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- ITS ROLE IN CREATING CULTURAL IDENTITY AND IDEALS. ITS RELATIONSHIP TO MINORITY EXPERIENCE.
- HOW IT OPERATES IN POPULAR CULTURE.
- WHAT DISTINGUISHES A "NATION" FROM A "STATE"? WHAT FORMS DOES NATIONALISM TAKE WHEN MANY NATIONS CO-EXIST WITHIN ONE STATE (E.G. DENE, FRANCOPHONE, ANGLOPHONE. . .ETC. IN CANADA). WHO DOES IT SERVE/WHO DOES IT EXCLUDE?
- WHEN IS IT VALUED/WHEN IS IT DEPLORED (E.G. LIBERATION STRUGGLES/IMPERIAL POWERS).
- TIS RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER SOCIAL MOVEMENTS SUCH AS THE PEACE MOVEMENT, FEMINISM, LABOUR. . .ETC.

There are many assumptions about nationalism, both positive and negative. However, if we consider these often strongly held opinions, one along side the other, contradictions arise that demand a rethinking of the term. That is

will encompass a wide scope of art activity along with the publication of several essays. We are encouraging the submission of essay outlines from writers and are looking for proposals from artists active in various media. The submissions and proposals may consider the statements listed above or others not mentioned. What ever the case, we encourage people to respond from the point of view of their own experience

Proposals will be accepted until January 1st, 1986, and should be addressed to: NATIONALISM. **EXHIBITION COMMITTEE, A SPACE, 204** SPADINA AVE., TORONTO, ONTARIO M5T 2C2

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DECEMBER 1985

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EXHIBITIONS



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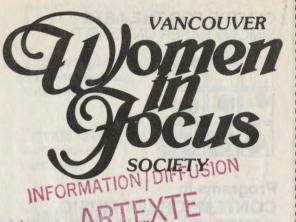
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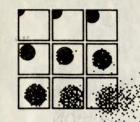
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Shot in the Dark

CLIVE ROBERTSON

Reports: Capital Battle in Toronto, Hopeful Talk for the Next Generation

The Compleat Clichettes Inter-species Relationships

> Private Ownership/Public Access You Can't Have Both **GARY KIBBINS**

The Sit-Down Comedian

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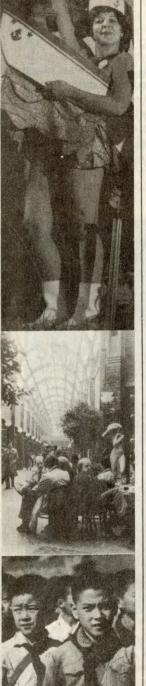
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And We Note... Look Who's Insulting Potatoes JEFF HOUSE

Naipaul's Legacies Book Review: Digging Up the Mountains MARLENE PHILIP

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Shot In The Dark

AL BOYARSKI (STAGE NAME: AL | on local country stations and well-Perry) was shot to death by Metro Police on Sunday, August 11, while spending the day at home with his wife and mother-in-law. Police were allegedly attempting to serve Perry with a drug warrant when the shooting occurred. Police searched the house extensively, but the search failed to turn up any drugs.

Perry, a country and western musician, had been working the C & W circuit since the late 1960's, and had recorded an album, You Have to Be What You Are by Al Perry and Boothill. According to Kenn Moyer, his producer and songwriting partner, Al was not a "high profile" performer, but inspired love and affection in all who knew him. David Peever, Perry's agent and himself an ex-police officer, said he didn't believe Perry had fired any shots, as was reported by the police. "Al was not involved in drugs; light or heavy. The police have dropped the drug theory. It's not a factor in their investigation."

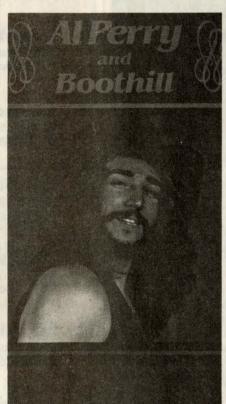
Perry, in addition to singing and playing fiddle and guitar, operated his own asphalt paving business, and was a member of ACTRA, appearing on one occasion in a Second City episode with John Candy and Joe Walsh. Perry and his wife. Marlene, had been married almost eight years and had two children, aged six and three, who were in the house at the time of the shooting.

Less than two weeks after his death, a benefit was held to raise money for his wife and family at the Caroletta Tavern on the Danforth in Toronto. The Caroletta is a "down east" tavern which caters to displaced Maritimers (60% Newfoundlanders) and a sprinkling of Torontonians. The Caroletta's manager, Shirley Kotsopoulos, who organized the benefit, said she felt there was a great need for funds and that a benefit, if done right away, would get a good response.

Over sixty entertainers volunteered to play (including Perry's old band, Boothill, which was reunited especially for the occasion). Only thirty of these could be accomodated in the benefit, which lasted from noon until 11 p.m. Free ads were broadcast for the event

Capital Battle In Toronto

known country artists headed up the show. Altogther, \$5,000 was raised from the six hundred people who attended, and several more benefits are scheduled in various venues around Toronto. A video of the event was produced by a local record store, with plans for the profits to go to Perry's widow, and Perry's record company is donating up to 400 albums for sale at future events.



Commenting on the first benefit, Shirley said, "The atmosphere was incredible. Everyone was standing on their chairs when Boothill came on. People really felt for the man.' Marlene and other family members are awaiting the outcome of the inquest before taking any further action. Asked about the propriety of officers tricking their way into people's houses (as was alleged to have occurred), Staff Sgt. Aikens of District 4 Headquarters replied, "No comment."

Don Alexander

IN FEBRUARY OF 1985. THE Toronto Arts Council released a report entitled Cultural Capital: The Care and Feeding of Toronto's Artistic Assets. This report was formally presented to City Council's Neighbourhoods Committee on April 25. An inhouse committee of City Aldermen and Arts Council staff members (chaired by Alderman Dorothy Thomas) was struck to consider all the facets of the recommendations made in that report.

Written submissions from over 100 arts and community groups have since been delivered to the Council's Task Force on Art and Tourism. Open meetings in Council chambers (media in attendance) were held August 13. 1985. At that time, as Alderman Thomas pointed out, the submissions were the most thoughtful and provocative of any submissions presented to the Council in recent history. Due to the number of submissions the "inhouse committee," holding hearings with community and art groups, felt that further meetings were in order... and as well, the committee felt it should not respond to the questions that arose until they had had adequate time to study all the briefs.

The briefs were presented by dance companies, theatres, video and film organizations, composers, writers, and visual artists. There were some minor criticisms of the Cultural Capital report, but for the most part the artistic community supported the spirit and the thrust of the request for the supplementary funding for the arts and community organizations.

The only dissent to the Cultural Capital report came from the camp of some long established theatre groups who do not want their money coming through the Toronto Arts Council as they are accustomed to garnering most funds directly from City Council. These theatre groups appeared to be uneasy as they fear adjudication and distribution of all art funds through the TAC might spread available funds more thinly. This attitude appears to be reactionary in terms of the real needs of the larger cultural scene, and the more than apparent imperative that smaller tributaries be supported in order to ensure the future of the DEBATE: cultural network.

Working groups for further discussion were set up by the City Council in August. Subjects ranged from "finding money for the arts" to the "City of Toronto as facilitator or patron of the arts." The committee on "Finding Money for the Arts," headed by Alderman June Rowlands (Chairwoman of the Budget Review Committee) with assistance from John Wilson (Senior Financial Advisor to the Council). varied from the mundane (cake bakes

The Artist: It would appear that in order to raise money the artists must once again go out and entertain, and sell buttons and hang banners. We've been through this for centuries ... endless beggary, endless patronage.

The Musician: How do we bridge the gap? How do we solve the conundrum? The art that is produced in this city is a part of the social fabric of the city. The artists of this city offer their philosophies and their absolutes...it is this we offer to the city. No one else can do this. What does the city offer in

The Musician: Does the City Council have then the power or the political will to move through the Provincial Legislature to lobby for changes necessary such as exemptions for nonprofit cultural organizations from realty taxes, and secondly, to push for a Provincial increase in hotel taxes the increase to be re-distributed by the Province back to the Metropolis of Toronto on the basis of a percentage of total hotel tax collected from this municipality and that money then to be distributed back to the arts and cultural groups of Toronto?

The City: If the City's assessment

CULTURAL CAPITAL -The City: We want to support you. | base shrinks, corporations will have to

and parades) to the Byzantine (Toronto Foundation for reception and distribution of funds). As was pointed out by one member of the audience: if the Foundation opens no new territory it would simply compete for the same corporate and private funds art groups have worked on for years.

Other representatives from the cultural network were of the opinion that money being routed through Toronto Arts Council (as suggested in Cultural Capital) would be most effective as the TAC already does that job. In addition, the establishment of a Toronto Foundation would create another level in the hierarchy of grant distribution.

Logos and banners were on the agenda. A Tag Day was discussed; a one-day event with an Arts Parade and artists performing; a public display of all creative skills and art forms.

Celebrities could come out and support you on that day.

The Artist: Art is not, cannot any longer be supported by the feeble and arcane philosophy of patronage. The City must address the very serious problems facing the artists of this city. The arts industry is in transition. The city must not back-pedal, but must take its role as "initiator" of the changes that are necessary to guarantee the survival of their own artists and the arts industry.

The City: The City operates under serious constraints, a narrow tax base prevents further investment in the arts. The Musician: Can the City Council take a leadership role in protecting one of its major industries, or does it perceive its role only as a limited patron crippled by its narrow tax

The City: The City's entire revenue is based on property value as assessed by the Province. The Province is in charge

pay more and manufacturing might relocate.

The Artist: I suspect the realty tax exemptions we speak of here would be an insignificant loss to the City's tax base.

We are requesting that the City bring its attention to the fact that art and artists enhance property value. And further to that, people come here to spend, to be entertained, and the Province and the Federal government all make money on Tourism.

The Musician: The City Council should resolve to be the initiator of an increased hotel tax to be re-distributed to the municipalities.

The City: How does one request redistribution of this extra surcharge from several levels of government when all are running at a horrible deficit? Taxes go to a general revenue fund, and there is legislation which requires money to be applied consistently province-wide. The Artist: Designated monies must be fought for, argued for. Negotiations must take place. We want to know

what role the City will play in the struggle that lays ahead for the survival of art in this city? Is it not possible for City Council to assist the artists of this City through a real committment — first, in terms of money for the immediate needs, and second, through acting as a spokesperson for those changes necessary on the provincial level?

The Musician: The City cannot argue for the arts at any level until it accepts the fact that artists are of major economic and cultural value to the life of Toronto.

The Artist: Which brings us to the question...Alderman Rowlands, as head of the Budget Review Committee, what will be your recommendation to City Council concerning the request from Toronto Arts Council for supplementary funding for the arts organizations of Toronto?

Alderman Rowlands: My recommendation will be some small part of that, [request] some additional help.

In September, the Budget Review Committee recommended \$60,000 of the \$200,100 request for supplementary grants to arts organizations. This recommendation (opposed by all arts groups as insignificant and inadequate) was taken on October 15, 1985 to Toronto City Council. The Council recommended the full supplementary grant requested.

This money is being distributed eventually among 158 professional and community arts groups: \$65,000 will be paid out immediately, and \$135,110 will be available in January after ratification by the new Council in December.

For some organizations, after a year of briefs, meetings, debates...the total increase in a grant might be between \$100 and \$500 for 1985.

So the victory, belated and strained as it is and will be (until after the December Council ratification), lies not in the amount of money added to budgets, but lies instead in the fact that the City Council has a majority of aldermen who have made a gesture of support for local artists.

Names worth remembering are: Jack Layton, Dale Martin, JoAnn Campbell, Anne Johnston, Tom Jakobek, Ying Hope, William Boytchuk, Richard Gilbert, Derwyn Shea, Ron Kantor, and Joe Pantaloni.

Hopeful Talk For The **Next Generation**

AN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE entitled "Issues for the Next Generation" was held in Toronto, Ontario between August 15th - 18th. Sponsored by the York University Political Science Department in conjunction with International Youth Year, the conference was attended by 220 delegates and 65 resource people from approximately 56 countries. The conference included workshops on a variety of topics, cultural performances, and film and video showings. FUSE Editorial Board members Gary Kibbins, Don Alexander, Kate Lushington and Jeff House attended addresses by several of the Keynote speakers: Stanley Aronowitz (Work and Technology), Murray Bookchin (Environmental Issues), Sheila Rowbotham (Women's Issues) and Samuel Bowles (Education).

Work and Technology/ Stanley Aronowitz

WHY DO WE HAVE THE MISERY of unemployment on one hand and shitty jobs on the other, instead of more free time for all? This was the question addressed by Stanley Aronowitz at the International Youth Conference. Not only are there no jobs for approximately 18% of the population, he stated, but those jobs that do become available are so desperately alienating and so monstrously boring as to insult anyone's definition of human dignity. Yet the same automation and information technology responsible for these ills has the potential to increase production to a materially comfortable level while freeing us from long hours of toil.

Aronowitz attempted to show why (although not how) we can transform this paradox into a Utopian goal. He began by drawing a distinction (first made by Hannah Arendt, derived from Marx's earlier writings) between work' and 'labour'. 'Labour' is what one does, not for the commitment to the activity itself, but in order to make objects for exchange, and of course for the compensation one receives in wages. 'Work', on the other hand, is a form of self-defined cultural expression. One does work for the develop-

ment of oneself and one's community. In work, a person's own initiative and human resources are fully respected because work is by definition selfdetermined. Aronowitz also distinguished 'leisure' from 'work.' To spend one's free time consuming products of the leisure industry is to fall back on the same instrumentalized world of labour rather than one's own human resources and capacity for cultural expression.

Aronowitz then briefly outlined the historical development of the Industrial Revolution. The initial phase was based not on the introduction of machinery, but on a restructuring of the labour process, where diverse trades and skills were brought under one roof so that they could be coordinated more efficiently. The division of labour and the factory system was developed, and the skills of workers were slowly and systematically transferred to machines. For a period, the working class, having been transformed from peasant to proletarian, possessed real power - they, not the owners, had the skills to run the machines. As specialization intensified, and as science was increasingly subordinated to technology, much of working class (inaccurately named) skill became embodied in cybernetic systems where only management had the overview of the production process, thus strengthening management's control.

Here, Aronowitz denounced the labour movement (accurately named) for being consistently fixed on short term economic gain rather than long term political and cultural goals; for not bargaining for control over the introduction of new production technologies; for not developing a sound educational program with which to help re-empower its members; and for developing no underlying distinction between 'work' and 'labour' which it could use to fuel its political activities with a vision of human worth.

We have reached a critical phase in the historical development of the technology of production. The irony is that the enormous production capabilities developed by capitalism, in large part due to reducing work to the status of labour, can be entirely turned around: we can not only reduce labour time, but transform everything we do, including the production of goods, into work. Everything is there for us to begin the process of abolishing labour.

Yet Aronowitz was strangely selfeffacing as he spoke of the Utopian nature of his ideas, sensing the need to justify this. (And I did hear grumblings from some individuals in the audience regarding his "one-sidedness".) This was also true of Samuel Bowles, who supported his own position by pointing out that what has been labelled 'Utopian' is both concretely achievable as well as rational. (Murray Bookchin, on the other hand, insisted on the legitimacy of his Utopianism with no hesitation whatsoever, making it seem as natural as the wind driven snow.) In any case, a Utopian proposition was probably the best contribution an academic speaker could have made to a conference whose most important function was the exchange of ideas and experience amongst young activists.

Gary Kibbins

Environmental Issues/ Murray Bookchin

MURRAY BOOKCHIN, NOW IN HIS sixties, grew up during the Spanish Civil War, worked as an organizer for the Young Communist League, and faced shotguns in the C.I.O. organizing drives of the late 30's and early 40's. His parents were members of the I.W.W. who nigrated from Russia where they hac een associated with the Social-Revolutionary Party, which later took part, along with the Bolsheviks, in the 1017 Russian Revolution. Bookchin

lished a major book on ecology six months before Rachel Carson's Silent Spring, and says that the ecological degradation of the planet has exceeded his wildest predictions: "The ecological problem cannot be separated from the social problem. The very forces which re degrading human beings and the quality of social relations are undoing 4 1/2 billion years of evolution in the space of a few decades."

B okchin is a self-described "anarchist" and has turned his back on what he sees as the paradigms of a different era. He rejects "class" as the pre-eminent analytic category, preferring instead to focus on the emergence of a new "people," drawn from all classes and strata. who are disenfranchised by the regime of "experts" who dominate in both the 'communist' East and the capitalist West. He takes issue with the notion that culture is determined by economics pre-capitalist societies, the economy was often limited by cultural assump-

For the farmers and artisans of a different era, the productive process was more than just a means of making a living; it represented a whole way of life, an ethical orientation to nature and community. In the early 1800's, some tory system and the Industrial Revolution because of their notion, as E.P. of the English Working Class, of a

by pointing to the fact that, in many | itself today in impersonal bureaucracies, and in the modern corporate mentality which sees nature as mere resource." Traditional left-wing ideologies do not fully challenge this sensibility. Economic efficiency and rationalization remain the key watch-

Marxism (see Aronowitz) has tended to make superfluity of goods and the English working people resisted the fac- advancement of technology a precondition for liberation, instead of seeing that political self-determination and Thompson describes it in The Making | moral citizenship are perhaps the most important products and attributes of a "moral economy" in which economic healthy, socialist economy. If one activity takes place to serve the needs | makes the advancement of the "proand interests of the individual and his or ductive forces" the main goal, one is her community, and not to satisfy the forced to rely on centralization and greed of the few. The over-riding aim of hierarchy and alienated labour. If one is the economy, as these people had concerned with empowering people at known it, was maintenance not growth. | the local level and making production a People took pride in their work, shared | more convivial activity, then one opts



CONFERENCE MOVES TO TORONTO ISLAND

the land for grazing (the "commons"), and viewed nature as a benefactor. According to Bookchin, "The market system has abolished the ethical constraints of previous epochs and smashed all limits on growth, consumption, production and domination. The market has reduced people to buyers and sellers, has replaced cooperation (as practiced, for instance, by the artisan guilds of Europe) with competition."

But the problem goes deeper than the market system. The profit system of capitalism was made possible by what Bookchin calls a "sensibility of domination." This is the tendency to pit the human "subject" against the world of "objects," such as nature, or other people. This same tendency manifests

FUSE

for human scale, "appropriate" technologies and a melding of urban and rural settings where people can still appreciate the natural world, and enjoy face-to-face contact.

Thus, for Bookchin, the challenge for the next generation is "...to conceive of how to reconstruct society so that a harmonious relationshp is re-established between humanity and nature...to create a situation in which human beings control their own destinies by demystifying statecraft and making politics amenable to the average citizen." This, more than building more efficient machines, should guide a genuine socialist society.

Don Alexander

Women's Issues/ Sheila Rowbotham

SHEILA ROWBOTHAM, A MARXist and a historian well-known for her documentation of both revolutionary and women's movements in such books as Woman's Consciousness Man's World and Women, Resistance & Revolution, addressed the contradicitons inherent in fighting the battles of class and gender on two fronts. Speaking to the upcoming generation of women and men, she outlined her background briefly: of working class origins, she has spent sixteen years in the women's movement, and has recently been encountering layers of contrary assumptions.

Far from defining the struggle as that of white middle class women, she pointed out that there is a history, often suppressed, of working class women in the movement, and that in North America the roots of current feminist consciousness can be traced to women's involvement in the Civil Rights movement of the sixties. She referred to a book published in the 1920's called The Russian Enigma, which addressed the post-revolutionary generation by quoting Goethe: "All theory is hoary, but the tree of life is enternally green," but which then went on to advise young people not to "waste precious energy battering down open doors." As a historian she believes this is good advice for people newly engaged in the struggle to challenge all circumstances of privilege. It is important to remember that ideas come from life in the immediacy of the present, but also to understand the theoretical limitations of past thought, in particular the "radical liberal" tradition of the women's movement. For example, Rowbotham cited the emphasis, born of early consciousness-raising, on individual self-development. While she finds this emphasis important, the liberal tradition is hampered from exploring what this could mean for all women by being intransigently ahistorical in its belief in human destiny, and by stressing freedom of choice in a vacuum. She suggested the roots of the current women's movement can be found in many alternate sources as early Utopian communities, the theories of anarchist syndicalists, social reforms, the struggles for national liberation, and

For Rowbotham it is imperative to | cast the net wider than the dominant trend, to change not only society but the state. The stakes are too high, she said, for women to cling to the purity of powerlessness. The liberation of women for her is a larger quest, to expose and confront ruthless and vicious interests. Yet as women, she suggested. we experience the prevailing culture as a fracture; it is painful, we live out a split. We must challenge the hidden power of what is accepted as universally applicable (meaning male) and establish new criteria for social transformation, beyond just using the existing order for new purposes. We will need a knowing resilience, since self-righteousness leads to disillusion.

Although "all theory is hoary," Rowbotham warned that we must not turn away from it into the limitations of oppression. She believes that we need to seek the understanding that men have gained by weilding power, to investigate just how theory is defined and conceived, and to open up so-called "Women's Studies" for these purposes. Illustrating her point with an anecdote about a miner's wife who successfully challenged one of the Coal Board representatives at a public meeting in London during the recent strike, she suggested that the main problem for the future generation will be how to sustain consciousness and connection between women of all classes beyond such high peaks of struggle. To do this we must respect Goethe's "Tree of Life," and remember that in the words of South African writer Nadine Gordimer, "Noone knows where the end of suffering will begin."

Kate Lushington

Education/ Samuel Bowles

PROFESSOR SAM BOWLES OF THE University of Massachusetts enthralled his audience with a well-prepared lecture arguing that capitalism faces a new crisis. After a quick tour of Benthamite liberalism (thrown in, one suspected, as an obligatory show of academic erudition), Bowles settled down to the main argument, in which he contended that a shift in the nature of property spells trouble for the private enterprise economy. In a world where "the accumulation model" and private property rights face a new

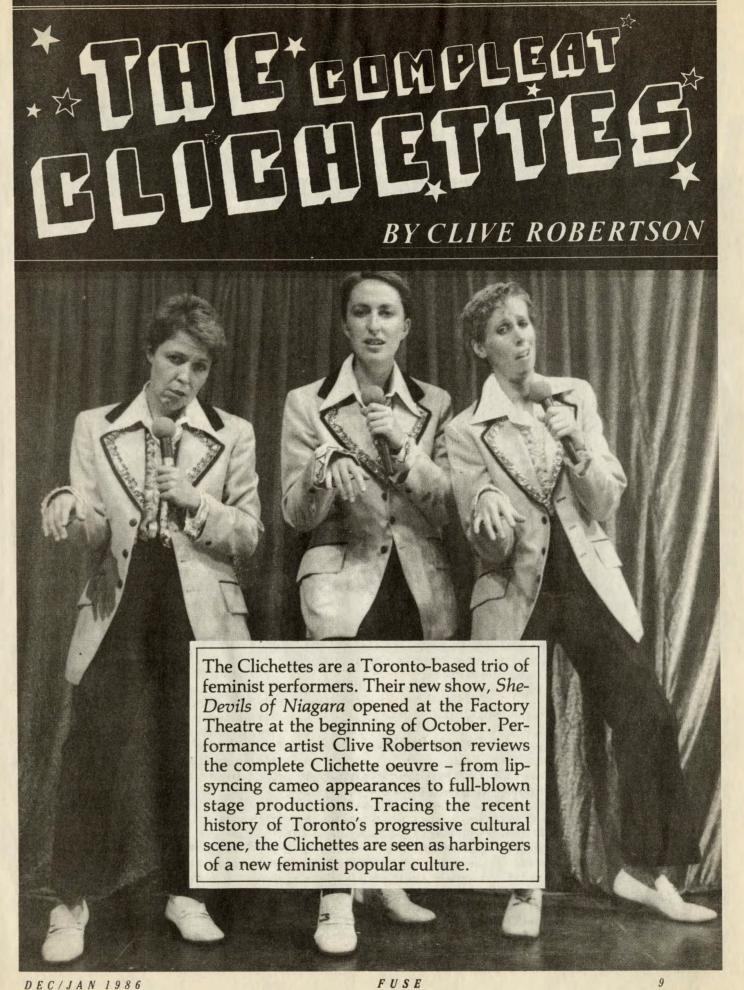
politics in which rights are not property-related, Bowles hinted that the coming changes in the composition of property offered an opening for forces building a new society.

Property, said Bowles, used to be land and objects, but is now, increasingly, knowledge. And it is a quality of knowledge, he claimed, that it does not lend itself to becoming private property to the same extent as do material things. Therefore, more and more social labour must be, in a capitalist society, directed to guarding knowledge, and preventing its free reproduction. He claimed that 25% of all labour in the U.S. is now guardlabour, and that the proportion increases yearly. That irrationality, he suggested, was being confronted by a

Property, said Bowles, used to be land and objects, but is now, increasingly, knowledge.

new politics, which defined itself by asserting rights far removed from traditional concepts of property. Movements which cry "Black is Beautiful" or "Women Unite, Take Back the Night" are, he argued, something new and important. While Bowles' work is creative and stimulating, this listener felt it was often more convincing the faster he ran through it. Thus, once one has decided to reduce a complex and pluralistic movement to a slogan, one might as easily choose "Bread and Roses" to represent the women's movement. Alas, that example would not be as convenient for Bowles, as the demands for the redistribution of social wealth show through. In fact it seemed at times that Bowles had to work hard to twist his schema away from the traditional, and well-understood, struggle between the haves and the have-nots. But class struggle is a well-mined vein, and perhaps not so popular on campus these days.

Jeff House



other popular movements.



- · She-Devils of Niagara, The Factory Theatre, Toronto. Written by Marni Jackson & The Clichettes. Directed by Bob White.
- · Canada Day, Harbourfront.
- · Gay Pride Day, Toronto.
- · Women's Cultural Building, Five Minute Feminist Cabaret. International Women's Day. Benefit for OCAC (Ontario Coalition of Abortion Clinics), Salon Theatre, Toronto.

1984:

- · Protest Rally Against Arts Cutbacks, Artists Union. St. Lawrence Centre, Toronto.
- · Emily Stowe Shelter Benefit, The Rivoli.
- Anti-Censorship Rally, OFAVAS, Royal Alex Theatre, Toronto.
- · Medical Aid for Nicaragua, Benefit for Fet Salud.
- · National Lip-Sync Contest, Houston, Texas.
- · Send Those Lips To Houston. Clichettes Benefit. The Rivoli.

1983:

- · Pro-Choice Benefit. Convocation Hall, Toronto.
- · Women and Words Benefit. Harpers Restaurant.
- Nightwood Theatre Benefit.
- · Canada Day at the Cameron, Cameron Hotel.
- · Women's Cultural Building. Five Minute Feminist Cabaret. The Horseshoe, Toronto.

- · Toronto Women's Bookstore Benefit.
- T.A.C.W.L. Conference (Toronto Caucus, Women and the Law).

• International Theatre Festival, Toronto.

1981:

• Half Human, Half Heartache. Old Angelo's, Toronto (December 1981 to April 1982).

Director: Hrant Alianak.

Producer: Theatre Passe Muraille/Old Angelo's.

· Half Human, Half Heartache, The Beacons Arms,

Director: Hrant Alianak. Producer: Bill House.

· Half Human, Half Heartache. Vancouver East Cultural Centre.

Director: Hrant Aianak. Producer: Bill House.

· Half Human, Half Heartache. Horseshoe Tavern. (July) Co-producers: The Clichettes/Bill House. (May) Co-producers: The Cichettes/Theatre Passe Muraille.

Director: Michael Glassburg.

- · Dude's (gay bar) Birthday Party.
- · Basin Street, Toronto.
- · Yuk Yuk's, Toronto.
- . The Body Politic Benefit Rally, Toronto.

1978:

- · Dance in Canada Benefit, Toronto.
- · Big Sonnet Benefit (Coach House Press).
- · General Idea's 10th Anniversary, CN Tower.
- · Tele-Performance Festival. Fifth Network, Independent Video Conference.
- · Café Soho Hallowe'en Celebration.

IN 1978. AT THE CONCERT HALL at Yonge and Davenport, a group of independent choreographers made a brief but lasting appearance as a lipsync girl group: The Clichettes. The occasion was the Tele-Performance Festival, several evenings of new performance works that responded to TV as content or theatrical technology. Writing for the Tele-Performance issue of Fuse (then Centerfold), Colin Campbell noted that the Clichettes were "dangerous and aggressively funny." That was the evening when Louise Garfield, Johanna Householder and Janice Hladki (with Elizabeth Chitty) introduced their lip-sync version of Leslie Gore's "You Don't Own Me."

Pounding their fists on the floor to the lyrics, "Don't tell me what to do, Don't tell me what to say..." the Clichettes were subconsciously helping to hammer out part of the foundation for a new women's cultural community. With "You Don't Own Me," the Clichettes discovered their first of many pop landmines (loaded with subversive potential) that were just waiting to be detonated.

In On The Birth

LOOKING BACK, IT CAN BE argued that the birth of the Clichettes coincided with the birth, or public emergence of Toronto's recent progressive cultural scene. For 1978-79 was the year when the gay community would look for and receive crosscommunity support in the first court battle of The Body Politic. And 1978 was also the year when Immican, the Regent's Park Caribbean community organization, emerged publically as the generator of dub poetry and reggae music. At the same time, the decadeold downtown artist community was about to make a tentative leap into the larger cultural milieu, aided by external allegiances of gender, sexuality and class politics.

With hindsight, the most lasting change came about from within the feminist community; in particular it's simultaneous development of a surge of cultural activities. Along with the feminist publications Fireweed and Broadside, as well as the lesbian bar Fly-By-Night, came a need for "women wanting women to play women's benefits." This need provided support for the formation of a number of women's

DEC/JAN 1986

bands, including No Frills (Susan G. Cole, Cathy MacKay, Sherry Shute, Evelyne Datl, Ben Cleveland) and Mama Quilla II (Linda Robitaille, Susan Sturman, Lorraine Segato, Maxine Walsh, BI Danylchuk, Jacqui Snedker, Linda Jain and Nancy Poole). Not only did these bands help the women's network to and Janice Hladki.

a few feathers. Fortunately, by 1981, feminist artists had advanced our attention by forming the Women's Cultural Building collective (WCB). Among the thirty or so founding members were the three Clichettes -Louise Garfield, Johanna Householder



LEFT TO RIGHT: LOUISE, JOHANNA, JANICE. DANGEROUSLY & AGRESSIVELY FUNNY

dance, but they also helped coalesce | The Hummer Sisters many hitherto isolated cultural organizations. Mama Quilla II became a super-charged role model for younger women artists who desired a full diet of fun, collectivity and political engagement. And finally, 1979 was also the year when the "Inco Women" helped swell the ranks of the International Women's Day March.

For the artist community in general, the process of cultural politicization was not a cause for unanimous celebration. Visiting feminist artists Martha Rosler, Carolee Schneeman and Susan Hiller received a mixed response. Some thought that the era of post-feminism was already an 'intellectual' accomplishment, causing Schneeman's

IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO WRITE a history of the Clichettes without mentioning the Hummer Sisters. Prior to the Clichettes, the Hummers had already mapped out a sizeable chunk of territory with their production company, VideoCabaret. Occupying the basement of the original A Space building at One Nicolas Street, the Hummers pushed hard in all directions at once. Scripts written by Deanne Taylor fused dialogue with satiric songs, a live band (The Government) and backdrops of eye-searing black and white video monitors. As the Clichettes later moved from cabaret "Herstory" lessons to ruffle more than appearances to stage shows, so too the

Hummers moved into civic election | show, Half Human, Half Heartache spectacles and the production of impressive videodramas such as Hormone Warzone. The Clichettes writer, Marni Jackson. Currently comacknowledge the inspiration of both the Hummers and popular commedienne, Sheila Gostick. Clichette Janice Hladki describes the overlap as being "of similar intent and drive...in each it finds a different expressive form."

Benefits, Club Acts, Benefits

THE CLICHETTES APPEARANCE at the Tele-Performance Festival was in the form of a self-contained segment of David Buchan's piece: "LaMonte Del Monte and the Fruit Cocktails." Buchan, himself using lyp-sync, recently admitted that in comparison with the Clichettes, his role was under-rehearsed: "They came on as dancers with perfect costumes and choreography." An important step for the Clichettes initially was to resist becoming a performing homage to girl pop groups; not that it was ever their desire to do so - but all along, audience approval for nostalgia has been strong.

From the beginning (see chronology) the Clichettes, like Mama Quilla II, were very much in demand to perform at benefits. "When we began to write shows, the benefits allowed us to test our material before particular audiences," Hladki stated, adding, "We can firmly delcare our allegiances by performing what we do at benefits, rather than in some other way." Householder sees a similar raison d'etre for both the Clichettes and the WCB collective. "Many of us had, as artists, always felt torn about being political activists in the classical sense. Being in this particular segment of society you've got your jobs, your art and your political work. The WCB helped us realize that the Clichettes are an option for putting it all in the same package.'

In 1979 the Clichettes shared a bill with Sheila Gostick at Yuk Yuk's. Louise Garfield remembers: "We did two sets, about ten songs. The place is small with a ceiling so low that we couldn't point our fingers straight up. We learnt from Yuk Yuk's how to become tired of performing songs in a concert format. The satire we could bring to any particular song wasn't as great as we wanted it to be. We needed to write something around it.'

That "something" became their first

(H.H.H.H.) and their first writing collaboration with journalist and fiction pleting work on her first novel, Foreign Men, Jackson has also written a humour column for the Toronto Star and journalism for life-style and news magazines.

Girl Groups And Girlhoods

ACCORDING TO JACKSON, THE Clichettes gave her a single sheet of paper which succinctly contained the whole outline for H.H.H.H. "The Clichettes saw records and soundtracks as cultural metaphors, pop songs equally loaded with both good and bad ideas. Their initial conception was clear - they knew who they wanted to be."

In Half Human, Half Heartache, the Clichettes developed a group mythology. The device, as old as pop music itself, has also carried a lot of baggage for other art groups and movements. I asked the Clichettes why they needed a group mythology. Householder explained, "People want the story and the real story is often not that interesting. Part of our mythology, of being from Outer Space, has been a convenient way for us as 'aliens' to explain lip-sync. Lip-sync also happens to be, in itself, a good metaphor for the cultural imperialism experienced by women. Half-Human was a look at our own girlhoods, girl groups, petting, emotional blackmail - the whole works. She Devils by comparison looks at our possible future through issues like reproductive rights and unemployment."

Half Human opened in Toronto in 1980, and travelled the following year, first to Vancouver's East Cultural Centre, and later to the Beacon Arms Hotel in Ottawa, Frances Leeming, who worked as the dresser for the Ottawa run, remembers that the venue, the town, or both were not appreciative. "One day the Clichettes wore their boat costumes and went out onto Sparkes Street to encourage some business. People pretended not to

Though it's one of the funniest places in the country (being, as it is, the pompous hub), Ottawa had a hard time recognizing the Clichettes' talent. Johanna Householder: "We performed in the Nostalgia Lounge of the Beacon

Arms, where there was no dressing room. We would get ready in our room and then take the hotel elevator on our way to the stage. Staying in the same hotel were a party of young kids from Munro, New York. One night we entered the elevator wearing our weird make-up and shared the ride with some seven and eight year olds from Munro. You could switch off the lights in this elevator and we thought we'd scare the kids by doing just that. When we reached the mezzanine, the elevator door opened and this little kid looked up at me and said, 'Did you scare vourself lady'?"

But Half Human, like almost all of the Clichettes' work, was a 'hit.' Staged at Vancouver's East Cultural Centre, the show was held over for an extra week. Reviewing the Toronto run. Globe & Mail correspondent Carole Corbeil wrote: "Their satirical lipsync act has always relied on the elaborate costumes of early girl groups ...but this time around they've created a show that goes beyond dressing up and sending up."

In his book, Pop Goes the Culture, Craig McGregor describes a form of popular culture that the Clichettes get close to: "the conjunction of popular energy and self-conscious artistry seems to release an enormous imaginative burst of achievement."

The plot of Half Human, conceptually sounds as daffy as Mork and Mindy. Three women, sonic engineers, land on Earth in The (Da-Doo-Ron-Ron) Crystal's closet for the purposes of a scientific investigation. They become a girl group but, being aliens, they have to learn how to become girls - a process of practice and heartache that truly hurts. For a while they are protected by emotional immunity pills, but these unfortunately run out. As Louise Garfield was repeatedly quoted as saying at the time of the show: "We're not simply a nostalgia act, we're interested in parodying the extreme of these clichéd emotions.

Unlike Mork or, even, a comedian like Jerry Lewis, there is an aspect to the Clichettes work that goes beyond parody and emotional (or nonemotional) exaggeration. While collaging different folk/popular forms, the Clichettes can also critique pop culture and its stage-management by men. Straddling, very loosely, the art and entertainment circuit, what the Clichettes depict in their shows also DEC/JAN 1986 becomes reinforced by their experiences as performers.

In the spring of 1984, after already workshopping their current play, She Devils, the Clichettes went South to Houston to perform in an American National Lip-Sync contest. Competing against Michael Jackson look-alikes, they became real-life winners with their most esoteric song, Lolita's "Seamen, Seamen," Wearing the same boat costumes which had failed to impress Ottawa's pedestrians, they won the approval of the judges and upset the organizer. Louise Garfield explains: "They wanted a celebrity lookalike. We thought the contest was rigged - but it wasn't. Normally the winners of these contests get booked into a string of bars across the mid-West not exactly our idea of a good time. We were glad to leave and they were glad to see us go. The organizer insisted to us, before we left Toronto, that the song we chose should be upbeat - for him, meaning 120 beats per minute. When we arrived he was appalled to find out that our song was only 90 beats per minute. He told us we didn't stand a chance. After we won, he wouldn't talk to us - he was so pissed off." The Clichettes walked away with 2 trophies, 3 ten-speed bikes, 3 beer coolers, \$1,000 in cash and (as yet unused) plane tickets to San Francisco.

Striking Machos

THE MAIOR CONTENT SHIFT FOR the Clichettes after Half-Human, Half-Heartache, was their decision to perform lip-sync versions of male songs, to become 'mock-males.' Their versions of Paul Anka's, "Having My Baby" and the Four Season's "Walk Like A Man" are now underground classics. The new show features both songs, as well as a version of Motorhead's "Go To Hell." All three numbers hit hard at patriarchal puffery, jock swaggering, and the god-given rights of heterosexual males. In "Having My Baby," the trio, dressed in cheap male suits and wigs, leaves the stage to cruise the audience. As women dressed as men, they look at the male members of the audience with knowing nods and winks, and an irony that beats you over the head. Sewn into the lining of their jackets are the chorus lyrics which they reveal on cue: "I'm a woman in love and I love what it's doing to me."

Taking the same attack, but from a



SPOILS FROM THE HOUSTON LIP-SYNC CONTEST

WALK LIKE A MAN



FUSE

DEC/JAN 1986

different angle, is "Go To Hell." The | that both the women's and gay movesurprise element is hard to describe. I saw it premiered (along with twenty other 'acts') at this year's WCB 5-Minute Feminist Cabaret. The curtains open with the Clichettes, already bounding across the stage, wearing naked spandex male torsos, clutching guitar cut-outs, waving their pink tongues, as two of them pose, back-toback. They bend over, jump, and rub against each other in true feigned heavy metal rock n' roll ecstacy, with their true-to-life (wheat germ) penises dangling between their legs. Just as you are imagining exactly what you most want to see - this outrageous spectacle - they are gone. (If MuchMusic didn't have the catatonic formula that it has, they would be playing an as-yetunmade video version of the Clichettes "Go To Hell" every hour, on the hour.)

Pro-Choice: Culture

ONE OF THE HISTORICAL moments in Toronto's recent cultural life was the first WCB 5-Minute Feminist Cabaret, staged at the Horseshoe in 1983. The event was embedded in a marathon of women's cultural festivals, organized by the Women's Cultural Building and Women's Perspectives. The cabaret coordinated by Johanna Householder and Cynthia Grant, showcased a sampling of feminist performance: opera, theatre, music, schtick, monologues, slapstick, stripping and performance works from some 30 artists including Boo Watson, Phyllis Waugh, Tanya Mars, Marcia Cannon, Lisa Steele, Susan G. Cole, Sherry Shute, Carolyn Martin, Kate Lushington, Jane Farrow, Laurie Conger, Lorraine Segato and the Clichettes. It's not that an audience response of both patience and excitement is that unfamiliar to the women's community, but the contrast with Oueen Street's normal audience attitude, of polite deference or bored indifference, was both vast and vivid.

As a man, it would be improper to pinpoint this event, among others, as a turning point for the acceptance of the women's cultural community, but, then again, in writing about the Clichette's history, it is important to describe the events which have both provided and encouraged a supportive environment.

Simon Frith, the clear-thinking pop culture sociologist, has pointed out door to a wax museum beside Niagara

ments have recognized the role of autobiography in the development of political theory. And it follows that this autobiographical function can be important for communities as well as individuals, as the women's cultural community here develops its own popular culture, by collective acts of creation, that in turn capture an "enthusiasm of consumption."

Pro-Choice: Reproduction

THE CLICHETTES. LIKE THEIR feminist peers, place reproductive rights near the top of their agenda. Working both as organizer and performer, Lousie Garfield co-ordinated the 1983 Pro-Choice Benefit at Convocation Hall. Just as their new play opened, the Ontario Morgentaler abortion clinic acquittal was overturned. Pro-Life staged a rally of 20,000 people, while the pro-choice protest against the Court of Appeal's decision was attended by less that 400 people. Householder remarks: "Even our wildest sci-fi inventions that depict the loss of reproductive rights are finally not much of an exaggeration."

The Clichettes and Marni Jackson have written She-Devils as a story set in 1998 when there is only one official gender (mono-gender) made up equally of males and vestigial females (mockmales). The state has declared a policy of monogender so that an endangered species, 'The Great Sperm Males,' can be saved. Jo, Lou and Jan realize that the policy/appeal is merely a tactic to get rid of women.

Like Ladies Against Women, an agit-prop theatre piece performed here by visiting Californians, The Plutonium Players, the Clichettes' She-Devils is very much an activist piece of theatre. Theirs is not the detached satire of SCTV, Monty Python or other past popular and clever wits. Just as the Clichettes laughted at their own girlhoods, now they are making us laugh with them at their own struggles as women.

There's Safety in Numbness

IN SHE-DEVILS THE GENDER police are portrayed by male voiceovers. Sex is controlled by the SCBO (Sex Control Board of Ontario). The Clichettes work in a nightclub, next

Falls. The wax museum is used as a motif of false history (similar to Gil Scott-Heron's presentation of Black history from a white wax museum in his film Black Wax.) In the wax museum, Jo meets Mother Theresa, Ghandi, Castro, McLuhan and two women: Maria, the first person to walk over the Falls on a tightrope, and Annie, the first person to ride over the Falls in a barrel.

When Io discovers the plot against women. McLuhan offers this advice: "There's safety in numbness, Jo. Try a little more detachment - get waxed, relax." Of course, the Clichettes do everything but relax. Jan believes that the solution to their plight can be brought about by genetic engineering, Lou prefers experiments with interspecies relationships, and Jo wants to find out how history works so that they can "find a better year."

Though the three alien scientists have been "out of work for 25,000 years," nonetheless they don't enjoy their current employment as chorus girls/guvs.

Lou: "Fine! Okay! If you two want to go back to Andromeda, waitressing ankle deep in hot lava, let's go."

Ian: "At least Andromeda has sex..." Io: "Oh, sex, sex, sex. There's more to life than sex, Jan."

Jan: "Not much more. Not when you're human."

Io: "Why do we have to be human in the first place?"

Lou: "I'd rather be something simpler ...like a germ or a fruit-fly."

Ian: "Great! Fruit-flies with degrees in genetic engineering. There's a big demand for those."

The plot development of She-Devils is both collaged and fast. As well as the sci-fi story itself, there are unexpected cameo's, like the obscure lip-sync male monologue, "The Quail Hunter" (a soft treatise on the male ritual of birdhunting) which Lou performs. She-Devils unravels as a piece of theatre, a performance event and a revue with the Clichettes constantly changing character, costumes and breaking into solo and group songs. Finally, after being placed in the Male, Male, Male Room where the gender police attempt to brain-wash Jan into becoming a man, Jan's genetic concentrate is poured into the Niagara Falls, polluting the water supply, and saving Ontario (and presumably, the Earth) from monogender.

Reviews and Response

WHEN DISCUSSING SHE-DEVILS. co-writer Marni Jackson spoke of the process of "writing in order to find out where you stand...anchoring the work in existing details rather than approximating cultural strategies to fit ideoget into trouble when they wander too far from it." Likewise, the CBC's Journal, (that has lately been making a ridiculous mess of its arts coverage),

tectionism: "they're not conventional | not care to contest) but the fact that actresses, after all. They're comedians this is a continuing and dynamic prowith a strange, brilliant schtick who cess, and that energetic popular forms can rival and supercede established 'high' or 'classical' disciplines. They don't like the idea of a continuing (cultural) revolution which perpetually flashed an item on the Clichettes with a challenges the established order.



SHE-DEVILS' FINALE

logical pre-conceptions." The critics and audience post-conceptual response to She-Devils is as interesting as it is varied. Primarily, She-Devils is a lively example of a feminist pop culture. It is as accessible as a streetcar ride. And yet while there have been many that have seen the show who have suffered continuous fits of laughter for an hour and forty-five minutes, there have also been women in the audience who hardly smiled, and at least one man who fell asleep.

While journalists like Liam Lacey, Henry Mietkiewicz and Carole Corbeil have applauded She-Devils or Half-Human for their populist political inventiveness, Ray Conlogue and Gina Mallet, not surprisingly, have faulted both productions for failing to maintain some notion of theatrical standards. Conlogue in his review of She-Devils seems miffed by the Clichettes acknowledged ability to deliver content in an accessible and popular form. Trailing behind other critics, he can only engage in a form of territorial pro-

pre-caption which read: "Three waitresses who do parody." The implication of course is dismissive - three waitresses who do parody in their spare time - proving The Journal's aversion to putting feminists-on-theair. Similarly, but more subtly (after all, you can't be seen to be on the wrong side of something 'popular'), Robert Crew wrote that She-Devils "promised more than it can deliver." He then goes on to prove that it delivered all that it promised and more: "Many of the kicks (into the male anatomy) are well placed and well deserved: a few seemed shrill and motivated by dislike, if not hatred." (emphasis mine)

To complicate matters, it's not just the critics who want a performance presented on a stage to confine itself to theatrical proprieties, no matter how effective or appropriate the show may be on its own terms! Craig McGregor puts it best: "What disquiets the cultural élitists in our midst, however, is not the populist beginnings of all art (a historical fact which even they do

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(McGregor points to the development of the novel from a "low-caste varn." and film that "began as a box of tricks for diverting children and noveltyseekers.")

Given the necessary resources, the Clichettes could continue their feminist pop culture quest by putting a show like She-Devils onto film. After all, it was film which put Linton Kwesi Johnson before audiences who would not have bought his records, or known of his involvement in Race Today. Whatever happens in the future, the Clichettes can be satisfied that they have more than contributed to the present. For no matter what those with cultural power, money, and influence might think of Toronto as the music, film, TV and print capital, without a developing popular culture made available to us from the likes of the Clichettes, this place would be the most creatively unimaginative location in the country.

Clive Robertson

PRIVATE PUBLIC ACCESS

OWNERSHIP

You Can't Have Both

Gary Kibbins

The Right to Shop: The Public Privateers

"YOU WANT PEOPLE THERE TO SHOP. YOU DON'T want your people distracted by public rallies or such." Thus spake W. McNaughton, lawyer for Cadillac-Fairview Corp. Ltd., owner of Toronto's Eaton Centre. True to their word, and despite all the noble references to an accessible strike, one participant encountered an irate shopper who complained that the demonstration was interfering with her "right to shop."

To be sure, one should be careful not to overpublicize the "right to shop" issue lest the National Citizen's Coalition catch on and start taking out full-page ads in all the dailies, demanding that it be entrenched in the constitution. None-



public area which was written into the original planning documents, 32,000 people were evicted from the mall last year, including Retail Wholesale Department Store Union members who were then on strike against Eaton's.

McNaughton's perspective is predictable enough considering whose interests he was hired to represent and protect. Yet it is also shared by many of Eaton's patrons. When 2000 International Women's Day marchers diverted their route through the Eaton's store in support of the RWDSU

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theless, the "right to shop" is a political articulation of sorts, and apart from the wacky image of earnest shoppers wagging their fingers at demonstrators, it issues from a more significant political accounting of personal rights as well as our prevailing concepts of the 'public' and the 'private.'

While our constitution and legal apparatus sing the praises of the rights of the individual, they have consciously omitted a similar treatment of the democratic rights to the public domain for those same individuals, unless in one of two possible roles. One may engage in private economic competition; this serves to identify the minority who own or otherwise control the public domain. The rest of us are

DEC/JAN 1986

Pluralist Shopping, after all, guarantees a

then vouchsafed the right to shop in it, provided that shopping is permitted and that we have the money.

There are two mutually reinforcing sides to this process: the privatization of the public domain, and the publicization of private interests. The process itself excludes access to important components of the public domain for the majority of the population, while simultaneously providing a steady stream of ideological justification for that exclusion. (According to thinkers like Z. Breszinski, former security advisor to President Carter, this is as it should be. Once citizens have voted, their only role is to keep the economy healthy by consuming as much as they possibly can. Breszinski takes the "right to shop" a step further, transforming it into a duty.)

The "right to shop" is the most formidable argument that liberal society has mustered to defend its great shibboleth pluralism. Pluralist shopping, after all, guarantees a social order free from the spectre of barbarians breaking down the gates: we are all more than welcome to spend our money. But if by pluralism we mean the right of equal access for groups or individuals to enter the debate over public policy and the allocation of social resources, then the promise of pluralism is shown to be the fink that it is. Once the public domain has been privatized and only a minority of private interests are publicized, then the best that can be claimed is a plutocratic pluralism - the competition of elites.

But this is not to say that restrictions on public access are of an economic nature alone: often having the money to gain even temporary access isn't enough. When the Ontario Federation of Labour attempted to buy two 30-second radio ads in support of the Eaton strikers, almost every radio station they approached in southern Ontario refused to run them. The reason, of course, is that the radio stations were unwilling to jeopardize their advertising contracts with Eaton's. At least two of the stations which turned down the ads were owned by Standard Broadcasting, which is owned by Argus Corp., which is run by Conrad Black, who sits on the board of Eaton's. No mystery.

And what of "public" broadcasting, "our" own CBC With its apparent freedom from the tyranny of the marketplace, and despite its recent programming changes (such as dropping Our Native Land in favour of programs more suitable to that phantom-class, the "petit yuppie"), the CBC would seem to be willing and able to broadcast material that the commercial broadcasting media either will not or can not handle. Still, a policy of alternative access does not exist. There is the story of a citizens' group, including media critic James Laxer, who prepared a response to the advocacy advertisements of two American subsidiary oil companies, Imperial Oil and Gulf Canada Ltd. Imperial spends \$5-6 million on TV ads annually in order to keep us fully informed of its involvement in community projects such as hockey and swimming. Gulf is expected to spend \$1.7 million on newspaper ads alone, aiming its declarations of good citizenship at the "socially and politically aware." In response, the citizens' group prepared a counterad, "only to have the CBC refuse to run it on the grounds that it was too political." (You know. If you can't say anything nice, don't say anything at all.) Journalistic

DEC/JAN 1986

balance prevailed, however, and an article appeared in the Globe and Mail's Report on Business section outlining the group's complaints - an article whose readership was utterly negligible in comparison to that of Gulf's original

"Too political?" Whatever happened to the gallant struggle for freedom of expression in the public domain? Or the heroic era of the newspaper editor risking his neck for press freedom and the right to criticize the powers that be? What of that earlier struggle in which principled editors and publishers endured constant jailings, and even beatings in order to press their demands for access? What has been gained or lost in the transformation of that period of conflict into our current relatively stable period of "objective journalism"?

Press Freedoms: A Concise Mystery

A BRIEF LOOK AT THE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT of the "free press" allows us to see more clearly the problems we are confronting today. There were good moments. Ben Harris, having been earlier jailed in England for putting out a paper critical of the authorities, began publishing North America's first newspaper in Boston in 1690. Publick Occurences, Foreign and Domestic was a single sheet folded once to produce four 6x9 inch pages. And in a splendid



gesture of respect for the principles of the public sphere, the last page was left blank for readers to add their own comments before passing it on to others. Only one issue was printed before it was shut down by the British colonial

There are instances of juries acting in open defiance of the law by acquitting newspaper publishers whose crime was criticism of the government. The British colonial government enjoyed unrestrained legal freedom for a long time in the U.S., and for a century longer in Canada, Censoring any disrespectful newspaper was easy. Legal prosecution was simply channelled into libel suits, where it was

social order free of the spectre of barbarians

only necessary to demonstrate that the government's reputation had suffered – the truth or falseness of the material had nothing to do with it. Peter Zenger, publisher of the New York Weekly Journal, was charged with seditious libel in 1733, and under the prevailing law his guilt was unquestionable. The jury, however, chose instead to rule against the law and acquitted him. In Canada the famous Joseph Howe trial of 1835 was almost identical. A jury ruled on the truth of the writing in question, and Howe was acquitted.

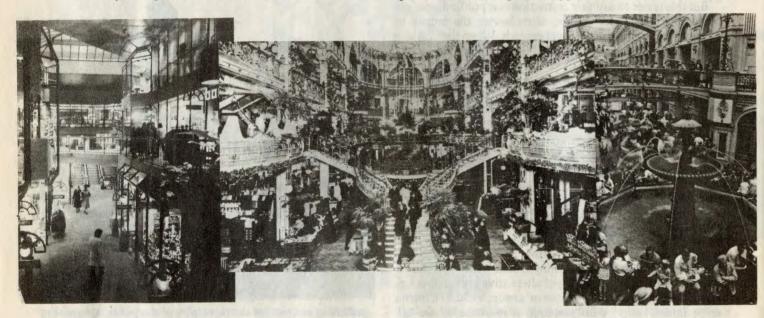
Then through the period of the 1837 Rebellions, Responsible Government in 1849, and Confederation, the practice of freedom of expression in the public domain was gradually abandoned. Says Rutherford in *The Making of the Canadian Media*:

The enemy defeated, the journalists were no longer sensitive to the key issue of independence. In any case, soon after the Rebellions, the ambitious and the powerful established a stranglehold on the press in order to manipulate the new god of public opinion the press had awakened.... The journalists, emphatically bourgeois themselves, legitimated this emerging class, its ideals, and its dominance. What, after all, was the cry of popular government about, a cry so loud in the Reform press, if not the handing over of political authority in the provinces and the towns to the bourgeoisie?

longer "civil rights," but "capital." Says Habermas:

Until the permanent legalization of a politically functional [bourgeois] public sphere, the appearance of a political newspaper meant joining the struggle for freedom and public opinion, and thus for the public sphere as a principle. Only with the establishement of the bourgeois constitutional state was the intellectual press relieved of the pressure of its convictions. Since then it has been able to take advantage of the earning possibilities of a commercial undertaking.

This is not to say that advertisers, being the primary source of income, have the media jumping through hoops. J.E. Atkinson, legendary editor of the *Toronto Star*, considered advertising at best a necessary evil, and stood ready to jettison it if it taxed his personal principles. "The individual advertiser," he once said, "is more dependent on the newspaper than the newspaper is on the individual advertiser." In 1920 Atkinson was willing to lose his most valuable advertising client, Sir John Eaton, over his right as an editor to pursue his own independent policy. Sir John, who had inherited not only the Eaton's Company but 11.7% of the *Star*'s stock from his dad, was deeply concerned about what he called the "Bolshevistic trend" in the *Star*'s editorial policies, and attempted to apply his invested influence to



Yet the various forms of blatant political patronage which characterized the early Canadian newspaper began to disappear by the 1870's. For the first time, a mass market was developing, and the fervour of economic competition replaced the struggle for increased democracy in the public arena. Due primarily to the limited nature of its goals, the battle over press freedom had been "won," and the press took up the task of advancing its circulation and profitability through the introduction of high-speed presses, mechanical typesetting, inexpensive newsprint, telegraph services and smatterings of political patronage. The battle cry was no

have it changed. It was the *Star* which gained the nicknames "The King Street Pravda" and the "Red Star of Toronto" in the 1920's, a period of intense red-baiting in Canada. The *Star* alone amongst the major dailies did not melt into a puddle of hysteria during the Winnipeg General Strike of 1919, and even attempted to produce material in its pages which would specifically be of interest to the Canadian working class. Atkinson resisted the pressure, and Sir John (who, oddly enough, was vice-president of the Reform Club of Toronto) sold his stock and withdrew the Eaton's ad which had appeared regularly on the back page

breaking down the gates: we are all more

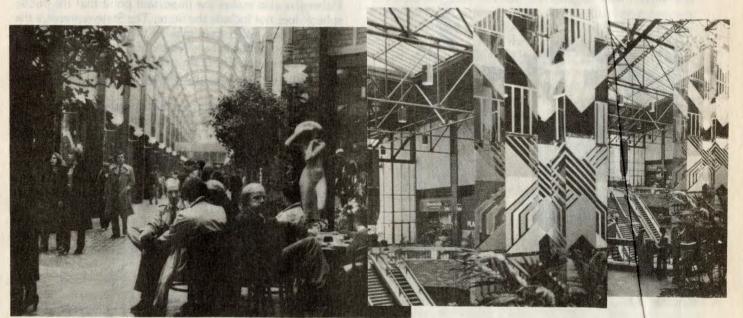
of the Star. This was a significant setback for Atkinson, for not only was the Eaton's account an important source of income, it was also one of the most popular items in the paper. His superlative business talents prevailed, however, and the Eaton's account returned within a year.

But however much we might admire Atkinson's principled stubborness, or (swallowing hard) appreciate the importance of Toronto Sun editor Peter Worthington's challenge to the Official Secrets Act in 1978, they are, in a sense, the political struggles of the 19th century. They are conflicts in a world already divided into cabbages and kings. To the extent that the press carries on its historical demands for press freedom, it is in the context of a conflict amongst kings. This spring the kingly Globe and Mail published the profits of the Thomson newspaper chain to which it belongs, in its business section. Headlined with 48 point type across 9 columns on an item of only 13 lines, as John Marshall has pointed out, it was transformed from an article into an investment ad. It would seem that the shareholders, in return for all their hard work and willingness to take risks, have been blessed with another 22% return on their investment. And this kind of profit is true of newspaper investments as well as those in the electronic media, which characteristically squeak through on an annual 25-30% increase. (The manufacturing sector, by comparison, gains only about 10% per annum.)

lawlessness and anarchy; for example, public places, where any and all individuals can freely enter and leave: a public body (the State), whose task it is to act on behalf of society in general, and which is comprised of individuals whose status or initiative entrusts them with that responsibility: the public interest, embodied in a political mandate whose most important task is to protect the rights of the individual (extended to include private enterprise) from the State (the 'public'). If this conceptualization is accurate, there is nothing in it to expose the contradiction of a privatized public. And if this privatized public domain is seen to be unruly, if it seems ready to burst with contradictions, if it is seen in fact to be in a perpetual state of crisis, this, according to those who own it, is as it should be, for these conditions are nothing more than a sign of political health: the free competition of private interests, some succeeding, some not.

There is, in this understanding of "public", considerable confusion about the nature of political rights as they exist in Western society. As Cohen and Rogers state, our commonly accepted view does not take into account

...the inequalities in the distribution of resources, characteristic of capitalism, which decisively affect the exercise of political rights and importantly limit their power of expression.



The Public Good Gone Bad

extracting private profit without the obligation to consider its effects on the public domain is widely considered to be a natural extension of private property rights. This suggests that our prevailing concepts of the "public" have built-in rhetorical security devices. While there is no official or legal definition of "public," one can describe the general sense of the word now in use: the public good, a collectively agreed upon set of moral, cultural and political standards or limits beyond which lies

And Cadillac-Fairview's own Mr. McNaughton quite aggrees:

The trend seems to be that the courts are saying you have a right of association, but the means of exercising the right isn't guaranteed.

This is the general contradiction of civil rights which the ideologues of capitalist democracy don't seem to find at all unusual. Presumably any doubts they may have are sooth-

DEC/JAN 1986 DEC/JAN 1986

F U S E 19

than welcome to spend our money....

ed whenever they enter a legislative or law courts building, most of whose roofs are held up by Doric or Corinthian columns. The image of an ancient Greek aristocrat is evoked, holding forth eloquently in "public" debate on an issue of "public" importance, his toga as white as a cowboy hat. (We can, however, complete the image on our own initiative and endow the historical parallel with more accuracy, when we recall the systematic exclusion of women and slaves from ancient Greek society.) And there is no shortage of sycophantic academics willing to support this paternalistic vision. This is Conor O'Brien from a symposium on the "Responsibility of Intellectuals," reproduced on the unimpeachable pages of the New York Times:

I think one of the great advantages that you have in this country [U.S.A.] is that you can live quite happy and contented lives without being involved in the political process...

This is the mythological opposition of public/private which capitalist democracy is sworn to maintain. And when phrased in a certain way ("through the mass media, private interests mediate private experience") it makes everything sound, semantically at least, just the way it's s'pposed to be. This is the lesson we learn so spectacularly



every time we are drawn to the Dundas Mall, a lesson which those public privateers, those centurions of the 20th century, have prepared for us with such numbing thoroughness. It is the desiderata of Confederation and the supplication of late capitalism: Live "happy and contented lives;" Be not "involved in the political process." It is, after all, the private realm which is the truly authentic one, where we develop our individual spiritualities, our aesthetic passions, where we can whisper our intimacies freed from the obligations and distractions of public duty, a duty whose true task, in any case, is merely the maintenance of that bastion

FUSE

of consumption which is the private realm. There is indeed a hierarchy of rights not articulated in the constitution: we have Speech and Creed, preceded by Assembly and Association (and so on, the standard ones, you can almost hear the anthem), then of course, the pinnacle: Private Property. Yet none quite encapsulates the capitalist democratic zeitgeist, with all the necessary, eulogistic bows in the direction of The Economy, and with the correct image of the private citizen dutifully realizing their private selfhood in the public domain as thoroughly as The Right to Shop.

A Public Divided

THOSE OF US VEXED BY THE ONE-SIDEDNESS OF IT all might prefer to begin with a theoretical model which prefigures our own presence in the public domain. Habermas provides a useful description of the public sphere as follows:

Access is guaranteed to all citizens. A portion of the public sphere comes into being in every conversation in which private individuals assemble to form a public body... Citizens behave as a public body when they confer in an unrestricted fashion – that is, with the guarantee of freedom of association and the freedom to express and publish their opinions.

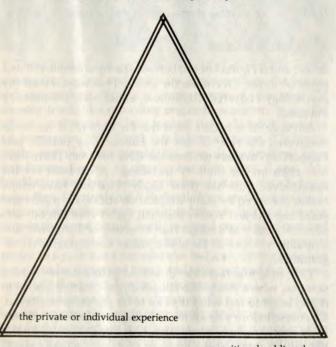
Habermas also makes the important point that the public sphere does not include the State. The State represents the citizenry, but rather than making the citizens' self-presentation in the public sphere redundant, it only makes it all the more pressing. The State and the public sphere are confrontational in function and in character, and can have no common ground.

All things being equal, the public sphere should influence and restrain the power of the State in accordance with the views expressed by the citizenry in all its diversity. But things are not equal, and the public sphere is structured as a clearly identifiable hierarhy of authority and privilege. At the top rests that portion of the public sphere which is privately owned which is the "bourgeois public sphere." It too is distinct from the State, even though they are mutually supportive at many points. There is also a portion which, short of an Orwellian nightmare, will never be absorbed by the bourgeois public sphere, called variously the "alternative," "oppositional," or "proletarian" public sphere. It constitutes community centres, cafes, union halls, galleries, street corners, and so on. It also includes the alternative media which focuses on sometimes specialized, always excluded discourses. The "public" then, is not, as the myth goes, a more or less uniform structure made up of a plurality of equally empowered and competing parts. It is a bi-polar structure, both ends of which reveal very different political and cultural commitments. Similarly, the "private" is a bi-polar structure. On one end is private property, and on the other, private or individual experience and discourse unsupervised by law. Like the "public" they are quite dissimilar concepts.

Both the "private" and the "public," then, have two quite distinct elements to their structure, and share one of them:

private property, or the bourgeois public sphere. The public/private is not formed by two parallel, semi-autonomous realms which the democratic process keeps in harmonious and mutually reinforcing equilibrium. They form, more accurately, a three-way relationship, with private property doubly reinforced at the apex:

private property/bourgeois public sphere



oppositional public sphere

Mass Media: A Tapeworm in Human Experience

THIS IS NOT TO SAY THAT. BECAUSE OF THE GAP between the two poles of the "private," the bourgeois public sphere yields its claim on the realm of the private, individual experience. The privately owned mass media cannot jeopardize either its profits or its political or cultural hegemony by ignoring the cultural preferences of those who are excluded from it. It must capture and hold their attention - if not their loyalty - while at the same time, as benignly as possible, subverting their desire for direct cultural and political expression. In order to achieve this, the mass media steals fragments of the speech and collective culture of private experience, deprives it of its political and cultural explosiveness, and sends it back in the deodorized form we are now all too familiar with. With all the dazzling unpredictability of a sit-com, we hear the perpetual announcement that everything is possible, every experience has been accounted for, and if it's not here now, then it's coming up next. The mass media, according to John Brenkman, "...robs us of the speech without which it could not live in order to make us hear something we would not speak.'

The mass media always arrives after the scene, after the psychological investment and the accompanying risks have already been made, when the roughness and obscenity of daily experience can be rendered simple and palatable for the tired businessmen. Through this kind of cultural mopping-up operation, it hopes to keep the enactment or the playing out of diverse experience – its political consequences – in constant limbo. The mass mediated form of social experience seeks to posit experience as a thing-initself and an end-in-itself, dedicated only to the immediate pleasure of those who happen by it, or have it delivered through co-axial cable to their loft.

But this constant retreading of experience can only be its own undoing. The mass media is incapable of processing experience as it is directly lived, or "experience at the edge of semantic availability" as Raymond Williams has described it – something that artists endeavour to express all the time.

It is probably the single defining characteristic of power itself that it always acts contrary to the enduring characteristics of human desire. Yet while it is theoretically easy to ring the death-knoll of privileged private ownership, it is another to identify correctly the cracks in the public edifice and strategically exploit them for the purposes of democratization. Why was the public access mandate of cable T.V. turned into private advantage? (See "September Purge" in FUSE, Summer 1983.) Why is there no movement to insist that the CBC, presumably concerned about Canadian content, broadcast the work and public policy views of Canadian video artists? A barrage of questions needs to be addressed. As artists struggle for unencumbered access to the public sphere, picking up where the Reform press left off in the mid-19th century, they may find political allies from among a whole range of infinitely diverse and constantly changing groups and individuals.

Gary Kibbins

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See also

FUSE

Arthur Siegel, Politics and the Canadian Media, Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson Ltd. 1983.

For a useful perspective on uses made of mass media forms by alternative interests (too long a taboo by the Left), see *Radical Science 16*, London, 1985.

The Sit-Down Comedian

CLIVE ROBERTSON

AN EMPTY THEATRESPACE IN DOWNTOWN Toronto. A man enters from stageleft, smiling and waving to rows of empty seats.

Hi...How are you...Hi? ...Well, thank you...good to see you again...(Motions both hands downwards, as if stopping something.)

A-L-L-R-I-G-H-T (swings both arms sideways, sits in chair and peers into darkness.)

(Pulls a piece of string out of his pocket, the end of which is tied to an empty, round tin can.)

Seen one of these before? It's a new toy item street-corner hawkers are peddling to tourists. You bury the fish can part in the snow and attach the string to a small shrub or parking meter pole. Good for snaring wayward politicians. Course the pelts aren't worth much, and the flesh (or the policies) is mostly unfit for human consumption. But amazingly effective in controlling rodents up to and including Ministers.

Speaking of all fall down, here's the story of the sit-down comedian. There I was, unemployed, you know what I mean? (Acknowledges imaginary hecklers) Right, unemployed, the pre-free trade no-trade. So, y'know I'd joined the Artists Union, the new union, the yet-to-negotiate-acontract-union. Look guys let's do it now. Soooo, we rush it. Soooo, we might fuck up. But then, then we can go on

strike, and if I gotta choose between being unemployed and going on strike, I'll choose the strike. That way at least my psychology's covered. Right now, either way, the money's the same.

Anyway, if it hadn't been for the union, I'd 've never discovered the ride! It was the Labour Day parade, and LabourDayParaders get into the CNE for free. There were new rides on the midway including...A carousel for the unemployed, just like those kiddy rides that have tigers, horses skewered by giant shishkabob sticks, firetrucks and small import cars. You've seen 'em, right? Well this one was different, this was a magic ride, courtesy of Tanpower and Irradiation — one of the new summer unemployment programmes.

This, in-actual-fact-ride turned out to be a job re-training octopus, where you get to choose a new creative job, sit in it and learn to feel what it's like to be gainfully employed. Of course before you know it, you're hooked on a refreshingly sparkling new occupation. But I've got to warn you, like all the games at the midway you don't actually win. I mean be r-e-a-l-i-s-t-i-c. If everybody who went on the ride got a job, they'd never make any money. It's strictly recreational. What you get is the inspirational feel-ing, the feeling that you could do the job, if it ever miraculously materialized.



There I was gawking at this wheel of steel (Gets up for unnecessary effect and twirls on toes) watching the potential occupations fly by. Course, some of the seats I'd already tried, like recording engineer, sculptor, magazine editor...and some of them looked risky, like dub poet, ty anchorperson, WH Smith bookstore manager. Then suddenly one of them caught my eye. It took about four revolutions for me to clearly focus on what it was. My blinking retina had made up its mind: it was the sit-down comedian. I figured that if Richard Pryor could create the illusion of simultaneously insulting his own dick and his own race in the same breath, well, in time I could sit-down and insult every Canadian goose that was ever given the opportunity to fly. In our time who else but a sit-down comedian is paid to be bitter and mean and who is loved for the service? (At this point I wasn't thinking clearly.)

Then it happened. The ride coasted to a stop and, elbowing my way past a couple of ex-bank presidents, I made the seat and fastened the safety strap across my accelerating heart. In seconds, I was up in circumlocomotive heaven, suspended on a very long chain above a crowd of tens of thousands of people. Four laps later found me screaming at the blur below:

Soooooo, looks like the Chinese have done it and the Russians are trying, all good things must come to an end.



Its **purge** time. That's p-u-r-g-e. What? Oh, OK we'll drop the 'P' and call it an urge or a shuffle, either way there's too much deadwood and the little conifers need some light to grow.

(The saliva began to flow sideways out of my mouth like a Canadian Tire lawn-sprinkler.)

So who should go? You, Robert Fulford, Bernard Ostry, Peter C. Newman, Pierre Burton. Bye bye members of the Liberal and Conservative fast buck franchise club. And please take Danny Finkleman and his little brother Jack Farr, the boys at SCTV, the Royal Canadian Airfarce and the entire CTV network with you — you are no longer funny and, SHEILA GOSTICK WON'T WAIT FOREVER...

(The midway blares not three but four different songs simultaneously.)

Ever watch mulchmusic, gumball? That's the domestic pay TV station that's programmed by the British and American consulates. Also claims to help the Canadian music industry. Who are they? Word has it it's a thoughtless tank of some 800 persons with maybe fifty of them nominated as signed recording artists. For the other 10,000 musicians out there, they don't exist. I kid you not. In this great multicultural land of ours there's not one black artist with a recording contract.

But all is not lost. The industry's thinking of signing the reggae band, "Truths & Rights" — in recognition of their service and influence. But of course there's a catch. When the band goes into the studio they want them to sound white. So they can have more 'commercial appeal.'

(The ride speeds up and I'm having problems addressing any one particular member of the audience.)

How many of you missed this year's Canadian Magazine awards? Seriously, it was a riot. They gave Saturday Night magazine 11, count 'em, 11 awards. Insiders report that the jury was duped. Appears that what they unknowingly judged was a bunch of old Saturday Night covers that had been wrapped around fresh copies of the Globe and Mail's "Report on Business" magazine.

Had the flu yet? Most of my friends suffered from that unannounced gastro-enteritis epidemic. It happened when Maureen Forrester sang with Reagan and Mulroney. The same night the Shamrock Summit was televised, artists from coast-to-coast felt nauseous. Most threw up.

(The last story made me feel queasy but the crowd roared, and presumably it was for more.)

OK, one more and then I wanna get off. Did you watch the CBC documentary on pianist Glenn Gould? Subtle! Described the guy as being both a 'humanitarian' and 'a recluse'. Glenn so loved his country and its people that he kept himself to himself. Nice try wackos! We still want the access, the public programming access. Noam Chomsky anchoring with Barbara Frum! Watch it Juneau!! You wanna go the way of Danny Finkleman?

OK That's it (Shakily gets off ride, falls over, almost vomits and half-mumbles.) Terrific...we'll meet again. (Exits)

(Offstage) Don't know where, don't know when...but I'll graffiti your BMW some sunny day...

Clive Robertson



A Fuse Interview

MOHAWK RADIO by Don Alexander

A Nation Rebuilds Through Broadcasting

THE FOLLOWING IS AN EDITED transcript of an interview with Jake Swamp, traditional chief of the Wolf Clan (Mohawk Nation), David Back, production manager for CKON (a radio station operating on the Akwesasne Reserve which straddles Ontario and New York State), and Daniel Benedict, CKON program manager. I would like to express my thanks to Jennifer Sells for her assistance in carrying out this inter-

reading in Akwesasne Notes that the radio station had been licensed by the Mohawk Chiefs and Clan Mothers instead of the government of Canada. Would you talk about how that came about and its significance?

IAKE SWAMP: Over the last couple hundred years we've been hampered from exercising our government as we know it. We have our own constitution which governs our people. But yet we have the imposed government systems of the United States and Canada. We're trying to replenish our government within our communities by exercising our ability to sanction these acts: we sanction our radio station; we sanction an education system. Our view is that, later on, our people will become strong again. And then they can operate with pride in themselves. It would no longer be just words of what we were before, we'd be saving this is what we are again as a people, and this is really the reason [for

the radio station].

ceremony, it was mentioned that the something people hadn't conceived of the environment. a number of years ago, was a very important step for Mohawk sovereignty. IAKE: The radio station, through the airing of our views, is educating our people to what they're supposed to be. We tell them about the creation story, about who we are as a people, because in the process of the last two hundred years, the people have lost their identity and picked up another's identity. DON ALEXANDER: We were So we have to reverse this process and it's going to take, maybe, years. But through this radio station, it's going to make the reality [happen] sooner.

DON: Technology has often been used as a means to inculcate white values, whether it's through television, radio, or through printed media. Obviously, by running this radio station, you think some of this technology can be turned away from this function and made to do something else.

technology. We have to recognize the technology as we know it today, and to benefit our people. But, at the same roundings. It's a very important factor, course, recognizing most of the tech- eventually other communities, so that

nology that's available to us. We will DON: During the licensing take advantage of those things as long as it doesn't hurt the environment, fact of having one's own radio station, because we have a great concern for

> DON: What further plans do you have for the use of technology?

IAKE: We've been meeting with different Indian peoples across the country, and we've been noticing that everyone wants to come together. And this is our goal also - to link up the Indian communities in North America, maybe using computers, along with radio communication by satellite. This is our projection into the future, so that if an issue is arising out west somewhere, we will instantly know what's going on and can report it in our area.

DON: How was the idea of the radio station conceived and what kind of work went into actually making it possible?

IAKE: We were surrounded by New York State police here in our community for about a year and a half. We had bunkers up and warriors patrol-JAKE: We're looking at appropriate ling the perimeter. And this is where our education system came into being because so many things were coming at we have to apply it wherever it's going us at the same time that we had to learn, we had to discipline ourselves to time, we also have to recognize that it the fact that we were at the brink of must not come into conflict with what destruction. Here's our culture that's we believe in, with our natural sur- thousands of years old, and it's in jeopardy. We had to look at all these because if we walk away from what we things, and weigh things out. How are believe in, if we walk away from these we going to survive in this kind of principles, we would be destroying our situation? So we put together a phone own purpose. So, we're staying on tree linking up our community, and

DEC/JAN 1986

when they were planning to attack our people, we would get on the phone and call one person, and that person would call another person. In a matter of minutes, our people from the community would come to our assistance, and they would surround the police that were surrounding us. We made the phone tree grow to other cities, and other communities in Europe. When something would come down on our people, all we'd have to do was make a phone call and it would go all over the world, and people would start sending telegrams and watching the situation

Coming from this experience, and because of the communication available to us now, I don't think what happened back then is ever going to happen again. The police would not be so willing to come over here and say: "When we come in, we're going to destroy all your women and children, so that later on we won't have to bother with this problem."

DON: How did the police come to surround the reserve?

JAKE: Back in 1979, one of our chiefs within the traditional council heard these chainsaws operating one day and went down to investigate. He found a group of young men cutting trees, making way for a fence. He wasn't informed of any fence coming through his property, and so he confiscated the chainsaws. He wanted to get to the bottom of it: why are they cutting these trees down? Our culture tells us to hold the trees in high esteem; we don't want to destroy every tree that's coming up out of the ground. So this is the reason the conflict started.

The tribal council had this Youth Conservation Corps - a summer program where they create jobs for young people - and their plan was to build a fence around the reservation. It would have been simple just to inform the people, but they didn't, and this is why the problem arose. When our people went there and investigated, they tried to convince [the Youth Corps] to have a meeting with the tribal council where they could work things out. But what happened is that the tribal council instead went and called the police from outside and, at the same time, they had their own police - the Bureau of Indian Affairs police - and they worked hand in hand with the State

So, they went to this man's house -DEC/JAN 1986

they were after the tools that he had confiscated - and they arrested him. And there was an old woman there that they hurt in the process. They put a stick in her stomach and she spent the night in the hospital. She was about seventy-six years old at the time. After that a series of events happened: we say we are a nation, then why are we going to go to court? If we're a nation.

AKWESASNE:

Akwesasne is a community composed of thirty-nine islands and adjacent mainland in the St. Lawrence River and River Valley. This Mohawk community straddles the U.S. Canadian Border and its further disected by the interprovincial boundary between Ontario and Quebec provinces. The people here are Mohawks who are one of six members of the Iroquois Confederacy. The locations indicated by A are Iroquois reserva-

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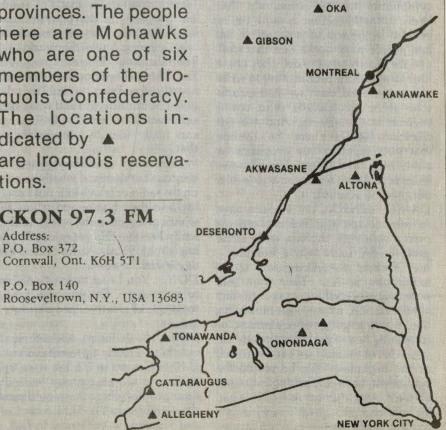
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then we don't belong in another country's court. We're going to stay here and stand our ground. [He laughs.] And somebody put up a gate. This is our own country, and we maintained that it's Mohawk law that's going to stand. And New York State says: "No, you're going to follow my law. You're going to become our citizens." So that's the problem that ensued for a year and a half. [Eventually] it was costing them too much to maintain that police force twenty-four hours a day. They had to pay a lot of overtime. They lost millions of dollars, so I guess that's the reason they decided to disperse.

For about a year and a half we were inside the encampment and we had our families in there. [This experience] taught us how [people] operate on the outside, it taught us how they are. This is how our education system was born, which is going toward immersion this fall right up to the eighth grade. The radio station, too, because we want to communicate with the rest of the world, because if our culture dies, along with it dies our concepts, our principles of how we look at the world. We think the world today, as we know it, is in grave trouble. And I think we would have an impact on other nations



FUSE



if we could speak to them about these

DON: So what specific work had to be done to bring about this radio station? You say you conceived the idea in 1980 of gradually expanding the communication system.

JAKE: What we had to do first was look into our community, and see what kind of gifts people had to give toward the rebuilding of our nation. And we noticed that if we took a certain area that we wanted to develop. we only had to look around in our community to find somebody that knew something that would be of benefit. In the area of fundraising, we had people who worked on that stuff and they knew what to do. They knew how to approach people, how to write proposals. And then we had people who were electricians who could become our engineers. And we got musicians like Dave here - he's the one that puts together our programs in advertising, and Danny has a knowledge of different music, how to level it out, how to schedule it.

DANIEL BENEDICT: We did have to form a committee. Before there was even a building - this was quite a few years before there was a building they formed the Akwesasne Communication Society. They went into researching everything it takes to start a radio station, where to get money for one, where to get good equipment, or something just to get by at the beginning. A lot of the stuff we had borrowed at the beginning. We borrowed the equipment, and were getting help from all over. And after we realized we had the station, [the government] didn't give any order, we just went on the air.

The Communication Society had a plan for how things were supposed to go, but once it got up to the day before we went on the air, there was no real preparation for how to do it, how to sound good right from the beginning. So we said: Let's go on, and we'll learn from there!

DON: Do you have an active skillssharing program for folding in new people and teaching them skills?

JAKE: There's three young girls working here now who are training. He motions to the studio from which the sounds of heavy metal are emanating.] We're always encouraging young people to come in and try out for D.I.. especially on the weekends.

DON: Tell us a bit more about your programming?

mainly have is Jake's show. It starts at 10 o'clock. He does general news - it's away - like with the confiscation of road equipment at the Seneca Nation that was put on the talk show as much as possible.

JAKE: What I like about doing the Native program is that I'm reaching old people who don't know how to speak English. They're amazed about what's going on in the world, when you talk about the world news. When between Brooklyn Rivera (leader of the I'm talking about South Africa and the Misurasata, an Indian oganization on apartheid policies, when I'm talking Nicaragua's Atlantic coast) and the about South America and what's going Nicaraguan government. It seems that on down there with the Indians, they there's a lot of communication and excan really identify themselves with

They can't read newspapers, and they can't understand what's being said day it's in the news.

DON: You bring international news Europe?

and it's now in existence. In fact, we generalize.

"...I'm reaching old people who don't know how to speak English. They're amazed at what's going on in the world."

have people over there right now at-DANIEL: [In terms of news] what we tending those conferences. And we're working with the South American Indians who have problems that they in Mohawk - for fifteen minutes, then want us to present. They want us to he does Mohawk language for fifteen take the lead within the U.N. because minutes. He comes on again at noon our nation's structure was used [as a with his talk show. If there are any model] to form the United Nations. news breaks, we try to put it on right The United States patterned their constitution from ours, so we can testify with how politics works in the world. DON: It seems that there's increasing cooperation worldwide between indigenous peoples. For example, there's the World Council of Indigenous Peoples. Also, there's the delegations that have been going down from the Iroquois people to sit in on the talks change of information.

JAKE: Yeah, I had Brooklyn Rivera here about three weeks ago and we had an hour long conversation and that on the radio or television. But I'm commade the people in this community ing into their homes and telling them really aware of what's happening in what's going on in the world, and they Nicaragua. It's really important, you really like that. So every day I'm talk- know - especially the role world ing about South Africa 'cause every politics plays in our lives, and you can almost pinpoint where the trouble is coming from. Especially with the big to the reserve. Do you also take the corporations of the world. They have a message of Native people over to big control over the lives of the people of the world. And every time we speak JAKE: Yeah, I made about three trips out about these things, we get the feelout there. I made a presentation at the ing that these people get mad at us. It's U.N. in Geneva in '82. We were trying kind of dangerous to speak the truth in to form a working group for indige- a presentation. When you're in the nous peoples where they could present U.N., you can't directly point fingers their problems. The U.N. voted on it at certain nations. You have to

So we speak for the grass, the water, the air. They can't speak for themselves in those forums, so that's what we do. Sure, we come in there and talk about our problems, about how we've been wronged and we've lost a lot of land, and we're almost extinct. But it's not just us. We always bring up the issues about the natural environment. They don't have a place to come here and present their problems, so we come here to speak for them also. Because they're part of us.

DON: Do you see any new movements or philosophies developing in the last ten to fifteen years which are more in line with the Native worldview?

IAKE: Oh veah, we've seen a lot of changes. [People in general] take our principles and the way we look at life and they're utilizing them in their lifestyles wherever possible. Anywhere you go, you can hear the remark: "Well, we must make this decision today and it's going to affect the seven generations; make sure that those grandchildren are not hurt." That comes from our constitution, that's one of our laws. When we make a decision, we have to look seven generations. ahead. The decision we make today is going to affect our grandchildren.

Advocacy Journalism

NATIVE STYLE

THE FOLLOWING IS AN EDITED transcript of an interview with Alex Jacobs, co-editor of Akwesasne Notes (based in Rooseveltown, New York), the longest running Native Journal in North America.

DON ALEXANDER: I'd be interested in your views on technology and whether you think it can be used to the benefit of Native people.

ALEX JACOBS: There's a relationship between high technology and low technology. It's not just a one-way street. There's a situation out in the southwest where Hopi seeds, which are thousands of years old, are being studied for possible use in droughtstricken Africa. Here's a case of low technology people coming to the rescue of high technology people when all the high technology stuff has failed. This assimilation and acculturation thing works both ways. Low technology people adapt. Native people are using high technology to survive, using it in the service of low technology, but at the same time Indian culture is beginning to be seen as having something to say to people who are suffering from overdevelopment.

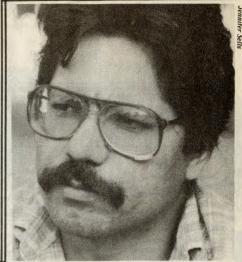
AICOM [Associated Indigenous Communications has introduced a computer system for keeping people in touch with one another, and there's the

DEC/JAN 1986

possibility of a new satellite system. All this is going to happen in Indian ALEX: It's impossible! We're low country, but the face-to-face meetings have to continue too. The computers are going to save lives. When sometaneous. In the old days, when something happened out in the middle of nowhere between whoever was fightor a corporation - it took days to get it out and days for people to respond. But, with the computer networks, it will mean a hell of a lot in terms of response time, saving lives, saving nations. When it comes down to it, a band of three hundred people - if they're surprised in the middle of the night - their whole community could be gone like that.

Arizona (where the U.S. government is involved in the attempted forced relocation of thousands of indigenous every time, and back then it was people).

ALEX: The last time I felt what I'm sure people feel with Big Mountain like what more can be done? - was just before Wounded Knee. And then Wounded Knee hit and people were killed, it was a bad time, and the repression was severe. But it really galvanized things, it got the movement going. So Big Mountain is going to do the same thing. They're going to back Reagan was elected in 1980, this whole



ALEX JACOBS

Reagan down. It's got to happen. Reagan says the fence is going to be put up, and the Navajos and Hopis say it's not going to happen.

DON: How has Akwesasne Notes managed for seventeen years? You put out a thirty-two page tabloid six times a year, with writers on staff and costs of printing and typesetting. How do vou do it?

technology people, apparently not interested in money. That's why we're still here. And we're still broke, and we thing happens, it's going to be instan- have to send out our appeal letters every year. Our subscriptions only account for sixty to seventy percent of our costs, so we've got quite a bit to ing - some Indians and a government make up. And then there's the burnout phase that any organization or movement goes through. There's a staff of about a dozen. We put out three publications. Everybody's paid the same subsistence wage. And any other side projects, anyone who has to have other jobs to survive, we just work around it. We used to work for twenty bucks a week and all the potatoes you could dig up. Nowadays, that twenty DON: Or on a bigger scale what's bucks just doesn't go very far. Now, happening down at Big Mountain, we get one hundred and fifty bucks a week - that's basic economics.

> We used to put out 100,000 copies almost monthly - that was over a million copies, and most of them were going out free! Around 1980, there was a business decision made that it couldn't continue the way it was - on a donation basis - so we switched to subscription. So, now it costs to participate and it's dropped from 100,000 to 10,000, and a lot of people think we're not around anymore. Ever since

Akwesasne News Akwesasne Freedom School The American Indian Peace Movement: Past & Present Mohawk Position Paper: Canada The Canadaian Leak digenous Peoples Meeting: Geneva genous People of Peruvian Amazo

A JOURNAL FOR NATIVE AND NATURAL PEOPLE

AKWESASNE: NATIVE JOURNAL

mood has taken over. But there's a hell of a lot of people still working and putting out, and *Notes* is in there too. We don't put out those extra copies, so we don't exist – in certain circles! We have to double our subscriptions to be in a position where we don't have to worry about things. Everybody is obviously not doing it for the money. We do it because it has to be put out, it has to be done.

DON: What do you see as being the purpose of Akwesasne Notes?

ALEX: It gets into advocacy journalism. I guess Notes and a lot of movement papers never had respect because we don't have journalistic credentials. We're not going to give the corporations equal time. We have thirty-two pages, and we're not going to give anybody like that equal time. They have their lawyers, they have

millions of dollars, they have publications, they own all the broadcasting companies, so what the hell! And we're not going to give governments equal time. And we're not going to give religions equal time.

And the same thing we'll say with the Sandinistas, on the other side of the coin. They're in a fight with the Miskitos, and the left and the Sandinistas - they have their organs and their support. And we try as much as possible to be balanced on that particular situation. But we do get some flak on that issue. But where the hell are the Miskitos going to go to get their point of view across? It's touchy. I sure as hell wouldn't trust the U.S. in that situation, but with the Sandinistas. there's got to be some changes. There's thirty million Indian people south of Rio Grande, and it's all in the Sandinistas' hands. Our job is to make those contacts, and get that news out there. DON: What do you feel the problem is in Nicaragua?

ALEX: The Indians, they don't understand what happens. They have their own cooperatives, but they're not called cooperatives. It's just the way things are done. So the government comes in and says you're not going to do it that way cooperatively, you're going to do it this way. This is called a cooperative. Every incident is like this. It's just racism in the Americas, from the North to the South. It doesn't matter whether it's English or French or Spanish. It's still racism when it comes down to Indian people or folk people or low technology people.

DON: By contrast, it seems that there are a lot of sympathetic movements coming to the fore in recent years.

ALEX: The Green movement, the bioregional movement, the permaculture people, Indian philosophy – they're all akin, it's all together, and when you start putting those figures together, we're talking about millions of people. These movements have the potential to change the face of the planet.

Don Alexander

DEC/JAN 1986

For information or subscription inquiries about Akwesasne Notes, write to A.N., P.O. Box 196, Mohawk Nation, Rooseveltown, New York, USA 13683-0196.

Class Struggle - Club Med Style

LISA STEELE

SURPRISE, NORTH AMERICA HAS entered a period of class struggle. But the face of this struggle is different from what might be expected. By this, I mean that the visual signs which signify the skirmishes can now be seen to be emanating from the top of the hierarchy. It seems that the upper class is on the move. Now you might say that the upper class is always on the move - up, that is - so what's new? Most significantly, what's new is the incorporation (appropriation, if you will) of the facade of 'equality between the sexes' into the visual representation of class dominance. Consider a couple of examples along these lines:

First, there's a recent advertisement for Canadian Club whiskey which has appeared in Maclean's magazine off and on for the past few months. The primary text of this ad - the message from the sponsor - reads "Be a part of it" and instructs the viewer to consume Canadian Club in order to enter the lifestyle proffered in the photograph. This ad is part of a series of ads conceived for Hiram Walker & Sons, distillers of Canadian Club and other whiskeys. All feature the same textual suggestion superimposed over various pictorial vignettes; most feature a male/female dyad meant to be read as a 'couple'.

In this particular ad, the dyad is presented as a well-to-do, late-30s or early-40s husband and wife who are sharing a somewhat intimate moment of mutual adoration for their most recently acquired possession – a baby. The baby, of course, is off-camera, allowing its parents to remain fully self-controlled and relaxed. In the place of the real baby is a teddy-bear, which both parents are happily gazing upon. Floating above their heads is another piece of text, meant to be read as dialogue in this 'story'. It says "I'm glad we waited."

When I say well-to-do, I mean that both the man and the woman are very well dressed, formally dressed in fact. She has on a satin evening gown, diamond jewelry and has an ultra-tasteful upsweep hairdo. He has on a tuxedo, no ruffles mind you, just a very conservative black and white number that's perfect for those formal occa-

FEMINISM IN THE MEDIA

sions which few of us ever attend in real life. The set which is meant to represent their home is equally upscale; the perfect blend of historical and modern furnishings (family photos on the wall, a period-style armchair, a timelessly-modern glass-topped coffee table) with light beige wall-to-wall throughout. A clock on the wall



behind this pair reads 10 minutes past midnight. The 'story', then, would seem to say that the couple has just returned from yet another social engagement – business-related no doubt – to find their progeny tucked safely up in bed (a warm glow issues from the stairway in the background) and are taking this opportunity to reflect on the benefits of their comfortably planned mutual lifestyle.

Control is the point of this ad, which is why I have pointed it out as a visual example of class dominance. The secondary text, "I'm glad we waited" makes this explicit. This couple obviously "waited" for parenthood until they had amassed enough material wealth to cushion themselves against the rigours of a demanding baby. "Family planning" takes on a whole new meaning in view of this little story. The picture reeks of preferred investments, education funds and plenty of hired help. It is a cruel trick at this point in economic history to link domestic happiness with wealth. And crueller still to imply an equality between the man and woman here. Acquiring the kind of lifestyle represented in this ad is one thing for a man and quite a different proposition for a woman. For example, women occupy less than 15% of the top management positions in the corporate world, hold only 11% of the department chairs in universities, and within the professions, such as medicine, women generally earn less than their male counterparts, as they seldom enter the more highly paid specialty fields such as surgery. So for a woman the "waiting" referred to in this ad - for the happiness and comforts of material wealth - is not simply a matter of time; she will most often have to "wait" in the right company.

Much has been written about women's position within the family.

Frederick Engels, in his book *The* Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State, (1884), speaks of an earlier work which he and Karl Marx produced in 1846 which said: "The first division of labour is that between man and woman for the propagation of children." He continued:

And today I can add: The first class opposition that appears in history coincides with the development of the antagonism between man and woman in monogamous marriage, and the first class oppression coincides with that of the female sex by the male. Monogamous marriage was a great historical step forward; nevertheless, together with slavery and private wealth, it opens the period that has lasted until today in which prosperity and development for some is won through the misery and frustration of others. It is the cellular form of civilized society in which the nature of the oppositions and contradictions fully active in that society can be already studied.

This ad, I would suggest, is a visual representation of this "cellular form of civilized society" in the '80s. Women are being instructed in the proper and effective way to get ahead, to realize their dreams of a happy family. Advertising always plays quite heavily on insecurities and thus creates anxieties. All parents, regardless of their economic status, desire "the best" for their children. This ad is cleverly corrupt - in the way that it suggests that material comfort alone is the basis for a happy family. In the past, representations of family life might have reflected the economic hardship which children impose, but allowed for other factors albeit romantic and sentimental ones to come into play. While it is important for women today to realize that "love" does not conquer all, the replacement offered by this ad is highly suspect. Conservative in its tone, the message to women is quite clear. Equality - for all women - is no longer the issue. Sisterhood is dead. What is offered instead is a kind of plateau upon which cosmetic equality can appear to exist between men and women of like economic class. The implied audience for this ad would be the more upwardly mobile women whose alliances with feminist ideals - in a general sense - are limited. Those for whom Milton Friedman is a more appropriate mentor than Emma Goldman. Friedman, after all, has said:



What kind of society isn't structured on greed? As a friend of mine says, the one thing you can absolutely depend on every other person to do is to put his interests ahead of yours...So the problem of social organization is to set up an arrangement under which greed will do the least harm.

He's speaking, of course, about capitalism. All product advertising of this form – full colour, full page magazine ads – is capitalist in the broadest sense.

And this particular ad embodies capitalism, with all of its appropriate gender arrangements. By this I mean that the woman's economic status is represented in relation to her (male) partner. He is the pivotal figure in the



picture. He is literally in the center, the focus. He is facing the camera; she is in profile. He is active; he's tossing the teddy bear. She's the passive observer of his activity. (Interestingly, since this is an ad for whiskey, only he is actually drinking. As a group, women can drink; mothers, however, 'should not'. or so this particular story goes.) The implied "equality" in this picture is simply the male's perceived satisfaction with his role as father. His smiling, relaxed demeanour is in relation to his ability to provide - not necessarily nurturing, loving, mundane everyday care - remember he's not changing a shitty diaper or shovelling a spoonful of baby green beans into an active infant's moving mouth. No, he's just "glad we waited." Waited, no doubt. until he could pay someone else to do it for him. Some equality. Some father. And some joke considering the clearly defined agenda of feminism which has. for many years now, advocated a more direct role for men in parenting.

The second example of visual representations which give a knee-jerk in the direction of "equality" between the sexes is a set of two posters which I saw disguised on a sandwich board in front of a graphics store in Toronto this summer. The two posters were exactly alike, except that one featured a man and the other a woman. In each, the figure is dressed in snooty. Englishstyle riding gear (to represent the landed gentry, I guess); each has champagne glass held aloft to the viewer: each has one foot firmly planted on the front bumper of a Rolls Royce, which is parked in front of a grey government-style building. The building is real; it is the National Department of Health, Education and Welfare which is located in Washington, D.C. (The identifying logo is clearly present.) Both posters have the same caption: Poverty Sucks. While there is obviously a certain amount of irony intended in these posters, any direct political commentary is missing.

Consider the difference between these posters and one created by German artist Klaus Staeck, where there is also a Rolls Royce. But in Staeck's poster, the car assumes the menacing appearance of a tank, as it cruises down a narrow working class British street, accompanied by the text: "For Wider Streets, Vote Conservative." Class politics is a source of conflict, not comedy; identifying class alliances

is a necessary part of building class consciousness. The Poverty Sucks posters are, in their own way, about class consciousness – they were not produced for the poor, but rather for those who wish to identify with the values the figures present.

The interesting thing in these posters is that the choice was made to produce two gender-symmetrical views of this tasteless image, thus implicating women in the ever-widening gap between the rich and the poor. The truth, of course, is that women are poorer, as a group, than men. Amongst the elderly, women live below the poverty line more than their male counterparts; working women earn less than working men; single mothers must exist on much less money than single fathers. and so on. Thus it is women who have the most to lose if the institutions of health, education and welfare are put into private hands - which is the implication of these posters. And if those in power, those possessing the real wealth in this society, are to remain on top, it is necessary to dissuade women from many of the goals of the feminist movement. If some women can be persuaded to abandon this "equal rights" business, and cast their lot with the every-man(sic)-for-himself crowd, then so much the better. We can get back to the good old days of ruthless profiteering with as little fuss as possible by just admitting a few 'old girls' to the old boys network.

That's the 'class struggle' I'm referring to. The power brokers are nervous; feminism has presented many demands which are radical and far-reaching in their implications, particularly in terms of the re-distribution of wealth. These two examples I have cited are representative of the call which is being sent to women today. It's 'Let's Make A Deal' now just as surely as it was in the post-war days - and remember where that got our mothers. Whenever success is offered to women with no strings attached, we need to be suspicious. The advancement of women is not simply a matter of individual initiative; it is a collective struggle. Feminism alone offers the analysis, process and support necessary to ensure that the advancement is not of a few at the expense of the rest of us.

Lisa Steele



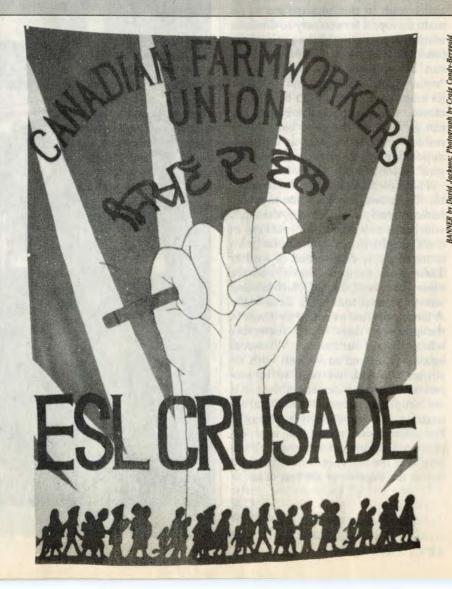
LIVING & LEARNING

David Jackson

THIS IS THE SECOND OF A THREE-PART SERIES WHICH FUSE IS PRESENTing on the Canadian Farmworkers Union's approach to using culture as an organizing tool. The Union is made up of a predominantly immigrant work force and has its roots in the Punjabi community of B.C. The first part in the series (published in Volume 9, No. 3) dealt with Punjabi theatre. The following article focuses on the English as a Second Language Program of the Union. In our next issue, the final part of the series will be an interview with the makers of Farmworkers. Zindahad, a recent docudrama video about four women workers.

THREE YEARS AGO, THE Canadian Farmworkers Union set up an English-as-a-Second-Language Crusade run from the back of the union office. From the outset, the political platform of the union was incorporated into the English language training. The aim of the program was to empower Punjabi-speaking farmworkers with the English language, so that workers could act more effectively and confidently in their lives and as union members, as well as express an understanding of why their conditions were so exploitative. The ideal was to establish an ESL program from the point of view of the farmworkers' own vested interests, to encourage direct participation in strategies for change, and to increase the students' activity in the union.

The teaching methods of Paulo Freire were used, for they incorporate the process of political analysis and the understanding of social issues directly relevant to the students' daily experience. This article attempts to balance our own ideals with a more pragmatic view of what we have done and learned in three years, both about organizing within the ESL program, and about our understanding of Freire's philosophy of pedagogy.



WE DID NOT START OUT AS "Freirians" looking for a cause; rather, our interest in Freire came out of work we were already doing to improve the working conditions of farmworkers. Freire, better than any other educator we knew of, had articulated a philosophy of learning which seemed consistent with the political goals of CFU. However, as we began to put this philosophy into practice, it took on a life of its own, distinct from CFU's goals, and we became "Freirians." As time went on we began to discover inconsistencies within our interpretation of Freirian theory, as well as between Freirian theory and the CFU's goals. I will examine these further on.

A number of hurdles stand in the way of farmworkers who want to learn English. These are: a lack of formal education, first language illiteracy, conflicting work schedules, and allconsuming domestic responsibilities. The result is that few of our students, who are mostly middle-aged women, have ever been able to attend any other ESL classes. The Crusade has tried to get around all these problems by sending tutors to students' houses, by getting the support of each student's entire family, by organizing classes made up of family members or friends to reduce shyness and tension, and by running the program only in the off-season of farmwork.

In this respect we can claim concrete success, since the program has grown from 28 students in the first year to 60 in the third. Likewise, three-quarters of the students from the second Crusade have returned for the third.

Farmworkers in general have similar backgrounds and concerns. This is especially true when compared to the diversity of the average ESL class with half a dozen nationalities. We have been able to develop carefully tailored methods and materials, both for language instruction and for political analysis or "problem-posing." The prevailing methods of language instruction have evolved (at least "officially") from drill-based approaches to more naturalistic ones which emphasize real communication between students and teachers, rather than mastery of specific phrases one by one. Freire himself assumes from the start that oppressed people's purpose in life is to "become more fully human"; this process necessitates struggle against their oppression. He suggests that the central process in education should be

"problem-posing;" that is, analyzing or values demystifying the underlying problems (or sources of oppression and exploitation) in students' lives.

Our own view has always been that this analysis must be grounded in the workers' own interests. In our adaptation of Freire we have therefore focused on the importance of "dialogue." Teachers start from a premise of equality with students, respecting their experience and concerns as fully as possible and making those the frame of reference for whatever is to be learned. The concept of problem-posing fits in well with this approach, ideally to the point where language instruction and political analysis become completely inseparable.

Freire's argument is that the process of dialogue will in itself politicize students, and that the perception of their own interests will change through the process. By viewing learning as something "organic" in the students, he is able to make a strong contrast between dialogue and "banking education." In the latter, teachers try to impose understandings (often in the forms of slogans or clichés) that are in-

But there are several built-in contradictions here, ranging from obvious to subtle. First, problem-posing means pushing one's understandings to their limits, and digging deeper and deeper for underlying causes. This requires a fine-tuned use of language. Yet a common language is exactly what anglophone tutors and Punjabi students don't have. The kind of dialogue we have achieved has been at a clumsy, superficial level. We cannot say from our own experience whether Freire's distinction between "dialogue" and "banking" is valid, at least not in terms of any resulting changes in the students' attitudes.

When Freire visited our office last summer, we asked him about this most basic contradiction - the lack of a common language between students and anglophone tutors. He first said, "Why don't you just have the dialogue in Punjabi?" Then he suggested, "Why don't you teach them English first, then worry about the political analysis?' Our own solution has been to have the CFU's trained full-time organizers visit the ESL classes and discuss the union consistent with students' experience or in Punjabi, taking advantage of the



FUSE

groundwork already laid by the tutors. To be realistic, however, the success rate of signing up new members through the Crusade has so far been no higher than through visiting families of farmworkers at random.

This process has produced a more fundamental conflict: that between CFU's political agenda in developing ESL (that is, to use the Crusade as a tool in organizing farmworkers), and the students' own concerns and interests. While many are eager to discuss the exploitative conditions of farmwork, few are willing to put the union's promise of long-term financial gain ahead of their own short-term financial interests and security, since the present economic situation puts more pressure than ever on workers simply to survive. The goal of joining the union, at this stage of its organization, must appeal to a person's sense of self-respect, anger at exploitation and desire to fight back, rather than immediate monetary gain.

Another contradiction is that many workers simply do not consider farmwork the most significant problem in their lives. Oppression by men in their family may be a greater source of difficulty and anger for women. This is a complex issue for the union to deal with, especially since the majority of farmworkers are women while, despite women's active role in union drives. most union staff are men. Other problems which emerge relate to racism but not directly to farmwork. These include difficulties in finding jobs or tangles with bureaucracies. Many are daily problems, such as how to take the bus, or the complexities of banking. Other concerns are not problems at all, but rather aspects of life where joy and difficulty are intertwined, such as childrearing, life in India, weddings and the Sikh religion.

The conflict between the union's agenda and that of its students has pushed tutors in two directions. The first is one of frustration with the students, at least politically, because of their unwillingness to become union supporters. The other is to completely focus on the students' own concerns, becoming almost resentful of the union's priorities. The former reaction is often a product of the tutor's own commitment to the Crusade as a means of building the union. The latter tendency is more likely when tutors are newcomers to the union when they

34

students than with union staff. Since they have not experienced the union's successes first hand, the CFU program organizers, the following seems to hapmay seem abstract to them. They may become too close to the students' to be objective or retain a perspective on the they also have their own union agenda long process of organizing. Both tendencies, frustration and complete identification, become exaggerated by the severe limitations on dialogue, as previously discussed.

Freire's ESL work that students' own is being beaten at home, or is finanlives, and especially their problems, cially very insecure), the tutor/organiare the most effective basis for zer will probably try to persuade the

start, having more contact with their them and unionizing them may be two quite different things.

With tutors who fit our ideal as pen: they do use the students' interests and concerns as a starting point, but in mind to which they are very firmly committed. Nonetheless, they are aware of the contradictory relationship between the two. Unless a student's immediate personal concerns are over-There is an implicit assumption in whelming (for example, a student who language teaching; that is, that the two student, by every means available,



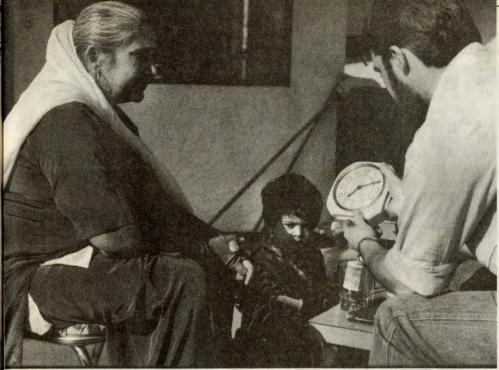
TOPPING BRUSSEL SPROUTS IN THE FRASER VALLEY

belong together. Yet several tutors report that their classes are most attentive and satisfied when talking about language itself: grammar, contrastive phonetics, and other topics scorned by some "progressive" language teachers. Others are very interested in issues or stories which on the surface relate only peripherally to their lives, but may have strong appeal in other ways.

The lesson of our experience is not necessarily that we should abandon our focus on union politics. We must, however, be aware that unionizing the students through focusing on their own concerns in the context of a program run by a trade union, may conceal contradictory rather than complementary objectives. In other words, politicizing

that the pro-union stance is "better" than the student's own. Here our understanding of the theoretical distinction between dialogue and banking, or between dialogue and propaganda, becomes fuzzy. But in practice, no one seems to join the CFU without a great deal of careful consideration, and if we have made a collective mistake in the Crusade, it is probably in not asserting our prounion stance to students strongly enough. Again, language limitations make this difficult. About 20% of the tutors in the last two years have been Punjabi-speaking, and their ability to discuss issues in depth with students is incomparably better. But most of the volunteer tutors we are able to recruit

DEC/JAN 1986



MAKING TIME FOR HER STUDIES

are anglophone, so we must adapt to this limitation.

The restriction imposed by language has encouraged us more and more to explore the non-verbal possibilities of political education: drawings, photos, videos, films, and plays are all vehicles for political analysis as well as tools for learning language. "Problem-solving" visual materials encourage dialogue, especially with beginners. Nina Wallerstein, Deborah Barndt and

IN THE HOUSE OF A FARMWORKER

others have developed ESL tools based on Freire's literacy techniques. We have produced a set of ten drawings about to encode a series of related problems in the lives of farmworkers so that students can analyze them and identify their causes and possible solutions.

develops basic vocabulary. Then, the students discuss the wages advertised in the drawing, comparing them to their own pay, discuss the contracting system (in which farmworkers are hired by contractors instead of directly by farmers). Alternatives to the contract system, including workers' co-ops and unions, provide a basis for further discussion.

We have learned a great deal by using these effective teaching tools. The tutor must supply basic information and vocabulary to enable the students to understand the story in English. It may be valuable to include a stronger narrative line, to help the students themselves construct the story. As well, the current drawings present the workers as "faceless," in order to encourage abstraction. However, we have found this lack of identity to be dehumanizing, discouraging interest in the characters and their experience in the narrative. We also find that the visual style is most effective when based on the conventions of the culture that it represents. A possible the conditions of farmwork. Each tries direction for future work may be to work with students to produce materials collectively, as Deborah Barndt and her associates have done in Ontario.

To date, we have centered on deve-The students pass through a series of loping materials that are specifically stages in looking at the drawings. First concerned with farmwork. This clearly they identify the subject of the drawing reflects the CFU's goal in running the and its information content. This program. It also reflects the lack of available materials on other aspects of students' lives. Our next project, however, will be to develop problemsolving materials dealing with a range of concerns, both in response to students' English-language needs and because farmwork cannot be discussed in isolation from other aspects of students' lives.

The CFU's ESL program is effective in teaching English and in introducing basic information about the CFU. Tutors genuinely want to be seen by their students as partisan equals, not in a condescendingly "helping" role. The most serious limitation of the program is the tutors' unfamiliarity with Punjabi. Yet anglophone tutors are also a strength of the program; they provide an important bridge of friendship and trust between the two communities which is of value not only to individuals involved, but also to the union.

David Jackson is the co-ordinator for the English as a Second Language program for the CFU.



DEC/JAN 1986

DEBRIEFING **BRUCE COCKBURN**

Salvadoran Refugees Under The Military Thumb

Allen Booth

On August 29 of this year, the army of Honduras attacked a | We left Toronto on Tuesday morning September 17, and flew to Teguci-United Nations Refugee Camp at Colomoncagua, Honduras, close to the border with El Salvador. After killing two people and wounding over fifty, the Honduran military closed the camp, allowing no one to enter or leave. While the official story claimed that the military action was directed at Salvadoran rebels supposedly hiding in the camp, the United Nations personnel and the refugees themselves stated that the attack was indiscriminate, aimed rather at terrorizing the inhabitants into moving further away from the border. They suggested that this would cleanse the area of unwelcome witnesses to unofficial Honduran-American military activity in the nearby liberated zone of El Salvador.

THE CAMP AT COLOMONCAGUA HAS BEEN HOME FOR five years now to nine thousand refugees, mostly women. children and old people, afforded nominal protection by the presence of a handful of international aid workers hired by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. Their alternatives are either to walk about three hundred kilometres over the mountains to another camp built to accommodate three thousand and already overcrowded, or to go back to El Salvador, where the bombing that destroyed their homes can still be heard daily. These people have built up a way of functioning under difficult circumstances, with pottery and embroidery workshops, schools and a camp band. While presumably sympathetic to the idea of a free El Salvador, they have no involvement with guerrilla activity: they just don't want to move. Since August 29, no one has been going anywhere; and the camp has been sealed off from the outside world.

The Candian Council of International Cooperation (CCIC), an umbrella group of development and aid organizations, decided to attempt to break the camp's isolation. They selected a delegation to visit the camp, including singercomposer Bruce Cockburn, Meyer Brownstone of Oxfam Canada, and Jeff House, a Toronto lawyer. Cockburn, a musician with a broad knowledge of Central America, had previously visited refugee camps in Guatemala, crystalizing his experiences there and in Nicaragua in several songs on his most recent album, Stealing Fire.

Shortly after his return to Canada I asked Bruce to describe the trip:

galpa, where we arrived in the early evening. The airport there is typical of Caribbean airports - not particularly sophisticated and with lots of paramilitary presence. I was a bit nervous about what the border officials would think of the Nicaraguan and East German stamps in my passport. As it turned out, I was right to be concerned, because as soon as we went through customs all of our passports were confiscated.

They were left to cool their heels while various checks were done. When asked the purpose of their visit, Meyer Brownstone showed them the card of a Honduran Member of Parliament. This cut no ice with the officials at the airport.

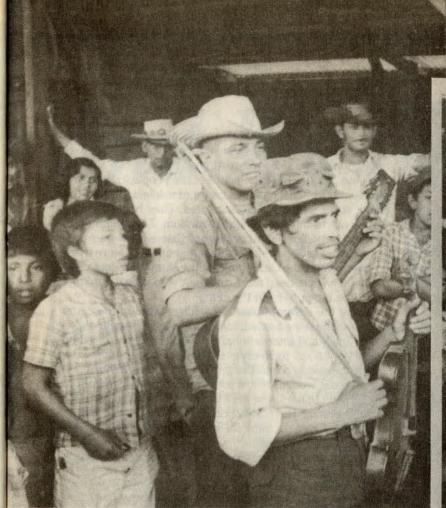
We were relieved when they gave our passports back and let us through. Eventually we found out that it was government policy to photograph any passport that had Nicaraguan stamps.

We emerged into the parking lot, to be met by our contacts from international aid organizations who briefed us on the local situation. We were warned that telephones and hotel lobbies have extra ears, and that there are certain restaurants where you can talk, and others where you can't.

The CCIC delegation spent the next two days struggling to get the permission required to enter the Colomoncagua camp. While permisson from the United Nations Commissioner for Refugees was immediately forthcoming, they soon discovered that this permit was acceptable only to the UN personnel in nominal control of the camp, and meant nothing to the rings of soldiers surrounding it. Access to the camp had become the subject of a power struggle - the "National Refugee Commission," headed by regular army colonel Abraham García Turcios, was being challenged for control by the Honduran secret service. "No permits will be given," Turcios stated categorically.

Meyer Brownstone responded by mobilizing international pressure from aid and development organizations, and began placing telephone calls from the hotel to various news agencies to complain about the refusal. This activity, together with the help of the honorary Consul-General for Canada who also happens to be the general manager of the Banco Atlantida and brother of a Honduran presidential candidate - produced magical results. The next morning, Colonel Turcios called the Canadian delegation into his office. He had orders from the Honduran Army's Chief of Staff, General

DEC/JAN 1985



Walter Mesa López, to let them into the camp at Colomoncagua. They received papers, signed by Turcios, allowing them a one day visit, from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

On Friday the CCIC delegation set off:

We left for Colomoncagua in a four-wheel drive vehicle driven by a Honduran worker from an aid agency. There was a nice highway from Tegucigalpa to a point not very far past a huge American airbase. The base was right beside the highway, about two miles long with sentry towers and

A few miles past the base we left the main highway and turned south towards the camp. Here the road gets bumpier and slower. It's beautiful country - pine forest, mountains, farms in the valleys. As we got closer to our destination it started to rain. The dirt track turned to mud. The last forty kilometres took us five hours. When we got to the town of Colomoncagua it looked like a sleepy little town right out of a spaghetti western. There were chickens in the street and lazy soldiers lying around. That night we stayed in a house used by international workers.

The next morning the CCIC delegation presented their papers to the lieutenants in charge in Colomoncagua. According to Bruce, these two men were not impressed by Colonel Turcios' signature (even though he is nominally in charge of all refugee camps in Honduras). It was only when Jeff House claimed in Spanish that General Walter López had issued the order, and wanted to be informed of anyone who refused to obey, that the soldiers began to jump.

We took a twenty minute drive to the camp. It's only a five minute walk from the town but you can't walk because if you do you'll get shot.



The camp is in a valley. The first thing you see are a lot of corrugated tin roofs. All the buildings have wood frames covered with burlap. The camp is divided into six sections. Sentries patrol the roads between them. There's a machine gun nest overlooking the camp.

We had planned to visit the two sections of the camp that had been raided by the army. In the first section we were greeted by an aid worker, an Irish guy named Adrian. He had malaria but he got up to show us some of the camp workshops. While we were looking around the word must have spread that internationals were in the camp because when we came out of the last workshop there was a crowd of about two hundred people and we were treated to a concert by the camp band. They played homemade guitars and guitarones and one kid - he played a sort of conga on legs that came up to his chin. They were conspicuously unconcerned about tuning but it was great anyway. They played traditional music with lyrics about their situation. The chorus of one song went something like, "No to repatriation; No to relocation." I asked if it was alright if I played a couple of songs. It was a bit strange because I sang in English, but as a gesture it was well received.

Another impromptu concert later in the day drew a crowd of around five thousand. According to other members of the delegation, it was Cockburn's signing of his song "Nicaragua" that generated most excitement, especially when he sang in Spanish the lyric "Sandino lives on in our struggle



COLOMONCAGUA CAMP BAND

38

for peace." Eyes widened in recognition, and small children ran about exclaiming, "He said Sandino!".

About noon we drove past the cemetery to another section of the camp. We met a couple of aid workers and asked to meet with the camp organizing committee so that we could listen to their testimony.

The meeting took place in a chapel. The refugees sat on benches around three sides and we sat on the fourth side. We saw a lot of people with bandages. We asked them to appoint one person to describe the events of August 29. This caused about fifteen minutes of confusion because they weren't used to appointing one person to speak for them. Finally one man told the basic story to all of us and then we split up to listen to people's stories individually.

What emerges from Bruce's account of what the CCIC delegation heard is a terrifying episode of violence and intimidation. Around noon on August 29 the army sprayed machine gun fire over the heads of the people in the camp for two hours. Then a large group of soldiers entered the camp, some with their faces painted. They began hauling people out of huts seemingly at random. They claimed to have a list of ten Salvadoran guerrillas who were in the camp. However, the refugees said that not only were there no guerrillas in the camp but that the army's list contained the name of one dead man, one man who is deaf, and one man who never lived in the camp.

During the several hours the soldiers were in the camp many people were beaten, two were killed, two schoolgirls were raped, and international aid workers were locked up when they tried to intervene. Hundreds of rounds were fired into walls and into the ground at people's feet. At one point an old woman heard someone being dragged out of the hut next to hers. She went out to plead with the soldiers not to hurt him. The soldiers called her a whore and kicked her. She dropped the baby she was carrying and the soldiers kicked the baby to death.

Bruce does not believe that the army intended this attack to be a massacre. He points out that if they had wanted to kill everyone in the camp they could easily have done so. He thinks they wanted to intimidate the refugees to make it easier for the Honduran government to relocate them. He believes that they want to relocate the camp because of the presence of Salvadoran refugees, and therefore the U.S. aid workers, complicates Honduran and American plans for military operations in the region. Bruce also believes that the refugees are solidly determined not to be

I asked him what he thinks Canadians can do to help the

What's needed is to avoid the bloodbath that will happen if the Hondurans try to relocate the camp. (Canadian) External Affairs needs to know that the Canadian people care about the nine thousand people in the camp. Canada is in a good position to put pressure on the Honduran government. We have a lot of money in Honduras, money in forestry projects. Canada can also persuade the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to object on moral grounds to relocation. Honduras has to believe that maltreatment of refugees will generate terrible PR.

I asked Bruce how he has been personally affected by his political involvement in Central American issues:

When you see how the peasants live in Nicaragua and Honduras, and how they work together, and you see the belief they have in themselves and the future, you realize that if these people can have this kind of hope it's almost obscene if we don't. That kind of contact stays with you for a long time. I think it's a good balance to the kind of esoteric non-involvement you find here.

Allen Booth is a Toronto free-lance composer and script writer. He is currently completing an album with his band Only Human, produced by Stacy Heydon.

DEC/JAN 1986

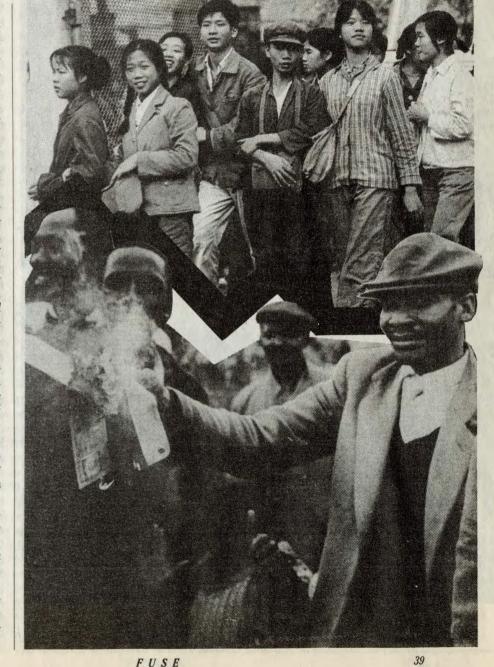
And We Note...

JEFF HOUSE

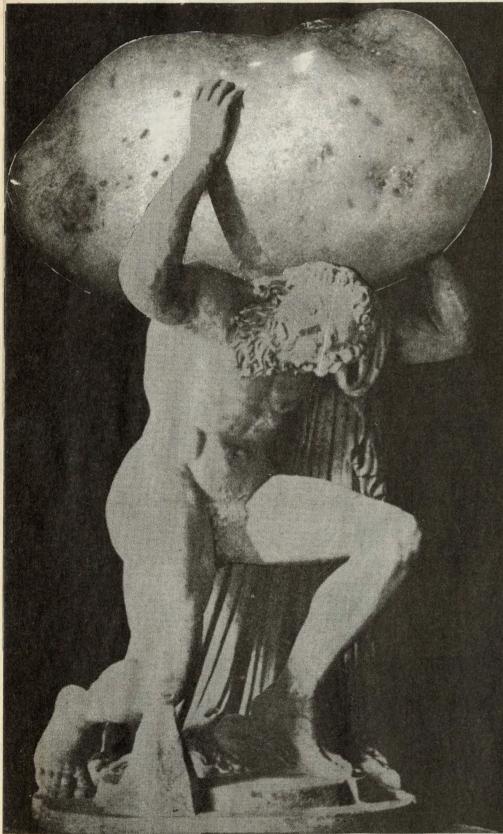
Ready but not Abel

TORONTO IS A FORGIVING town, especially if you're a small boy by the name of Allan Abel. Regular Globe and Mail readers will be unable to avoid recalling young Al's sportswriting, a collection of bon mots which sharply etched various forgettable events over numerous leaden years. But lo, the young lad was rewarded with a plum posting in China, where, to our great relief, he mostly occupied himself with weightlifitng, pingpong, and bodybuilding à la Chine. So far, so good, you may well say. But when the people of South Africa rose in rebellion against their government this summer and fall, young Al saw his future, and worked it. China, he wrote on a day when over 1,000 South African youth languished in jail, has an apartheid system. According to our analyst, the equation was all too obvious. China, he noted, requires peasants to obtain a pass if they wish to live in the big cities of the coast, and as often as not, such passes are not granted. No doubt the analogy leaps to the frontal lobes of even the most closed-minded reader: South Africa has a pass system too, does it not? Of course, this writer, a dved-in-the-wool nit-picker, can only note some distinctions. South Africa applies its regulations to blacks only, while China's controls apply within a context of government attempts to create equality among its citizens. Furthermore, is it so onerous that not everyone, in a country of a billion inhabitants, can move to the big, shiny, overcrowded cities? And is that the same as saying that one race can, while another can't? All the best in your career, Al.

DEC/JAN 1986



collage by Chris Reed



ATLAS

Rich and Mistreated

WHEN MILLIONAIRE DEVELOPER Peter Demeter was convicted a few years ago of paying an assassin to off his spouse, he found ready champions in a couple of right-wing journalists who wrote a tendentious book about the trial. In the book, authors Barbara Amiel and George Jonas argued that rich persons cannot get a fair trial in Ontario (at least as compared to "privileged" legal aid recipients, and in view of the working class bias of juries). The evidence in that trial had included a tape recording of Demeter plotting the murder, but speaking Hungarian. In the book, Jonas contrived to retranslate the tape in a manner which made it seem less criminal, an instance of special pleading which surely deserves a place in Canadian history. Now, in 1985, Demeter has been convicted of another murder plot. this one on videotape. Production values were also improved, for jury purposes at least, by Demeter's willingness to plot in English. This department awaits, with bated breath, a mea culpa from the erstwhile duo.

Look Who's Insulting Potatoes

THOSE WHO PINE FOR THE values of the good old 18th century have been comforted this year by the publication of a journal called The Idler, made in Canada but of decidedly anglophilic caste and aristocratic pretence. The editors adopt a pose of bored sophisticates, a literary elite whose readers make up "the educated and intelligent market." For pretenders to the mantle of G.K. Chesterton, though, their journalism is pretty shoddy. Worst in the latest issue was an article typically titled "The Abortions Controversy", by one Ian Hunter. Predictably, no controversy appears in the article. It is standard, one-sided, anti-abortionist stock, which defends the view that fetuses are human by quoting legal cases as far back as the thirteenth century, but omitting Section 206 of today's Criminal Code, which says they are not. Worst of all though, is the Dred Scott caper, which has been turning up in rancid right-wing literature for some months now. Our author who argues that since escaped slave Dred Scott was declared not to be a legal person in 1855, great harm was done the cause of

Black liberty; similarly, he says, with the "persons" case, which held women not to be persons for certain purposes. Now if, today, one substitutes "unborn" for Scott, or the woman involved," one has precisely the claim of proabortionists." This qualifies as material for the intelligent market? Suppose one takes the proposition "The world is flat," and for "world," substitutes "potato." Have we proven that the potato is flat? Or round? What if, instead of potato, we wrote "potato pancake"? Have we proven that the world is flat? If The Idler wishes to be taken seriously in these controversial times. it will have to learn to tell a fetus from an escaped slave.

USIA: The Seoul Truth

EAST AND WEST, NORTH AND South, the world fills its jails with political prisoners, with little protest being heard internationally. Even given this context, though, it's surprising that we've heard so little about 20 South Korean students who sat in at the Seoul office of the United States Information Agency, protesting its consistent misrepresentation of their country. The sit-in ended after four days, without incident, but the ring-leaders faced court action. The result? After one of their defence lawyers was disbarred for organizing a demonstration at the university, their other defence lawyers resigned in protest. The students received terms of up to seven years in jail for the sit-in. After that, their civil rights (what civil rights?) :are to be suspended for another three years.

The 25¢ Vote

YOUR FAITHFUL SERVANT HAS oft been accused, in his professional life, of sleazy-dog tricks, but never have we oiled our way to the kennel in quite so oleagenous a manner as a recent Toronto Sun editorial. Those great folks at the Sun, it turns out, are under attack by a community group for racist columns. That position was later supported by the Mayor's Advisory Group on Racism. So the Sun, in its editorial claimed that the racism was "culled" from the "hundreds of millions of words we've published." This sounds suspicously like the oldtime pornographers who used to wrap their message in wads of "socially-DEC/JAN 1986

relevant" twaddle, and claim they weren't peddling garbage. But the coup d'grease came with the editorial's claim that the Sun had 280,000 people who "voted for us" by purchasing the paper that day. Of course, the front page was wholly devoted to Blue Jay derring-do against Kansas City. How many of the ball fans knew they were voting for a racist fist in the Blue Jay glove?

or that a property-related franchise is democracy writ large. We do say that "forgetting" South Africa's history plays into the hands of the McKenzie Porter verband. That, of course, is error-by-omission. But errors-by-commission are printed as well. Thus, day after day, the *Globe* refers to Chief Gatsha Buthelezi as the hereditary chief of the Zulu tribe. GB, we all



Globotomy

SPEAKING OF SOUTH AFRICA the media have done a pretty atrocious job there, quite apart from the Abelian drivel. The Globe, for example, is still queasy about giving Blacks the vote, and justifies its indigestion with a polite version of the "they're just down from the trees" rot that the right-wing media float. How come, though, one never reads, in a Canadian newspaper, that Blacks once did vote in South Africa, that a property-related Black franchise was part of the constitution of the Cape Colony (1810), and that Blacks voted as recently as 1951, three years after the pro-Nazi National Party won the elections? (By contrast, the Inuit in Canada did not become enfranchised until 1950. Indians on reserves waited until the early 60's for the privilege.) We don't claim that the Cape Colony was nirvana for Blacks,

know, travels worldwide arguing that disinvestment in South Africa "hurts the blacks most." In fact, anyone consulting a basic history of South Africa will find that the South African government appointed Buthelezi; he was not next-in-line for the Zulu kingship. He was, however, thought to be the "best candidate" by the government which now issues him his passport as an international spokesman for South Africa's Blacks. Our newspaper's little error may be more understandable in light of the following juicy fact: The Globe and Mail is owned by International Thomson Organization, Ltd. of Toronto, which also owns 100% of Thomson Publications, Ltd. of Johannesburg. The latter company employs 200 "mostly white" workers. Could this affect the Globe's position on disinvestment?

Jeff House

Naipaul's Legacies Continuing the Colonizers' Dirty Work

MARLENE PHILIP

Digging Up The Mountains

by Neil Bissoondath Macmillan of Canada, Toronto, 1985

ALTHOUGH THE POSSIBILITY OF oblivion has never yet stopped a determined writer or artist, it could be argued that acknowledgement by critics and the media is a final and essential step in the process of producing a work of art. The overwhelmingly positive reception of Neil Bissoondath's Digging up the Mountains by media critics has, if we accept this argument, not only completed the process of creation but also established him as a literary heavyweight. England has its Naipaul, Canada its Bissoondath. They are even related (Bissoondath is Naipaul's nephew), which undoubtedly helps to validate Bissoondath and his work.

But, for once, the praise is not hyperbole: the book should win prizes...his book stands out, because of its excellence...

> Ken Adachi, Toronto Star. April 15, 1985

Bissoondath makes considerable contribution to the literature of immigrant

Ken Adachi, Toronto Star, April 20, 1985

"Bissoondath's New Worlds" was how Now magazine headlined their dalliance with neo-conservatism. 1 Based on an interview with him, the article allowed Bissoondath a full page to expatiate upon the evils of Trinidad, his country of birth: "To me it was a small, isolated, really unimportant place...a

1. Now magazine, April 25 to May 1, 1985.

dangerous place" from which people now fled "because bullets are flying. They have no choice if they want to survive."

Neither statistics, personal experience, observation nor information corroborate these comments which must either be the product of an overly active imagination or mere fabrication. Also, this "small, isolated, really unimportant place" remains the working home of the writers/poets Derek Walcott and Earl Lovelace, both of whom are internationally known and respected.

Bissoondath insists that "as a writer you have to tell the truth," and proffers his analysis of racism in Canada: "We [immigrants] dwell on the past. We fabricate stories of racism that create tension and problems. We isolate ourselves in ethnic communities."2

Juxtaposing such statements alongside the published results of Frances Henry's study (Spring 1985) which documented widespread and systemic racism throughout the Toronto business community as well as in the work place, we may be tempted to dismiss Bissoondath, but opinions such as these find great currency in these conservative, and often reactionary, times.

The Globe and Mail finally noticed him in August 1985 with a most appropriately headlined article, "Author Follows in His Uncle's Footsteps." This article made no attempt to analyse or criticise the work, but concentrated on Bissoondath the writer, whose quoted comments would be reason for mirth were it not for the chastening awareness that they were voiced, guoted and undoubtedly read and accepted in all seriousness.

2. My letter to Now magazine, May 9 to 15,

FUSE

I don't mind when people call me racist, I think it says far more about them than it does about me...Because I don't wear ideological blinkers. I like trying to get different ideological viewpoints to any given situation.

Neil Bissoondath, Globe and Mail, August 7, 1985

The latter statement may appear reasonable enough until interpreted against the background of Bissoondath's work and his other statements. His pre-publication and dust cover blurbs are panegyrics that welcome this "strong, new voice, with an impressive range" (Margaret Laurence); "I'm staggered by the talent" (V.S. Naipaul); "A new-found writer of astonishing power" (Malcolm Ross); "Audacious, surprising and highly readable" (Robert Fulford).

Roughly one-third of Bissoondath's collection is, by any standards, quite good. The title story, "Digging up the Mountains", along with "Insecurity," "There Are a Lot of Ways to Die," "An Arrangement of Shadows," "Man as Plaything," and "Life as Mockery," comprise this group. In all of these Bissoondath succeeds in developing and maintaining a tension between his protagonist and the events that, in almost all cases, embrace him/her too closely. In what I consider to be his best and strongest story, "Digging up the Mountains," his control of suspense is delicate vet sure; the reader's attention is held as tautly as the events that play themselves out. His tendency to overwrite is most apparent in "An Arrangement of Shadows" in which we find the most compassionately drawn character in this collection - a White, female teacher. Generally his work reveals that he is not yet in control of his material; it often gets the better of him.

physical manifestations of these people's Blackness, be it hair or facial features, become reason for criticism or ridicule. "Christmas Lunch" is unmerciful in revealing the underbelly of working class East Indian (Caribbean) life here in Toronto. If its aim was to show how lacking in any worthwhile sentiment or thought these people are, then Bissoondath has succeeded - admirably; so too does the Toronto Sun, and it's at that level I rank this particular piece. Any

writer who aspires to literary standards

Another third of these stories is

marked by the casting of Bissoondath

himself as the unidentified observer.

The only tensions arise from attempts

to remove himself from situations and

people to whom he obviously considers

himself superior. "The Revolutionary,"

"A Short Visit to a Failed Artist,"

"Christmas Lunch" and "Continental

The first two are noteworthy for the

fact that they return the woolly-haired

Black to modern literary images: the

revolutionary (in the story by the same

name) bears "a mass of woolly hair

shooting from his head, replete with

bramble and twisting vines." "A Short

Visit to a Failed Artist" yields "tufts of

hair like black, curly cotton wool, stick

out from her tight afro." The Oxford

Dictionary still lists Negroes' hair as one

of the meanings of wool, and while

there are many who would argue that to

compare a Black person's hair to wool

in no way implies a criticism, the

"woolly-haired Negro or Black" has

never been a value-free expression, and

has always implied that there was

something wrong with having "woolly"

hair. There is no denying the contexts in

which Bissoondath uses these descrip-

tions - they are negative, and the

Drift" fall into this category.

counting, for the apparent sake of recounting, how a group of unfortunate people live.

The scope of a novel may allow for more evenhanded treatment, but the condensed form of a short story very quickly reveals a writer's bias, through what s/he chooses to emphasize or play down, and the way in which s/he does this. Bissoondath chooses to emphasize all that is negative and reinforces this by having the unidentified observer (obviously Bissoondath himself) make unsuccessful attempts to leave the situation. "Christmas Lunch" fails because at the end the reader is left wondering what was the point of the story.

The only value in the immigrant experience for Bissoondath has been to give "him some things to write about"3

3. Globe and Mail, August 7, 1985.

(emphasis mine). That a writer should write about the profound and absolute alienation of a group of people is not, in and of itself, reason to take issue with him/her. But when the material is presented in such a way that we have no other recourse but to scorn and/or ridicule them without knowing why except that they are poor or Black, then such reason does exist. It is Bissoondath's arrant refusal to contextualize these people or their lives, repeated time

DIGGING UP Profound and absolute alienation of a Brought by take it and him he had or indicated the such a such as but to show in and with the such a such as but to show in and with the such a such as but to show in and with the such a such a such as but to show in and with the such a such as but to show in a such as the such as but to show in a such as the such as that they are poor or black, then st

DEC/JAN 1986

and again in this collection, that so con-

The remaining pieces in this collec-

tion, with the exception of two, appear

to be set in some unnamed South

American country. The better ones,

and that is truly a relative term here,

are vague, the others decidedly boring.

"The Cage," about a Japanese woman

who rejects convention, belongs most

founds me and damns him.

BISSOONDATH'S SUCCESS LIES IN THE UTTER, ABSOLUTE AND DELIBERATE DEHISTORICIZATION OF EVERYTHING AND EVERYONE OF WHICH HE WRITES

assuredly in this latter group, being one of the longest – at 28 pages – and most boring attempts at the short story genre. So too does "Dancing," a clichéd, overwritten account *about* the recent immigrant experience of a young woman from Trinidad.

So, what we have here is a work which in its varying competence reveals an author still learning his craft and making the expected mistakes. It in no way warrants the uncritical praise it has received, and although one may be inclined to ignore and/or dismiss the pre-publication blurbs as mere puffery on the part of his publishers, the extensive media coverage of Bissoondath and his inanities demands a closer look.

These inanities do provide good copy, but a more insidious reason explains the uncritical embrace by the media, and those of us who know V.S. Naipaul's work have seen it at work there. It lies in the promulgation of certain views and approaches to the Third World by writers from those areas, and who thereby serve to give these views more validity and currency than would ordinarily be the case.

Bissoondath's success lies in the utter, absolute and deliberate dehistoricization of everything and everyone of which he writes, and in so doing, as he himself admits, he models himself closely on his uncle, V.S. Naipaul, who pimps the tawdry racist views of colonial powers, past and present, the world over. The nephew has learnt well "the Naipaulian formula for Third World writers - present the Third World at best as an existential wasteland, at worst as the garbage dump of the world; place becomes irrelevant - Africa, India, Latin America, the formula is always the same."4

To dehistoricize the Third World as 4. My letter to Now magazine, May 9 to 15,

Bissoondath and Naipaul have done; to be silent about the source of much of what ails it and its peoples today, while excoriating those societies for their backwardness, their lack of a sense of history (as Naipaul so brilliantly accomplished in Bend in the River, while the work itself manifested dehistoricization at its worst); to present Third World people as rooted forever in some Sisyphean nightmare that dooms them to return to terror, depredation and despair is, as a writer, to work from the centre of these forces that dehumanize entire peoples. It is also (contrary to Bissoondath's claim) to be truly and committedly ideological and partisan and to forget or ignore Gabriel García Márquez's caution, given in his Nobel Prize speech, that "London took three hundred years to build its first city wall, and three hundred years more to acquire a bishop; that Rome laboured in a gloom of uncertainty for twenty centuries, until an Etruscan king anchored it in history...." and that "the quest for an identity is as arduous and bloody for us as it was for them" (the Europeans).

As empires disintegrate, as colonial forces appear to retreat, in their wake they always leave individuals who are prepared to be their spokespersons, their apologists, and who insist on their own neutrality, objectivity and refusal to take sides. It is of course a most insidious myth, that of the objective, unbiased writer, and one to which Bissoondath and his blurb writers and the media cling most tenaciously:

Bissoondath displays a remarkably mature understanding and a stout refusal to take sides. (My emphasis.) Dust cover, Digging up the Mountains

What he writes, he would have us believe, comes from the inside, unsullied by anything as gross as ideology or propaganda. However, a reference to Marx and Castro is within a decidedly negative context - to reflect unwelcome change - and is entirely unbalanced by any reference to American imperialism in the Caribbean. As the unidentified character who converses with the revolutionary (in the story of the same name), he dismisses the armed uprising in Trinidad in 1970 as a "brief fling with notoriety and headlines." Among the many reasons for this uprising was the continued exercise by the private sector, including many Canadian-owned banks, of one of the more execrable racist practices the refusal to hire other than Whites or pale skinned Chinese as employees. It was very seldom that Black people could obtain loans and all profits were siphoned off to England, Canada or the U.S.A.

Neither widespread nor widely supported, the uprising was quickly crushed, and had it not been, the United States, as always incarnate in warships (two), waited outside the Port of Spain harbour to "assist" the Prime Minister. One of the most noticeable effects of this "brief fling with notoriety" was discontinuance and modification of the practices described above.

"A person who has no past, only a future, is a person with little reality." So writes Octavio Paz in A Literature of Foundations.⁵ He also writes that, "(b)efore having our own historical existence, we began by being a European idea. We cannot be understood if it is forgotten that we are a chapter in the history of European utopias." I would add that neither can we understand ourselves if we forget this. The hegemony enjoyed by writers such as Bissoondath and Naipaul among cer-

5. The Tri-quarterly Anthology of Contemporary Latin American Literature, Editors Jose Donso & William Henkin.

THE HEGEMONY **ENJOYED** WRITERS SUCH AS BISSOONDATH AND NAIPAUL AMONG CERTAIN SECTORS OF THE LITERARY WORLD ITS CRITICS AND THE MEDIA, IS, I BELIEVE, TO BE UNDERSTOOD AND EXPLAINED BY THE FACT THAT THEY SUP PORT AND NOURISH THOSE SYSTEMS THAT WANT TO FORGET THE PAST, AND THE ROLE OF **EUROPE AND THE** UNITED STATES IN PRESENT PROCESSES OF

THE THIRD WORLD

tain sectors of the literary world, its critics and the media, is, I believe, to be understood and explained by the fact that they support and nourish those systems that want to forget the past, and the role of Europe and the United States in the present processes of the Third World.

Bissoondath was born in 1955 and was therefore seven in 1962, the year that Trinidad and Tobago became independent of British rule. He would obviously have been too young in the late fifties to have been made to line the streets for hours in the sun waiting for Her who, from her air-conditioned limousine, would wave her tiny royal white hand and be gone in five seconds; he was surely too young to have experienced the heady wild exciter ent that swept a people full of dreams about controlling their lives, those of their children and their future; and surely he was much too young to have felt or seen that deep joy and pride of parents witnessing their children going off to school to obtain a "decent" education - universal for the first time in the island's history. Did he miss, because of his age, the empowerment of a people as one of their own - a Black man - albeit Oxford educated - rose to power, told them "massa day done" and tried to forge a new reality out of a history of oppression, slavery and exploitation? Has he forgotten that until 1963 we, as Black and Caribbean peoples were taught that we lacked not only a history but a beginning, or who it was that, in their classic and sublime efforts at divide and rule, set "coolie" against "nigger" in the colonies of Trinidad and Guyana and, as they withdrew, accused the people of inability to govern? Was it because he was too young and lacks a sense of history - of where he and his kind

have come from - that he now forgets how direct the line is between the struggles described above and where he is today?

It is ironic that this is probably the most exhaustive review that Bissoondath's work has received to date, since much of what passes for review in the media is hype and opinion masquerading as criticism. There has been much hype, there have been many inaccuracies, most of them fuelled by Bissoondath himself. This must be balanced by acknowledgement of the many fine writers and poets of the Third World or, as I prefer to call it, the New World (as in New Worlds of empowerment and strength of women or peoples of colour) who practice their craft here in Canada - Himani Bannerji, Krisantha Bhaggiyadatta, Dionne Brand, Claire Harris and Charles Smith, to name a few - and who have been creating a literature founded on a reality defined by ourselves. It is a reality which is at times shared and at times different, but one which always acknowledges, most of the time implicitly, as fine literature will, the historical reality that has propelled us into the psyche of the Western mind and attempts to fashion us in its image.

Carlos Fuentes writes:

Remember the future
Imagine the past
See the present and deal with it. It is a part of history.

Bissoondath and writers of his ilk may have the weight of oppression on their side, but writers such as the ones mentioned and quoted in this review have the ear of history and as such ensure a continuing remembrance of the future and imagination of the past.

Marlene Philip

HE DISMISSES THE ARMED UPRISING IN TRINIDAD IN 1970 AS A "BRIEF FLING WITH NOTORIETY AND HEADLINES."

FUSE DEC/JAN 1986 PUSE 45

BETWEEN STRUGGLE & HOPE

Reading & Rights Literacy Crusade in Nicaragua

ITO PENG



Between Struggle and Hope

by Valerie Miller Westview Press, Boulder, Colorado, 1985

LAST YEAR, WHEN THE CANADIAN Association for Adult Education released its conclusion that 45% of Canadian adults are functionally illiterate, the national media went through a spasm of ritual concern. Since then, the issue has been lowered back into our collective unconscious, and is now a direct concern only of teachers and professional educators.

Objectively, functional illiteracy means a basic competence level for an individual to function effectively in society. In Canada, one must be able to fill out forms such as job applications and Unemployment Insurance forms, to read and understand newspapers, the instructions on the package of a consumer item, safety regulations, notes from your child's school; one must also have the ability to understand bills and calculate amounts due as change. Graduates of Grade 9 are expected to have these skills in Canada. In subjective terms, literacy is connected to feelings of competence and control of the environment, while illiteracy may often involve deepseated feelings of inadequacy and lack of control over one's life.

While it may not be too distressing that one half of Canadian adults are unable to be misinformed by the media, the exclusion from access to most information also excludes one from participating in the democratic process. If democracy includes freedom of choice and of expression, effective freedom of choice depends upon being fully informed, while effective DEC/JAN 1986

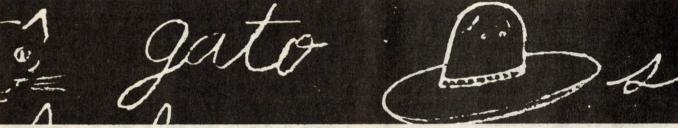
expression usually involves the ability to decide between various written options, and to write and distribute one's own conclusions. In fact, literacy today means more than simply reading or writing; rather, it involves being "literate" in the techniques necessary to retrieve information about oneself and one's position and status in society, in short, to find the information necessary to make sense of one's place in the world.

It is difficult to believe that Canada's shameful rate of functional illiteracy has come about by accident. Governmental support for education has always been directly tied to the needs

Miller is able to document the process from the inside, from sublime moments to stretches of chaos, she also attempts to bridge the gap between the theory of literacy as it relates to social equality, and the nuts and bolts pragmatics of organizing a national campaign of this nature. Of course, Miller would not have been invited to serve as guest expert and advisor to the campaign, had she not shared the conviction of the Sandinista leadership, that illiteracy served as one of the bulwarks of social inequality in Somoza's Nicaragua, as well as elsewhere in the world. But the conviction that democracy requires participation,

by engaging in critical dialogue with classmates and teachers alike on topics intimately related to the students' daily lives and experiences. Learning was reinforced through participation in activities suggested by the group during the discussion. The stress was always on the need to be functionally literate, as well as politically literate.

While praising its accomplishments, Miller maintains a critical view of the Crusade's development and practice. She details organizational and logistic difficulties which arose from the moment of the Crusade's inception, as well as mid-course changes in program goals and priorities which undercut ef-



of "the economy," which, when looked at closely, usually means the requirements of industry and employers, and not the requirements of individuals. If only half of Canadians need to be functionally literate to fulfill their jobs, then government reasons that teaching all to be fully literate is an extravagance that cannot be afforded. Those who drop out of school to take dead-end jobs face little impediment from the powers that be, and a massive rate of illiteracy and consequent disorientation is condoned.

This need not be so. In the past five years, something remarkable has happened in Nicaragua, where literacy of the entire population has been a prime national objective since the revolution of July, 1979. The National Literacy Crusade of 1980, which initiated a broad long-term educational effort at creating literacy, was a remarkable success, reducing the rate of illiteracy from 53% to 13% in six months. Although there have been several rather credulous studies of this campaign, no serious book-length work has emerged until now, with Valerie Miller's work Between Struggle and Hope. Invited by Father Ernesto Cardinal to participate as an advisor and critic of the Crusade programme, Miller had a special advantage over other scholars, a fact which is evident in the close-captioned documentation of that unique social process. While DEC/JAN 1986

and that participation requires literacy, is one that has been shown to be correct in practice.

It was clear from the beginning that the Literacy Crusade was expected to achieve more than simply technical upgrading of participants' reading skills; it aimed to empower those without power, and lay the foundations of the country's political consolidation. The Crusade was consciously developed as "political action with educational implementation." Its main objectives were to raise social and political consciousness throughout the country, and to develop a strong network of consciousness-raisers even in the farthest outposts. In an interesting discussion, Miller cautiously supports the administrative organization of the campaign, which involved the development of a far-reaching network vital to the revolution's consolidation. while showing some concern for the result, which was the country's largest and most unwieldy bureaucratic struc-

The network, nonetheless, was able to effectively direct a popular education movement whose underpinnings were based upon the teachings of Brazilian Paulo Freire, which emphasized learning through a fully reciprocal dialogue with the teacher, and through direct participation in the educational process. The students learned, not through a text book, but

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fectiveness. Curriculum development also suffered, according to Miller, as a result of time constraints and chaotic administration. Even the actual day-to-day teaching was plagued by disasters, owing to the youth of the volunteer teachers, their own short-comings, and the general backwardness and disorganization in the country at that time. But, says Miller, the Crusade hung together, and succeeded because it was able to draw on the long-suppressed energies of these same volunteers, enthusiastic and determined to create a new, just society.

Between Struggle and Hope documents the theory and practice of what was perhaps the world's most successful large scale literacy program. In the final analysis. Miller shows that what made it all possible was the contagious enthusiasm, and the certainty that all obstacles could be overcome. that was characteristic of the Sandinista revolution in its early years. Meanwhile, in Canada, our literacy rate remains largely untouched, and except for ritual occasions, unlamented. And many of our youth, unemployed and cynical, have suppressed, perhaps forever, that longing for a just society.

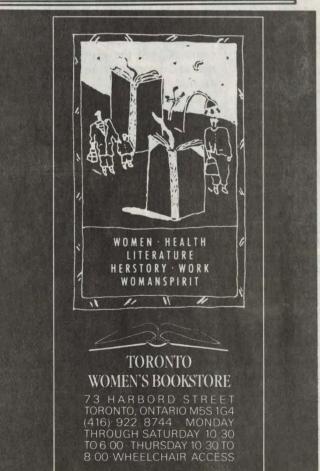
Ito Peng teaches English as a second language with the Humber College Labour Studies Programme. She visited Nicaragua in 1983 to study its education.

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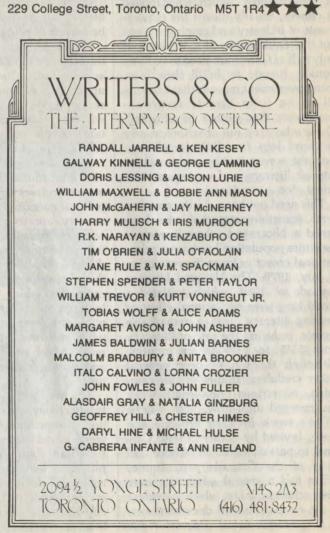
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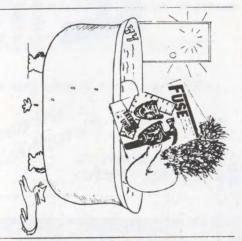
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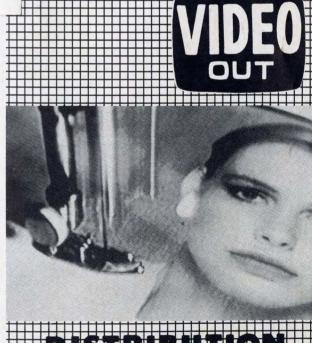
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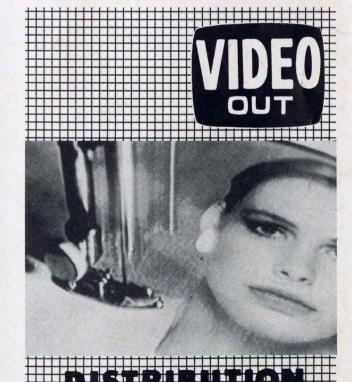
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