extension or outering of the analytic logic created in our minds by phonetic literacy and typography. That logic is at odds with the world of "secondary orality" created by radio, television, and the telephone. Despite his constant disclaimers, some of his sympathies lay with the electric milieu, the one that contrasts with the typographic universe so brilliantly delineated in his magnum opus, The Gutenberg Galaxy.

Prophetically, McLuhan wrote to Wyndham Lewis in 1944 that "there is some sort of work in me. I shall impinge in some sort of way, but whether academic or not I am unable to see" (147). Also foretelling is Corrine McLuhan's studied comment the day after their 1939 wedding: "My foremost thought will always be Marshall's happiness, for we're going to build a significant life together" (113).

Reviewed by: R. D. Berg

Labour's New Voice: Unions and the Mass Media
Sara U. Douglas

The labour movement, recognizing the opposed class interests of the private mass media, has historically resigned itself to a relationship with them which has been partly defensive, partly dismissive. Its failure to prosecute the class struggle in the symbolic realm as effectively as it has done so at the factory gate has, in the long run, weakened its capacity both for internal cohesion and external militancy.

Sara U. Douglas' richly-detailed study of the US labour movement's current and historical public relations efforts provides useful evidence both of labour's typical shortcomings and of its occasional successes in the use of the media. Her general findings are that union leaders are learning to mobilize relevant media publics, and that they are committing their organizations' resources to the job. The scholarship is broad and detailed (though lacking critical depth). This volume's 300 pages include: (1) an historical survey of labour PR at a national level, from the turn of the century; (2) four historical PR case studies of large active unions (International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union, United Auto Workers, International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers, and American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees); (3) a current questionnaire survey of the US AFL-CIO affiliates on PR and publishing budgets and activities, advertising and sponsored programming activities, and legal and policy issues in labour communications: (4) probably the best worm's-eye view of constitutional case law on media access, reply, and advertising yet published; (5) studies of three recent campaigns (United Farm Workers, Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union, and the Missouri United Labour Committee); and (6) a detailed case study of a second, successful and recent campaign of ACTWU.
Douglas' historical chapters document how some large US unions fought against their ideological isolation during and after World War II by committing themselves to advertising campaigns and sponsored programming which stressed patriotic commitment and character of the labour movement. But, these organizations soon discovered that any ground they gained in public opinion by these means were wiped out by the threatening visage the media automatically constructed for them whenever strikes occurred. As Alberta Zack, PR director of the AFL-CIO from 1958 to 1980, put it: "Public relations people have confided to me that, if the labour movement renounced the strike, its 'image problem' would disappear. Of course, so would the labour movement" (46).

To explicate her case study approach, Douglas adopts a systems theory "model of influence through protest" drawn from Michael Lipsky's *Protest in City Politics* (1970). The prescription she offers for successful campaigns (backed by their careful case studies) amounts to an analog of the "strategic positioning" of electoral candidates among a set of references publics, as discussed by Gary Mauser in his *Political Marketing* (1983). Here, the stages of the union's campaign, e.g., prior organization, court action, boycott, client pressure, are designed to position the target firm as a "losing candidate" in the competition for public support. The "winning candidate" (the union) mobilizes a "protest constituency" which recruits the media themselves, via their autonomy, as the spokescorps of a popular consensus. In this kind of strategy, the willingness of the media to legitimate the views of labour and its allies rests a great deal on labour's success in the courts.

There is also where the necessary congruence of goal orientation among reference publics breaks down most noticeably in Douglas' model. The National Labour Relations Board (NLRB) is usually where the legitimacy of labour's case is established for the media. As simultaneously a "reference public" of, for example, ACTWU's campaigns, and a "neutral" and autonomous regulatory apparatus for labour relations, the NLRB assumes an "expressive" role for the US public in "representing the procedural fairness and neutrality of the state" (273-5).

Douglas sees signs in recent years of a change in labour's distant and largely ineffective relationship with the mainstream media. The development of communications tactics more closely oriented to the reporting needs of commercial broadcasters and publishers appears to complement other components of contemporary bargaining strategy. These tactics include increased publicity budgets, more confident and professional liaison with news outlets, a higher level of paid "image" and "advocacy" advertising and a renewed presence in media regulatory processes. Her case studies tell us that the most successful among these efforts are directed more at systematic intervention in particular situations and well-planned advocacy on specific issues, and less at the construction of a positive general image for labour, as was the case in the immediate post-WWII period.
The questionnaire survey reported in Chapter IV tells us that views within the labour movement about the prospects for such initiatives are understandably cautious. In the first place, effective media campaigns tend to be very expensive, and assessing the resulting benefits is notoriously difficult. Both prior planning and later assessment of an ad campaign, for example, may involve in-depth interview studies and/or statistically-based polling studies, whether the context is a particular dispute locally or a legislative battle nationally. Very few unions that advertise budget for such an ongoing and costly element of the mass communication process.

Labour leaders also remain cautious about developing any reliance on the media because of the objective position of media owners as convinced opponents of all increases in labour costs in any sector of the economy. This estimation is buttressed both by the findings of media content studies, such as those carried out regularly by the Glasgow University Media Group, and by the often bitter labour-management relations within the media industries themselves.

Another reason for caution is the perception of labour leaders that most reporters and editors are ignorant of labour affairs. Certainly their ignorance only increases as the labour beat is eliminated as newspapers, as attested recently by Jo-Ann Mort in "The Vanishing Labour Beat" in The Nation magazine. Labour news is largely assimilated to business news and it is indeed the specialized business press, exemplified by the Wall Street Journal, which has best kept alive the US tradition of labour reporting.

There are several other reasons for labour’s caution about the media: the differences between the views of the rank and file and labour executives; the contradictions in the desired outcomes of media campaigns between the production of an image of moderation and an image of militancy; the vulnerability of labour’s mandate to seek changes in the status quo ante. In face of all these difficulties, Douglas’ findings remain vague at best:

Although the class structure of the media industries apparently has changed little since the days when labor decided to ignore it and publish its own newspapers, labor’s methods of dealing with the media have changed and are changing (287).

Unfortunately, mainstream labour in the United States has changed its communications methods largely in emulation of business and political campaign PR methods. It will take more than the mainstream media accommodations Douglas describes to really advance labour’s interests, but her book is a good-faith effort to apply "state of the art" media analysis to its communicative practices.

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