

## A revealing film

# Multinationals chronicled

reprinted from Seven Days  
by Peter Biskind

**Controlling Interest**, a new film by California Newsreel, is like one of those documentaries on tuna fishing or the wonders of the assembly line that you used to see in junior high school. Here again is the sonorous narration that lulled you into a half-stupor with its assurance of omniscience; here again the factory floor jammed with serried ranks of neatly-clad women assembling audio components. But there's one big difference: The women in the factory are South Korean and the film is a devastating indictment of multinational corporations.

Multinationals are not the easiest thing to capture on film, but California Newsreel has put together a lucid guide to how they work and why they should be resisted. **Controlling Interest** is an ambitious film that touches on Brazil, Chile, the Dominican Republic, runaway shops, U.S. imperialism and the CIA, but it moves easily from subject to subject without losing the thread of analysis.

The film contains interviews with corporate executives who, with wonderful frankness, make statements that would stun the most mechanistic of Marxist economists. Leading off the parade is the chairman of the board of Castle & Cooke (Dole Pine-

apple, Standard Fruit, etc.) who says: "We're in business to make money. We are not in business to satisfy society if that requires us to lose money. Profit has to be number one." Then there's the executive who speaks fondly of the Brazilian regime (which tortured its way to "stability"): "In Brazil, the people, from the man who cleans the street to the guy in high office, really work together."

On screen are the fashionable high rises of Brazil's gold coast. The camera pans a quarter of an inch, and into the frame comes the favelas, the jumble of shanties that comprise the homes of Brazil's

*Oxfam-Canada will be screening the new film "Controlling Interest" at 8 p.m. on Monday, November 6. The film showing is part of the Oxfam open house in the new Oxfam offices at 1521 Grafton Street. Everyone is invited to come to the open house, and the film. "Controlling Interest" will also be available for future film showings, through the Resource Centre housed in the Oxfam offices. For more information call 422-8338.*

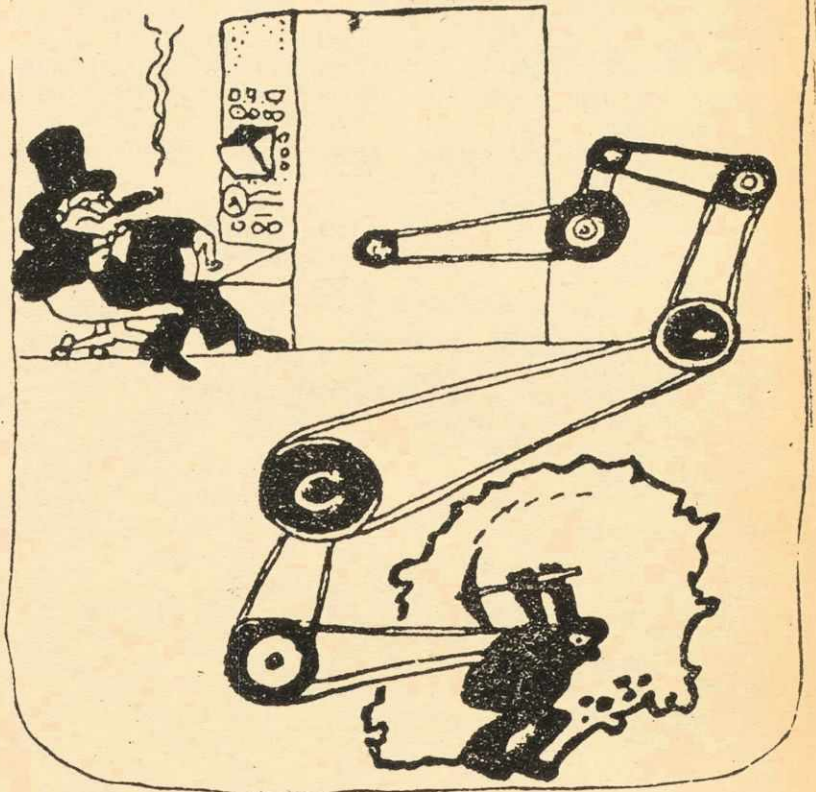
poor and dispossessed. The narrator explains that under the benign guidance of banks like Chase Manhattan, Brazil is switching to cash crops for

export like soy beans and coffee, at the expense of items like black beans. This is fine for Brazil's "Economic Miracle" and the corporations that skim off the profits, but it's not so good for the millions of people who used to eat black beans. Now, they starve.

In a series of brief sequences, **Controlling Interest** documents the happy collaboration between business and government that has been the hallmark of the American way. George Ball, the former Under Secretary of State, says: "I think American foreign policy is geared to meet the needs of business. . . ." The Vice-President of Hewlett-Packard extols the virtues of cheap labor in America's client states. In Singapore, he says, "You could hire a girl for \$20 U.S. a month, 48 hours a week. They live much differently here than we do. . . . They don't mind sitting down and doing very tedious jobs on a continuing basis."

One executive after another is condemned by his own words, until the film comes to rest in Greenfield, Massachusetts. Here the rank and file of the United Electrical Workers are resisting a pay cut demanded by Ingersoll Rand, a small multinational that has taken over a machine tool plant which has been in the community over 100 years. When the workers refuse, the

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the same system



company threatens to pack up and move the plant to South Carolina. After months of maneuvering, the union and the company reach a no-win, no-lose stand-off.

**Controlling Interest** doesn't offer any answers. It describes the great power of the multinationals and the failure of their employees to maintain even the marginal security they took for granted after decades of relatively success-

ful unionism. The film suggests that labor's traditional pursuit of narrowly-defined economic goals is useless in the age of multinationals and that working people must seize political power, but it stops short of filling in the details. Nevertheless, with its montage of abandoned factories—empty, barren, lifeless—the film captures in graphic terms the human cost of profit.

# Divine and human mixture

Eric Simpson

Miller Brittain's exhibition of religious paintings currently being displayed at Saint Mary's Art Gallery might offend the pious, traditional Christian with its powerful energy and emotion. Yet, it is undeniably a profound selection of modern sacred art.

In the fanatical gleam of Christ's eyes, the brilliant green hue of Christ's head and the anguish of other biblical figures, Brittain avoids the classical Christian themes of peace and spiritual happiness. He concentrates on the concrete expression of human emotion and man's ultimate confrontation with death.

In styles varying from impressionism to surrealism, Brittain alternately uses soft, sombre colours and vibrant, rich tones to transform religious scenes into realistic portrayals of man's worldly struggles.

Miller Brittain's art reflects a consuming, impassioned view of life. He fought in World War II as a fighter pilot and his sensitive, artistic nature was deeply affected by the experience. When he returned to Saint John, N.B. in 1945 he abandoned his "social realism" style and turned to a religious idiom. The social turmoil Brittain previously depicted in his impoverished urban figures, was now represented in the figure of Christ.

The disturbing mixture of the divine and the human was not popular with the critics or the public, consequently Brittain fell into debt and alcoholism which plagued him until his death in 1968.

In the honesty of his art Brittain reveals his soul to the world. Obsessed with the terrifying reality of life and death Brittain refused to disguise the futile nature of man's existence. In a forceful secular work entitled **Threat of War** we are confronted with a wild, red-eyed man screaming the universal language of fear and pain. In **Slander** a multi-coloured human face mirrors the emotion of a tortured mind.

In all his work Brittain reaches out to the real natural world for inspiration. With Brittain the myth becomes real.

Gesture and motion pervades the canvases, yet some are so calm and soft that they could be included in a collection of children's bible stories.

It would be difficult not to react strongly to the outpouring of artistic sentiment found in Brittain's work.

This fine art show was tastefully arranged by the curator of the Saint Mary's Art Gallery, Robert Dietz. But federal cutbacks in funding for the arts and a lack of support from the university administration and student



**In Memoriam** is an exhibition commemorating the tenth anniversary of the death of Miller G. Brittain. Above is an example of his work.

body could have disastrous effects on the future of this small gallery. It would be unfortunate if the range of different shows, which has included the Hundertwasser exhibition and the graphics of

Bram Van Velde and Pierre Alechinsky, were to be limited due to a lack of support.

The current display of Miller Brittain's work will continue until November 12.

Another major showing of Romanian artists will soon be undertaken. It is only through an expression of interest on the part of the public that art shows of this calibre can be maintained.