That figure is increasing with free trade.

### Liberal

Most Canadians accept this system of dependent capitalism. The form of liberal democracy we have emphasizes individual rights rather than the common good.

The prevailing liberal ideology gives a certain role to the state, but still bows to the needs of business. It depends on the economic oppression of many Canadians. Both sexism and racism help to maintain this inequality.

Liberalism as a way of thinking is difficult to get a handle on. It obscures real differences, pretending that the system gives everyone an equal chance. The poor get blamed for poverty, rather than the structures that perpetuate it.

The structure of our society - a capitalist, dependent, and liberal Canada - is deeply ingrained, both in the way we work and in the way we think. In working to change it, we have to go to its very roots.



## An alternative vision

Those who benefit most from this system, primarily big business, however, are quite happy to see it remain as it is. In fact, many are working to roll back social progress in order to further increase their own profits.

But this structure does not benefit most Canadians. There is a growing number of poor in our country. Native people, farmers, the welfare and working poor, immigrant workers, and women are increasingly marginalized by the present system. Organized labour, especially in the public sector is under attack.

These groups, along with others concerned about social and economic justice in this country, have an alternative vision of Canada. New coalitions are working together in a spirit of 'social solidarity' to build a new Canada. Their vision is of a non-sexist and non-racist society, an economic democracy where basic needs are met and decisions made by those who produce the wealth.

Underlying this vision is a common commitment to profound social and economic change.

### In summary

In working toward this long-term goal, we need both structural analysis and political analysis for action. Through structural analysis, we clarify the systemic roots of the injustice we are fighting.

In **naming the moment**, we look critically at the present situation and identify actions we can take now. While these actions respond to the present moment, they also help build the awareness and organizational skills we need for the long haul.



## Notes

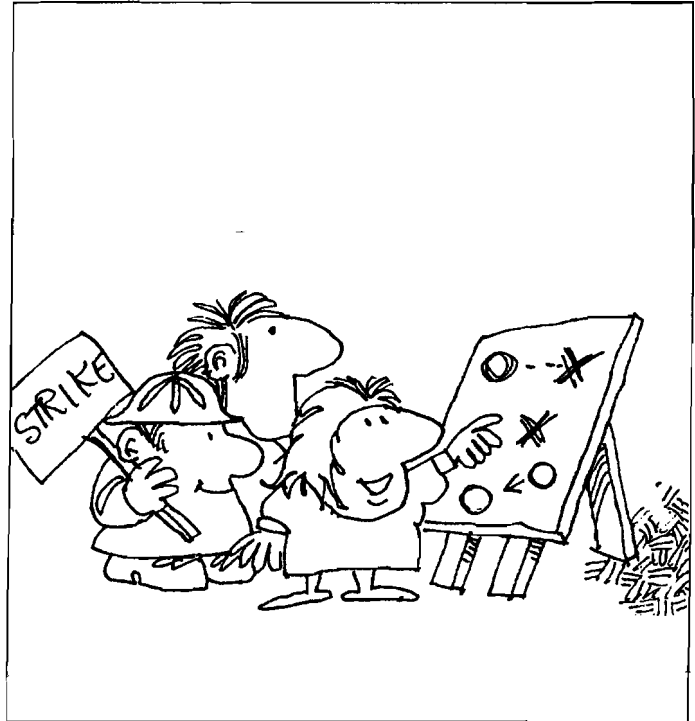
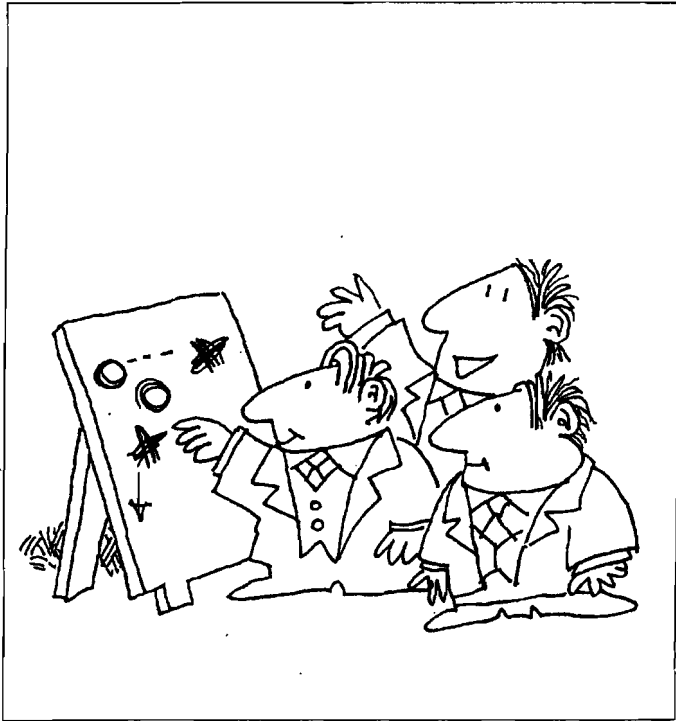
## A tool for what?

Like any tool, **naming the moment** can be used by anyone and for any purpose. It is used by those in power to maintain control and to discredit groups that challenge their power.

A 1988 disclosure showed how the Atomic Energy Commission of Canada kept records on environmentalist groups that oppose its policies. They assessed strengths and weaknesses of each group from one moment to the next, and

found ways to undermine the strengths and exploit the weaknesses.

When we do political analysis for action, we must be clear about why we are doing it, for what and for whom. We can use the tool to better understand our own internal tensions as well as to understand external forces affecting our work. Both inside and outside power relations can limit us or help us move forward.



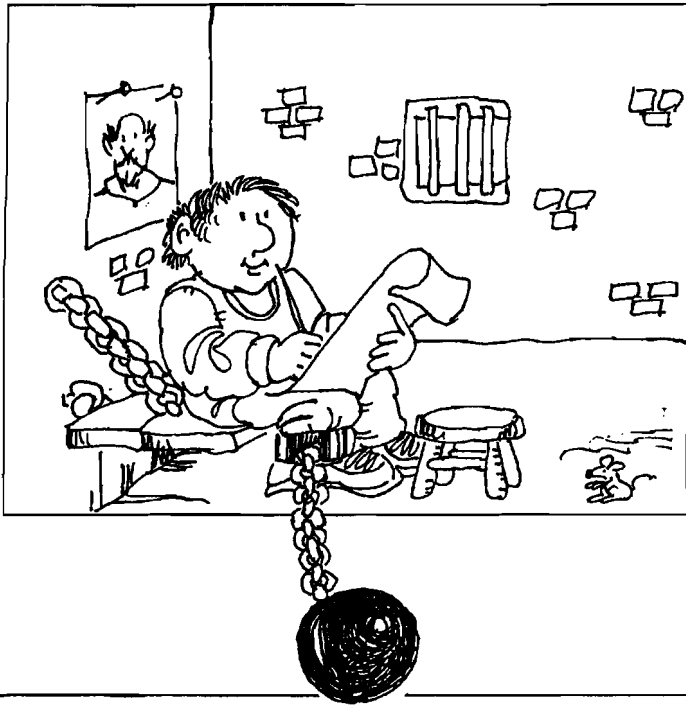

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Notes

# 2

## History of the Practice

Political analysis for action is not in itself a new idea. It has always been used by people making their own history.

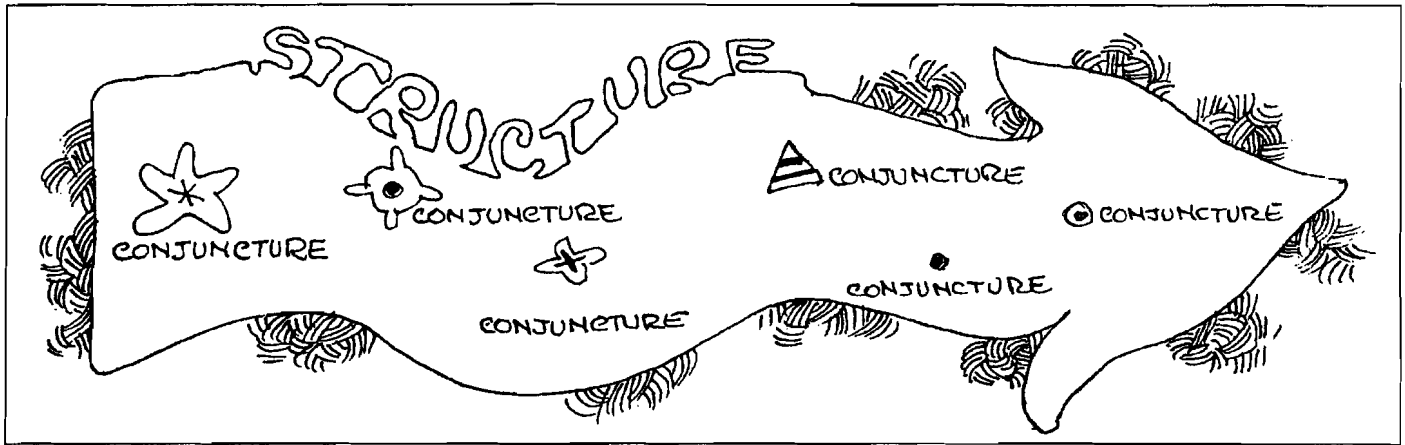


The specific concept of 'the moment' or the 'conjuncture', however, was most developed in modern western thought by a young Italian named Antonio Gramsci. The historical context that shaped this development was the struggle against fascism in Europe in the 1920's.

Gramsci was born of a poor peasant family in Sardinia and he became an important Marxist intellectual and communist leader. He worked with his party to organize workers' groups as bases for revolution. These efforts were nipped in the bud by Mussolini. Gramsci was imprisoned in 1926, and he died a prisoner in 1937.

From his prison cell, Gramsci tried to understand why oppressed peasants and workers supported Mussolini. He could only explain this by examining the specific relation of forces at that time in history.

Notes



## The structural and the conjunctural

Gramsci made an important distinction. Certain aspects of the social structure were organic or relatively permanent, such as the economic relations between the landowners and the peasants.

Other relations were more temporary, appearing almost accidental. In supporting the dictator, the peasants were acting against their real class interests. Their economic conditions could not fully explain their behaviour. The level of awareness and organization of the peasants was also a factor; ideological and political forces of the moment had to be taken into account.

Gramsci's contribution was to suggest that 'conjunctural analysis', or political analysis for action was needed to develop the most effective strategies and tactics. He emphasized the importance of ideology, of the way people's thinking had been shaped by their social relations. Strategic

actions had to start where people were and move them to greater levels of awareness and to more coherent political organization.

### Three kinds of forces

It was the tension between the short-term and the long-term, between the conjunctural and the structural, that Gramsci helped to clarify. He considered three kinds of forces for structural change that needed to be analyzed at any point in time: the level of development of economic forces, of political forces and, at a certain point, of military forces.

The relations between these forces, too, was critical. Conditions had to be ripe in each of these areas, before certain actions could be taken. Conjunctural analysis helped to assess what was historically possible to do at that moment.

## Experiences in Latin America

The approach to **naming the moment** introduced in this manual has been influenced by Gramsci's ideas and by some applications in Latin America. Because the Jesuit Centre has strong links with groups in Central America, there has been considerable exchange of ideas with educators working there over the past ten years.

Since the 1960's, Latin American popular groups (labour unions, peasant organizations, neighbourhood associations) have been organizing against military dictatorships and foreign (U.S.) control of the local economy, politics, and culture.

'Popular education' has become an important tool in these grass-roots movements. This approach starts with peoples' daily experiences and helps them analyze the conditions of their lives, so they can act together to change those conditions.

A Brazilian educator named Paulo Freire helped develop and spread this concept of education. He claimed that education is not neutral: it either serves the interests of those in power or those challenging that power.

Freire's pioneering literacy work with Brazilian peasants led to his exile in 1964. For the next twenty years, he joined popular education efforts in other parts of Latin America, Africa, and North America.

Such education is called 'popular' because it takes a stand on the side of poor and marginalized people. It encourages a participatory process that develops people's critical thought, creative expression, and collective action. It links analysis and action, theory and practice. Its major aim is to help people to organize more effectively for social change.

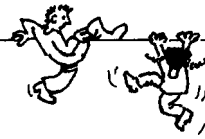
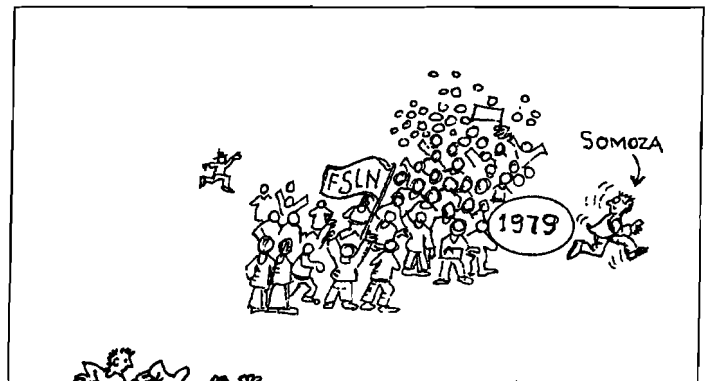


## The Nicaraguan example

Political analysis for action is one tool of popular education that has both shaped and been shaped by social movements in Latin America. Popular groups in Nicaragua used it in preparing to overthrow the Somoza dictatorship in the late 1970's. They were able to recognize and use several 'critical moments' to prepare the conditions for insurrection. For example:

- the earthquake in 1972, followed by Somoza's squandering of international aid, which alienated even some of his business allies, making them more open to efforts to overthrow his regime;
- the election of Jimmy Carter as U.S. president and his 'human rights' policy in Latin America.

It was the convergence, or conjuncture, of many different forces and personalities in 1979 that made it 'historically possible' for the Nicaraguan people to defeat Somoza. Most importantly, the years of building consciousness and strength among popular groups, under the leadership of the Sandinistas, meant people were ready to act when the conditions were favourable and the situation was ripe.

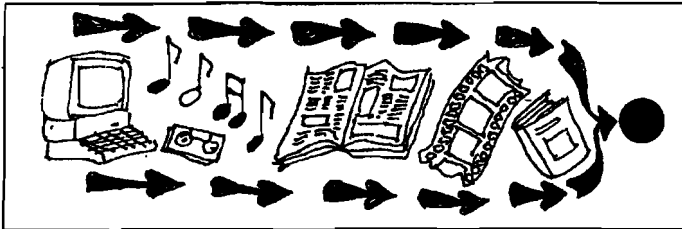


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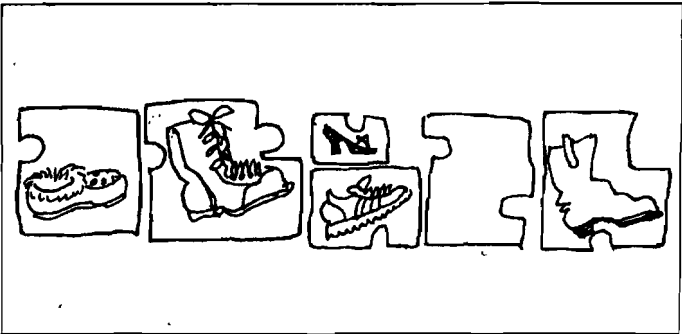
### A model from Panama

A popular education centre in Panama provides an interesting example of how political analysis for action can be done regularly. CEASPA (the Panamanian Centre for Education and Social Action) organizes monthly meetings of people from key popular groups (workers, native people, Christian groups, students).

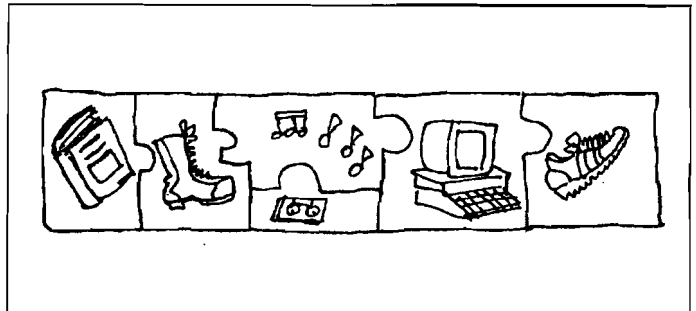
- CEASPA staff review coverage of the month's events by various media (mainstream and alternative). They file newsclippings according to key categories: national economy, labor, U.S. politics.



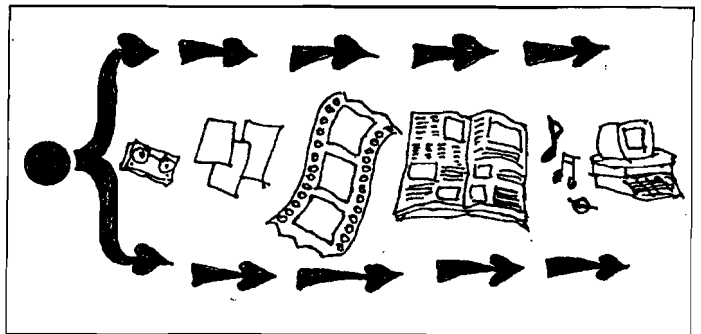
- Sectoral subgroups analyze the 'news' that's relevant to their interests and prepare a synthesis of how work in their sector has been affected by recent events.



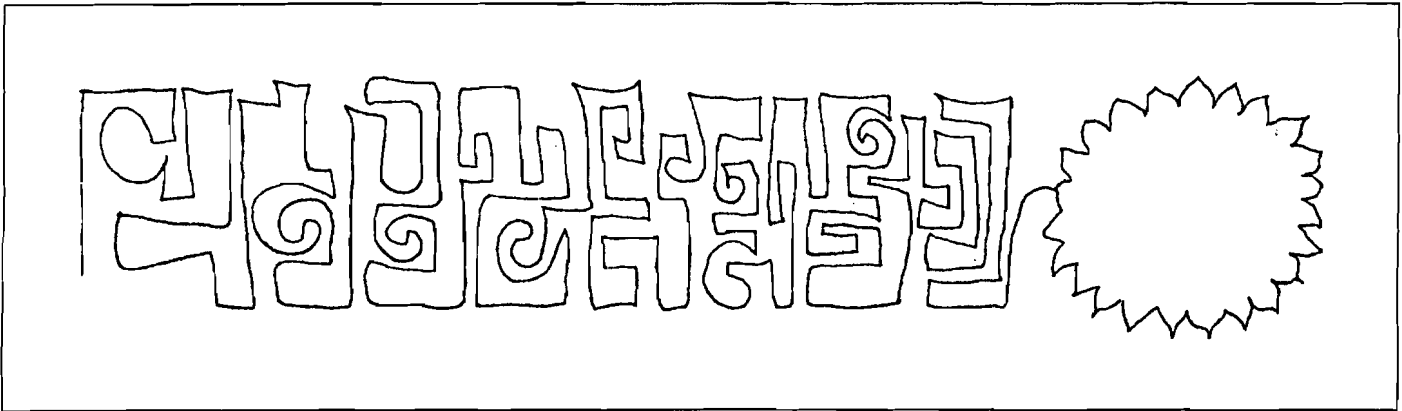
- At the monthly meeting, each sector feeds its information and perspective into a broader analysis of the current situation. Some participants doing ongoing research into the global and national scene offer their interpretations of recent shifts. Collectively they put the pieces together into the 'bigger picture', to understand the particular 'relations of forces' of this moment, or 'conjuncture.'



- CEASPA staff share this analysis with grass-roots groups - through a monthly bulletin, workshops and audio-visual materials.







- Most importantly, this process of collective analysis suggests new possibilities for action. While the group as a whole does not often plan coordinated actions, people use their deeper understanding of the moment to develop new strategies for work in their sectors.

without an arrow, how can you hit the target?' And so they learned to use the bow and the arrow together; and Yi taught the two to shoot."

Han Fei Zi  
Ancient Chinese Fable

This action outcome is the real aim of the entire process!

### The link between analysis and action

CEASPA also offers a ten-day course in 'conjunctural' and 'structural' analysis to coop members from all over Latin America attending the InterAmerican Cooperative Institute in Panama. A training manual called **The Bow and the Arrow** introduces the kind of dialectical thinking that underlies political analysis for action with this quote:

"One person said 'My bow is so good that I don't need an arrow.' Another stated that 'My arrow is so good that I don't need a bow.' The skilled archer Yi heard them and said 'Without a bow, how can you shoot your arrow? And

In the same way, **naming the moment** provides the critical link between analysis and action. Neither analysis for its own sake nor action without analysis is useful in working for social change. They need each other.

There are other rich experiences of conjunctural analysis in Central America. The Central American Historical Institute in Nicaragua hosts a weekly meeting to analyze the constantly changing 'conjuncture.'

ALFORJA in Costa Rica does weekly reviews of media clippings, tracing key actors, their positions, and how they shift over time.

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Notes

## The Canadian experience

The idea of political analysis for action is not totally new to Canada either. Many activists do a 'fly-by-night' analysis - following the media, discussing strategy, proposing actions. But rarely is it a systematic process-built into our organizational life - to help groups make more strategic decisions about their work and its direction.

Political activists in the 60's and 70's organized study groups that often did 'conjunctural analysis' based on the Gramsci model. There were a lot of community organizers in Canada during that period who integrated strategic analysis into their work.

Certain critical moments pushed forward peoples' understanding of the deeper structural issues. There was the Ban the Bomb movement in the 50's, followed by the anti-Vietnam war movement, anti-poverty organizing, the rising of the women's movement.

Feminist educating and organizing challenged the traditional male expert approach to analysis. Consciousness-raising groups encouraged a process of collective analysis and linked the personal and political.

Socialist feminists pointed out the limitations of a structural analysis based only on questions of class. Women of colour, in turn, pushed for the inclusion of race as well as gender and class in both the content and method of political analysis.

The analytical framework to interpret the moment is, in fact, being reshaped by these challenges within groups to respond to all forms of oppression in working for social justice.

### Support from the churches

In the past ten years, some Canadian churches, too, have spoken out against injustice and for the need for more critical analysis of the underlying economic and social system.

The Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops made a dramatic statement in late 1983 to a Royal Commission on the Economic Union and Development Prospects for Canada. 'Ethical Reflections on Canada's Socio-Economic Order', described a 'pastoral methodology' with these steps:

- 1) being present with and listening to the experiences of the poor, the marginalized, the oppressed of our society (e.g., the unemployed, the working poor, the welfare poor, exploited workers, native peoples, the elderly, the handicapped, small producers, racial and cultural minorities, etc.);
- 2) developing a critical analysis of the economic, political, and social structures that cause human suffering;
- 3) making judgments in the light of Gospel principles and the social teachings of the Church concerning social values and priorities;
- 4) stimulating creative thought and action regarding alternative visions and models for social and economic development;
- 5) acting in solidarity with popular groups in their struggles to transform economic, political and social structures that cause social and economic injustices.

## The Moment Project

It was in this context and with such support that the Jesuit Centre for Social Faith and Justice initiated in 1986 a series of monthly workshops, called **naming the moment**. They brought together activists from various sectors to do an ongoing political analysis of key Canadian issues and to develop an approach to political analysis for action appropriate to the Canadian context.

During the first two years, the multi-sectoral gatherings examined major conjunctural issues: native self-government, refugee policy, health and environment, and free trade.

Work on the free trade issue moved participants to get more involved in coalitions and to take actions based on the

monthly analyses. Building on this, the workshops have recently been exploring the deeper question of how to build a broad-based movement for change in Canada.

The analyses are shared with a broader public three times a year through a 16-page booklet called **The Moment**. Produced in an accessible format, it is a tool for educating and organizing around critical Canadian issues. **The Moment** also serves as a model of how the **naming the moment** method can be applied to struggles of this time.

At the same time, a training program has been launched to help community groups integrate political analysis for action into the daily practice of their organizations.




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Notes

## Obstacles

While there have been various efforts to develop our skills in political analysis for action in Canada, we still face many obstacles to doing it. What are some of them?

### No broad-based movement

First of all, we have not yet been able to organize a broad-based social movement for fundamental change. Some have pushed within the NDP for a more grass-roots coalition politics, while others have given up on parties altogether. **Naming the moment** would find its real base in the context of a popular multi-sectoral movement. What keeps us from coming together?

### Single issues

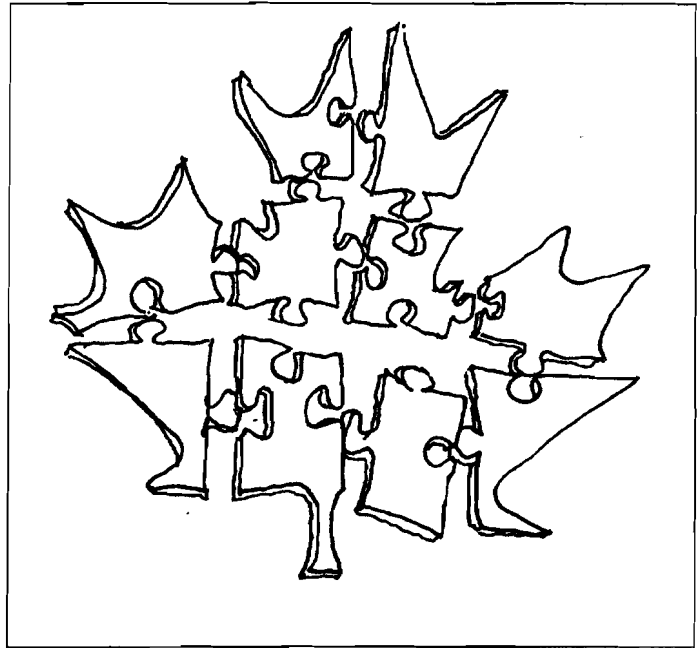
We often feel isolated in our efforts with single-issue battles. This sense of fragmentation serves the interests of those in power; they seek ways to keep us divided. As long as we fail to connect our issues and develop cross-sectoral alliances, we will never be able to develop a strong and unified movement.

### Short-term vision

We lose sight of our long-term objectives and get preoccupied with short-term efforts. We find it difficult to balance the inevitable tensions between short and long-term goals.

### Burn-out syndrome

Our society encourages instant results. We are trained to do, not think; to act now, not later. We are unable to see ourselves as part of a broader historical process, and so we burn out, trying to achieve everything immediately.

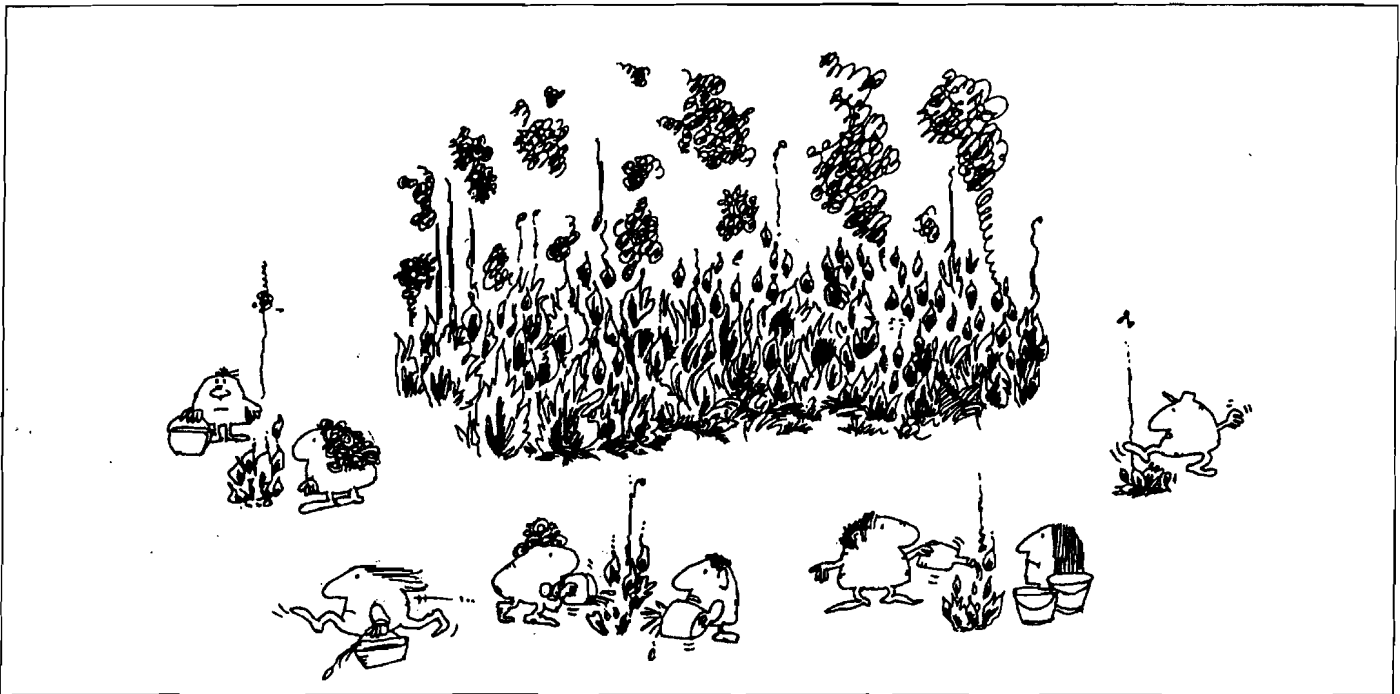


### Anti-analysis

As activists, we are sometimes like the mad-hatter at Alice's tea party, too busy getting there to think about where we are going. We are wary of theory, perhaps because it has often been taught to us as unconnected to our daily activity, and the opposite of taking action.

### Lack of an historical perspective

We have been taught to think in a way that takes events out of their historical context. We are influenced by a kind of idealism which tends to dichotomize forces, rather than look at them in terms of their dynamic relationship to each other and to these times.



### Dependence on experts

We don't trust our own skills of analysis and so we often depend on experts to do it for us. Schools have trained us to fit into and not challenge the system as it is. We haven't many alternative models of how to do collective analysis in a way that builds on the various experiences and understandings that we each bring to a group effort.

At the same time, we need to make better use of the expertise of progressive thinkers who can help us deepen or broaden our critical analysis.

### On the defensive

When we do start to challenge the status quo, we find ourselves constantly on the defensive. The dominant forces control the money, the political machinery, and the media. They often define the issues we work on, so we find ourselves fighting *against* regressive refugee policy, *against* sexism and racism in the workplace, *against* environmental destruction.

We rarely have time to think about what we are *for*, and how we might take the initiative for a change. So we spend all our time putting out little brush fires, while the big forest fire rages on.

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Notes

## The Time is Ripe

These are some of the forces, both external and internal, that make it difficult for us to **name the moment** in a regular and systematic way. But there are also encouraging signs that suggest new possibilities for developing this practice.

The formation of new coalitions, the profound nature of issues like free trade which created new alliances that brought sectors together, links with international struggles - these are some of the external forces affecting our work for social change.

Within progressive organizations, there is a new awareness of the urgency of these times. Groups are more self-critical of their own educational and organizing work, and are seeking ways to be more effective. Many recognize the need for political analysis and for cross-sectoral discussion of our issues and actions.

It is in this space of new interest and new opportunity that an approach to political analysis for action like **naming the moment** is growing.



Notes

# 3

## An Approach: Introducing The Four Phases

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### Not a method but a way of thinking

At the end of a training workshop in our approach to **naming the moment**, a member of one community group exclaimed:

"I realize now that I have a hole in my thinking: I have trouble holding contradictions!"

Because we have been taught to think in either-or terms, we tend to ignore or dichotomize the contradictions around us. Yet central to this kind of political analysis is 'dialectical thinking'.

Rather than 'either-or', it requires a 'both-and' way of looking at forces, of seeing the dynamic interaction of

contradictory ideas and forces. It involves naming and using them creatively and productively.

Learning to **name the moment** or to do political analysis for action is not just adding a new tool to our repertoire of analytical skills. It is, in fact, another way of thinking, a different way of looking at the world and acting upon it.

In the process, we will come up against the dominant thinking in our western liberal culture, which is more idealistic and absolutist, linear and ahistorical. In developing our own practice, we will also be developing a more historical and dialectical view of our actions.

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Notes

## A word of warning

We realize the danger of this 'approach' being taken as a recipe or formula. This would be a distortion of the underlying principle: that all our actions, including the act of doing political analysis, must be appropriate to our own particular historical context and time.

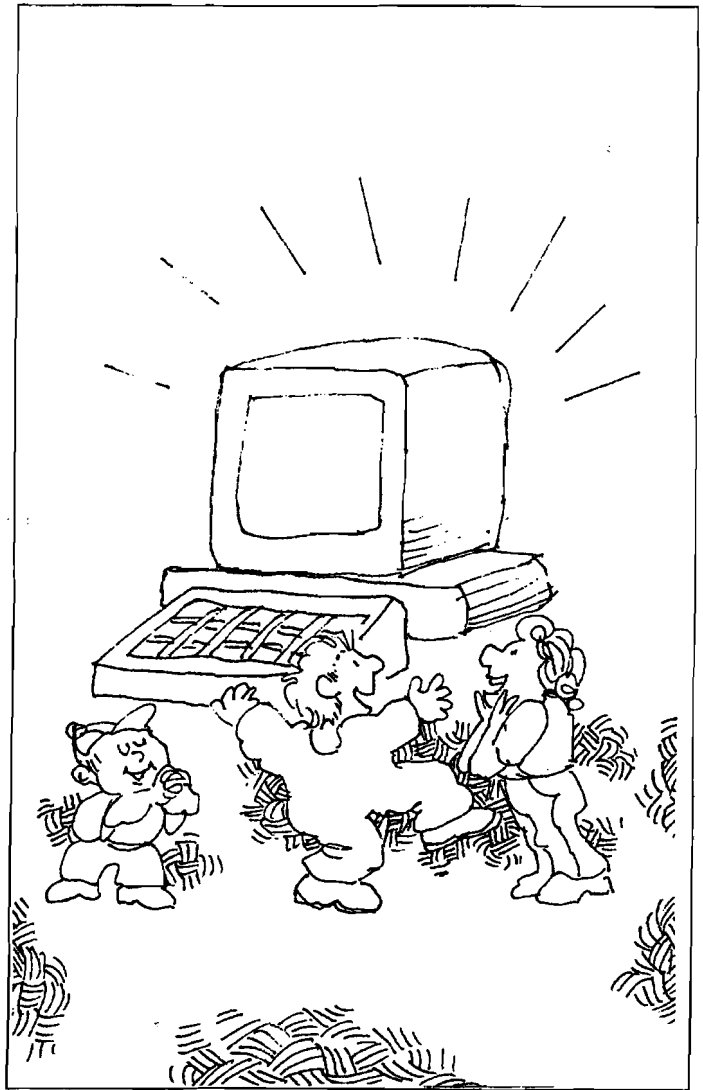
Hopefully, the questions raised and processes illustrated here will stimulate groups to think about their own analytical work. But any specific practice of political analysis has to be hammered out by a group itself, given its own constraints and possibilities.

## Tools are just tools

In a highly technological consumer society like ours, there is a tendency to think that the latest tool can solve all our problems. We are fascinated by new toys, and sometimes expect them to provide a quick fix!

It's important to guard against this understanding and use of the tools and techniques described in the following pages. Analytical tools are needed in the practice of political analysis for action. They can help make our analysis sharper, more creative, more participatory.

Groups will choose or create tools, depending on their specific objectives, the culture and practice of the group, the time available, etc. Our primary hope is that the examples given here make people feel that political analysis is something that they can do themselves and that it will make their work more effective.



Notes





This chapter offers a training program in a more dialectical way of thinking. It's a bit like learning a sport. When we first try it, all the movements are awkward. So there are exercises that we do to warm up.

We learn the new motions step by step; the game itself is broken up so that we can practice one piece at a time. Then when we begin to master the pieces and put them together, we start to internalize the skills; they become second nature to us.

We have divided the process of **naming the moment** into four phases. In the following pages, you will be introduced to several analytical tools. But our hope is that eventually the four phases meld into an ongoing process, a way of thinking.

### Action is the key

The main goal of **naming the moment** is to act more effectively for change. Action is the heart of this process: the analysis is based on an evaluation of past actions and leads to more strategic action in the future.

Action is the reference point in the phases; it must be taken to give meaning to any of them. It's a spiral process: we move through the four phases to plan for action, we act, then we reflect on that action and what we've learned from it. Ultimately, the reflection and action are inseparable, become one.



# Naming the Moment: Phases and Questions

The process of political analysis for action, or **naming the moment** moves through four phases:

## PHASE 1 – Identifying Ourselves And Our Interests

Who are 'we' and how do we see the world?

How has our view been shaped by our race, gender, class, age, sector, religion, etc.?

How do we define our constituency? Are we of, with, or for the people most affected by the issue(s) we work on?

What do we believe about the current structure of Canada? about what it could be? about how we get there?

## PHASE 2 – Naming The Issues/Struggles

What current issue/struggle is most critical to the interests of our group?

What are the opposing interests (contradictions) around the issue?

What are we fighting for in working on this issue - in the short-term and in the long-term?

What's the history of struggle on this issue? What have been the critical moments of the past?

## PHASE 3 – Assessing The Forces

Who's with us and against us on this issue (in economic, political, and ideological terms)?

What are their short-term and long-term interests?

What are their expressed and their real interests?

What are the strengths and weaknesses of both sides?

What about the uncommitted?

What actors do we need more information about?

What's the overall balance of forces?

Who's winning and who's losing and why?

## PHASE 4 – Planning For Action

How have the forces shifted from the past to the present?

What future shifts can we anticipate?

What 'free space' do we have to move in?

How do we build on our strengths and address our weaknesses?

Whom should we be forming alliances with? In the short-term and in the long-term?

What actions could we take?

What are the constraints and possibilities of each?

Who will do what and when?

PHOTOCOPIY THIS PAGE  
AS AN EASY REFERENCE!



Notes

The four phases are intimately connected and can be happening almost simultaneously. When we are clarifying our goals or suggesting new allies, for example, we will also be reflecting on who we are and what we believe.

The rest of this chapter provides detailed introductions to each phase, with examples of how various groups have carried it out.

## PHASE 1 – Identifying Ourselves and Our Interests

### This phase involves:

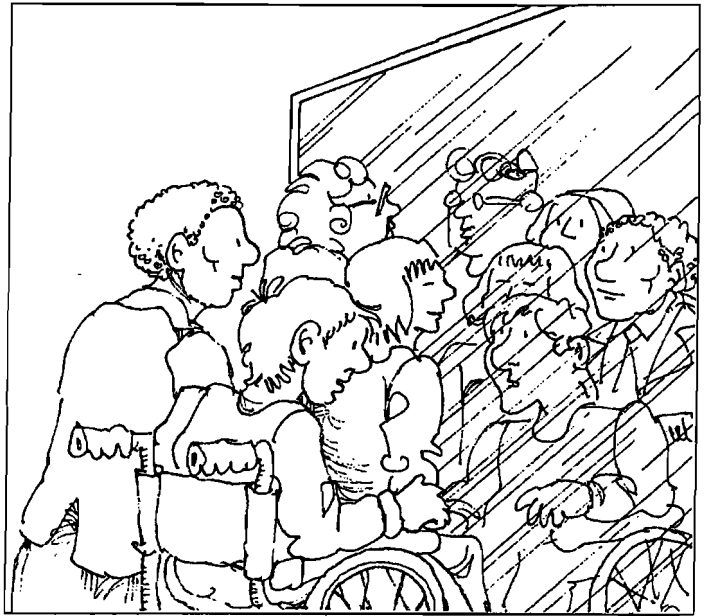
- clarifying who we are in terms of class, gender, race, ethnicity, religion, age, sector, etc. (*examples 1 and 4*);
- expressing our views of how Canadian society is structured (*example 1*), how we would like it to be (*example 3*), and how we think change happens;
- identifying how we think our group can contribute to a movement for social change;
- clarifying both similarities and differences in our political perspectives.

### Why is it important?

If we want to change the structure of society and the course of history, we must see ourselves as part of that society and history. Our analysis will reflect our own interests, who we are in terms of class, race, gender, age, sector. Our goals will be tied to our own experiences within current power relations.

**Naming the moment** helps us read history and act more effectively toward social change. While this analysis shifts from one moment to another, it is based on a more permanent structural analysis: how we see society structured and how we want to change it.

It's important to talk frankly about the different perspectives we bring to the longer term questions, even if we don't agree. The differences, in fact, may offer both constraints to and possibilities for our proposed actions. They will inevitably affect how we read and use present moments for short-term goals as well as for longer-term objectives.



## How can we do this?

Finding out who we are and what we believe is really a life-long process. If we want to be more conscious about it, we could start by responding to the questions under Phase 1 on page 27.

Boxed in on the following pages are examples of what some groups have done to address one or another of these questions.

### Example 1 - Lifeboats

This activity can provide a 'social X-ray' of a group. It works well with a larger multi-sectoral group, if people don't know each other very well.

The purposes of this exercise are to help people identify common interests and to highlight the major characteristics of the group.

This is the scenario: We are on a ship that might sink so we must practice getting into lifeboats. The facilitator calls out categories (gender, age, race, etc) on which basis we divide ourselves into lifeboats. When a category is called, participants scramble to find others in the same category. (See *A New Weave*, pages 79-80, in the *Resources* for more details). This is how we used it in one moment workshop:

#### By province or country of birth

This gave us a sense of each other's backgrounds. While we recognized that our analysis would be Toronto-centric because that's where we work, we learned that only 8 out of 17 were born in Ontario.

We identified current political forces in our places of origin. Those from British Columbia and Great Britain

named 'right wing attacks on people's rights,' for example; a Quebecois talked about Quebec nationalism and the Ontario-born identified 'Orangeism'.

#### By decade of birth

When we divided by decades, we could easily see that the majority were children of the 50's. No one over 55 or under 25 was represented; we had to acknowledge that this would affect our analysis. For fun, each age group selected a song from the decade and sang it to the group.

#### By cultural background

Most people were of British origin, with some American, European, and Latin American. The absence of people of Asian, African, and Caribbean origin was identified as an important gap, which we would have to address as a group.

#### By gender

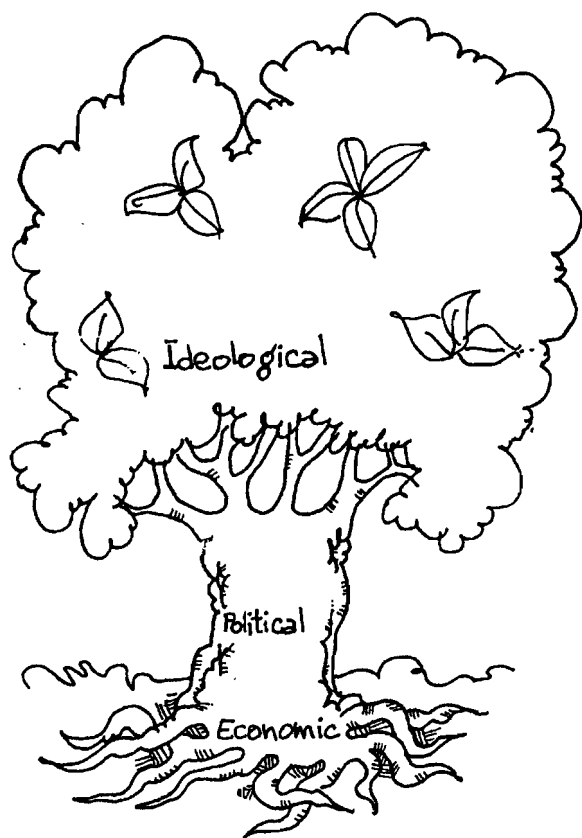
We were quite evenly divided between men and women. Each group was asked to discuss what they felt the other gender would bring to the workshop. The men felt that a feminist perspective would be important to our analysis. The women expressed fears that the men might tend to make the discussion too intellectual.

The 'Lifeboats' activity can be adapted to almost any group, purpose, and time frame. What characteristics are important to identify in your group: occupation, racial identity, years of involvement, positions on a particular issue? As is evident in the example, you can use each new grouping to pursue specific questions in more depth.



Notes

## Example 2 - Social Tree



In Phase 1, as we identify ourselves, we also need to clarify our different political perspectives, how we see society now and how we would like it to be.

We have found the 'social tree' a useful tool for examining our understanding of Canadian social structure.

The roots represent the base of any social structure - its **economic** system (in Canada, our form of advanced capitalism). This defines the relations of production.

The trunk is the social and **political** structure that makes the system run (eg. our parliamentary form of government, social organizations and institutions).

The leaves stand for the **ideological** elements of society - school, churches, media and cultural forms that transmit the beliefs and values of the system.

No aspect of Canadian society exists in isolation from the others; no tree has leaves without a trunk or branches without roots.

While the economic system gives rise to certain political structures or ideological forms, ideas and institutions also influence the shape of the economy.

There is a dynamic and integrated relationship between the parts.

Here are two ways this tool has been used:

- One group wrote on index cards what they thought were the significant characteristics of Canadian social reality. They worked in three small groups, to identify economic, political, and ideological features.

They taped the cards on a large tree on the wall, placing them in the appropriate areas. Then they looked at the bigger picture and asked: What are the common elements of our analysis? Where do we disagree?

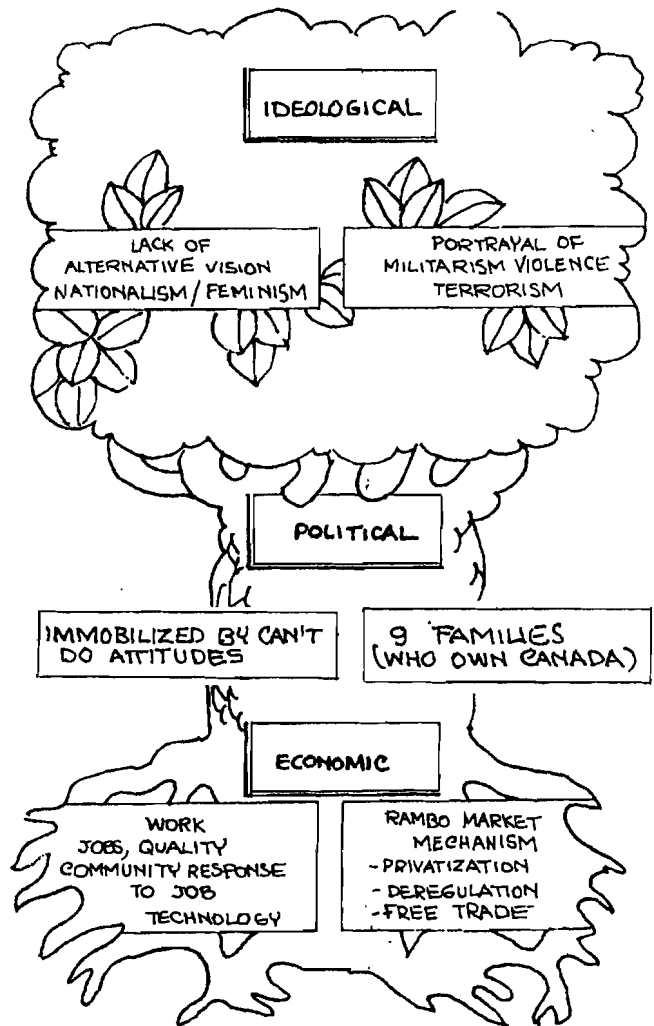
- In another workshop, in early 1986, just after the MacDonald Commission Report suggested free trade, participants identified the key tensions in Canada at the moment as those illustrated on the tree to the right.

**Critiques of the tool**

It is interesting to note some of the problems emerging with this tool. In a couple of instances, groups protested the use of the tree as a metaphor for society.

In the first case, they critiqued the image of uprooting the tree as the metaphor for fundamental structural change. They felt it was not an appropriate metaphor in Canada, where trees are a major natural resource and cultural symbol. And so the discussion of the metaphor itself raised important questions about how we understand the process of social change.

In another context, the social tree was criticized for giving prominence to the economic roots. The role of sexism and racism in maintaining the structure is not clearly integrated into the model. Feminist and anti-racist movements are helping to reframe our understanding of social structure in this way.



### Example 3 - Vision Exercise

Using the tree metaphor, some activists identified a 'lack of alternative vision' as a key ideological force.

In early 1987, we devoted three hours of a moment workshop to exploring our visions of the kind of society we would like to create.

Taking the time to do such a thing seemed novel. As people working for social change, we often find ourselves fighting against injustices of all sorts without thinking about what we're working for in the long term.

And yet it takes vision to mobilize groups to act. The moment people see that something can be different, they feel a lot more energy for the work.

The objective of the activity described below was to give us time to reflect on our different assumptions about what we were working toward and to begin to construct a common vision.

- Individuals spent 10 minutes writing down the characteristics of the society they wanted to live in.
- In small groups, we shared those ideas. Then each group created a collective drawing to illustrate the common threads of the vision of its members.
- Groups displayed their drawings in a plenary to share our visions and the similarities and differences in them.

Most images reflected a desire for a society with values rooted in a reverence for all things - people, nature and an acceptance of diversity. People talked about

supportive communities where there was an integration of work and home life.

There was tension around how this vision would work on a global scale. What would happen to mass production and advanced communications technology, for example?

While imagining a more just future, we still had to confront the contradictions of the present. We realized that we needed to work a lot more on our vision of alternatives, given current conditions.

### Example 4 - Monitors

We recognized that our own discussion often unconsciously reflects the sexism, racism, ageism, homophobia, and middle class perspectives that permeate our society.

So we periodically assigned members of the group to be monitors for each of these 'isms'.

Their role was to listen especially for signs of bias in our conversations, and to point them out to us - either at the moment it was heard or during the evaluation at the end of a workshop.

For example, one person signaled the use of the term 'Black Monday,' when we talked about the stock market crash in October 1987. It made us more conscious of how 'black' is often used as a derogatory term. The monitors reminded us in a systematic way about how who we were influenced our analysis.



Notes

## PHASE 2 – Naming the Issues

This phase involves:

- identifying the key issues/struggles in the sector where we work and in the broader Canadian and global context (*example 1*);
- clarifying what are the major contradictions (opposing forces) at play within and around an issue (*example 2*);
- reviewing the history of struggle around this issue and the shifts in forces from one moment to the next (*example 2*);
- defining our group's short-term goals and longer-term objectives in working on the issues (*example 3*).

It is important to name the key issue we are working on and the contradictions it reflects.

As conjunctural analysis involves learning to read history, we must always look at present struggles in terms of their past evolution and where they might move in the future.

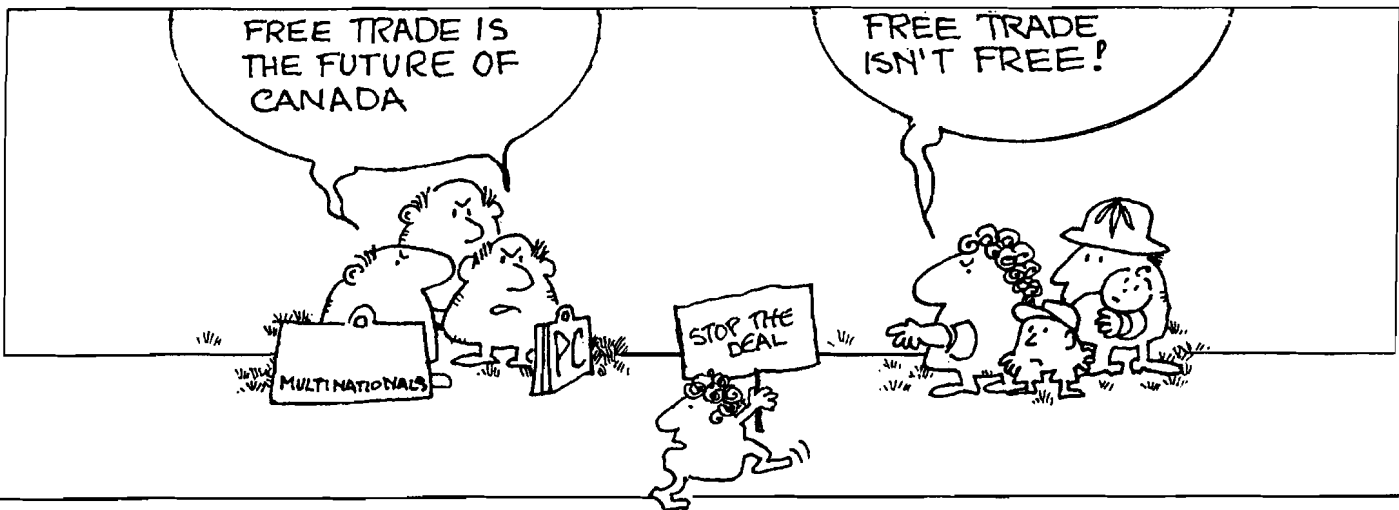
The real value of an ongoing systematic analysis of events is seeing the shifts over time. Then it's possible to project developments and shape them strategically.

Defining short-term goals and longer-term objectives is another way of clarifying why we are working on an issue, in both conjunctural and structural terms.

### Why is it important?

Some groups have very clearly-defined issues, while others may shift issues depending on the moment and need.

If we want to identify who's with us and who's against us, we have to be clear around what interests they are with or against us. If we are using the analysis to develop more strategic actions, we must know what we're working toward.



Notes



### Example 1: Fleshing out an issue

During the 1987-88 moment workshop series, the twenty participating activists chose to focus on the issue of 'free trade'.

Because the issue seemed so big and all encompassing, we felt the need to define the many opposing interests reflected in the free trade debate. This is how we did that:

- We brainstormed a number of ways that the issue could be looked at. Thirteen aspects were listed on a flip chart.
- We shortened the list to eight, and voted with sticky dots. Each participant had two votes to stick on the area she/he would like to focus on.
- Four areas were selected and small groups formed to examine them:
  - 1) privatization of social services;
  - 2) role of culture and media;
  - 3) militarization and foreign policy;
  - 4) trends of transnational capitalism.
- Each group researched its area, and reported to the plenary a month later.

This deeper 'naming of the issue' allowed us to see free trade as just one aspect of a neo-conservative trend, related to privatization, deregulation, decline of the welfare state, etc.

### Example 2: Drawing an historical timeline

In early 1989, the Jesuit Refugee Services-Canada (JRS-C), along with other groups, was responding to new government legislation around refugees. A shortened screening process threatened many refugees with deportation.

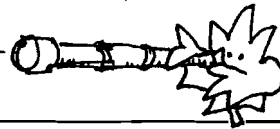
In joining forces with other groups to form a national network called VIGIL, JRS-C reviewed the struggle around the refugee issue in Canada. This historical review helped activists trace how public consciousness developed in relation to key incidents over the past few years.

A synthesis of this timeline appears on the next page. The group chose to look at the past ten years, focussing on the last two.

The actors and actions on behalf of refugees are below the timeline in italics. Government actions which have threatened refugee rights are above the line.

To develop strategies for the coming year, the group also projected anticipated future events and potential reactions to them. Situating present actions in the context of past and future scenarios helped to identify the kinds of forces at play.

A group adapting this activity might select a different time line in reviewing its own issue. It is also important to situate your own group within the context of the history of the struggle.



Notes

# HISTORICAL TIMELINE

**Reviewing  
The Past  
10 Years**

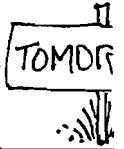
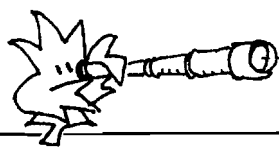
	Government bureaucrats informed, not public		Unemployment ('They're stealing our jobs.')	Media campaign against refugees		McLean announced intended restrictions		New laws proposed	Passed	Implemented	
1978	Boat People	1982	Recession	Refugees from Cent. Am., Iran, Afghanistan	1988	Singh Case	1986	Tamil Boat	1987	1988	1989

**Close-up  
of past  
2 Years**

	Government introduces interim measures		C-55 introduced		National emergency declared		C-84 introduced		Turks deported		Bills passed		Elections		Bills implemented
1987	Jan	Feb	Mar	May	July	Sikh Boat	Aug	Sept	Oct	1988	July	Nov	1989	Jan	
Hawkes proposal rejected in cabinet		Formation of National Coalition for a Just Refugee/Immig. Policy				Bills stalled in Senate				VIGIL and court action					

**Projecting  
the next  
2 Years**

	Government working out the wrinkles of the new system - few deportations		Once public attention has waned, more deportations		Court action decision	
1989	Jan	April	May	June	1990	1991
Court Action launched Vigil network formed		Refugee Rights Day	Vigil Conference	Canadian Council on Refugees Conference		



Notes

### Example 3: Clarifying our goals

With an historical perspective on the issue we are working on, we can clarify what we are working for in the future. This identification of goals is critical to the **naming the moment** process.

Some groups do goal-setting as part of their program planning process. But they often stop with short-term goals, and fail to propose longer-term objectives. There are dangers in focussing merely on one or the other. With vague longer-term objectives, a group may flounder, not knowing how to get there from here. Action plans must be built around concrete, realizable goals. On the other hand, focussing only on short-term goals may lead a group to actions that don't build toward a longer-term impact.

An environmental group named as its long term objective **to achieve sustainability** of the planet. They distinguished this from 'sustainable development', a catch word being used by corporations and governments to justify a more subtle form of control.

They identified indicators of sustainability in the long-term:

- zero waste;
- soft energy and small scale alternatives;
- local control of bioregionalism;
- increased food production in urban centres;
- zero discharge in the Great Lakes;
- no more subsidy on primary resource extraction;
- international trading of recyclable resources.

Many of these indicators had technical implications, but clearly depended on a shifting of political forces and an increasing public consciousness.

The group had major responsibility for public education in their organization, and so they focussed their short-term goals on the educational process. They brainstormed several aspects of their task:

- to get a working definition of 'sustainability';
- to translate that definition to a broader public;
- to identify the blocks to sustainability and to uncover good examples of it;
- to expand the numbers of environmentally active citizens to 400,000;
- to identify the sectors they want to reach;
- to work cooperatively with groups;
- **to create a shift from NIMBY to NIABY consciousness.**

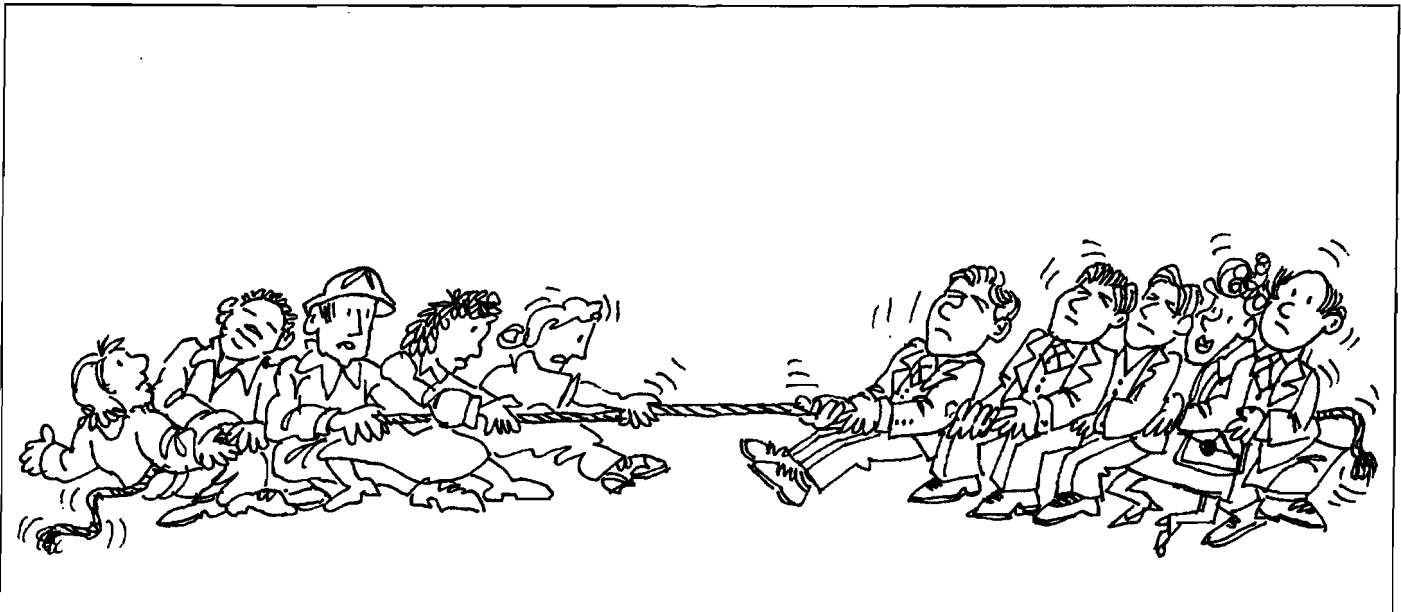
This last goal became the heart of their strategy. They recognized the growth of Not-in-my-backyard (NIMBY) groups who were fighting landfills and dumping in their own communities. These new activists represented an important constituency for further education.

The group's hope was that their programs and materials could help move such folks toward a NIABY perspective (Not-in-anyone's-backyard). This would imply a deeper analysis of the causes of environmental destruction and a broader concern for the whole planet. These would be steps toward taking more positive action for sustainability.

## PHASE 3 – Assessing the Forces

This phase involves:

- listing the major actors (in the economic, political, and ideological sectors) that are with us, against us, and uncommitted on the issue (*example 1*);
- identifying key groups, organizations, and institutions as well as personalities who lead the organizing for and against (*example 1*);
- clarifying the real and expressed interests of the major actors, their short-term goals and longer-term objectives (*example 2*);
- selecting the most critical relationships/tensions (*example 1*);
- analyzing the strategies being adopted by both sides (*example 2*);
- naming both short-term and longer-term allies;
- assessing the balance of forces for and against, who's winning and who's losing, and in what ways (*examples 3 and 4*).



Notes

## Why is it important?

This phase is the heart of the process of **naming the moment**.

In assessing the forces organizing for and against an issue, we are coming to terms with who is on our side and who is not.

Listing the actors is primarily an analytical process, while assessing their relationships is a process of synthesis.

Identifying persons and groups by sector (economic, political, and ideological) helps clarify where the battle is most intense. At certain moments, it may be hottest in the political sphere (e.g. during elections), in the ideological sphere (e.g. the Rushdie affair), or in the economic sphere (e.g., the debt crisis), but the three will always be interacting.

It's important to decide whether certain groups share our long-term interests or only our short-term goal. We may make tactical alliances with such groups, but recognize the limits to collaboration.

Assessing the overall correlation of forces is the key task. It involves looking at the interrelationship of all the various forces, their strengths and weaknesses. It means coming up with a balance sheet, one that indicates who's winning and on what terms, who's losing and why.

## How can we do it?

### Example 1: Listing The Actors

- Identify at the top of a large sheet of paper the short-term goal and the longer-term objective you are working toward.
- List in three columns forces in the economic, political, and ideological spheres that are with us, against us, and uncommitted (with = red, against = blue, uncommitted = green).
- In naming actors, describe their short-term and long-term interests.
- List short-term allies but long-term opponents on 'forces with us' side but in blue; long-term allies but short-term opponents on 'forces against us' but in green.
- Put in parentheses those areas or actors requiring further research.
- Assess the major contradictions in the three spheres (economic, political, ideological);
- Identify the major opposing interests;
- Relate the opposing interests identified in one sphere to those in other spheres;
- Decide the balance of those forces: who's winning, who's losing, and why.

NAMING THE MOMENT  
NAMING THE MOMENT

Notes

<b>Short-term goal:</b>	<b>To expose (fight) racism in police repression</b>	
<b>Long-term objectives:</b>	<b>To fight racism in ourselves, our organizations and institutions. To build a non (anti)-racist, non (anti)-sexist socialist Canada.</b>	
<b>FORCES WITH US</b>	<b>UNCOMMITTED</b>	<b>FORCES AGAINST US</b>
	Ideological	
Community Newspapers – Contrast Minority Women’s Movement Black Action Defense Committee Wade Lawson Defense Committee – Sherona Hall		Toronto Sun Education System Philippe Ruston Police Association Women’s Movement Churches Concept of multiculturalism
	Political	
Teachers’ Unions USWA – Michael Lewis NDP Native Peoples	Many rank and file members Church Solidarity Groups NDP Liberals	National Citizen’s Coalition Ontario Housing Authority Police Association Conservative Party Immigration System Multicultural Policy
	Economic	
Black and Eggleton pro SARC Refugee support groups Employment Equity Alliance Women’s Movement	75% of population	Entrepreneurial Immigrants Ebony Magazine Business opposition to employment equity Toronto Chamber of Commerce

Notes

The chart on the preceding page was developed by a workshop of community activists in early 1989 examining police racism following the killings of two black men. The multi-sectoral group divided into three groups, each focusing on one sphere: the economic, political, or ideological.

Only partial results of the analysis appear in the chart. The group first clarified their short-term goals and longer-term objectives; one group redefined the goals in stronger terms, noted in parentheses. Sample of actors in each sphere are listed.

The listing of the actors is not often a straight-forward task. People will bring their own perspectives of which forces are most important. They may argue about who goes in which column. This process of debate is in itself critical; it is how the deeper interests get identified.

Some contradictions in the listing illustrate this debate:

- The group examining ideological forces distinguished between the minority women's movement and the broader women's movement. They argued that if a group wasn't taking an active stance against racism, then it was a 'force against'. On the other hand, the women's movement appeared as a 'force with us' in its support for employment equity emphasized in the economic sphere.
- The group focussing on political forces looked specifically at the splits within groups. The NDP, for example, appears both as 'with us' and 'uncommitted'. One key labour-union is named as supportive while it is recognized that many rank and file union members may not be.

- There was protest by other groups when the economic subgroup identified Conrad Black and Toronto Mayor Art Eggleton's support of the Social Assistance Review Commission recommendations as a positive force. The group clarified that certain politicians and corporate leaders might share our short-term goal of exposing racism in the police force, without a real commitment to the longer-term objective of fighting systemic racism.

Such critical questioning of the deeper underlying interests is a major purpose of Phase 3 in the naming the moment process.

After assessing the forces, groups synthesized their analysis by identifying the major opposing interests in each sphere. The economic group counter-posed the forces of wealth against the movement for employment equity.

In the ideological sphere, 'multiculturalism' was identified as a key liberal concept which ultimately worked against 'us' by obscuring racism. The group also questioned exactly what is meant by 'we', by asking: Are all progressive groups working to fight racism?

This examination of systemic racism, then, forced groups to look critically within their organizations as well, to understand the more subtle internal forces acting for and against change.

The process of listing the actors and assessing their interests also suggested new allies for anti-racist struggles, for example, the untapped interest of solidarity groups, the more progressive elements of the church, etc.



## Personalities count

In trying to understand the present moment, we must also take into account the role that certain persons play. Though they represent institutions and their interests, some individuals become important symbols of those interests by force of their personality and their position.

During the three years of national free trade debate, for example, there were key figures pitted against each other in different spheres. Thomas D'Aquino of the Business Council on National Issues represented the economic interests behind the deal, while Bob White of the Canadian Autoworkers Union was a kind of folk hero for the interests of working people.

In the political sphere, especially during the 1988 elections, it was Brian Mulroney versus John Turner. **Ideologically**, academics put themselves on both sides of the battle line. John Crispo of the University of Toronto served as a key government consultant while Marjorie Cohen of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women was a frequent spokesperson for the Pro-Canada Network.

## The Uncommitted

On many issues, large portions of the population may not be sure where they stand. It is as important to identify the uncommitted forces as it is to name those that are clearly with and against us.

These groups are potential allies. We must ask why they straddle the fence. If we understand better where they are coming from, we may find where their interests coincide with ours.

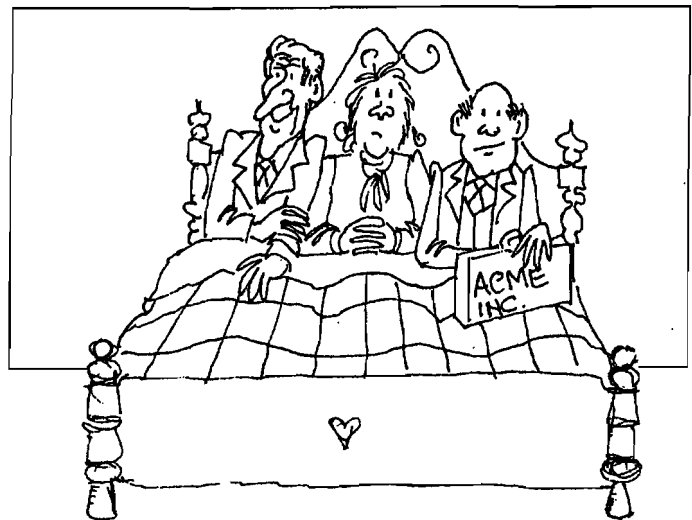
In this area is the elusive role of 'public opinion.' Refugee rights groups realized the importance of this factor as Canada began to close the doors to refugees in early 1987.

Government strategy, aided by the media after the arrival of the boat of Tamils, for example, was to fuel the flames of racism within the Canadian public. Immigrants were also pitted against refugees who were seen as 'queue jumpers'. The challenge was to help people see their deeper common interests with refugees.

## Allies: short and/or long-term?

In listing groups that support a particular issue, we must distinguish between those that are with us in the short term and those that actually share our longer-term interests.

In fighting to stop the Mulroney trade deal, for example, we found some strange bedfellows in the Liberal Party and select elements of the business sector.





## Example 2 - The Table Metaphor

In the fall of 1986, native organizations in Canada were preparing for the final First Minister's Conference on native self-government, to be held in early 1987.

A native leader participating in the moment workshops helped us look at the forces at play around this issue. The 'table' became a metaphor for naming the actors and assessing their interests.

First of all, the table is a western not an indigenous construct, brought to Canada by European settlers. In the same sense, the First Ministers Conferences were also called and framed by the government. Native people would not have created this form of negotiations.

In trying to examine the opposing forces, we asked three major questions:

### Who's at the table?

We placed the four native groups and their lawyers on one side, the federal and provincial government representatives and their lawyers on the other side.

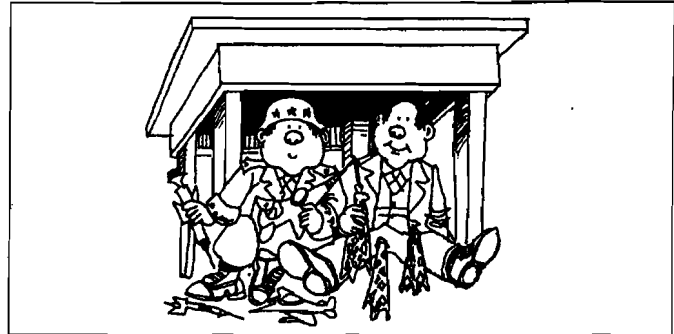
We did a quick analysis of these actors in terms of class, race, and gender; not surprisingly, white male business class interests predominated.

### What's on the table?

The next question forced us to name the expressed interests of the two major opposing forces. We described the strategies evident in the behaviour of the State actors (keeping the debate within the legalistic frame of the constitution, affirming the provincial and federal levels of government as the only two sovereign governments), and

the strategy of the native groups (to emphasize aboriginal rights as an historical given, not as something being requested of the colonial government.)

### What's under the table?



We had placed a small table in the centre of our circle to focus our discussion. At this point, we turned the table upside down and asked: What are the real interests at stake in this government-constructed debate?

We divided into four small groups to examine aspects of these opposing interests: ideological, political, military, and economic.

This activity helped identify alliances that progressive groups could make with native people on this issue. Peace and environmental activists, for example, joined forces with native people in showing how the increasing militarization of Canada served the economic interests of multinational oil companies like ESSO, while taking control of the land and resources of northern native people, destroying the ecology and culture that sustains them.

### Example 3: Dramatizing contradictions

Listing the actors and analyzing their interests and strategies reveals their strengths and weaknesses. Built on a deeper understanding of these opposing interests, we finally need to assess their relative strength and relationship.

The technique of 'theatre of the oppressed' lends itself well to focussing on contradictions in power relationships. In a 1989 moment workshop, community activists learned to use the tool to examine tensions within their own groups around the question of building a base.

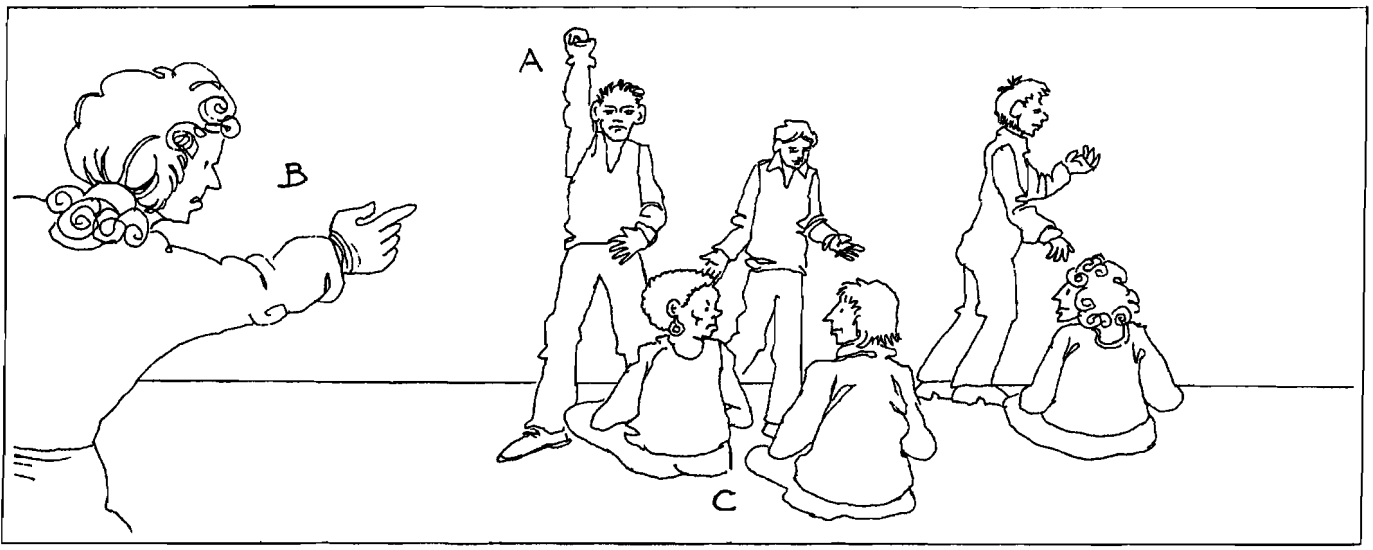
After warming up and learning to sculpt each other into positions of power, participants were asked to reconstruct incidents in their own experience reflecting internal

tensions around base-building.

The drawing below shows the sculpture created by a women labour activist.

In decoding this image we find:

- A the domination of white men within the labour movement;
- B the efforts of feminist members to raise the consciousness and activity of women trade unionists around their own rights and interests;
- C implicit racism among white women activists that excludes women of colour from their efforts.



Notes

There are several ways to use theatre to dig deeper into these contradictions:

- Any one of the actors can be examined more carefully by asking:

What other figures around this person would express in more detail his/her interests? Put them there.

What would each of the actors in the scenario be saying? Say it.

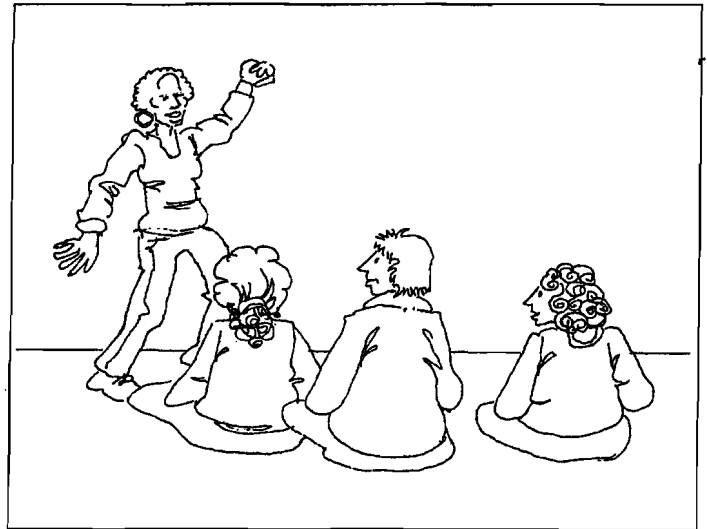
What would the next movement of each be? Do it.



- Accepting this as an accurate picture of the present situation, how would you like to change it? Reconstruct the sculpture to reflect the ideal. What would we have to do to get there?

This is one example of the use of nonverbal tools to examine power relationships. There are many other applications not only of theatre techniques, but also of drawing, photos, music, etc.

Find the forms that are culturally appropriate to the group using them and that group members feel comfortable with. Most important is that they help the group achieve its analytical objective; if that can be done with a lot of energy and creativity, all the better!



### Example 4: Drawing the relationship of forces

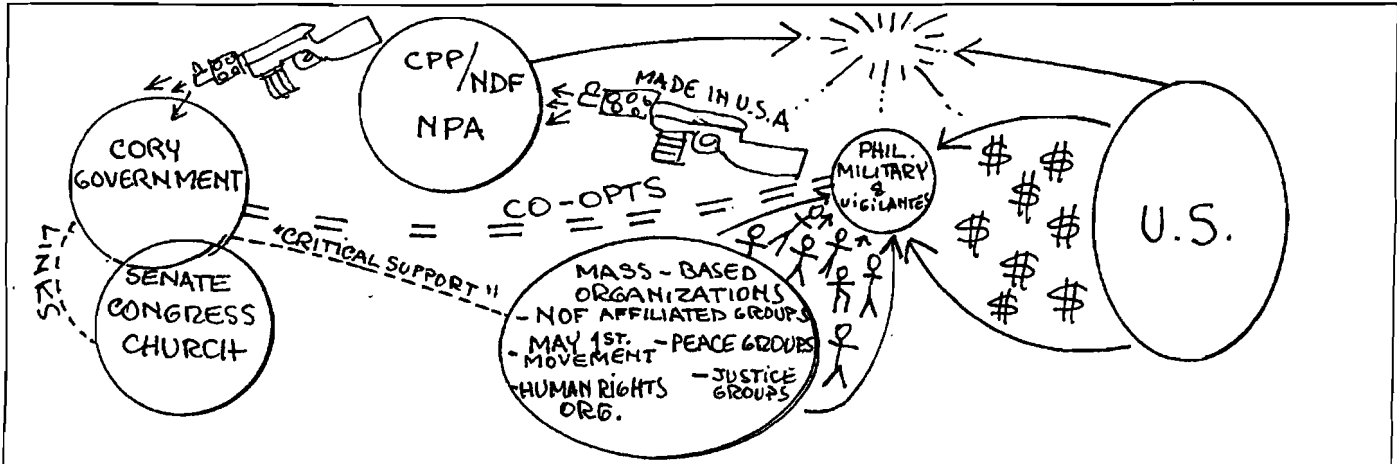
A group working in solidarity with the Philippines chose a graphic method of describing the correlation of forces. The time was mid-1988, two years after the Marcos dictatorship had been overthrown by the more popular government of Cory Aquino.

The graphic below shows different aspects of the forces:

- The size of the circles represents the group's assessment of the relative strength of the various forces at that particular moment.
- The relationship between forces is reflected in two ways:

- their proximity to each other (for example, there is an overlap between the Cory government and the Senate, Congress, and Church; and the Philippine military is placed close to the U.S.);
- graphic symbols of the kind of relationships between forces (for example, guns representing the U.S.-supported force of the military against guerrilla groups - CPP/NDF NPA - as well as the armed struggle of those groups against the government).

This kind of graphic analysis can be done by various groups and their analyses of forces compared. It can also be done over time as forces shift, and their relative power and relationships change.

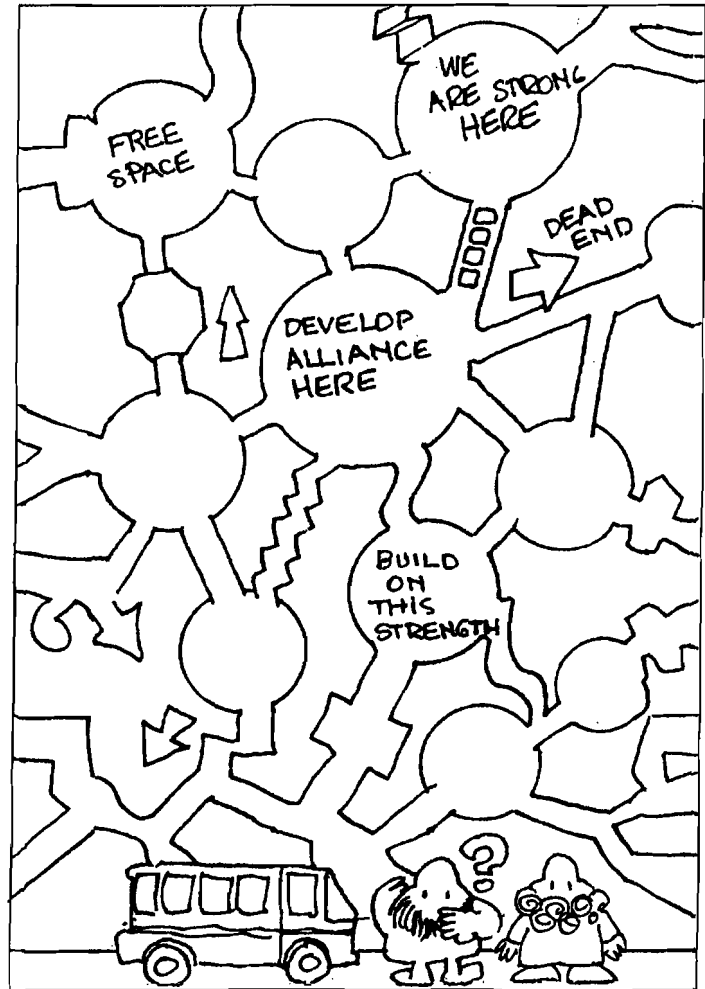


Notes

## PHASE 4 – Planning for Action

This phase involves:

- evaluating past actions to assess which strategies worked well and why (*example 1*);
- reviewing the shifts in forces in the past, anticipating future shifts, and assessing the 'free space' in the present moment (*examples 2 and 3*);
- identifying strategies that build on our strengths, take advantage of their weaknesses, and tap the uncommitted (*example 4*);
- selecting the most effective strategies, by evaluating the constraints and possibilities of those proposed (*example 4*);
- proposing new tactical alliances and how to build them;
- considering how this moment can be used to move toward both short-term goals and longer-term objectives.



Notes

## Why is it important?

Political analysis has little value unless it is applied to planning for action.

It can help us make more strategic decisions about how to use our organizational resources and energies. It can help us link with other allies who have similar goals, to build a broader-based response to the issues we are working on.

Based on our analysis of the relationship of forces (Phase 3), we try to identify what this moment offers that others don't. Even under the most repressive circumstances, there is some 'free space' or 'room to move.' An objective understanding of the social forces involved will help us decide what is historically possible.

But this phase also requires bold imagination. While recognizing the constraints, we need to push the possibilities. We need not only to think dialectically but also to act dialectically. This means finding strengths in what appear to be weaknesses, turning liabilities into assets.

The strategies we adopt provide the road map for our actions. The tactics we develop are the different vehicles we choose for following that map. Tactics need to educate, mobilize, and energize the group.

Both the strategies and tactics we propose should keep in mind our longer-term objectives as well as our short-term goals. Otherwise we may find ourselves winning in the more immediate sense, but not moving toward creating the kind of society we want.



### Example 1: Post-Electoral Strategizing

Evaluation of recent actions is essential to planning future ones.

Activists from eight different sectoral groups met the morning after the November 1988 elections (municipal and federal) to assess their use of the electoral process and the impact of the results of their work in the future.

These are the questions used by each group:

- What key issue(s) did your organization/sector work on during the electoral campaigns?
- What were your short-term goals for the issue during the elections? What are your longer-term objectives in working on the issue?
- What strategies did you use (lobbying, media coverage, base-building, internal education, etc.)? How successful were they?
- What other sectors did you work with during the period and how?
- How will the results of the elections affect your work on the issue (s)?

Out of this collective analysis came new ideas for strategies. For example, women's groups who took anti-Tory stands during the elections now anticipated cuts in government support. This suggested the need for exploring potential new funding sources.

### Example 2 - A global perspective on future events

A Canadian group working in solidarity with Latin America used the graphic tool on the next page to identify upcoming events that would affect their work and, therefore, should inform their strategy.

Because their solidarity work attempts to influence Canadian foreign policy vis-a-vis Latin America, they needed to follow the unfolding of events in three contexts, including the United States because of its major influence in both Latin America and Canada.

First they brainstormed what they knew of past, present and future events in each context, placing them on timelines on a large wall chart.

Then they asked how events in one context affect relationships with another. For example, the defeat of the Contra Aid bill in Washington gave some leverage to Canadians lobbying our government for a non-interventionist policy. To keep this space open, however, there needed to be real efforts to defeat the neo-conservative governments of both the United States and Canada in upcoming elections.

Out of this overview analysis, there were suggestions of strategies for Canadian working in solidarity. One was to educate Canadians about the links between free trade and U.S. intervention in Central America. The development of the Central American peace process clearly was to be affected by the outcomes of elections not only in North America, but also in Central America.

The concurrence of the elections in the United States, Canada, and El Salvador put a lot of emphasis on education and organizing to make best use of the electoral moment.



### Notes

	ONE YEAR AGO May 1987	NOW May 1988	ONE YEAR FROM NOW May 1989
<b>CANADA</b>	Refugee bills	Rise in N.D.P. popularity	
	Privatization of crown corporations, services	Economic Summit	Elections { Free trade Abortion Meech Lake Refugee bills Language rights
		Free Trade Agreement	
<b>UNITED STATES</b>		Election primaries Rise of rainbow coalition Contra military aid defeated	
	Irangate Hearings	Contra humanitarian aid approved	Soviet - U.S. summit
	October Crash		November elections
<b>CENTRAL AMERICA</b>	Joe Clark visit Central America	Nicaraguan currency exchange	Anti-US demos in Honduras
		Guatemalans return home	
	Esquipulas Peace Plan	Meeting of Central Amer. Presidents	U.S. troops invade Honduras
		Sapoa talks	Mexican elections
			Salvadorean elections
			Foreign Ministers' meeting

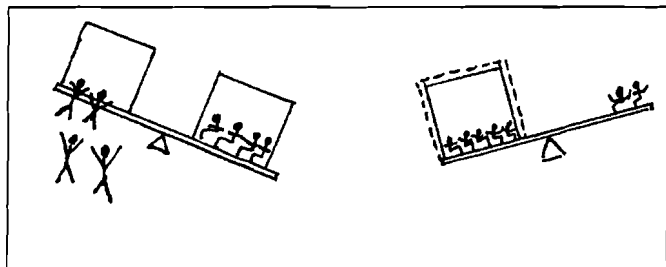
Notes



### Example 3 - Tracing proposed strategies

Another solidarity group also faced the challenge of analyzing events in more than one context. This group, however, was made up primarily of Filipinos in Canada, rather than of Canadians.

The Philippine support group developed the graphic on the next page to compare present conditions in both the international and domestic spheres. They saw the government, military and business forces in the Philippines currently holding the balance of power.



Their goal for the future was to achieve 'popular democracy', shifting the balance of forces through building a united left and allying with middle forces.

The group saw itself in the international sphere as working in collaboration with progressive groups in the anti-intervention movement, both getting updated analyses of the situation from them and offering them an assessment of international forces.

The proposed activities of their work included education of Filipino immigrants and Canadians, networking with other solidarity groups, and organizing as part of the broader anti-intervention movement to support the movement for popular democracy.

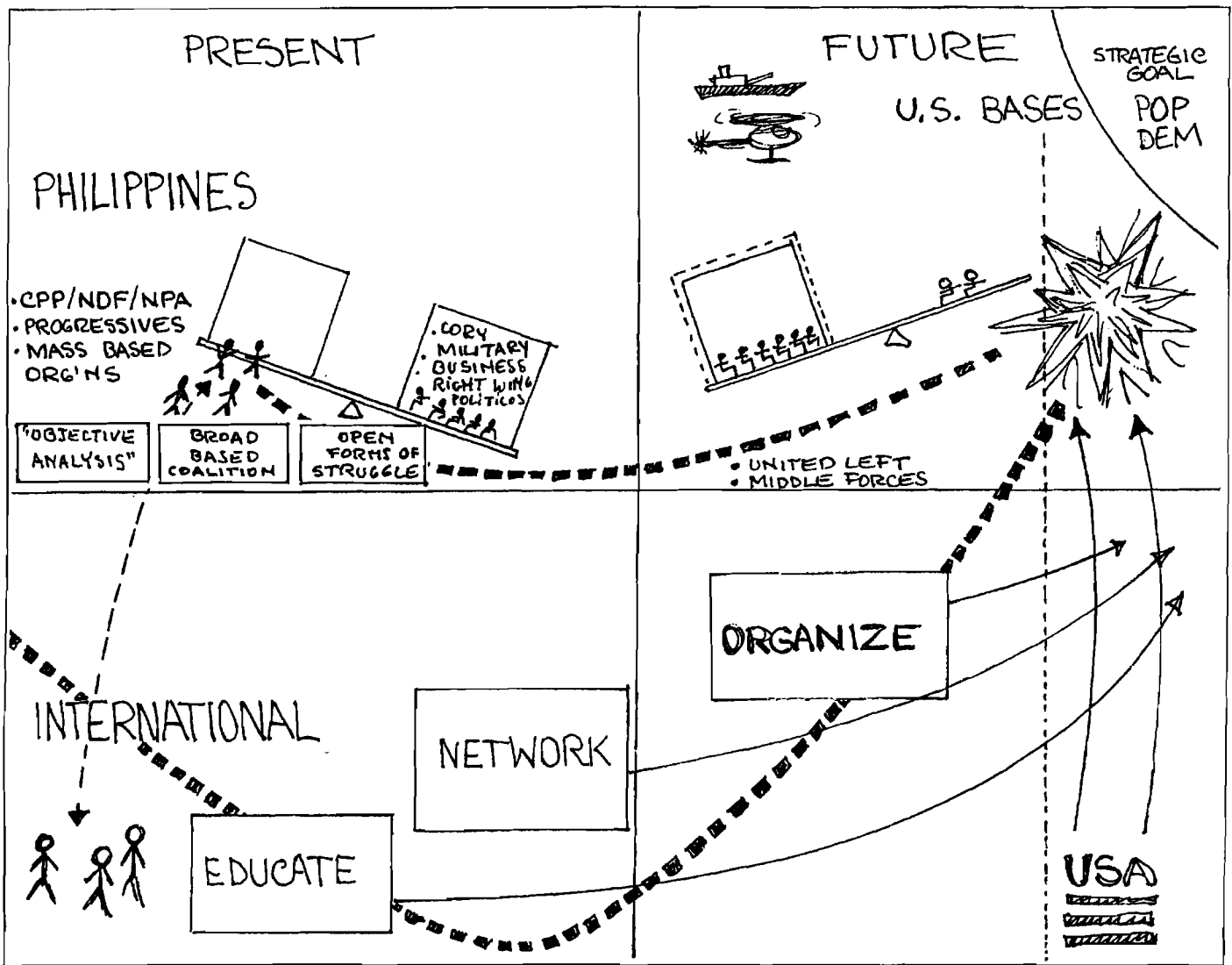
Once again, the role of the United States was critical to future scenarios. U.S. interests, represented by naval and air force bases on Philippine soil, are being challenged. And so, they anticipated an active military intervention from the U.S. as the anti-intervention movement grows.

It is interesting to compare the analysis done by the Canadian solidarity group working with Central America and the assessment of forces by the Filipino support group. On the one hand, there are real similarities in the structural contradictions that each is confronting.

The role of the United States in the Philippines and in Central America has followed similar patterns. There is a deep historical control by the U.S. expressed in economic, political, and ideological forms. Both regions have been strategically important to the United States in military terms as well.

Each solidarity group reflected their own limitations in their analyses. It was not surprising, therefore, that the Canadians had a greater handle on the details of the Canadian elections than on Central American elections. At the same time, the Filipinos lacked such detail in their analysis of the Canadian scene, while understanding better the subtleties of the situation in the Philippines (also reflected on page 45).

The Filipinos, in fact, suggested from this analysis that they make more direct links with other solidarity groups to deepen their own understanding of the strategies and tactics needed in the Canadian context.



Notes

### Example 4 - Free Space Analysis

When it comes to planning actions, we need to expand our sense of the options we usually consider. The 'free space analysis' tool helps us to do that.

The concept of 'free space' is in itself important to political analysis for action. We need to identify what space is offered by the present moment.

But in doing so, we often fall into one of two traps. We either discount immediately certain options as impossible, without exploring them fully. Or we select options that are poor strategies because we have not carefully assessed present conditions.

With the tool illustrated below, a group may examine the constraints and possibilities of any proposed strategy or tactic. But the point is not simply to list those constraints and possibilities.

Rather this is a dialectical tool: it encourages a collective process of looking for the constraints within each possibility and the possibilities within each constraint. It helps us to turn what seem to be liabilities into assets.

This process was used by the environmentalist group previously mentioned. They had clarified their short-term goals and long-term objectives (see page 36) and they had assessed the major forces working with and against them on these goals.

They were now examining different strategies, or spaces available, for achieving their educational goal of helping people to develop a more collective (and not merely personal) concern for the environment.

In the example on the next page, they flesh out the constraints and possibilities offered by the proposed publication of a Green Consumer Guide.



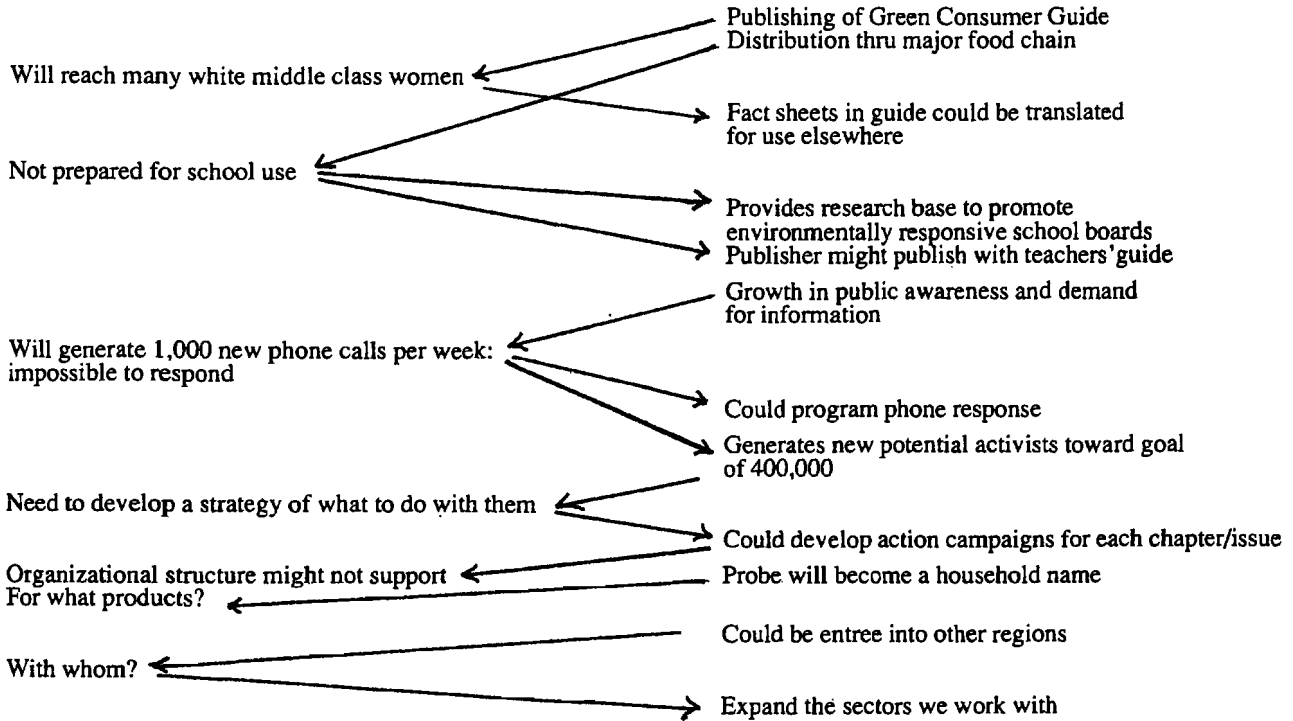
**Our short-term goal:** To create a shift from NIMBY to NIABY consciousness (from personal health/safety to environmental impact on larger community)

**Our long-term objective:** To achieve sustainability

**FREE SPACE**

**Constraints**

**Possibilities**



Once strategies are explored through tools like these, the most likely ones need to be selected. From there, a group can develop a specific action plan: for the next month, six months, a year or two.

It is important at this stage to be very concrete: about the strategy, alliances needed, activities to be organized, persons responsible, and mechanisms to evaluate its effect.

Notes

# 4

## Two Examples: Putting the Phases Together

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The preceding pages have introduced the four phases of the **naming the moment** process, with examples of each. But to understand how the four phases may be integrated within the thinking and actions of social change groups, we will examine the applications of the entire process with two different groups.

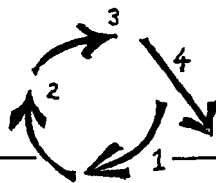
The first example shows how an environmental action group used the method during a weekend training session. In the second example, we will follow the analysis of the free trade battle done between September 1987 and May 1988 by a multisectoral group meeting for monthly workshops.

The two examples will reveal some of the strengths and weaknesses of doing this analysis either within one sector or in a multisectoral context.

In the first case, the organizational base is clear; it is easier to consider concrete strategies for action. The analysis, however, is limited to the perspectives of the group, and thus does not benefit from the input of other sectors.

When **naming the moment** is done with a multi-sectoral group, as in the second example, there is more possibility of constructing a 'bigger picture' of political events. Each sector brings its own perspective and strategies can be compared.

On the other hand, unless the group is a coalition formed for specific action, there is not such a clear base for organizing actions based on the analysis. That must happen more indirectly within the sectors represented.




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Notes

## One Organization Works on its Issue: Garbage Recycling in Toronto

The first example builds on the experience of three staff members of a local environmental advocacy group, Pollution Probe. In a weekend training program introducing the **naming the moment** process, this team used the four phases to examine the issue of garbage recycling in metro Toronto.

### Phase 1 - Identifying Ourselves

To introduce themselves to other groups, the Pollution Probe members created a skit of their door-to-door canvassing efforts. Staff members and volunteers met citizens in their homes with all the typical distractions, such as blaring TVs and screaming children.

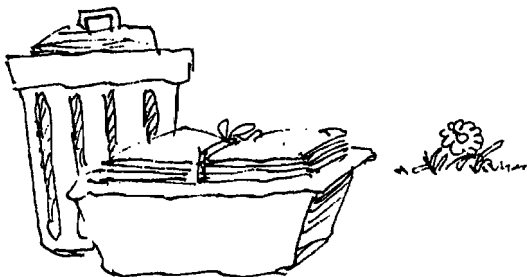
Their task was to convince the residents that they didn't have to feel powerless regarding problems of the environment. The strategy was to show them how they could in their daily lives contribute to solving those problems, starting with a practice like garbage recycling.

Concerned citizens could start by taking action around their homes. Then they were encouraged to move beyond their homes to take action at their workplaces, pressuring for more healthy practices. The third level of action would be to join groups like Pollution Probe to advocate and to lobby government for major changes.

In this short skit, the environmentalists identified, then, their constituency which is quite broad: the general public; in terms of activists, they are primarily white middle class. They also demonstrated one of the organization's major strategies: direct contact with people and education that starts with their lives and moves outward.

In a later workshop, this group further reflected on their identify as an organization. They noted that all but one staff of 50 were white, all but two or three were of anglo protestant background; most were, in fact, born and raised in southern Ontario.

They asked: what difference does this make in the kind of work we do? Most of the canvassing work, for example, is done in middle class neighbourhoods. If they were to develop alliances with labour or native peoples, for example, the question of their class and racial composition would have to be addressed.



Notes

## Phase 2 - Naming the Issues

The three participants were part of a staff team that had been pressuring municipalities in Ontario for changes in waste management practices. They chose this as their issue.

In analyzing the history of struggle around this issue, they noted that it had its origins in the Industrial Revolution and reflected the affluence of advanced industrial capitalist countries.

In more specific terms, they chose to focus on current efforts for garbage recycling.

Their **short-term goal** was to get garbage recycling practices established in municipalities and industries across the province of Ontario.

An **intermediate goal** was to use the garbage crisis as a catalyst for educating people about what they could do to fight against useless waste and environmental destruction.

The **longer-term objective** was to achieve a sustainable relationship between human beings, development, and the environment.

For example, the Canadian Environmental Law Association shares with Pollution Probe both the short-term goal of garbage recycling and the longer-term goal of sustainability.

- Uncommitted actors appear in *italics*; if they are 'with us' on the short-term goal, they appear in the first column, but are not yet long-term allies.

CUPE, the public sector union, for example, supports the garbage recycling campaigns but has not been clear on its long-term commitment to a sustainable environment as defined by Probe.

- The actors 'against us' are in lower case letters; a few appear 'with us' in the short term, but most are in the 'against us' column for both the short and long-term goals.

The Ministry of Energy and professional engineers, for example, are seen as having interests opposed to those expressed in the short-term and long-term goals.

- Actors are in parentheses ( ) if the group felt they needed to do more research on them.

Most of these are in the uncommitted category, such as church groups and labour unions, suggesting the need to explore potential new alliances with progressive elements within these institutions.

- The key players or forces in this fight are circled on the chart.

## Phase 3 - Assessing the Forces

Using the above goals as a basis for determining allies, the group listed the actors 'with us,' 'uncommitted,' and 'against us' in the ideological, political, and economic sphere. The results are on the following page.

The team used this coding system:

- Actors WITH US in the short and long term appear in capital letters.

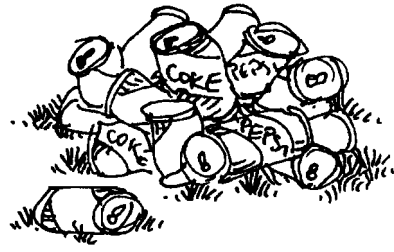
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Notes

**Our short-term goal: GARBAGE RECYCLING**

**Our long-term objective: SUSTAINABILITY**

	WITH US	UNCOMMITTED	AGAINST
<b>IDEOLOGICAL</b>	<i>Environmental Studies Program</i>	<i>School Boards</i>	SMALL ENERGY PRODUCERS (misguided)
	<b>PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHERS</b>	(traditional economists)	(institute of environmental studies)
<b>POLITICAL</b>	<i>Ontario Research Foundations</i>	Globe & Mail	engineering school
	TEMPLE J.	(Church groups)	metro council
	(The Journal)	(Most municipalities)	Gilbert
	(BRADLEY)/GRIER	Amo	metro works
	METRO NDP CAUCUS	<i>Environmental Action Branch</i>	<b>waste management branch of the Ministry of the Environment</b>
	CDN. ENVIRONMENTAL LAW ASSOC.	<i>Cdn. Council on Acid Rain</i>	Ontario Ministry of Energy
	'Not in my Backyard' Groups	<i>Recycling Industries</i>	tdhc
	CITIZENS FOR WASTE MANAGEMENT	(Apartment owners/supers)	professional engineers
	WATERLOO PUBLIC INTEREST RSCH GP.	(Charitable funders)	energy from waste proponents
	<b>CITIZENS FOR A SAFE ENVIRONMENT</b>	(Commercial Sector)	petro chemical industries
<b>RECYCLING COUNCIL OF ONTARIO</b>	(Restaurant Sector)	(packaging industries)	
<b>ECONOMIC</b>	S. RIVERDALE COMM. HEALTH CENTRE	(Trade Unions)	pulp and paper
	METRO TORONTO WORKS COMMITTEE		other primary resource industries
	ENVIRONMENT DEFENSE FUND (U.S.)		
	<i>City of Guelph</i>		
	<i>Star (operations)</i>		
	<b>ontario multi materials recycling industries (coke, peps, stelco)</b>		
	waste haulers		
	alcan		
	<i>St. Catherine's CAW</i>		
	CUPE		
<i>Resource Interior Systems</i>			
Recycling Entrepreneurs			



Notes



The large companies who are among the Ontario Multi-Materials Recycling Industries (Coke, Pepsi, Stelco) are the major economic forces to be contended with. They appear supportive in the efforts to institute garbage recycling but are not considered long-term allies for a truly sustainable development.

In the ideological sphere, public school teachers are seen as key potential allies. This recognition has led to a major Pollution Probe education project, trying to integrate environmental education into all aspects of the curriculum.

At the political level, there is a major tension between the Recycling Council of Ontario which shares PP's goals and objectives and the Waste Management Branch of the Ministry of the Environment. As is sometimes the case, there are splits within the ministry itself, with Minister James Bradley often being an ally of environmental advocacy groups like Pollution Probe.

This more intricate assessment of forces helps to reveal the contradictions within groups as well as between groups. When developing strategies, it is very important not to view these institutions and organizations as monolithic structures.

It is often the tensions within that suggest the 'free space' needed in order to take action at a particular moment. The example given at the start of this manual (pages 2-3) illustrated how one community group took advantage of these contradictions. By gaining the support of Jim Bradley, the Minister (though not of the entire ministry), they were

able to 'get the lead out' and the soil replaced in 1,000 properties in South Riverdale.

#### Phase 4 - Planning for Action

In their longer term efforts to educate Canadians to lobby governments and to pressure industries to take action, the Pollution Probe team projected a long-term process. The chart on the following page traces the steps of the proposed strategy.

The horizontal movement on the chart refers to the time line. The vertical charts the proposed movement from responses that are less environmentally sound to ones that more so.

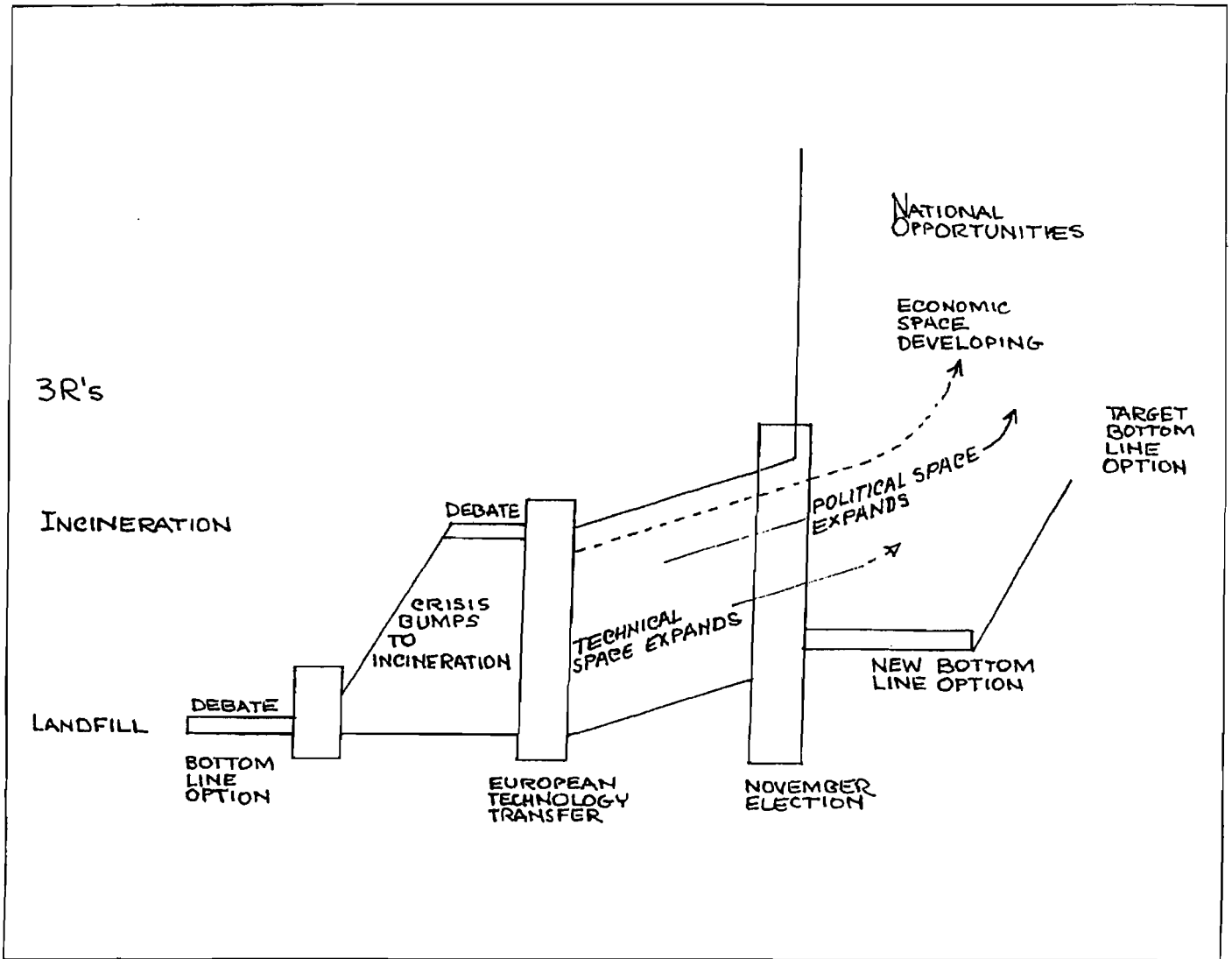
Landfills represented the 'bottom line option' in the debate around waste management until the garbage crisis pushed the public response to demand incineration.

The goal of the garbage recycling project was to develop the public consciousness and political will to adopt a '3 R's' strategy: reduce, reuse, and recycle. Examples from Europe of technology transfer were expanding the technical space.

By making the environment a national issue, it was hoped that the November federal elections would broaden the political space. This would in turn make more resources available, expanding the economic space and raising the bottom line option to the 3 R's.



Notes



Notes

## Multisectoral Analysis of Free Trade

The second example of the use of the four phases of the **naming the moment** process comes from quite a different grouping. This was a multisectoral gathering of 20 or so Toronto community activists who met monthly between Sept. 1987 and May 1988.

### Phase 1 – Identifying ourselves and our positions

The group represented a variety of groups - labour, women, church, solidarity, environment, anti-poverty. In order to define the common basis they had for doing political analysis, they decided to look at some of the assumptions they held about what they were working for.

The group carried out a vision exercise which revealed a common commitment to working for structural change and building a more equitable society.

Several participants were also active in the local Coalition Against Free Trade, whose coordinator was also present.

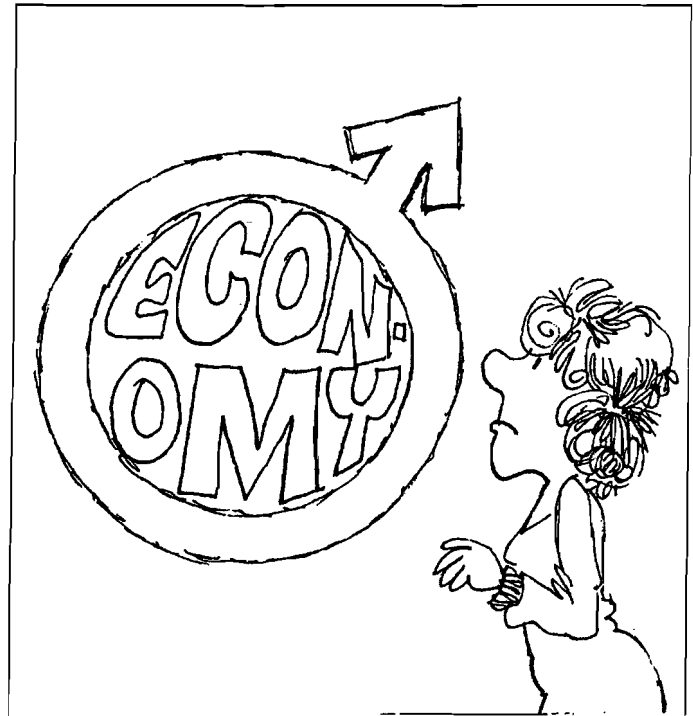
Throughout the months that the group analyzed the shifting forces within the free trade debate, group members raised further questions about 'who they were' and how that limited or informed their analysis.

In one session, for example, members assigned to monitor heterosexism, gender, race, and class biases in the conversation made these comments:

"Talk about the economy is traditionally a male sphere. It's no coincidence that more men chose to be in the group

looking at the 'restructuring of the world economy' while only one man joined the 'social services' group. The category 'social' in this case is often used as a mask for what are often really economic and political issues."

"There is a gender gap in terms of comfort and ease with discussing the free trade issue. When it's presented as a question of numbers and statistics it creates some unease, even amongst ourselves."



Notes

Early in the workshop series, participants decided to break into four working groups:

- Foreign policy and militarization (peace and solidarity activists)
- Privatization of social services (community workers, feminists)
- Culture, information and media (artists and academics)
- The future of transnational capitalism (labour activists, socialist feminists)

These categories in themselves revealed some of the limits of the group. There was no group looking specifically at the impact of free trade on jobs, for example. The glaring omission perhaps reflected the fact that no rank and file workers were in the group.

There was some critical analysis, however, of this potential class bias:

"We may have to think about Margaret Atwood (as a spokesperson against free trade) compared to trade unionists and workers (speaking out for themselves), and where really

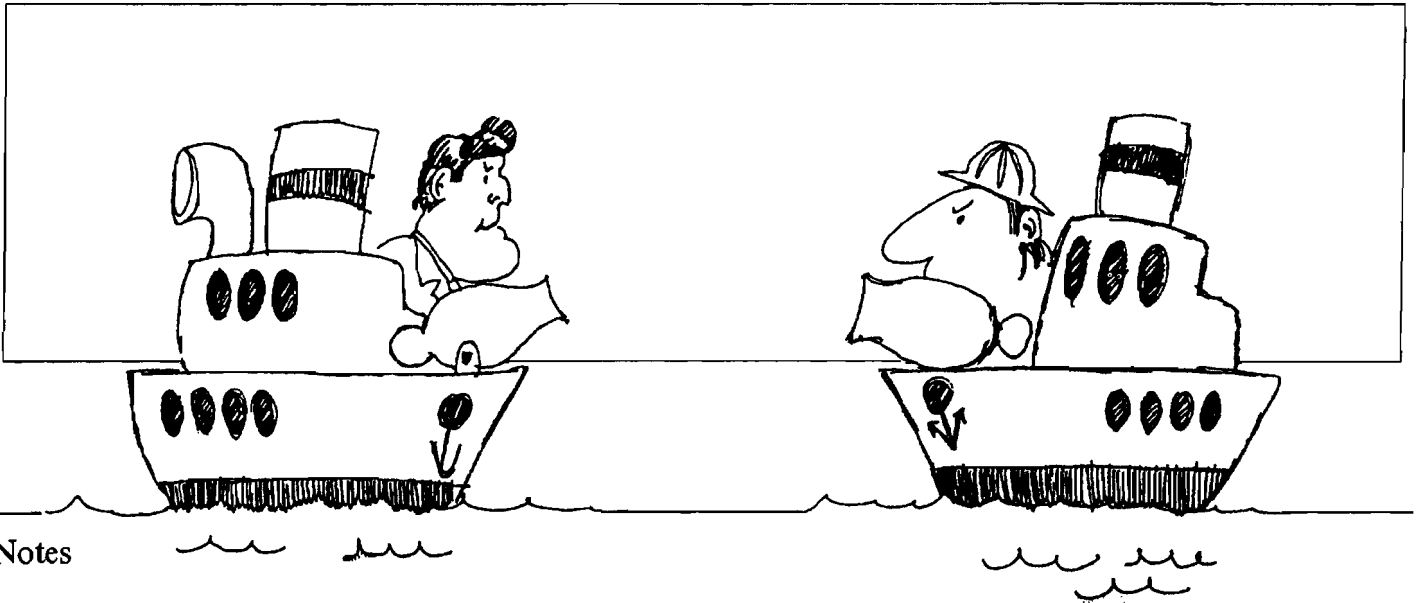
is the cutting edge of our activity? We need to be more conscious about these questions of what is the class basis for change, as against who are the intellectuals who can best argue one position or another."

This tension around the question of leadership and grass roots involvement, in fact, was present throughout the free trade battle, within specific sectors as well as in multisectoral coalitions. It raised the important issue of leadership, on the one hand, which is not always clearly conceived within progressive groups.

At the same time, it made activists look more critically at their own ability to build a base of those people most affected, to speak out and organize for themselves.

## Phase 2 - Naming the Issue

While there were ongoing tensions related to these differences within the group, the common bond was a shared belief that 'free trade' was the most critical issue, not only of the moment but perhaps of the decade.



Notes

During the first session of the series, all participants were asked to name what was the key contradiction of the moment. More than half named the free trade battle. The consensus was that the Mulroney trade deal reflected more clearly than any other battle the deeper structural contradiction between the rich and the poor - not only in Canada but globally.

It was clear that the proposed agreement served well the interests of multinationals whether in Canada or elsewhere. Other competitive businesses in Canada also stood to benefit. But for the majority, free trade with the United States would only deepen Canada's dependency on the global capitalist system. Once again, the poor would suffer.

For two months, participants worked in smaller groups to 'flesh out the issue' or examine particular aspects of the free trade proposal. It was important to first put the issue into an historical context and situate it relative to other trends. A working group looking at trends of transnational capitalism concluded:

"It's a period of tremendous class conflict, tremendous political and ideological crisis, repression of labour, social movements, women in particular, and tremendous international reorganization."

"Free trade is the reaction of a capitalist class that recognizes there are major problems on the world stage. Not out of greed so much as fear, Canadian capitalists are trying to hook up with some entity that will protect its interests as an internationalized capitalist production machine."

Other groups showed how this multinational agenda was also leading decisions about the militarization of Canada

and, consequently, our foreign policy. Nor was it inconsistent with other aspects of the Tory agenda: privatization, deregulation, and the dismantling of social programs.

The group investigating the potential impact of free trade on social services interviewed Marjorie Cohen, a feminist sociologist who has studied the service sector and women's work in particular. They were able to examine what had been until then a 'sleeper' in the free trade debate.

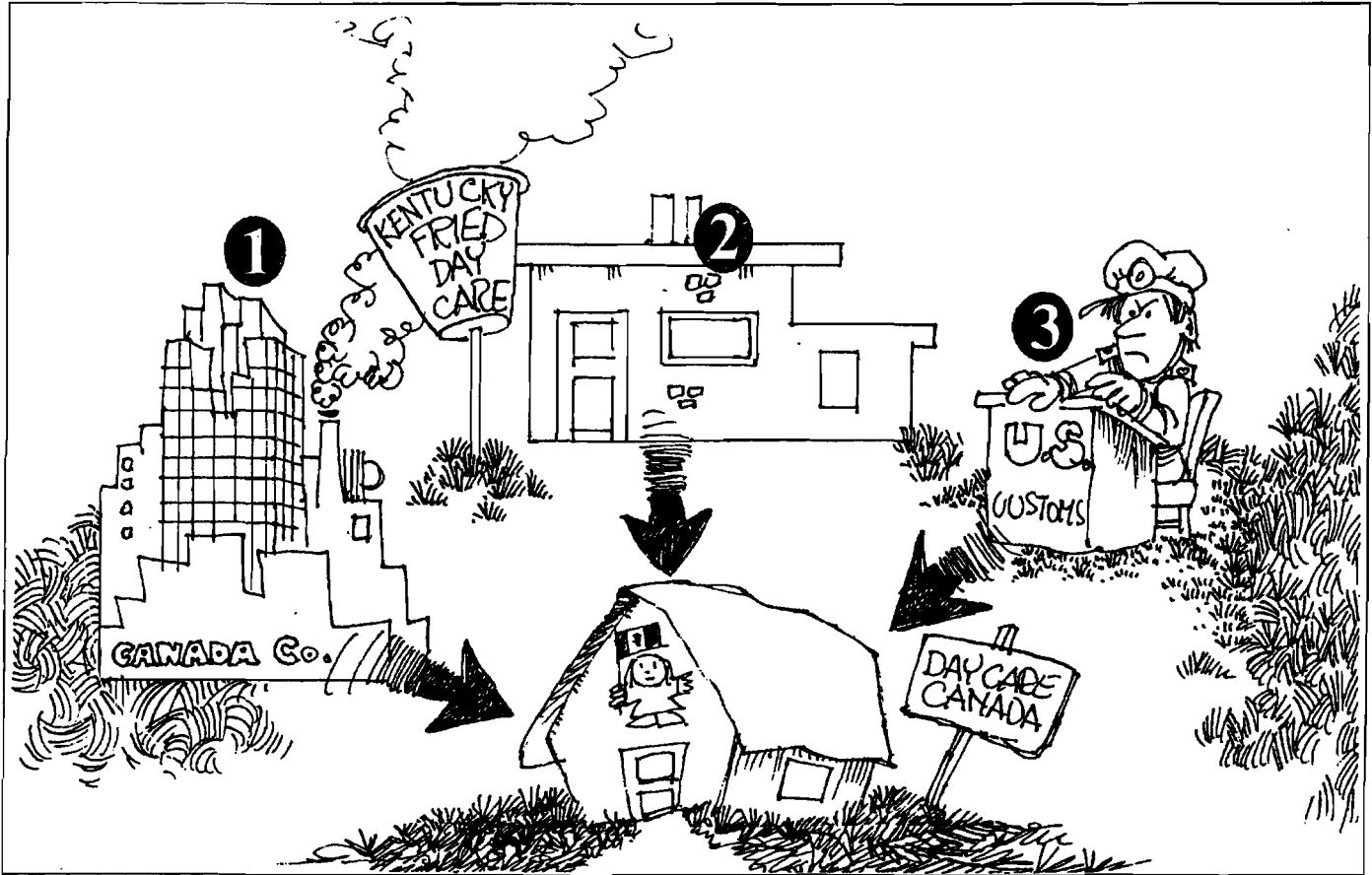
While Mulroney tried to frame the deal as a purely 'commercial' document, these social service workers knew well that new political and social relationships would emerge from a new economic agreement.

One member of the group worked with a day care coalition and so the group illustrated the point using the example of what would happen to day care under free trade. The drawing on the next page is coded by numbers:

- 1 With more pressure to compete on a freer market, Canadian companies will push the government for lower corporate taxes, accomplished by decreasing public spending on social program such as unemployment and health insurance and day care.
- 2 U.S. private day care enterprises will have new rights to establish themselves in Canada, and to receive the same treatment as Canadian firms. This will lower Canadian control over the standards of day care.

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## Notes



We have already seen this in certain American day care chains such as Mini-Skool.

- 3 In efforts to 'level the playing field,' U.S. business may charge that public support of services such as day

care is an 'unfair' subsidy. There is not yet a clear mechanism for deciding what is fair or unfair. That is to be decided within 5 to 7 years, by which time, Canada as the smaller partner will have lost most of its bargaining power.

Notes

In clarifying the structural underpinnings of the free trade battle, the group got clear about what they were *against*. There was a shared commitment to the **short-term goal**:

### to stop the deal

But group members realized that this was just one manoeuvre in a longer-term war against the interests of the poor, working people, women and minorities. And so they had to clarify what they were fighting for - their **longer-term objective**. This they described as:

### to build a social movement for fundamental social change

The naming of the short-term goal and the longer-term objective reflected the critical tension between the structural and conjunctural. The fight against the free trade deal offered an opportunity to educate Canadians about some of the deeper structural inequalities of our society.

It was important that this moment be used, then, not only for the short term but for the longer-term objective of creating more just structures.

### Phase 3 - Assessing the Forces

Once clear about their shared goals, the group was ready to list those forces with and against them on those goals.

They used the social tree categories (page 30), listing actors on both sides of the question in the economic, political, social, and ideological sphere.



The final list (appearing on the next 2 pages) was developed over two months, and in fact, kept being added to throughout the series.

**Our short-term goal: TO STOP THE DEAL**

**Our long-term objective: TO BUILD A SOCIAL MOVEMENT FOR  
FUNDAMENTAL SOCIAL CHANGE**

**FORCES WITH US**

- \* ACTRA (David McLaren)
- \* Writers' Union (Margaret Atwood)
- \* Playwrights' Union (Rick Salutin)
- \* Independent Artists' Union
- \* Toronto Arts Council
- Canadian Popular Theatre Association
- Toronto Star
- \* GATT - Fly church coalition
- \* Jesuit Centre
- \* United Church (John Foster)
- Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops
- Project Ploughshares

**Ideological**

**FORCES AGAINST US**

John Crispo (U of T)  
CTV  
Global TV  
Cineplex  
Fraser Institute  
C.D. Howe Institute (Lipsey)  
Toronto Sun  
Saturday Night (Conrad Black)  
Globe & Mail  
Financial Post

**Social**

- \*\* Pro-Canada Network
- Coalition Quebecoise d'Opposition au Libre Echange
- Canadian Peace Alliance
- Toronto Disarmament Network  
(Canadian Environmental Lawyers Association)  
(Canadian Wildlife Association)
- \* National Action Committee on the  
Status of Women (Marjorie Cohen)
- \* Women Against Free Trade Campaign
- \* Organized Working Women
- \* Day Care Coalition
- \* One Voice - The Canadian Seniors' Network
- National Anti-Poverty Organization
- \* Union of Unemployed Workers
- Council of Canadians (Mel Hurtig)

Energy Probe



Notes



**Our short-term goal: TO STOP THE DEAL**  
**Our long-term objective: TO BUILD A SOCIAL MOVEMENT FOR FUNDAMENTAL SOCIAL CHANGE**

**FORCES WITH US**

NDP Party (Broadbent, Rae)  
 Premier Pawley  
 Liberal Party (Turner, Axworthy)  
 Premiers Ghiz, Peterson, Peckford, McKenna

**Political****FORCES AGAINST US**

Reagan Administration  
 PC Party (Mulroney, Wilson, Carney, Reisman)  
 Parizeau (PQ)  
 Premiers Getty, Devine, Bourassa, VanderZalm

**Economic**

CLC (Nancy Rich)  
 \* CCU, CTCU (Laurell Ritchie, John Lang)  
 \* OFL (Jim Turk, Sean O'Flynn)  
 \* CAW (Bob White)  
 \* USAW (Leo Gerrard, Michael Lewis)  
 CUPW (Jean-Claude Parrot)  
 \* Communication Workers  
 \* United Electrical Workers  
 CUPE (Jeff Rose)  
 \* Brewery Workers' Union  
 \* OPSEU  
 \* Metro Labour Council (Ross Sutherland)  
 \* National Farmers' Union  
 \*\* Canadian Teachers' Federation  
 Coop Atlantic  
 Agricultural Marketing Boards

Canadian Alliance for Trade and Job Opportunities  
 Economic Council of Canada  
 BCNI (Thomas DAquino)  
 Chamber of Commerce  
 Canadian Manufacturers Association  
 Royal Bank of Canada  
 Northern Telecom  
 Canadian Federation of Independent Businesses  
 Noranda  
 ALCAN  
 Bank of Nova Scotia  
 U.S. Business Lobby

CODES: \* Members of the Toronto-based Coalition  
 Against Free Trade; national organizations listed

Notes

Next to some organizations key leaders or personalities are also noted. These were people who figured prominently in the debate, often as spokespersons and sometimes as symbols of the interests they represented. This was a time, for example, when major business leaders became much more vocal in defending their interests, headed by Thomas D'Aquino of the Business Council on National Issues (BCNI).

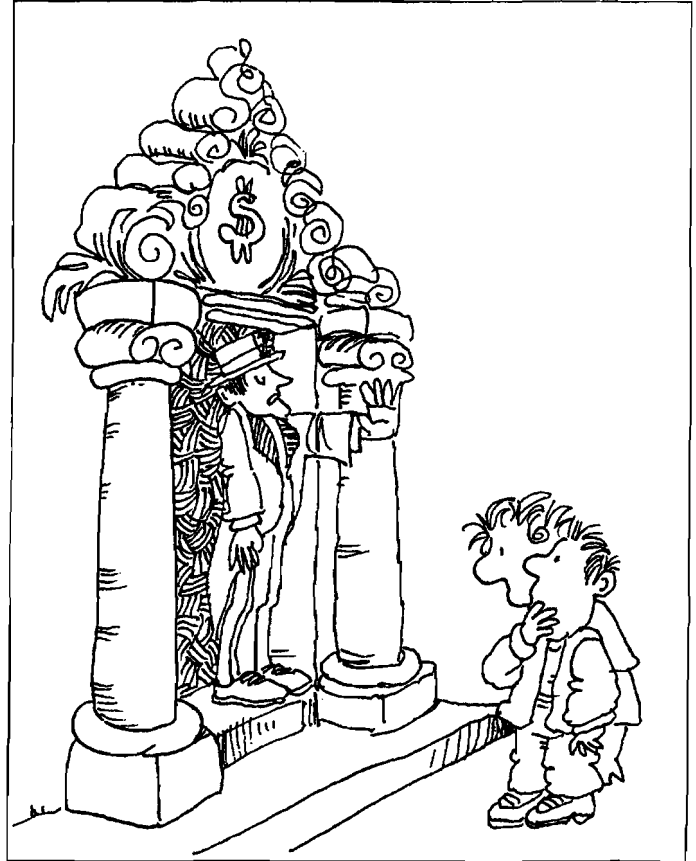
For one session, the group did a more in depth analysis of the economic interests at stake. They learned that it was the BCNI, in fact, that had first planted the seeds for the free trade deal at a meeting at the U.S. embassy in Ottawa in the mid 1980's.

The BCNI represents over 70 top corporations, and includes the Canadian Manufacturers Association and independent businesses. It is dominated by U.S. multinationals, banks and Canadian multinationals. Its aims are lower taxes and higher profit.

One group member brought in a four-page list of U.S. businesses lobbying Washington to pass the deal. The collective research done in this area revealed a couple of interesting problems within the group:

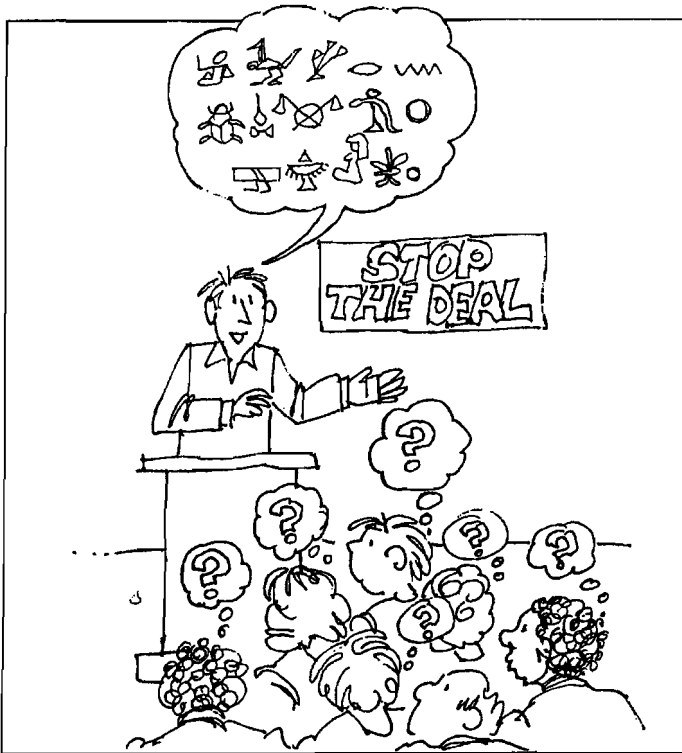
- There was a major lack of knowledge of the dominant forces and particularly of the economic institutions and business leaders who control the economy. These interests are so often represented by political leaders or dominant media that there is little need for them to be visible. Yet the free trade debate forced many of them to show their true colors.

- While this moment offered an opportunity, then, to better understand the major actors of Canadian capital and their real interests, there was also resistance within the group to focus on this area. Coupled with ignorance was a fear of discussion on the workings of the economy.



Notes





Some participants said they felt "overwhelmed by economic issues." A discussion of this feeling suggested that the majority of Canadians felt the same way, and that this fed into the government's strategy of keeping them in the dark.

The entire public debate on free trade had not only emphasized the economic illiteracy of the population but had deliberately been carried out at a level which did not

involve people in connecting the issue to their daily lives. This analysis suggested the need for strategies that do so.

Another important tension was revealed as the group began to analyze the interests and strategies of the actors working for and against the free trade deal. This was the contradiction presented by the nationalist strategy.

Where this became evident was in the naming of the Liberal Party, and perhaps the Toronto Star as short-term allies, as 'forces with us' in efforts 'to stop the deal'.

But once participants asked: "Are they with us in the longer-term objective of building a movement for fundamental social change?", the conflicting interests were clear.

The Liberals were not against free trade per se, but rather against the Mulroney trade deal. While they used a lot of anti-American rhetoric, they supported a multilateral trade agreement through GATT (the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade). And GATT remained dominated by U.S. multinational interests.

It was important to recognize these different interests among short-term allies, who obviously would not be 'with us' in the long term. A nationalist strategy was consistent with deeper liberal interests, and also served to confuse Canadians about how the economy is really structured. As one workshop participant pointed out:

"U.S. workers are also threatened by the Free Trade Agreement because it both strengthens the capitalist classes and gives more might vis-a-vis workers' movements."

Some strategic questions raised in the group by this assessment of the forces and their interests were:

"How do we put the question in its multinational context without ignoring the role of nationalism in the particular struggle?"

"How do we mobilize around economic issues that we don't understand?"

"Why has the debate not dealt with social services?"

There was also a critical look at the growing forces against the free trade deal:



"Immigrants groups are notably lacking from the coalition."

"We're losing credibility because we don't have an alternative."

"How do we build an alternative with emphases upon decentralization and community ownership (not just state ownership)?"

"There is a struggle within the labour movement between those who want labour to fight alone and those who want to work with coalitions."

In trying to do a final assessment of the correlation of forces, there was a feeling of desperation:

"Free trade is going to change the conditions under which we work for social change. I'm willing to sacrifice the long term goals to win this battle. It is not a realistic goal to educate Canadians about an alternative in 12 months."

Others were more optimistic, yet still pragmatic:

"Our unity right now is very strong. Let constituencies talk about nationalism if it works."

"This is a watershed. If we defeat the capitalist class on this, it will create good conditions for our work for social change."

This discussion led the group to decide to devote the remaining five sessions of the series on free trade. There was a new sense of urgency, however, that the group focus more on actions that could be taken within their organizations and by the coalition.

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## Notes

## Phase 4 - Planning for Action

To initiate the next few months of ongoing analysis and action planning, three spokespeople were invited from key sectors activities in the fight against free trade: a United Church leader also co-chair of the coalition, a feminist leader involved both in NAC and OFL Women's Committee efforts, and a labour educator central to efforts to involve immigrants and visible minorities in this struggle.

They laid out the strategies of their respective organizations, and named some of the tensions within their sectors as well as across sectors.

At the end of the session, workshop participants were asked to name how their organizations were involved in the fight against the trade deal. From this discussion, they formed three working groups to share and formulate new strategies in these areas:

- popular education of our own groups
- grass-roots organizing, broadening the base
- use of the media

These groups worked over three months. Critical to their planning was a monthly plenary session which involved a political weather report of the past month's events that impacted on the free trade battle. The task carried out in the weather report is described to the right.

An example of the March report appears on the following page. In March, for example, Premier Howard Pawley resigned. With his departure from the political scene, anti-free trade forces lost one of their key supports and the strategy of pressuring provinces to refuse to implement the deal was weakened.

## POLITICAL WEATHER REPORT

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**SHORT TERM GOAL:** TO STOP THE MULRONEY TRADE DEAL

**LONG TERM OBJECTIVE:** TO BUILD A BROAD-BASED POPULAR MOVEMENT FOR FUNDAMENTAL SOCIAL CHANGE

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**EVENTS THAT HELP US**

**EVENTS THAT HURT US**

- \* THINK OF ONE EVENT OF THE PAST MONTH (LOCAL, NATIONAL, GLOBAL) THAT HAS HAD IMPACT ON THE SHORT-TERM GOAL OR LONG TERM OBJECTIVE.
- \* PLACE IT ON EITHER SIDE OF THE BULL'S EYE, ON THE LEFT IF IT HELPS IN PURSUING OUR GOALS/OBJECTIVES, TO THE RIGHT IF IT HURT US.
- \* EXPLAIN WHY & HOW THE EVENT IS STRATEGICALLY IMPORTANT

# POLITICAL WEATHER REPORT

March, 1988

Events that help us

Events that hurt us

Turks in Church:  
heralds church/state  
conflict; may affect  
election

The U.S. invades Honduras:  
Cds realize 'Who needs enemies with  
friends like this', i.e. the imperial  
character of the U.S. is clarified.

The U.S. invades Honduras: an  
escalation of terrorism in the  
region; likely to cause increased  
U.S. support for Contra Aid.

Growing opposition to the  
Meech Lake Accord by  
Native Canadians,  
Francophones, & elements  
of the NDP.

Protectionist candidates lose ground  
in the U.S. presidential primaries;  
weakens opposition in the U.S.

Business studies & conference show  
free trade hurts the Cdn. economy: a  
split within the pro-free trade forces  
and a reminder of the structure of  
international capital.

Demonstration at the U.S.  
embassy.

Workshop on social analysis  
with D & P group connect  
elements of free trade & local  
issues

**FREE  
TRADE**

The Manitoba government falls;  
Mulroney hails the upcoming  
election as a 'referendum' on  
free trade.

Strong showing of Jesse Jackson in  
the U.S. presidential primaries shows  
a new coalition can be built even here  
in North America

The CLC experiences budget  
problems as campaigns 'blow  
budget'.

Textile duty remission program  
meets strong U.S. opposition;  
Canada caves in.

The CAW settles its strike  
against Northern Telecom and  
gains indexed pensions as a  
benefit.

Notes

There were several educational and cultural actions which grew directly out of the workshop discussion:

- an all-day forum on free trade and social services
- popular theatre by Ground Zero Production, built on a story designed in a workshop group
- a travelling photo exhibit Making Free Trade Visible that featured ordinary Canadians from a variety of sectors speaking out on free trade
- posters and stickers designed for a municipal free trade petition day
- the on-the-spot writing of several anti-free trade songs, one of which appears to the right



## GIVE UP

### The USA's Lenten Song on Free Trade

(12 bar blues)

#### Chorus

Group A) Give up, give up give up, give up, give up."

Group B) "Oh no -- we won't give up."

I'm a Yanker trader, let's strike a deal  
Let me put your country on Vanna White's wheel

By the way there's stuff ya gotta give up  
There's no free lunch in free trade with me

I've got a list and it's not very long  
Though it might make an Irishman sing a blue song

Chorus: "Give up, give up, give up, etc."

By Bob Carty, February, 1988

As importantly many groups represented in the workshop participated in the broader Coalition Against Free trade and its mass actions. There were common members involved in both the workshop and coalition meetings. Some pushed for greater participation of anti-poverty and visible minority groups.

While the workshop group was closely linked to the coalition, the difference between the two groupings was more in their function and what they offered to community groups.

While the coalition was clearly the base for organizing cross-sectoral actions, it did not offer much space for regular collective analysis of events and strategies. The workshops provided a forum for activists to reflect more deeply on the underlying questions of the debate and to rethink their actions.



Notes

# 5

## Practice: Naming the Moment Every Day

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The kind of political analysis described here is not meant to be a one-shot deal. If an organization is to develop its own analytical skills to organize more strategic actions, then the process must be built into the ongoing worklife of the group.

To name the moment, we need to develop a sense of the shifts of forces over time, an understanding of the lessons from past actions, and an ability to project future scenarios. This implies regular, systematic analysis of events and of our work in light of those events.

This is perhaps the biggest challenge. There are not only external but also internal obstacles to building this process into our organizational practice. In fact, we need to do an 'assessment of the forces' within in order to strategize how to do more ongoing political analysis for action.

Before suggesting some starting points for social change groups and organizations, let's look at a couple of examples of efforts by other groups to introduce and integrate analytical practice into their work.




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## Introducing the idea

The Ontario Public Interest Research Group (OPIRG) holds an annual Public Interest School. At the 1988 meeting, they organized a **naming the moment** session to introduce the practice to member groups across the province.

The provincial organization had chosen food as a priority issue area.

Their short-term goal was to develop projects around food issues in the local PIRGs. The longer-term objective was to move towards an equitable and just food system which would provide good, healthy food.

The group did a Political Weather Report to assess the current political context within which they were working on this issue.

They were asked to think of events which could hurt or help them in achieving their goals. Group members wrote these events on cards and placed them on a bull's eye chart. The short-term goal was in the central circle; the longer term objective in the bigger circle.

The group as a whole decided where the event should be placed on the chart, whether or not it helped advance their work on the short and long term goals. This collective discussion made the activity more dynamic, as people argued over the impact of certain events.

The group animator reported from that session:

"We talked about identifying short-term and long-term objectives and of the importance of doing so. We touched on both the extreme left's concept of 'pure' and a liberal abhorrence of 'using' allies in political strategies. This is a BIG discussion but an important one for a group that is diverse in outlook and politics."

There was some difficulty in looking at the contradictory impact of some events:

Quite a few people commented that they had not thought of 'negative' events as being useful for organizing work. Some were a little uncomfortable, for example, with the thought of placing 'family farms going under' as an event that could help us."

"There is some confusion about labelling an event as something that can 'help us' with a 'good' event. This raised the question about whether we should try to induce 'bad things' in order to provide a base for organizing! We talked a bit more about the idea of the 'dialectic' of these events and the importance of locating our work in what was currently happening, not in our original formulation or evaluation."

The group was introduced to the four-phase **naming the moment** process. There was a recognition that this process had to be ongoing to be really useful:

"We talked about the need to go back to phases and re-do them if the situation or the group changed significantly or if the analysis didn't seem to be working."





## Integrating the practice

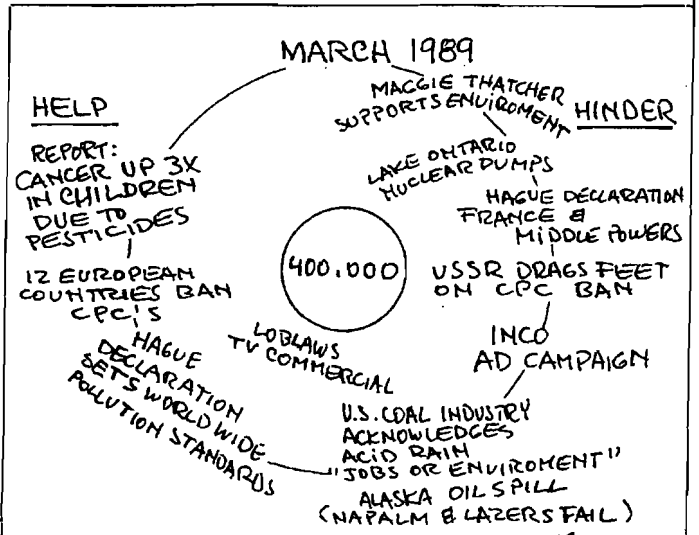
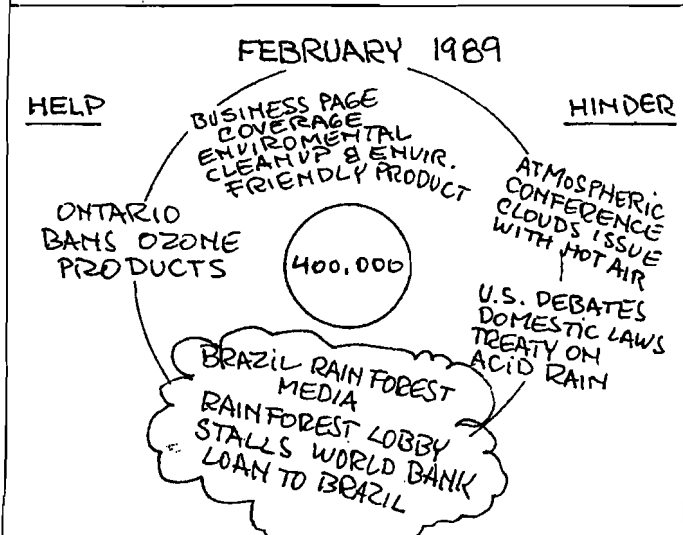
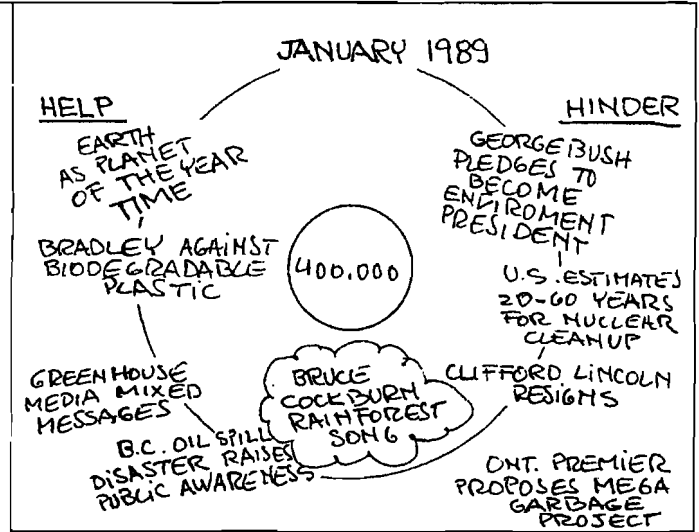
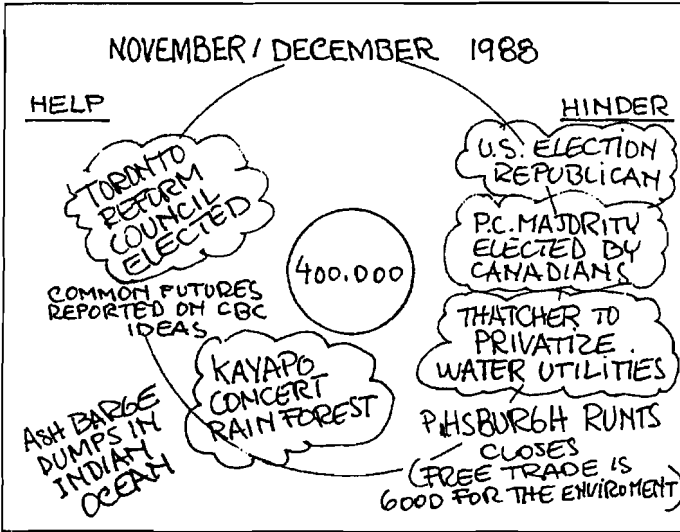
The environmental group described earlier instituted a weekly Political Weather Report into the Monday morning meetings of the Environment and Society Team. For the first five months, this is the process they followed:

- One staff member collected the media clips on environmentally-related issues from major newspapers during the week.
- He summarized the news from these clips for the group, while circulating the articles among the seven group members for more detailed review.
- The key events were recorded on a graph on a 8 X 11 paper. In the centre was the number 400,000 representing the group's key goal: increasing the number of environmentally-conscious and active citizens.
- The recorder asked group members to name the key events of the week (mostly suggested by the media clips) and to suggest whether the events helped or hindered them in moving toward their goal. In some cases, an event had both positive and negative implications, thus falling on both sides.

Samples of the Political Weather Reports produced appear on the next page.



Notes



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After trying this for five months, the team went through a two-day training session in the **naming the moment** process. At the end of the workshop, they rethought their use of this tool and suggested the following changes:

- Renaming their goal, to reflect more the kind of consciousness and commitment they hoped to nurture in supporters rather than the mere number of supporters. The new goal was to help people shift from a 'Not in my backyard' (NIMBY) concern about the environment to a more collective perspective symbolized by the acronym NIABY (Not in anybody's backyard).
- Integrating more stories of resistance into the Political Weather Report, thus not depending solely on mass media reports of key events. The team realized the limitations of using the media and knew that they had to be critically analyzed for the dominant interests they portray and how they analyze events.

They also remembered that they get many phone calls from individuals and groups across the province who are organizing against dominant forces and for a healthy environment. They decided to more systematically record these 'tales of hope', possibly compiling and publishing them - but also feeding them regularly into their weekly political weather reports.

- Selecting the major events from the many listed, doing a more in-depth analysis of the impact of one or two pivotal actions, rather than a cursory analysis of many.

- Tracing the major shifts in forces over a broader period of time, by looking back on political weather reports from past months. In doing this, for example, the team raised the questions of when and how the conservative heads of western governments (Bush, Thatcher, and Mulroney) had co-opted the issue by using the language of 'sustainable development' without necessarily requiring that economic activity in fact be sustainable.
- Drawing the Political Weather Report on a large wall chart with a wide marker instead of a small sheet of paper with pen - to give the exercise a more visible and collective focus.
- Inviting other teams to join the Environment & Society team every Monday morning for an ongoing Political Weather Report that would be organization-wide. The team recognized, for example, that the Environment and Development team would bring both a more international perspective to the analysis of events as well as more information about the complex interests of government and corporations around the issue.
- Trying to synthesize the weekly analyses to feed into a conjunctural analysis that would precede the annual program planning process.

Thus, once team members had fine-tuned their analytical skills in a training workshop, they could recreate the tool and deepen its use to affect their strategic thinking and planning in a more integral way.

## So you'd like to do something, too...?

Each group will have a different starting point and will develop their own most appropriate practices and tools. It will also be important to periodically evaluate and revise them to fit shifting objectives changing times and deeper understandings of the process.

If you are in a group or organization that needs to further develop its skills and practice of political analysis for action, you may want to ask these questions with sympathetic co-workers. Check them off as you address them.

- What is our past experience in doing political analysis?
- What do we need political analysis for? What are the objectives of our group that would benefit from ongoing analysis and strategic planning?
- What are some of the obstacles to doing such analysis? What are the aspects of the work and the people that would support it?
- Who should be involved in the process? Would they be interested?
- What are the times in our work plan and our daily work life that we could integrate some more ongoing, systematic reflection (e.g., program planning and budgeting processes, work evaluation sessions, staff meetings and/or retreats, weekly check-ins, organizational or educational meetings, etc.)
- What are some of the activities we might propose? (e.g. critical discussion of forces and strategies, political weather reports, inviting key allies for joint analysis)
- What is our plan? Which activity will we start with?
- What will be our first steps in implementing our plan?
- How will we know if it has been successful? How will we evaluate it on a regular basis?

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Notes



You may want to apply the four phases of the **naming the moment** process (see page 27) to this task.

Consider as your short-term goal:

**to integrate political analysis for action into the daily work of our organization.**

Work through the phases, asking:

#### **Phase 1: Identifying Ourselves**

Who are we and what are we working for in the long-term?

How does who we are affect the way we will go about this analysis?

#### **Phase 2: Naming the Issues**

What are the issues we are working on?

Why do we need political analysis for action in this work?

What past experience do we have in doing analysis?

#### **Phase 3: Assessing the Forces**

What are the forces (both external and internal) working with us and against us in trying to integrate political analysis into our work?

How can we strengthen the forces for and weaken those against?

#### **Phase 4: Planning for Action**

What free space exists now for integrating **naming the moment** into our daily work?

What existing structures and activities can we use?

Who will do what and when?

Another way to address the questions in Phases 3 and 4 is to brainstorm the obstacles to and possibilities for integrating analysis. Some of the obstacles mentioned by others, for example, have included:

- We don't have the time.
- We're too busy managing crises to do regular reflection.
- We're underfunded and understaffed.
- There are too many conflicts or differences among us.
- We're not in the habit of doing analysis.
- We feel we must focus on our specific issue and not get side-tracked by the bigger picture.
- The way our organization is structured doesn't encourage collective reflection.
- Certain people in our organization get in the way of this happening.
- Sexism and racism play a role, e.g., men dominate the conversation or the language we use is very white and middle class.

While acknowledging the reality of such constraints, we don't need to succumb to them as excuses for not doing analysis. We need to brainstorm also all the real possibilities, such as these:

Add an hour to a monthly staff meeting to assess the impact of the events of the past month.

Organize regular **naming the moment** sessions.

Designate someone to take responsibility to lead the analysis each time; rotate among group members.

Review and reallocate your use of resources to prioritize this analytical activity.

Give examples of the value of strategic analysis by comparing decisions for action that were more thought through compared to those that were hastily planned.

Recognize the objective circumstances and that everything cannot be done now; avoid frenzied activism that leads to burn out and cynicism.

Set up a study group, with common readings and discussion; bring in resource people.

Institute personnel policies that ensure employees have time for rest, reflection, training, etc.

Bring into your annual program planning process a longer period for sessions to update your analyses of the issues you're working on and the current relationship of forces around those issues. This assessment should inform the strategic thinking behind your proposed programs.

Take a day or two to work through the Training Program on pages 84 - 88.

Develop close links with another group that is also trying to develop their analytical practice. Share problems and solutions, develop alliances, etc.

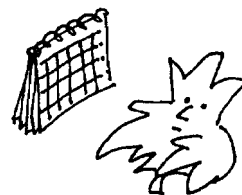
By now it must be clear: there is no one single way to do political analysis. The particular tools described in the **naming the moment** process were developed by groups from many different sectors and to meet their own purposes. Every organization will have its own particular needs and constraints.

One group may have a very clearly defined issue or action objective (for example, to get the lead out of the soil in a specific neighbourhood). Other groups are more broadly defined and shift their focus from issue to issue, depending on the moment (for example, a church social justice committee which may have worked on Central American issues and shifts its strategy to providing sanctuary for refugees threatened with deportation.)

The development of a process of political analysis will vary from group to group as will the appropriate tools.

Most important is that:

- groups do some kind of analysis
- linked to action planning and evaluating
- on a regular basis!




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Notes

## Broadening the exchange

Even though each group will have to make its own path, we can learn a lot from the various groups' analyses and actions. We need to exchange stories of our experiences of educating and organizing.

By listening to other activists working in a wide variety of sectors and on a wide variety of issues, we will

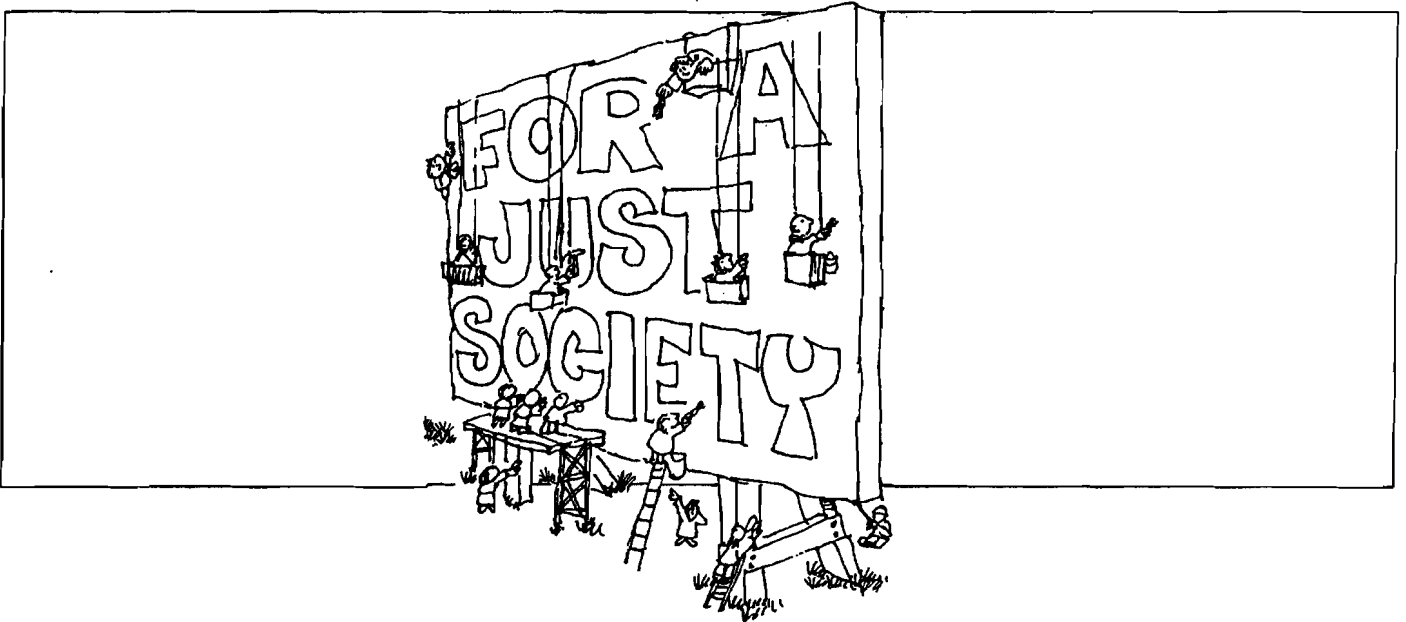
- feel less isolated in our own work;
- gather new insights into the dominant forces that we are up against;
- get ideas for new strategies and tactics;
- begin to think more broadly from a multi-sectoral perspective;
- link our issues and struggles with those of other groups;

- seek new allies and offer support to groups as we recognize related interests;
- join forces more frequently for coordinated actions (and strategic analyses) when those are needed.

## The deeper objective: movement building

Developing our own processes of political analysis for action and sharing those processes with other groups that have the same longer-term objectives leads to broader base-building and to more solid movement-building. This is our ultimate purpose, and all of the tools presented here must be seen in that light.

We welcome stories from other groups, critiques and challenges of what's written here, new opportunities for furthering the debate, deepening the analysis, and mobilizing our bases for real structural change.



Notes



Send your comments to:  
 The Moment Project  
 947 Queen Street East  
 Toronto, Ontario M4M 1J9

We start with the problems in our own community. This is where we take action. But as we work to change the unjust structures at the root of those issues, our analysis grows to circle the globe.

### The international dimension

This exchange inevitably becomes international in scope. We recognize that the structures we are working to change are integral to a global and economic dynamic.

The struggles of other people fighting for sovereignty and justice in the Third World have challenged international power relationships. Those who control finance capital and western political leaders are on the defensive; there is a restructuring of the world economy.

The contradictions that are sharpening on an international scale are reflected in a deepening disparity between the rich and the poor in Canada. We see this tension growing in our own defense of peoples' rights to a decent standard of living, to jobs, housing, education, dignity, power.

Groups **naming the moment** in Third World countries (the Philippines, southern Africa, Nicaragua, Brazil) can teach us a lot about their side of the global crisis. They bring their own theoretical understandings and methodological practices to an exchange.

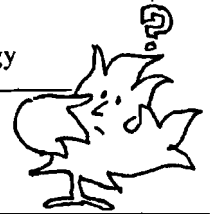
Some of these groups are listed among the resources on the following pages.

As we develop our own practice in political analysis for action, we will be creating opportunities for more direct exchange with groups, not only in other regions of Canada, but in other parts of the world.



## Appendix 1: Dictionary of Terms

<i>Conjunctural analysis</i>	the practice of regularly examining the conjuncture or the balance of current forces, actors, events to determine opportunities for action that the moment offers
<i>Contradiction</i>	opposing social and economic interests, whether these be principal and structural such as the contradiction between the rich and the poor, or secondary and temporary such as the contradiction between multinational business favoring free trade and small businesses which stand to lose from it
<i>Dialectical</i>	the dynamic relationship between opposing forces where each force both shapes and is shaped by its opposite; also refers to an historical understanding or way of thinking
<i>Forces</i>	social groups or institutions which shape events and are shaped by them; these groups represent particular interests, dominant or oppressed.
<i>Free space</i>	the room for action within the present moment; what is historically possible to do at this point in time; the possibilities found within constraints.
<i>Popular education</i>	education that serves the interests of oppressed groups, that involves them in critically analyzing their situation so that they can organize to act collectively to change the structures that oppress them; a process that is participatory, creative, empowering
<i>Practice</i>	our social and political activity, how we act upon our beliefs and work toward our goals
<i>Strategy</i>	a general approach or path chosen for action towards a goal; it is based on an analysis of the forces, the free space, and potential alliances with groups that share the goal
<i>Structural analysis</i>	an understanding of the underlying principal contradictions reflected in the more permanent structures of society, an analysis of relationships of domination/oppression
<i>Tactics</i>	specific activities designed to mobilize people to carry out a chosen strategy



Notes

## Appendix 2: A Training Program

A training workshop offered by The Moment Project in June 1989 involved teams from 15 organizations over a period of three days.

In introducing workshop participants to the phases of the **naming the moment** approach, we led them through four activities. These group activities are reproduced on the following pages. They can serve as training tools for organizations that want to develop their own skills in political analysis for action in a more systematic way.

It should be noted that in the actual training program, there were plenary sessions before and after each activity. These allowed for a more thorough introduction to each phase and for a rich exchange between groups from diverse sectors on the different ways they applied the phases. We have found that a training experience is much more effective in such a multi-sectoral context.

In any case, the activities that follow can be tried out by groups on their own over a period of time. There is a reference at the end of each one to pages in the manual which further develop the ideas introduced here.



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Notes

## Group Activity 1

### Recovering Our Histories

#### Phase 2: Naming the Issues/Struggles?

What issue are we working on?

What is the history of this work?

#### Tasks (60 min)

- 1) Select one issue to focus on. What opposing interests or contradictions are reflected in it?
- 2) What have been the key moments or events (within or outside Canada) in the history of struggle around this issue?
  - since 1900?
  - more recently (1980-89) or since your group has been involved?

**Write the key events or moments on a horizontal line on a flip chart. Use symbols for these moments if you like.**

- 3) For each moment named, ask:
  - how were dominant forces involved (i.e., how did they shape and/or respond to the event/moment?)
  - how were progressive forces involved?

**Write above the moment the response of the dominant forces and below the moment the response of progressive forces.**

- 4) Which moment has been the 'most critical moment' in the history of struggle on this issue?

See pages 33-35 for further description of this phase and an example of this activity.

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Notes

## Group Activity 2

### Reflecting and Projecting

#### Phase 1: Identifying Ourselves and Our Interests

Who are we?

#### Phase 2: Naming the Issue/Struggle

What are we working for?

Tasks (90 min)

**1) Reflecting on ourselves:**

Look again at your historical review and think about:

- How does our description reflect who we are (in terms of race, class, gender, age, sector, religion)?
- Who's missing in our picture and why?

**2) Projecting goals and objectives:**

- Clarify the issue you are focusing on.
- What is your long-term objective in working on this issue?

Brainstorm possibilities then select the major one.

- What is your short-term goal?

Brainstorm and select the first and most realizable one.

Develop indicators of how you will know if this goal has been achieved.

For further description of phase 1, see page 28; for an example of this activity, see page 36.

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Notes

## Group Activity 3

### Analyzing Actors and Interests

#### Phase 3: Assessing the Forces

Who's with us and who's against us in the short-term and long-term?

Who's winning and losing and why?

#### Task (120 min)

- 1) Write your short-term goal and long-term objective on the top of a large chart. Review and revise them as you go along, if necessary.
- 2) Make 3 columns across the chart:
 

With us (red)	Against us (blue)	Uncommitted (green)
---------------	-------------------	---------------------

Divide the chart vertically into 3 sections: ideological, political, economic.
- 3) List actors in any of these categories and describe their short-term (by column) and long-term (by colour) interests.
 

Use this listing of actors to debate the interests, strengths, and weaknesses of various groups.  
Identify potential allies.

Put parentheses around those that need further research.
- 4) Review the actors listed and name the key opposing forces/interests.
 

What is the overall balance of these major forces?  
Who's winning, who's losing, and why?
- 5) Use graphic tools or theatre of the oppressed to summarize the overall balance of major forces.

For further description of phase 3 and examples of these activities, see pages 30, 37-39, 43-45.

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Notes

## Group Activity 4

### Finding the Free Space

#### Phase 4: Planning for Action

What actions could we take?

What are the constraints and possibilities of each?

Who will do what and when?

#### Tasks (75 min)

- 1) Brainstorm potential strategies for action based on the assessment of forces, contradictions, and potential allies.
- 2) Select one or two that seem most likely to succeed.
- 3) Do a 'free space analysis' with the selected strategy, listing both constraints and possibilities. Within each constraint, look for the possibilities; within each possibility, look for the constraints. (See example on page 53 of the manual.)
- 4) Develop from these ideas a plan of action for the next six months. Note below:  
 who:  
 will do what:  
 when:
- 5) Write your plan in the form of a proposal, letter, or memo to members of your group who are not present, explaining to them why you propose this strategy and how it will be carried out.

For further description of phase 4 and the above activity, see pages 46-53.

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Notes

## Appendix 3: Resources

The materials listed here fall into two major categories. Listed first are some that help deepen our understanding of the **methodology** of political analysis for action. The second list focuses on the development of a **broad-based movement for social change** in Canada. These are further divided into English and Spanish.

### Methodological documents

#### In English:

Allman, Paula. "Gramsci, Freire and Illich: Their Contributions to Education for Socialism," pages 85-113 in Tom Lovett (editor). **Radical Approaches to Adult Education: A Reader**. London, England: Routledge, 1988.

Arnold, Rick; Barndt, Deborah; Burke, Bev. **A New Weave: Popular Education in Canada and Central America**. See pages 52-63. Toronto: CUSO/OISE, 1985.

Arnold, Rick and Burke, Bev. **A Popular Education Handbook**. Toronto: CUSO/OISE, 1983.

CELADEC. **Structural and Conjunctural Analysis**. Translated from Spanish by Deborah Barndt. Jesuit Centre files.

Czerny, Michael and Swift, Jamie. **Getting Started on Social Analysis in Canada**. Toronto: Between the Lines, 1988.

Freire, Paulo. **Pedagogy of the Oppressed**. New York: The Seabury Press, 1970.

Gramsci, Antonio. **Selections from the Prison Notebooks**. Edited and translated by Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith. New York: International Publishers, 1971. Note "Analysis of Situations, Relations of Force" (1933-4), pages 108-112.

Hope, A.; Timmel, S.; and Hodzi, C. **Training for Transformation: A Handbook for Community Workers**. Guero, Zimbabwe: Mambo Press, 1987.

Philadelphia Macro-analysis Collective. **Organizing Macro-Analysis Seminars: A Manual**. Movement for A New Society, 4722 Baltimore Ave., Philadelphia, PA, USA 19143.

#### In Spanish:

ALFORJA. **Técnicas Participativas para la Educación Popular, Tomo II**. San Jose, Costa Rica: Centro de Estudios y Publicaciones ALFORJA, Apartado 369, diciembre, 1988.

Arroyo, Alberto and Ignacio Medina. "Metodologia del Analisis Coyuntural" en **Teoria y Praxis, Cristus**. No. 498, Mayo, 1977.

### Notes



CEASPA. "Elementos Metodológicos para el Análisis de Coyuntura." *In Este País Más a Más: Boletín Mensual de la Coyuntura Panamena*. Septiembre-Octubre, 1987, Año II, No. 14.

CÉLADEC (Comisión Evangélica Latino Americana de Educación Cristiana). "Análisis de Estructura, Análisis de Coyuntura: Notas Metodológicas", Serie B - No. 1.

Instituto Cooperativo Interamericano. "Aportes Metodológicos para un Proceso de Análisis." Panama: ICI, 1987.

Leís, Raul. *El Arco y La Flecha: Apuntes Sobre Metodología y Práctica Transformadora*. Panama: Instituto Cooperativo Interamericano, Apartado T, Panama 9 A.

### **Movement-building in Canada:**

Adamson, Nancy et al. *Feminist Organizing for Change: The Contemporary Women's Movement in Canada*. Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1988.

Bird, Pat. *Of Dust and Time and Dreams and Agonies: A Short History of the Canadian People*. Willowdale, Ontario: John Deyell Co., 1975.

Cunningham, Frank et al (editors). *Social Movements/Social Change: The Politics and Practice of Organizing*. Toronto: Between the Lines, 1988.

Das Gupta, Tania. *Learning from Our History: Community Development by Immigrant Women in Ontario 1958-1986 - A Tool for Action*. Toronto: Cross-Cultural Communications Centre, 1986.

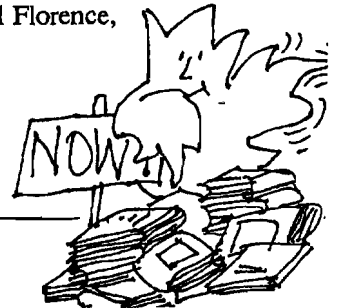
Kuyek, Joan. "Draft Position Paper for the Urban-Rural Mission on Social Change in Canada." Toronto: United Church of Canada, 1988.

Panitch, Leo. "The Need for a New Socialist Movement." In *Canadian Dimension*, Volume 18, June, 1984, pages 41-45.

Raboy, Marc (editor). *Old Passions, New Visions: Social Movements and Political Activism in Quebec*. Toronto: Between the Lines, 1986.

Ryan, Michael. *Solidarity: Christian Social Teaching and Canadian Society*. Guided Study Programs in the Catholic Faith, P.O. Box 2400, London, Ontario N6A 4G3.

Working Committee for Social Solidarity. *A Time to Stand Together: A Time for Social Solidarity*. A Declaration on Social and Economic Policy Directions for Canada by Members of Popular Sector Groups, c/o 21 Florence, Ottawa, Ontario K2P 0W6, November, 1987.




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