



Editorial

# Would you entrust electricity to the City of Berkeley?

The word "feasibility" is quite a broad-spectrum one, particularly as it relates to the financial feasibility of doing something in Berkeley.

We have little doubt that, at least for some people, if a three-trillion-dollar price tag were attached to the PG and E electrical facilities here, such people might think it is financially "feasible" — perhaps because they may not be around to pay off the bonded indebtedness they are calling upon others to pay by suggesting a "yes" vote on the electrical municipalization referendum next Tuesday.

However, Bertie Wells Associates, the financial consultants to the City of Berkeley who, with the engineering and economic consultants Cornell, Howard, Hayes and Mezifield, provided the unbiased outside feasibility study of city takeover of PG and E electrical facilities here, knew full well what "feasibility" means.

Voters still undecided about the municipalization of PG and E as it appears in Measure B referendum issue next Tuesday should read pages 27 and 28 of the CHM-Berkeley Wells study for those pages exist the biggest speculative case AGAINST the takeover.

To quote: "The financial feasibility of the acquisition would be seriously affected if the forecast level of growth were not obtained. Growth projections should be strengthened by further study of specific customer requirements.

Future land use as envisioned by the city planning department may also contribute substance to the growth projections. In light of the extreme importance of industrial and commercial growth to the project's feasibility, some caution is recommended in this area.

"Extreme caution" indeed! We insist that the takeover of PG and E electrical service here is all part of the radical pie, whose underside consists of taxing "the wealthy and the corporations," as stated in the radical April Coalition platform, by whose reading one gets the impression that big business and industry will hardly be made to feel welcome here.

Assuming the very worst — that

that years decide the city SHOULD take over PG and E electrical facilities here — there is not at all difficulty to project an decline in growth rates here. Indeed, some of us would forecast a dramatic decline.

The consultants themselves note (Page 22) that "it is especially difficult to project future energy consumption for this group since growth has recently tapered off and even declined."

They add (Page 23) "Because of the many possible variables which come into play, the unallocated revenues should be viewed with caution. Higher system taxes, higher interest rates, slower growth in the community, a tapering off in demand for energy, any of these would tend to reduce the forecasted surplus."

"Increased cost to the City through inflation or through an increased cost in wholesale power rates would not weaken the financial structure of PG&E electrical system, but under the bond proposals, it would have to be passed along to system users in the form of increased charges during the early years of operation."

But of course, in Berkeley, the ramifications of the consultants' concluding remarks bear more than a little watching.

There is considerable argument within the public power movement as to whether or not an electric utility should be used as a major tax collecting vehicle. The fundamental question to consider is whether or not the amount of electricity used has any relationship to the proper allocation of tax burden. (Emphasis ours.)

"A municipally owned electric utility may also become part of the community political power structure. With the rare, but possible, result that inadequate management is selected or retained, or that unfavorable policies are implemented for largely political considerations."

"We obviously have no basis for evaluating these political factors as they relate to Berkeley."

We however do. The recent past and the April Coalition platform give us all the basis we need to express the greatest possible degree of concern about a tax-sneaky mu-



Berkeley Center

## Berkeley's outlook hardly promising

BY STEPHAN J. AMBERG  
Berkeley Action Committee  
The efforts of state politicians in general have been opposed both by radical and conservative voters, who claim that potentialities are contained in the principles of American democracy. Yet for the liberal, the most unfortunate fact remains that those of the independent candidates can muster enough votes to garner a seat in the race. Consequently, any vote cast for a non-party candidate will essentially assist the radical coalition, since that voting bloc is divided and the likely to splinter its votes significantly.

Block voting has been the most potent political whip of the radicals' command, as demonstrated two years ago when the first trio of self-proclaimed radicals were elected to Berkeley's city council solely because non-radical liberal votes were splintered among various candidates.

So the outlook for Berkeley is hardly promising, in spite of obtaining a rational, reasonable council majority is concerned. There are several scenarios to be considered for the coming April election. One, one might suppose that the entire liberal state wins its four seats. This, the optimum objective, would essentially maintain the status quo, with three radicals, five liberals and a mayor who has been known to swing both ways to maintain some semblance of

professional Berkeleyans, does not bode well for any resident of the city, no matter what his current political persuasion. It is irrational to expect business and property owners to pay high income residents to create services to the largely non-contributing population which utilizes most of the municipal "cost" paid and "paid" centers demanded by the radicals.

There have been cities with unstable budgets, some which have actually gone bankrupt, and others which have been so unattractive that no new business will venture into the city limits, except for a few "operating" businesses. Unless some hard, realistic thinking is produced in the near future, Berkeley could easily go the way of all these

Mike Culbert

## Why we fear the 'takeover'

WE ARE not trying to argue that everybody in Refusers of Illegal and Oppressive Taxes (RIOT), or even RIOT itself, is "radical" in the Berkeley sense of that word.

We are not arguing that Berkeley's public ownership of utilities itself is necessarily radical. We are not even arguing that RIOT's battle to municipalize the PG and E electrical distribution system here boils down to an ideological dispute between public and private power.

This corner is no more enamored of private-power utilities than it is of government ones — though, given the choice between these two unhappily alternatives, we would prefer the former.

We would rather that private utilities financed their future growth through employe-owned and stock-ownership arrangements. Indeed, should voters make the mistake of "municipalizing" PG and E here next Tuesday, we will immediately argue for its universal socialization, rather than the universal socialization that is planned.

Nope, what we are arguing is that city seizure of the PG and E electrical system is bad economics all around, particularly in Berkeley, and particularly now. Forgoing editorials have sought to point out why.

For us, however, quite aside from the likelihood of higher rates, expensive litigation and higher taxes, the city takeover of PG and E electricity here means, to us, just one more tax-collecting device in the hands of Berkeley City Council.

The policy-setting, decision-making capabilities of the BCC over the past two years lead us to wonder whether ANYTHING should be placed under its control, most importantly a life-sustaining vital force like the city's electrical power.

We will not be particularly surprised if those who think of themselves as "radical" win the Tuesday sweepstakes, and if the various hare-brained, idiotic, perversely constructed initiatives on the city ballot also pass.

What we question is how unbiased, how fair, how honest, a "radically" dominated Berkeley City Council can be regarding business, industry and utilities.

We tremble at the thought of possible misuse and abuse of electrical energy here on a political basis. Just intermingling this new tax device with the April Coalition platform, we wonder if:

Taxes can be raised through electricity system overcharges for financing, say, the making available of "all city facilities" to "representatives" of "struggles for national liberation" for "the purpose of our education and their support."

While New Era Berkeley is setting up the communalization of property and "making clear the limited possibilities of reform in a capitalist context," will energy users be paying a disproportionate part of the bill?

Sound absurd? Well, it isn't. The AC platform (which, chuckle, with support of electrical municipalization tends to become sort of an AC-DC platform) states all the above as must-do items for future Berkeley.

In the meantime, there is another little hole in takeover here:

The firing of and hiring the 132 additions to the number of city employes who could be found already working for utilities to operate the new city system (with a minimal training period).

If the current trend of city hiring stops over into the new system, and it would, we are forced to wonder whether racial and sexual quota or merit would be uppermost at hiring time.

Andrew Tully

## Something good from the Hill

WASHINGTON — Something housewives like Mrs. Vincent had come from from the Hillside of the Hillside.

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## Cromley With U.S. 'friend' Who needs enemies?



INGTON - Ironical-Nixon administration United States of late on much more success in dealing with enemies with friends.  
breakthroughs with Russia are history. Ships with aid sails in Japan, Thailand, Asia, the Arab World, Europe and Latin America are snagging.  
we have not lost our Arab friends come to Soviet than to American  
E Latin country after we have failed to use small but consistent actions which would close associations, not, in reality, deal with the deep feelings some of our nations South of the Rio Grande have far in view of territorial waters  
new friends in high DDI me they are due for a chance to like and privately with American officials who

they are in on things and not merely being filled in as a necessary afterthought to keep them from boiling over.  
the nub of the matter, as this reporter understands it from a variety of insiders from selected countries, is that these friends want to be considered as an integral part of the show, not just people and nations to be pulled along in our wake, or consulted urgently in crises. They want to be a part of the ongoing discussion.  
A GAIN, IRONICALLY, these sentiments mirror almost precisely the spirit of the Nixon doctrine, as outlined by the President. These precepts also are almost in word-by-word agreement with principles expressed by Dr. Henry Kissinger, Mr. Nixon's chief policymaker for foreign affairs.  
Kissinger, even before coming to the White House, made it clear in his personal remarks and his writing that it was his firm belief that the United States historically had done much better, and had gone much further in ac-

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...Increased cost to the City...  
...through inflation or through an...  
...increased cost in wholesale power...  
...rates would not weaken the financial...  
...structure of the electric system, but...  
...under the bond covenants, would...  
...have to be passed along to system...  
...users in the form of increased...  
...charges during the early years of...  
...operation.  
...But of course...  
...In Berkeley, the ramifications of...  
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...There is considerable argument...  
...within the public power movement...  
...as to whether or not an electric utility...  
...should be used as a major tax...  
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...A municipally owned electric...  
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..."We obviously have no basis for...  
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...We, however, do. The recent past...  
...and the April Coalition platform...  
...give us all the basis we need to...  
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...of concern about a tax-agency municipal...  
...electric power in the hands...  
...of a radical city council.  
...Again, NO on Measure 8!

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## Berkeley Center Berkeley's outlook hardly promising

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Berkeley Action Committee  
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Yet, for the liberals, the unfortunate fact remains that none of the independent candidates can muster enough votes to garner a seat in the legislature. Consequently, any votes cast for a radical majority will essentially assist the radical coalition since that voting bloc is unified, and unlikely to splinter if votes significantly.  
...Vote voting has been the most potent political whip at the radicals' command, as demonstrated two years ago when the first trio of self-proclaimed radicals was elected to Berkeley's city council. They became neo-radical liberal votes were splintered among some candidates.  
...So the outlook for Berkeley is hardly promising, insofar as obtaining a rational, reasonable council majority is concerned. There are several scenarios to be considered for the coming April election. First, one might suppose that the entire liberal slate wins its four seats.  
This, the optimum objective, would essentially maintain the status quo with three radicals, five liberals and a mayor who has been known to swing both ways to maintain some semblance of sanity on the motley council.  
However, it's always the case with freshman legislators, no one can accurately predict which way the left-liberal members of the state would vote in a pinch. Judging from their campaign statements, it is likely that both would choose a path decidedly more left-wing than any of the present non-radical incumbents.  
...SCENARIO TWO: elects all four of the radical candidates to office, providing a clear-cut seven-to-two majority for radical action, and opening the door for any legislation deemed desirable by the interest groups supporting Berkeley's left-wing radical movement.  
While this result is unlikely, it should not be dismissed as irrelevant for in Berkeley, stranger things have happened. Of course, such a radical council, which would be the first elected, truly left-wing political body in the nation, would immediately attempt to initiate legislation such as municipalization of the local utilities.  
A measure to do precisely that is currently on the April ballot, despite the fact that the feasibility study conducted earlier clearly proved such a move would not be in the city's best interests.  
THE RADICAL council could also be expected to press for the abolition of the city manager form of government, legislation of marijuana, recognition of whatever political cause was most in vogue.  
Through its policies, it would draw hard-core addicts to its city hospital treatment center, and whatever criminal element...

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If the current trend of city hiring slops over into the new system, and it would, we are forced to wonder whether racial and sexual quota, or merit would be uppermost at hiring time.  
If the answer is qualifications above and beyond merit, then the city faces the possibility of a serious drop in the quality and safety of Berkeley's electric system - which is hardly child's play.  
And we can only surmise that in the future of Radical Berkeley, far MORE quotas of all kinds will be imposed in city hiring, until that perfect economically, socially, sexually, racially, mentally integrated work force - consisting of classless hermaphroditic automatons - is finally encountered, the supreme crowning achievement of the radicalization of Berkeley.

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## Andrew Tully Something good from the Hill

WASHINGTON - Something good has come down from Capitol Hill: It is the long overdue vote of the House Banking and Currency Committee for a roll-back of all prices, interest rates and rents to the levels prevailing on Jan. 10, the day before President Nixon described the consumer by imposing his bloodless Phase III.  
Phase III: If it escaped the notice of some casual reader in effect, it's the selling charge whatever prices the traffic will bear. Predictably, it has produced a new inflationary surge which among other things began a national boycott on meat.  
Even members of Congress don't know what will happen to the roll-back provision of the bill extending the President's authority to establish wage and price controls until April 30, 1975. But if Congress suddenly suffers an attack of sanity, the amendment will be voted with a minimum of foolishness.  
THE ROLLBACK is needed because in the furor over high food prices, everybody seems to have ignored the fact that prices of practically everything else have soared up into the stratosphere. As a result, the farmer has been unfairly cast as inflation's No. 1 villain.  
Consider some Agriculture Department figures: Prices for all items consumers buy increased 58 per cent from 1952 to 1974, but food prices went up only 47 per cent. Wages during that same 22-year period increased much faster than food prices and now are two and a half times higher than in 1952. Thus, the average family now spends only 13 per cent of its after-tax income on food, as against 23 per cent in

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## BIBLE QUOTES

"The spirit of man is the lamp of the Lord, searching all his innermost parts." - Proverbs 20:27



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