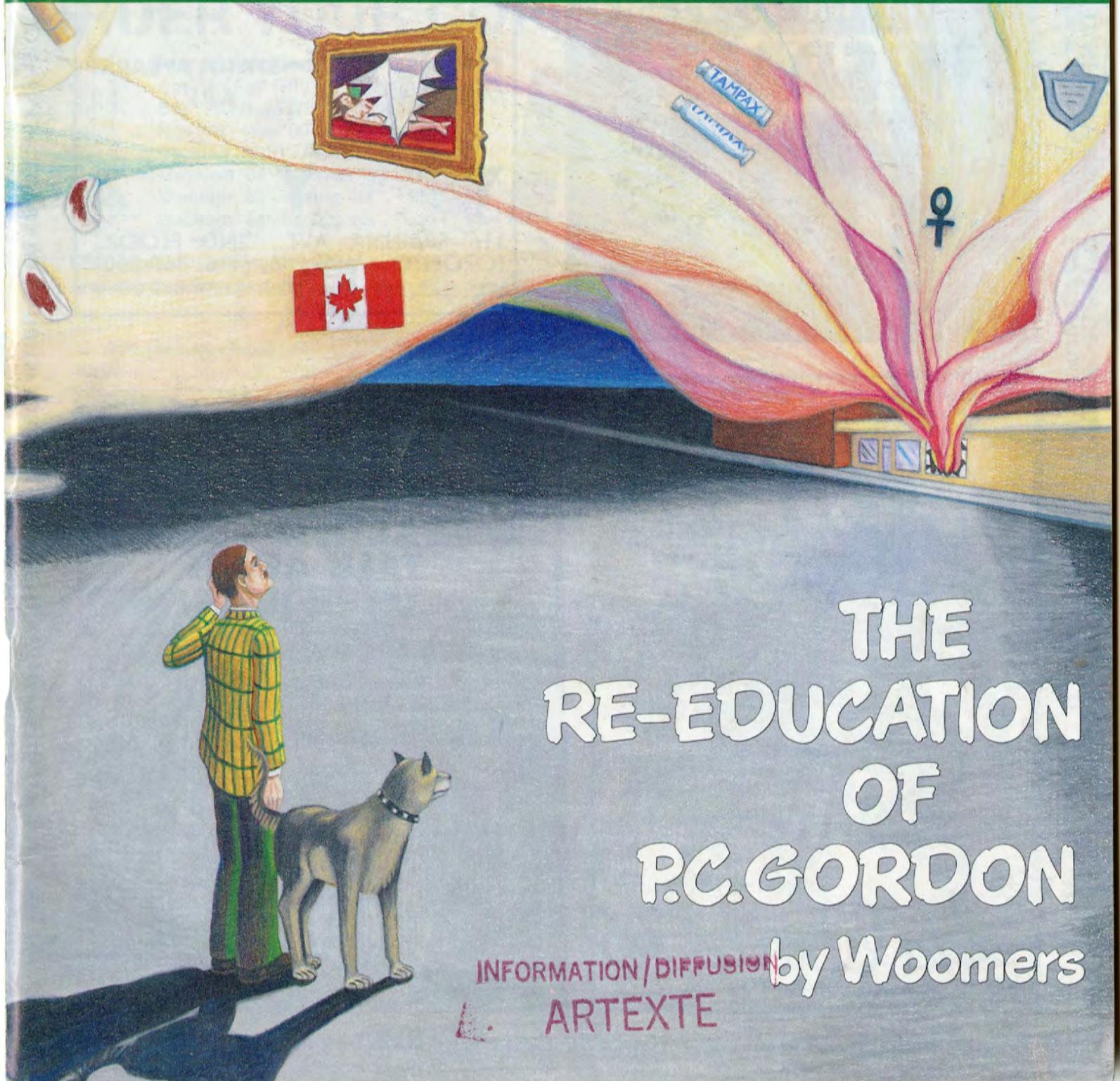


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LETTERS

Blown Tube

THE POSITION OF CURATORIAL Assistant of Contemporary Art (Video), held by Robert McFadden since November 1983, has been cut by the National Gallery in accordance with a recent directive from the National Museums Corporation to reduce personnel. The position was a term position, not subject to the procedures governing regular staff positions, and was one of several term positions not renewed by the Gallery as a result of budget cuts. Robert McFadden worked his last day on December 13, 1985.

While the Gallery will no doubt offer vague promises of maintaining a video program despite the loss of a staff person to attend to such a program, the evidence of its history suggests otherwise. These are the statistics: Until the Gallery hired Robert McFadden to fulfill the position as video curator in November, 1983, the National Gallery of Canada had held only three video exhibitions. This same cavalier attitude toward video is repeated in terms of acquisitions. Before November 1983, the Gallery had purchased a total of only 98 videotapes, and these were overwhelmingly associated with the exhibitions curated by Peggy Gale, 1977 and Bruce Ferguson, 1980: 43 tapes from *Another Dimension*, 12 tapes from *Canada Video* and a further 29 tapes purchased by Ferguson while assembling that exhibition. Only 14 tapes were purchased by regular staff. In the period from November 1983 to December 1985, there have been ten video exhibitions, seven of which were curated in-house and three by guest curators. Also during this period, a total of 169 tapes have been purchased, and a further 36 are in the acquisition process, all on the recommendation of Robert McFadden.

It is clearly evident that, without a staff person in charge of this activity, video is not given adequate consideration within the regular curatorial activity of the Gallery. With only two curators of contemporary art on staff, both already fully committed within their normal sphere of activities, it is inconceivable that this already overburdened staff will

have any leeway to attend to a video program, as they themselves stated informally. It is hardly surprising, then, in the forthcoming survey of Canadian contemporary art *Songs of Experience*, organized by these two curators and scheduled to open at the gallery in the spring of 1986, the video art component has been dropped entirely.

In terminating the video position, the National Gallery has *de facto* terminated the video exhibition and purchase program. We believe that it is essential for the video community to challenge this decisively backward step, which returns video to its status as "invisible" within the National Gallery's conception and presentation of contemporary art and isolates video as an 'expedient' art form, one which can be neglected until the Gallery opens its new quarters in 1988 — or later. Programmes that have been cut are notoriously hard to reinstate.

This withdrawal of commitment reveals how uninformed the National Gallery is regarding current international trends in art institutions. One has only to witness the expansion of video art activities across Canada and the U.S., i.e. the I.C.A. in Boston, the Long Beach Museum in California, the expanded programming at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, as well as the widespread display of video art in the ANNPAC centres here in Canada. As for Europe, the Tate and the I.C.A. in London have an expanding video programme, as has the Steidlek in Amsterdam. In addition to

a growing commitment to video in the major art institutions, video art theatres are opening up in a variety of European cities. In Japan, there is an enormous amount of video art display activity within the major institutions. Further, video art seminars and video art history courses are a regular and expanding component of Fine Art departments in universities and art colleges throughout Canada, the U.S., Europe and Japan.

There is no question that the National Gallery is not in a robust financial position. In comparing the Gallery with other major institutions, however, it is evident that the problem is not simply one of funds but of exhibition priorities as well. The irrationality of the decision to terminate the programme is further evidenced in considering the discrepancy between the substantial benefits in programming and prestige which have accrued to the Gallery from its video program and the relatively small investment required to attain these benefits.

We demand that a clear allocation of dollars and person-hours be committed toward the maintenance and expansion of the video programme. In doing so, the National Gallery would be more accurately reflecting the status and visibility that video production has attained with the international art community.

Renee Baert, Colin Campbell,
 Vera Frenkel, Kim Tomczak

DO TELL.

William F. Buckley, as good as his word, tells it like it is. from the *Toronto Sun*, Feb. 13, 1986.

We hope that ordered self-rule will come to the Philippines, but whether or not it does, we have imperial responsibilities in the Western Pacific that have nothing whatever to do with civic progress in that country.



In Defence of the Revolution

CERTAIN NATIVE AMERICAN leaders, particularly Russell Means, the Native American Youth Council, and the editors of *Akwesasne Notes* have it in for the left — and have had, for about ten years — and now have it in for Nicaragua. They are currently engaged in a media campaign to defame the Sandinistas and represent them as (depending on whom they are talking to and who is doing the talking) Marxist devils out to destroy the way of life of native peoples or as misguided non-Indians who are blunderingly doing evil.

Although the relations between the Miskitos and the Sandinistas have not been smooth, they have hardly involved the genocidal or even murderous agenda that these opponents suggest. And they are not graven in stone — even the Sandinistas say they were too abrupt in their attempts to interfere with the lives and political allegiances of the Miskito and other peoples along the Atlantic Coast and are engaged in efforts to rectify them. But I am not writing so much out of the desire to “exonerate” the Sandinistas as to question the enterprise of vilification that *Fuse* has, wittingly or unwittingly, become a part of.

The relationship between the Miskitos and Somoza, and the CIA, has not been adequately investigated in the journals that publish anti-Sandinistas attacks — although the relationship of former spokesman Steadman Fagoth, Brooklyn Rivera's predecessor (so to speak) to the CIA is generally acknowledged. What of the fate of another Miskito leader who, engaged in negotiation and rapprochement with the Sandinistas, was mysteriously killed? It has been suggested that he was killed for being too willing to reach a settlement. And what of the Miskitos who are unwillingly to play into the hands of the *United States* government and its mercenaries, the *contras*, such as Dr. Myrna Cunningham? Why are they not heard from in North American journals?

The most troublesome aspect of all this is the failure of all the various journals that print the attacks on the Sandinistas in “defense” of the native Central Americans not only to present a pro-

Sandinistas Miskito view, or the remarks of the Sandinistas themselves in response to the serious charges made, but, beyond that, to ask these native North American attackers where they have been while the government of Guatemala, to name only the worst case, has engaged in systematic genocide against its native populations for the past fifteen years, resulting in the greatest slaughter in the hemisphere? Even the most intensely anti-Sandinistas observers have been unable to produce more than forged documents of a campaign against Miskitos at the hands of the Sandinistas — may I remind you of the famous incident in which Alexander Haig waved doctored photos around for the sake of the press?

I wish I were more in command of the facts beyond the questions I have suggested. But let me close by asking what this exchange in your interview with Alex Jacobs and Don Alexander is supposed to mean?

First, Jacobs compares the ideological apparatuses of the corporations, with their “millions of dollars” and “broadcasting companies” with “the left and the Sandinistas,” saying “they have their organs and their support!” This pathetic comparison goes unchallenged by Alexander:

Jacobs: “...where the hell are the Miskitos going to go to get their point of view across? ...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 the Rio Grande, and it's all in the Sandinistas' hands.”

In answer to Jacobs' first question the answer is, in every mainstream newspaper and journal in the U.S., and in many left ones as well, not to mention in the mouths of government liars and apologists. And as to the number of people “in the Sandinistas' hands,” what was that figure again?

The Nicaraguan revolution is “fighting for its life.” Doesn't it deserve a little better treatment in terms of journalistic fairness than this?

Instead of printing a letter such as mine or naive articles and interviews such as the *Akwesasne* one, you ought to take seriously your responsibility to probe for truth, not attitudinizing.

Martha Rosler
U.C.S.D.
La Jolla, California

The Heat is On Ways of Seeing Sex

VANCOUVER — *The Heat Is On: Women on Art and Sex*, a conference which took place in the last weekend of November, 1985, drew more than 250 people (women and men) daily to Women in Focus, a Vancouver women's art gallery. Speakers and audience represented both the feminist and arts communities, creating a welcome and rare dialogue. Important ideas were exchanged and discussed during a weekend marked by tolerance and openness.

The conference was organized by a group of local feminist activists and artists (Sara Diamond, Caffyn Kelley, Pat Feindel, Karen Henry, Kellie Marlowe), hosted by Women in Focus, and financed by The Canada Council. As Diamond (a lesbian, feminist activist and video artist) pointed out in her keynote address, the organizers saw the need for a conference on sexuality in general as well, but were leaving that for other women to take on. The narrower focus — on the creation and perception of sexual imagery — was probably advantageous.

Though discussion frequently broached other issues, the complicated interface of sexual art and sexual politics began to come under scrutiny. If none of the contradictions were actually sorted out, at least they were addressed.

Diamond's talk set the stage for two days of panel discussions that explored women's views on art and sex from a variety of political and cultural perspectives. She outlined the range of debates within the feminist, gay, left, and arts communities. For once women's sexuality was viewed from outside the context of right and wrong where it could be examined and questioned respectfully. Throughout the weekend, conference participants as a whole steered clear of personal or moral condemnation.

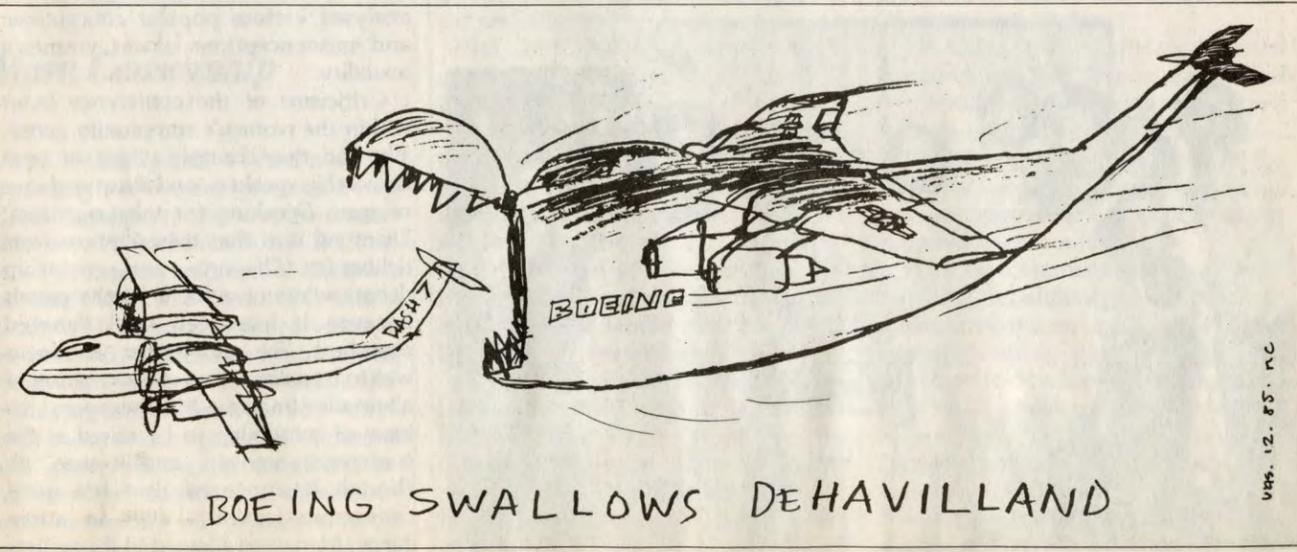
Saturday's panels looked at the political implications of sexual imagery. The first, “Coming Together or Coming Apart: The Social and Political Meanings of Sexual Images” addressed the context in which we live. It was followed by “The Objecting Object: Women and the Art of Sex”

which looked at some of the ways women have found to fight back. Each of these panels incorporated three different approaches, loosely those of academic/critic, activist, and ‘sex radical.’

The most obvious and distressing omission from all this analysis and discussion was that of women of colour. The only woman of colour speaking at the entire conference was Toronto poet Himani Bannerji. Only three of the videos dealt with people of colour at all, one only in passing, and the other two in the larger context of the gay movement. Given the range and amount of feminist work by both Canadian and American women of colour, this was unforgivable.

Bannerji's talk was a definite conference highlight, a powerful and incisive analysis of the politics of image-making. She discussed three types of images: proscription and ascription; description; and resistance. She stressed the importance of asking who makes each type of image, and spoke of the plethora of stereotypes (images

Mike Constable



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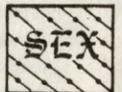
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in the mind) which stand for visual images of women of colour. And she addressed the stultifying impact of the term "visible minorities" that robs people of colour of a voice, a history, and an identity beyond visibility. It is difficult for the oppressed to feel desire, she said, in a society like this one.

A different style of presentation came from the 'sex radicals'. Amber Hollibaugh (New York City) and Sue Golding (Peterborough, Ontario) gave personal accounts and elicited personal responses. Hollibaugh's discussion of her experiences as a butch/femme lesbian activist was both painful and heartening. She has borne much of the brunt of the feminist backlash against fringe sexuality. She talked about women's fear of their sexuality, but also their curiosity, as well as the sheer lack of sexual information available to most women.

One interesting statistic she cited was the fact that women constitute an estimated 60% of the viewers of video porn in the U.S.

Golding showed slides that highlight the perennial ambiguities around the oft-used porn/erotica distinction. (She uses the terms transgression and indiscretion.) Overall, it was a bit difficult to figure out what point she was trying to make. It seemed she was at times bringing out images that she/we found troubling in order to force us to ask ourselves what it was that disturbed us.

One thing that became startlingly clear is that we are still more comfortable analysing extant imagery, our political situation, or other people's sexuality, than we are at creating alternative forms of imagery. In this regard, the definite conference highlights were Cindy Patton's reading from *Bad Attitude*, and Steele and

Tomczak's performance, *In the Dark*.

There has been much controversy regarding *Bad Attitude*. The magazine is still not sold at either the Toronto Women's Bookstore or the Vancouver Women's Bookstore, and at those women's bookstores where it is available, it has to be asked for at the counter. Amid the calls of "Read another story!" that followed Patton's readings, one woman stood up and said, "But that's so tame!" Perhaps as we begin to bring our most feared fantasies out into the open this will indeed be the response: there isn't that much to be afraid of after all.

In the Dark moved many women in the audience to tears. They called it 'beautiful,' 'real,' and the first affirmation of their sexuality they'd seen. It is a sexually explicit video of Lisa Steele and Kim Tomczak making love, amplified by a powerful script. It has been banned by the Ontario Censor Board.

Pat Feindel and Varda Burstyn gave all this a social and strategic context. Burstyn's talk, for example, was concerned with mainstream porn and existing legislation pertinent to it. She brought up the fact that the Supreme Court has now banned dildos, arbitrarily designating them a publication. Burstyn seems to see the issues around porn not only in terms of the pro- and anti-censorship debate, but also about the confluence of fear and arousal, and how that is expressed politically.

The evening screenings were packed. Some women evidently were expecting three nights of sex tapes. (Unfortunately we are a long way from that.) Instead most of the tapes documented and analysed various popular conceptions and misconceptions about women's sexuality.

Criticisms of the conference from within the women's community generally had two themes: a lack of pro-censorship speakers, and the attendance of men. Speaking for the organizers, Diamond said that these choices were deliberate. The pro-, anti-censorship debate was not a focus of the panels because it has been well debated elsewhere. She said, rather, the focus was to be a discussion of the creation of alternative imagery. Many expected the issue of censorship to be raised at the conference anyway, and it was, although it appeared that few pro-censorship feminists were in attendance. Men were allowed to the confer-

ence on the grounds that many male artists share an interest in the creation of anti-sexist imagery, and also because men are the primary viewers of the sexual imagery that exists.



Paula Levine

The conference did produce some resolutions. A Vancouver group to fight censorship was formed. There was a call to help the B.C. Teacher's Federation Women's Committee in their battle for sex education in the schools. One woman urged us all to get out there and make our own erotica. And there seemed to be agreement that what Vancouver now needs is a sexuality conference.

Emma Kivisild

More Censorship

VANCOUVER, B.C. — And now, introducing yet another piece of Social Credit legislation: a new video censorship law. With the new year, B.C. artists will face an imitation of Ontario's popular Censorship Board. B.C.'s legislation will require all existing video to be reviewed, classified and cut, and will require any new work to be submitted.

Any tapes that depict sex between or with those under eighteen; "unnatural acts" (now what could those be?); explicit sex and coercion, and dismemberment or torture, will be banned in the province. Educational institutions will

be exempt from the legislation. Historical footage and documentary may be exempt; as of yet there is no protection for tapes by artists or for artist-run centres or galleries.

Predictably, but sadly, many feminists, as well as the Christian right, support the legislation. This despite the terrible record of the Socreds in dismantling women's services and services for child victims of abuse, their morality campaign against street prostitution, the letting out of Transition House to the Salvation Army and their crusade against sex education in the schools. Somehow, some women think that on this issue the Socreds will act in their interests.

Resistance has mounted from the ar-

tists' community, recently from the gay and lesbian movement, from educators and from anti-censorship feminists as the legislation becomes an impending reality. The Vancouver Artists' League spoke out against the bill at a recent meeting with Brian Smith and received support from many in the audience. A petition is currently being circulated by women's groups opposed to the bill. Unfortunately, the resistance may be too late and feminist artists may soon be asking serious questions of their pro-censorship sisters as video dealing with lesbian issues or sexual imagery is classified or banned.

Sara Diamond

Sex Speaks Louder than Words

TORONTO — At "Challenging Our Images: The Politics of Pornography and Prostitution," a conference organized by the Ontario Public Interest Research Group (OPIRG) in Toronto November 22 to 24, the most common complaint was that there were too many interesting things from which to choose going on at once.

The conference broke new ground by focussing discussion on these two inter-related issues within the same forum, providing an opportunity to discuss prostitution in a political, rather than a social-worker, context, and putting the issue of pornography into its proper context — as a part of the sex industry.

But an opening statement by a disguised prostitute, "Cathy," graphically illustrated one of the major obstacles to organizing both women in the sex industry and those in the conference itself: pervasive external (and internalized) hostility that keeps sex workers "in the closet." "Cathy's" remarks hinted at some of the acrimony that marred preparation for the event and that would raise hackles in the course of the weekend.

Conference organizers explained in information distributed to participants that the event was a response to the Canadian Organization for the Rights of Prostitutes' (CORP) challenges to International Women's Day last year. A contingent from the CORP joined

the march because they believed it would focus on women's labour rights, an approach they felt might finally give them a chance at a fair hearing among feminists.

They were naturally horrified when some of the literature for the event blamed pornography for the oppression of women and a segment of the march stopped outside a Yonge street strip club to chant their disapproval of it. Not only did CORP members work that particular club, but they found it to be one of their more enjoyable and dependable bookings. The rights and needs of women workers in porn and prostitution clearly did not qualify as labour issues.

The March 8 coalition listened patiently to CORP's complaints and — because of the strong and mixed feelings evoked by the discussions — felt there was a need to broaden the discussion to involve other feminists and so approached OPIRG with a proposal for a conference.

With the imminent passage of anti-soliciting legislation, the women in the business felt an urgent need to find support among potential political allies and to develop organizing skills. Sex-trade workers were initially drawn into the organization of the conference with the promise of input into the agenda and the content of conference sessions. Not all of their aspirations were to be realized.

TEARS WERE NOT ENOUGH

If you felt uncomfortable watching Canadian record companies gaining political points while raising money for Ethiopia, here is a community-based recording project by full-time artist activists.

"South Africa," written and produced by Xola (Truths and Rights) is one of several anti-apartheid songs now being heard on campus radio stations.

Xola assembled a group of Toronto vocalists (singers, poets, actors) under the name, "The Maple Front." Participating were Afua, Lillian Allen, Diane Brathwaite, Carol Brown, Devon Haughton, Clifton Joseph, Ahdri Zhina Mandiela, Raffa, Ovid Reid, She Sherie and Xola.

Musicians on the session were Tony Campbell, Reggie Paul, "Chunky," Raffa, Mutadi, Rich Howse, Rupert, Darren Berret, Joe Allen and Xola. "South Africa" is currently available on cassette from Rebel Radio Productions, c/o 433 Spadina Avenue, Toronto, M5T 2G6.



The pressures of the moment — such as the risks inherent in assuming a public identity as a prostitute, and the inevitable problems of a young political movement trying to establish itself in the face of crisis — forced them, as a group, to scale down their involvement in the conference.

When the conference organizers discovered there were problems hampering the sex-trade workers' ability to work with OPIRG to shape the conference, instead of backing off and extending the time frame of the organizing, they plowed ahead.

From the perspective of the sex-trade workers, this project began with the goal of creating a forum in which the women most directly concerned with the outcome of the deliberations would feel comfortable enough to share their political concerns with feminists and others who were willing to listen. Instead, they mostly ended up in yet another series of confrontations with some feminists whose politics on these issues are not open to influence by the experiences of the women whose lives and livelihoods they presume to judge.

The agenda was distributed a week before the conference was to begin. All the local sex-trade workers were confined to a single panel. One of them, disguised by a veil, would be delivering a welcoming address and there would be a couple of workshops led by women in various branches of the business. Some women had been consulted for the experimental theatre pieces that were presented as Saturday night's entertainment, while three strippers presented their own work for the occasion.

All the other major (panel) discussions of the issues would involve feminist, legal, social-work and other "experts," while the women whose challenges had inspired the organization of the discussion in the first place were supposed to be adequately represented by American former-prostitute Margot St. James and Marie Arrington, a non-prostitute activist from the Vancouver-based Alliance for the Safety of Prostitutes (ASP). Neither Arrington nor St. James had any familiarity with the local context in which the conference was taking place, and both of them were, of course, intent on agendas of their own which, fairly or not, local prostitutes and strippers felt they didn't share.

"But feminists must be aware that sex-trade workers are not pawns and we won't tolerate the presentation of a warped version of our lives for the convenience of anybody else's political strategy."



TOP TO BOTTOM: SHEILA NOONAN, SUSAN G. COLE, MOROR MURRAY-HAYES, KATE, OPENING FORUM OF CONFERENCE

At panel after panel, audiences noticed that there was always one more woman in the discussion than appeared on the agenda. She was always "the sex-trade worker" who was added at the last minute (often without adequate time to prepare). In the end, as many of the sex-trade women who were able to put aside their difficulties with the way things had developed, insisted on equal participation in the conference.

"Feminists' colonialist mentality toward sex-trade workers once again dominated the discussion," according to CORP's Peggy Miller, "but for the first time in significant numbers, sex-trade workers were there to challenge and confront them. A stripper who performed on Saturday night summed up her reaction to that colonization by

saying that she felt more exploited by feminists than she ever had by customers in strip clubs."

Miller is not completely pessimistic. "This was an important discussion," she says. "But feminists must be aware that sex-trade workers are not pawns and we won't tolerate the presentation of a warped version of our lives for the convenience of anybody else's political strategy."

How do these things happen? How do such good intentions and apparently capable people go awry? OPIRG described itself in the conference kit as an advocacy organization promoting social change. Funded by University of Toronto graduates, it is a Ralph Nader-inspired group famous for its excellent work in exposing environmental degradations. One

observer suggested that, while OPIRG certainly has all the resources necessary to organize conferences, it was treading on politically unfamiliar territory with the issues of pornography and prostitution and there were bound to be problems. No doubt they were concerned about alienating any of the many constituencies to whom they had hoped the conference would appeal. And it is easy to seek the appearance of fairness by trying to represent all sides, without considering who you might be oppressing in the process.

Conference literature emphasized the significance of the proposed new anti-soliciting and anti-pornography laws and yet, because they sponsored the conference for educational purposes, OPIRG felt it was "not appropriate to take a side," according to spokeswoman and conference organizer Dianne Roberts. For this reason, the conference was unable to initiate or endorse action around these issues, apart from giving participants the opportunity to sign telegrams protesting the prosecution of Pages bookstore and the imminent passage of (anti-soliciting) Bill C49.

Dianne Roberts has no doubt that the conference was an unqualified success. Feedback from the approximately 400 registrants was, on balance, "very positive." Although "everyone with a strong position on the issues" had problems with the clash-of-opposing-forces format, OPIRG "would take the same approach again [because] it was balanced and fair." According to her, the biggest achievement of the conference was "the opening of people's minds to the fact that prostitution and pornography are feminist issues."

Most people attending the conference had no idea of the treatment most local sex-trade workers felt they received. That notwithstanding, some people got a lot out of the strong points of the conference — the diversity of interesting people and material available to them, and the over-due examination of the sex trade as a whole. What remains to be seen is whether or not sex-trade workers got much out of it, especially concrete support to help them in their resistance to the new anti-soliciting laws.

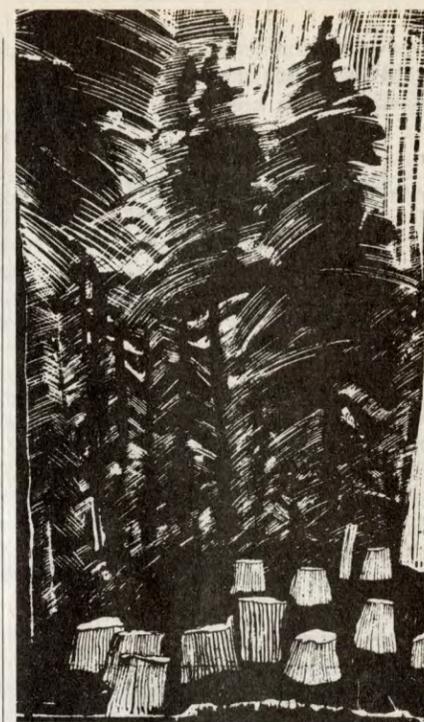
Chris Bearchell

Woodworkers Support Haida

LYELL ISLAND — The ongoing confrontation between the Social Credit government and the Haida restates the fact that B.C. is "Indian land." Virtually no treaties exist between Native bands and the provincial and federal governments. The province has adamantly refused to negotiate land claims, although these are constitutionally guaranteed.

As T.V. viewers have seen, the forest companies have begun ripping trees off of the Queen Charlotte Islands, a hitherto unexploited natural environment. They threaten the self-sufficiency of Native bands who rely on salmon spawning grounds and forest resources. The shocked Haida, rightful owners of the island, were in discussions with both the B.C. Lands and the Environment Ministers when the cabinet lifted its logging freeze and the chainsaws swung into action.

Lyell Island became the centre of the fight because it is sacred land covered by virgin forest. Haida leader, Miles Richardson, explained the crisis: "We don't want a confrontation, we've been working through the due process for one hundred years." But when Western Forest Products and their Socred supporters would not back off, the Haida



Carol Mossettsch

had no choice but to block logging, despite an immediate injunction against their presence on the island.

Three women elders were arrested by the RCMP, then other protestors, including NDP Federal Justice critic, Svend Robinson. Since October 30, seventy-two Haida have been charged.

While the Socreds won't intervene to negotiate, they have plenty to say about the Haida's resistance. As soon as the blockade appeared to be serious and arrests began, Attorney-General Brian Smith chastised the RCMP for only laying "mischief" charges and insisted that these be changed to contempt of court.

He then applied for an injunction that smacks of apartheid. It allows the RCMP to stop Haida before they even reach Lyell Island to ask them to promise not to block logging. Indians who refuse to take an oath can be arrested or diverted! According to Smith, police would, "work outside the area of conflict — stop Haida in fishing boats or wherever they were found." Responding to this injunction, John Dixon of the B.C. Civil Liberties Association noted that search, questioning and the interruption of innocent activities on the basis of race was against the Charter of Rights.

When the trial began, the Attorney-General lobbied for prison sentences for those convicted. The Haida were then refused the right, by Chief Justice McEachern, to provide their own defense, as they had been doing in hear-



Carol Mossettsch

ings on the injunctions. The judge lectured the Haida throughout the trial, telling them to keep their land claims

"I'm not pleased to be caught between your sense of law and my sense of justice, but I cannot betray justice for law."

and their politics out of the court and bring them into meetings with the government. This was absurd, given the Socreds clear refusal to consider the issue of aboriginal rights. Michael Nicoll, one of those convicted, responded to the Chief Justice, "I'm not pleased to be caught between your sense of law and my sense of justice, but I cannot betray justice for law." In a jammed courtroom, the Haida were found guilty of contempt and given suspended five month sentences. Robinson was also convicted.

The Haida have provided a powerful symbol, both of the racism endemic to the Social Credit government and the kind of fightback necessary in B.C. At the recent B.C. Federation of Labour convention, the nine hundred delegates unanimously supported the Haida's demands. Even the International Woodworkers of America, a union that in the past has favoured logging over Native land claims, endorsed the resolution.

The Haida do not intend to abandon their fight. In a recent move, Native leaders have called for a boycott of EXPO '86. The provincial government has banked on anti-Native racism and support for their traditional tough guy stance to carry the day. It hasn't. Finally succumbing to pressures from the public, the Native movement across Canada and the Conservative government in Ottawa, the Socreds have agreed to a preliminary meeting with the Haida. The outcome is yet to be seen.

Sara Diamond

Support the Haida Fight

Send cheques to:
Council of the Haida Nation
Box 1, Rural Route No. 1
Queen Charlotte, B.C.
Canada V0T 1F0

The Dawn of the Living Wage

TORONTO — In late November the Independent Artists' Union (see Fuse Vol.8, No.6) met in Toronto for its first provincial meeting. The agenda included ratification of its constitution and workshops to plan a province-wide organizing drive as well as future negotiating strategies. Eighteen months earlier, the union had existed only as a topic of tavern talk and kitchen conversation. But in subsequent months, with the back-handed help of the Ontario Censor Board and the Mulroney government's cultural cutbacks, the

furthering the general goal of artists' self-determination.

The basic premise presented in the union's constitution was that "...art production is a social and economic necessity," and thus the purpose of the Artists' Union is "...to secure a living wage and job security for all artists as well as the fundamental rights enjoyed by workers in Canada..." Essentially, the union has stated that if Canada is to have a continuing, vital and living art, then those who produce it must have the ongoing economic means to do so.



need for a union and not merely a lobbying association became even more pressing. The first local was formed in Toronto and grew rapidly in membership as it became painfully clear to many visual artists that they needed their own independent collective voice, separate from that of government-funded lobbyists. Artists felt the need to represent themselves when speaking out against state restrictions in censorship laws or on economic restrictions affecting their continued ability to survive as working artists. The constitution passed by the membership at the meeting set out the I.A.U.'s basic philosophy, fundamental goals, conditions of membership, and operating structure, and can be counted as a major step forward in

How the union will achieve these ends involves the recognition that the main economic support for the arts in Canada comes from the various levels of government. The conditions attached to individual arts grants enmeshes the artist in what is essentially an employer-employee relationship with the government, yet at the same time lacks any of the security or benefits which usually accompany such a relationship. To secure its demands, the union will have to negotiate with those governments and their appropriate public agencies.

The initial decision to form a provincial union came after the Toronto membership's discussion of some pragmatic questions. Originally the goal

The Independent Artists' Union at Work

On January 30th, Spokespersons Marusia Bociurkiw and Karl Beveridge of the I.A.U. made an oral presentation and submitted a brief to the Commission of Inquiry on Unemployment Insurance 1985-1986 hearing in Toronto. A total of four arts organizations made presentations, the number and quality of which impressed the Commission. Evidently the Commission, along with other unions and relevant government agencies, do not seem to find the principles of the I.A.U. or the contents of its brief, to be at all unreasonable. The questions raised by the Commission were concerned with the details regarding the implementation of the recommendations, not their underlying principles. The following excerpts were drawn from the I.A.U. brief; a full copy can be obtained by contacting the I.A.U., 489 College St., 5th Floor, Toronto, Ontario M6G 1A5.



SECONDARY INCOME

- Since the average artistic income is between \$4-5,000 per annum, most artists must seek secondary employment to supplement their artistic income, and through this subsidize their art work.
- Because the artist must constantly seek and hold secondary employment, the artist is unable to sustain and develop their primary occupation. The artist is caught between a primary and secondary occupation, neither of which can be properly pursued.
- An artist who pays UIC through their secondary employment and then receives a grant, cannot claim UIC benefits at the end of that grant as their benefit period has run out. In this sense, GRANTS WORK AGAINST THE ARTIST'S RIGHT TO COLLECT UIC BENEFITS, in the eventuality of their becoming unemployed.
- Artists, by being forced to take secondary employment, TAKE JOBS FROM OTHERS IN THE LABOUR MARKET.

DUAL STATUS — ARTISTS AS EMPLOYED/ SELF-EMPLOYED

The UIC Act applies to employees. Traditionally, and under existing regulations (Revenue Canada), artists are defined as self-employed.

Several reports and commissions have dealt with this question, especially a series of reports on artists and taxation. All of these reports point out that most countries, with the exception of Canada, Australia and England, allow artists a dual status. That is, for the purposes of taxation, artists are considered self-employed and are allowed to deduct expenses; for the purposes of receiving social benefits, including UIC, artists are considered employees. These reports further point out that in Canada such allowances are made for fishermen, taxi-drivers, and barbers. All these reports recommend that artists in Canada be given dual status, and that artists should receive full social benefits, including UIC benefits.



RECOMMENDATION NUMBER 1

That 'Professional Visual Artist' be recognized as an operative job classification under Manpower and Immigration based upon criteria set out by the Sub-Committee on Taxation of Visual Artist, Performing Artist and Writers, 1984.

RECOMMENDATION NUMBER 2

That UIC Benefits be attached to the living subsidy portion of individual arts grants for visual artists, received from both federal and provincial arts councils as per the standard regulations concerning both the contributions to and the receiving of benefits from UIC.

GRANTS



- Four important points should be noted regarding grants:
1. AN ARTIST CANNOT RETAIN SECONDARY EMPLOYMENT WHILE ON A GRANT.
 2. Since grants are 'awarded,' there is NO CONTRACTUAL AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE ARTIST AND THE ARTS COUNCIL. It is an implied contract.
 3. For the majority of artists, grants are the MAJOR SOURCE OF ARTISTIC INCOME. In this sense, artists are DEPENDENT ON GRANTS for their occupational income.

SECONDARY EMPLOYMENT

Different levels of government have gone some way in supporting the arts by providing grants to artists. However, if the government has gone part of the way, it is the artists who have gone the distance — and then some. The vast majority of professional visual artists subsidize their production — and by extension — Canada's heritage — by taking on secondary employment. What is pertinent in the artist's situation to this commission, is the fact that because of the inadequacies of the current grant system (artists primary means of support) artists are always in and out of work — with no 'safety net' in between.

Although the reality of secondary employment cannot be immediately changed (and it is not the mandate of the commission to do so) — the right for artists to a bona fide job classification and UIC benefits would help to mitigate these circumstances. By allowing artists a bona fide job classification under Employment and Immigration, the fact of secondary employment would be recognized for what it is — secondary, and it would allow artists the right to collect UIC for their primary occupation when they qualify for benefits.

**COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
CO-ORDINATOR
FOR**

**CATALYST
Theatre**

Catalyst Theatre in Edmonton requires a Community Development Co-ordinator to commence work in June of 1986.

Qualifications

— professional experience in some or all of the following areas: community organization, social and/or political action, teaching, research

— commitment to social change

Duties and Responsibilities

Research community needs and issues, project development, develop resource materials, assist group with action strategies, short and long-term programme planning.

Salary

\$20,000 to \$24,000/year
Letters of application and curriculum vitae should be forwarded to:

**Search Committee
Catalyst Theatre
No. 601, 10136 - 100th St.
Edmonton, Alberta
T5J 0P1**

**APPLICATION DEADLINE:
April 1, 1986.**

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was to organize a national union to negotiate with the federal government and The Canada Council. However, it became obvious that this would require enormous human and financial resources that were not at hand. Conversely, it was clear that while the Toronto Local's membership was growing rapidly, it could not expect to attain any significant changes without consultation and solidarity with artists in other regions. There were two main factors that favoured the formation of a provincial union. Firstly, the Ontario government had made an ongoing commitment to provincial cultural production through the Ontario Arts Council, meaning that grounds for negotiations had already been established. Secondly was the consideration that the development of a large and cohesive membership in various Ontario centres and regions was seen to be a more realistic



Peter Greyson and Bryan Gee

beginning of the development of a strong Ontario membership, although at the time of the meeting the only Local in official existence was the Toronto Local. The artists from London, Windsor, Hamilton and Toronto, who gathered at the artist-run centre *A Space*, discussed future organizing strategies, and the relationship of various locals to one another and to the union as a whole. In regions where a local has not yet formed, artists will be able to join the Toronto Local until such time as minimum numbers (5) permit the regional organization to start on its own. At that time any money collected on behalf of the artists in that region will be transferred back to their Local. It was re-affirmed at the meeting that large numbers of artist members will help establish the union's negotiating credibility. The membership should include artists at various career stages, involved in a variety of media and from all of the regional centres of production. Affirmative action, based on race, colour, gender, sexual preference, age or national origin, was inscribed in the constitution and made an operational requirement for union committees, Locals, and the Provincial Council as well as an ongoing component of union demands.

From its beginnings, the Independent Artists' Union has operated democratically by utilizing a workable consensus model for decision making, and by stressing membership involvement in decentralized committees to maximize each individual's input. It has been a progressive union willing to take positions outside of its specific mandate on issues of broad public concern. It has received support from progressive branches of the Ontario and Canadian labour movement, and continues to strengthen those links that will help a young union attain its goals. With the advent of Free Trade discussions and the continuing prospect of conservative attitudes in government, whether Liberal or Tory, the need for artists to speak collectively for themselves has never been more important.

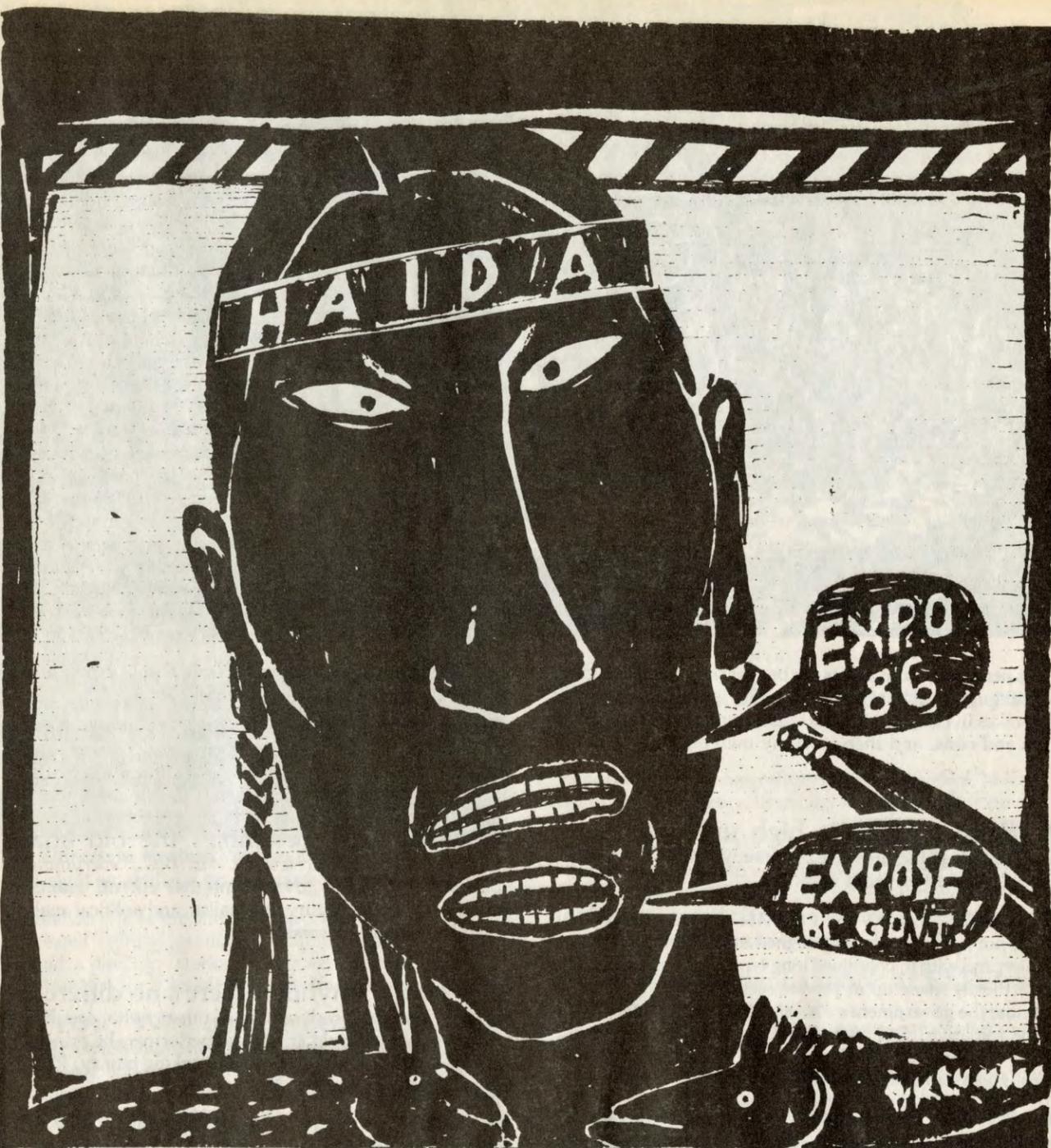
Any interested groups are encouraged to contact the Independent Artists' Union for information. Please direct inquiries to: The Independent Artists' Union, Research Committee, 489 College St., 5th Floor, Toronto, Ontario M6G 1A5.

The first provincial meeting was the

organizing challenge, from which the goal of a nation-wide union could then be more easily pursued. Thirdly, it seemed important for the various regions to organize initially on their own terms, and to formulate their own analysis as well as their own responses to locally specific issues.

Jim Miller

Barbara Klunder



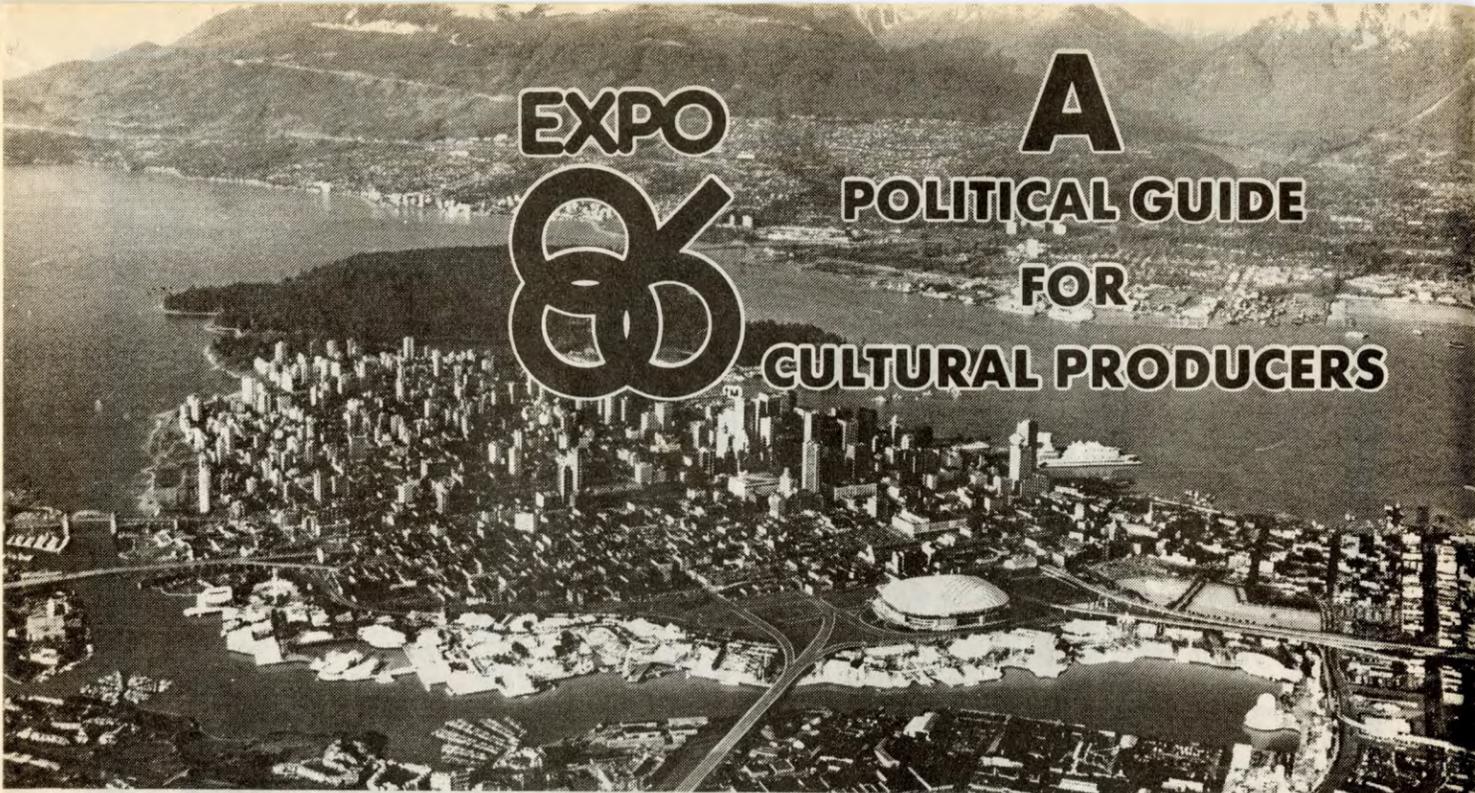
THERE IS A DILEMMA WITHIN THE B.C. CULTURAL COMMUNITY, ONE which has its echoes in other provinces and countries. To work at EXPO '86 or not to work...

For most artists and performers in B.C., it's a non-issue: we weren't invited. The priority has been engaging "world-class" (i.e. out of province) talent. But concern about EXPO on the part of B.C. artists is more than sour grapes.

Until recently, despite early rumblings of a consolidated boycott of EXPO by the trade union leadership and by cultural producers, and the possibility of a counter-fair, there was little organization against this overwhelming event. In the absence, a few progressive cultural administrators were offered and accepted employment with the fair. This process led to divisions within the progressive community, as some began anti-EXPO organizing and others began their new jobs.

"If the provincial government runs true to form, EXPO 86's giant Christmas tree will come from Lyell Island" (Jacob Zilber, *Vancouver Sun*, Dec. 7, 1985)

BY SARA DIAMOND



EXPO 86 A POLITICAL GUIDE FOR CULTURAL PRODUCERS

As performers and artists are being asked to make a decision about working at EXPO, it seems important to review the stakes in FUSE. In the next paragraphs I will outline the pros and cons, and then state my own bias on the issue.

- **Pro:** "There is high unemployment in all sectors of the province's economy and in the cultural sector, I desperately need work."
- **Con:** Expo is essentially a political event, not job creation; it's designed to guarantee Socred reelection and with it, continued long-term unemployment. The fair is mostly made up of private sector exhibits in order to promote the government's vision of free enterprise, "private sector initiative" and union-busting. Not all jobs are the same. Working for EXPO, especially in management positions, given its history and role is wrong.
- **Pro:** "Better me than a Social Credit appointee, if you can't stop it, join it." A variant of this is the argument that progressive EXPO employees can help to ensure that Third World and critical cultural voices are heard at the fair.
- **Con:** EXPO has consciously hired lefties in order to make certain that there is interesting "folk" culture represented. They want the cultural aspects of the fair to be inclusive. That there are no human rights in B.C. thanks to the Socreds, that the only religious pavilion despite massive protest is a fundamentalist Christian one, that there is racism in hiring policies (a Black man who applied for a job was told directly that Blacks were unrepresentative of British Columbians and that he would not be hired), that the Haida are suppressed and that South African wines are welcome on the liquor board shelves all become irrelevant as EXPO celebrates "folk" from around the world. The hard work of performers and progressive administrators could create

credibility for EXPO. Subversion from within can be an important tactic, but is it really possible?

- **Pro:** "It's not the cultural community's fault that it's an event the Socreds initiated. We are not working to re-elect the Socreds. It's art and culture we're producing, not an election campaign."
- **Con:** This resembles the old adage that "it's not political, it's art." In B.C., *everything is political*. This is the government that cut off grants to publishers of social history, journalism and political analysis and is bringing in censorship.
- **Pro:** "Anyhow, there's no difference between cultural producers and others who are EXPO employees; why should artists and performers be principled and self-sacrificing when others are making money, EXPO's the only game in town in '86."
- **Con:** There is a difference between management positions and people simply working at the fair. Management is there to make EXPO successful while individual workers are there to earn a living in a context they don't control. The energy that's going to build EXPO could have gone into a counter-event, and that's the energy of managers and of staff. Some cultural producers and organizations have chosen not to work at EXPO.
- **Pro:** "This is a world-class event; it allows cultural administrators to work with top performers and artists. Employment here if you're an artist is a major career break. My music (art) is progressive and will raise consciousness. It's an audience I could never hope to reach otherwise."
- **Con:** It's true: to refuse an EXPO contract is to refuse an important career opportunity. It requires a choice. True, you can reach audiences, but your



"The Rhinestone Meatball" as it is affectionately known — by night an artificial gem of paste and glass

presentation will be mediated by the context. Besides, EXPO has treated cultural producers shabbily. One B.C. artist designed a pavilion interior on request and then was suddenly bumped for a mass media oriented project.

- **Pro:** "Why quibble because it's provincial government money? After all the federal government is right wing and no one criticizes people for getting grants from them. And how is it different from working for the mainstream media?"
- **Con:** Deciding to work for the mainstream media, if you're critical of mass culture, usually involves deciding where you can be instrumental and effect change, as well as earn a living. It involves fighting for control over the right to speak critically of the institutions of media themselves as well as on issues. EXPO employees are not permitted to be openly critical of the event. And the big question remains of whether *in this instance* the critical voice will have any impact other than building credibility for a destructive process. On the issue of funding: artists have fought for cultural funding mechanisms where they have some control and are not *controlled*; EXPO does not work that way.
- "But the fact is that there is not an organized boycott." This argument points out the realpolitik of the issue. Those who are strongly opposed to the fair have

failed to organize a coherent response to EXPO. Some have feared that an organized boycott, if successful, would cause many British Columbians to blame the left for the economic failure of the fair and have argued that we should let the event hang itself. Others have been simply too involved in the day-to-day defensive struggle that has come to characterize life on the coast.

Which relates directly to what I think EXPO has meant to B.C. Millions of dollars have been drawn out of public services, health care, and education to make EXPO possible. B.C. residents will carry the debt for years. The jobs lost to make way for EXPO were qualitatively better (Transition Houses, child abuse teams, nurses, teachers...) than minimum wage service jobs easily done by ex-social workers, ex-teachers, etc. EXPO has been instrumental in busting union labour in the construction industry and in piloting Social Credit free trade (non-union, no protective legislation) zones in B.C.

Nonetheless, it is hard to ask people to act on principle when there is not an organized boycott. Yet there is large-scale hostility to the fair. It's seen by thousands to be a drain on the province's resources. Many B.C. residents *can't afford to go to it* and, as has been explained at length, it is a Socred political project.

What then should cultural producers do?

I have two alternate suggestions from (1), the ideal, based on what I feel as someone living here, to (2), the bottom line:

- **1 SAY NO TO EXPO!** Explain that you don't want to help win the Social Credit Party another electoral victory in B.C. In particular, don't produce pro-EXPO hype and don't take on administrative positions and work to make the fair a "success."
- **2** If you agree to work at EXPO as a performer do the following:
 - a) Insist that EXPO writes into your contract that you do not have to cross picket lines. Remember: there have been endless labour disputes and there are discrimination issues that will come up in 1986, so there could well be picket lines.
 - b) Make a political statement about politics in B.C. and about the fair itself at your performance, in your art or in your artist's statement about your art. *It's not enough to do a benefit off-site or talk in general terms about union issues, racism or sexism.* Please use your position of power as a performer to relate these issues to the reality that we face in B.C. Speak out: about the closure of Vancouver's Transition House, for example, or the fact that non-union contractors bilked building trade workers for about one million dollars in wages on the site, about the Haida losing their land or about the fair being a prolonged election rally... If you need information on B.C., just read back issues of FUSE!
 - c) Make contact with progressive artists and performers in B.C. and with anti-EXPO groups and find out what the update is on resistance to both the government and EXPO. Lend your support.

ENTRAPMENT!

AN EVERY-DAY STORY OF GAY FOLK.

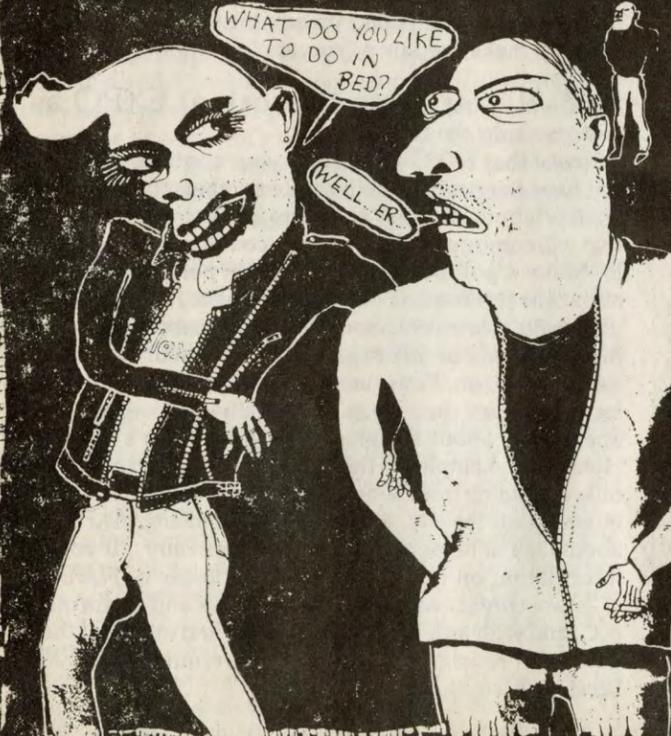
ON MY WAY HOME ONE NIGHT A YOUNG MAN SPOKE TO ME.



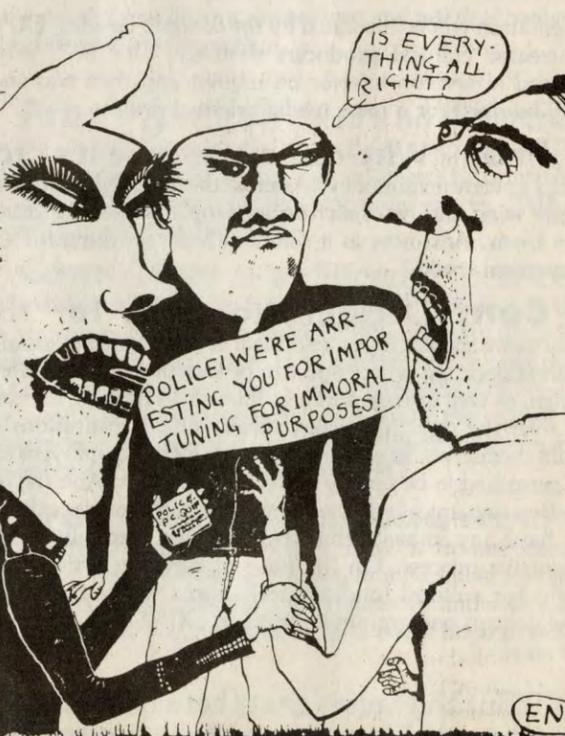
HE SEEMED VERY FRIENDLY...



WE WERE WALKING BACK TO MY FLAT...



WHEN SUDDENLY A THIRD MAN APPEARED.



THIS STORY WAS REPORTED IN THE OBSERVER MAY 19th 1984 © MOISELW 45CM

BLACK AND WHITE

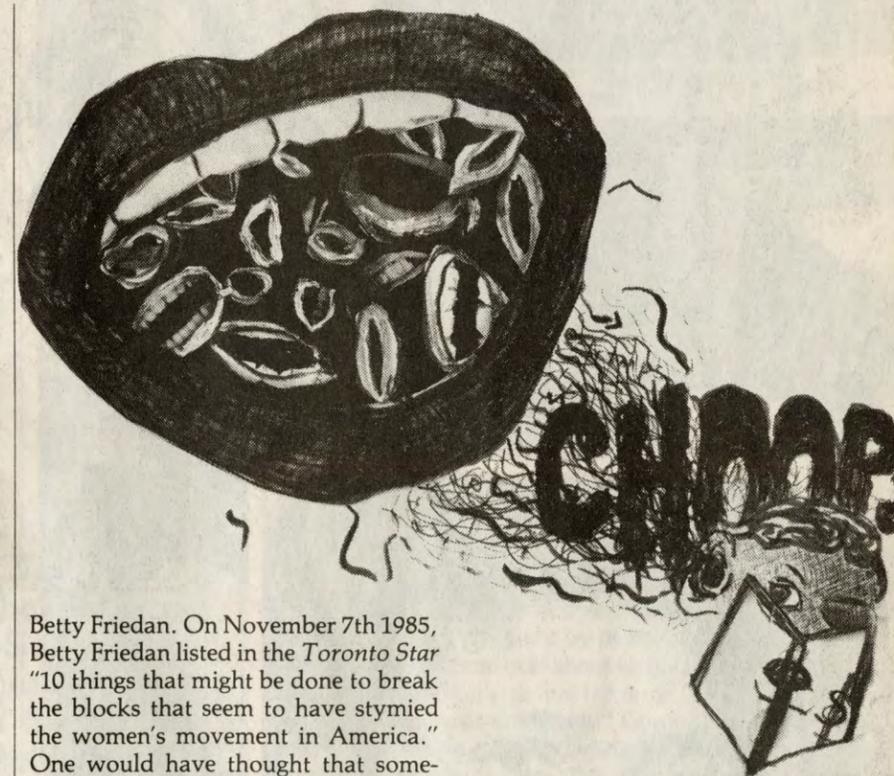
Hurrying On Up

MARLENE NOURBESE PHILIP

STOIC AND PHILOSOPHICAL, I could have shrugged my shoulders in response to Micheline Wandor's *On Gender and Writing* and said, "Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose;" instead I decided to go ethnic and cheupsed (pronounced choops) — one long, loud cheups. Pissed off and/or disgusted — with life, with circumstances, with someone, one cheupses — in the Caribbean that is. To suck one's teeth (which describes how the sound is made) is another expression for the same sound which, heard once, is always instantly recognizable. Why I don't know, but men seldom, if ever, cheups. Pure but intelligible sound, cheupsing is peculiar to us — it is all woman.

But back to Micheline Wandor. Informative and thought-provoking, with a range of contributions from feminist writers — male and female (predominantly female), gay and straight, and including one husband and wife tandem writing team that, strangely, speaks with one voice (his), *On Gender and Writing* covered every genre of writing — from journalism to poetry, nicely exposing the many aspects of feminist struggle in the very different worlds of writing. I recently finished this book and thoroughly enjoyed it, but, and there was a big but — noticeable by their absence from the list of contributors were Black writers and writers of colour. Conclusion? That the issues of gender and writing must be issues of interest and concern only to white feminist writers. I know differently, so I gave one good, long, rude cheups at the omission, deliberate or otherwise, of contributors of colour from Micheline Wandor's work and penned a letter of complaint to her.

This particular work is English, but lest we think this practice — that is, the omission and, often, obliteration of the experiences of Blacks and peoples of colour is foreign to us — let us cross the Atlantic and come closer home to



Betty Friedan. On November 7th 1985, Betty Friedan listed in the *Toronto Star* "10 things that might be done to break the blocks that seem to have stymied the women's movement in America." One would have thought that somewhere in those ten precepts would be mention of the necessity to confront the racism that is a cancerous sore in the already sore body politic, both north and south of the 49th parallel, and, although there are many who

NOTES FROM THE MARGIN

would prefer to ignore it, pretend, or even believe in its non-existence, racism continues to plague the women's movement.

Many feminists — both big 'F' and small 'f' feminists (more of that in another column) — were especially thrilled at the mention of economics and the feminization of poverty, "the shameful secret...that more and more

middle-class women are sinking into poverty." Is it not just as, if not more, shameful a secret that Black women and women of colour continue to be disproportionately represented in the lowest socio-economic classes of American and Canadian society? Silence from Betty Friedan on the subject of race as she writes of the need for the women's movement to be "reformed to handle the modern dilemmas" (of which racism is presumably not one) "that feminism has helped to create," and to her another long angry cheups for helping to perpetuate the unmentionable — racism.

And bringing it right home to dear old Toronto: at a recent workshop which I along with another woman led and which was attended by many feminists, one of the participants asked me to recommend reading material



TOP:
ALICE WALKER
BOTTOM:
AUDRE LORDE

about Black women and the issues of feminism. The question surprised me somewhat, but I was in no way prepared for the mass and collective scribbling of the names I suggested — Angela Davis, Alice Walker, Audre Lorde, Bell Hooks — nothing esoteric or recondite in that selection. However, most of the women in that workshop had not heard of, let alone read, any of these women. Another cheups?

Cheupsing is, of course, not a solution, except in so far as it prevents one from committing mayhem; in some situations it may be downright inappropriate. An agent who has been trying to flog a manuscript of mine in Toronto (a manuscript which naturally and daringly features Blacks) recently told me that the two publishers she has contacted to date were extremely reluctant to even look at the manuscript — because of the race of the characters. It would lose them sales, they told her, and one of them only grudgingly agreed to read it, if she would recommend the writing.

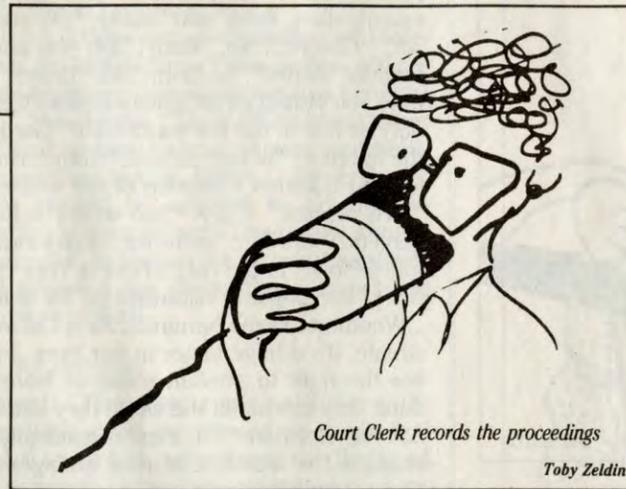
To cheups would be to underreact; to throw paint and write anti-racist graffiti on the premises of the publishers, to overreact and to be foolhardy. Somewhere between those two responses, there has to be found some potent and efficacious remedy for this demoralizing and often soul-destroying practice of racism, of which every example mentioned above is an instance. Here in Canada, even getting people to acknowledge that there is a problem presents a problem, but my clichéd ear pressed to the proverbial ground tells me that more and more Black women — feminists of both the big 'F' and small 'f' variety — are aware of this conspiracy of silence and are beginning to make their own noises — be it cheupsing or plain ordinary growling. Between the sound (the word) and action there is sometimes a very small gap.

This column, the first in a three-issue dry run, is my attempt at helping to bridge that gap. I promise to be quite ownway (headstrong), boldface (pushy, aggressive with lots of chutzpah) and hurry-come-up (as in those oppressed who have *finally* managed to acquire some measure of security after generations of struggle; they are said to have hurried). Ha! there is a lot of hurrying to do.

Marlene Nourbese Philip

FEB/MARCH 1986

THE RE-EDUCATION OF P.C. GORDON



Court Clerk records the proceedings

Toby Zeldin

by
Woomers

TORONTO ARTISTS EXPECT A SIGNIFICANT judicial decision to be handed down on April 18, when Judge Sidney Harris will determine whether Pages Bookstore, on Queen Street, violated the Criminal Code by displaying the installation, "It's a Girl" in its window. Below, The Woomers, whose artwork is the subject of the charge, report on the trial.

EXTERIOR: PAGES BOOKSTORE, DAY OF MAY 15, 1985... Police officer Gordon passes by Pages' window. Dressed in casual leisure wear, sporting a tidy moustache, and proudly displaying hair just below the collar, he looks like any other police officer in plainclothes. Woomers' "It's A Girl" is illuminated in the window. Gordon appears to be thinking: "Absolutely disgusting. Better start the paperwork."

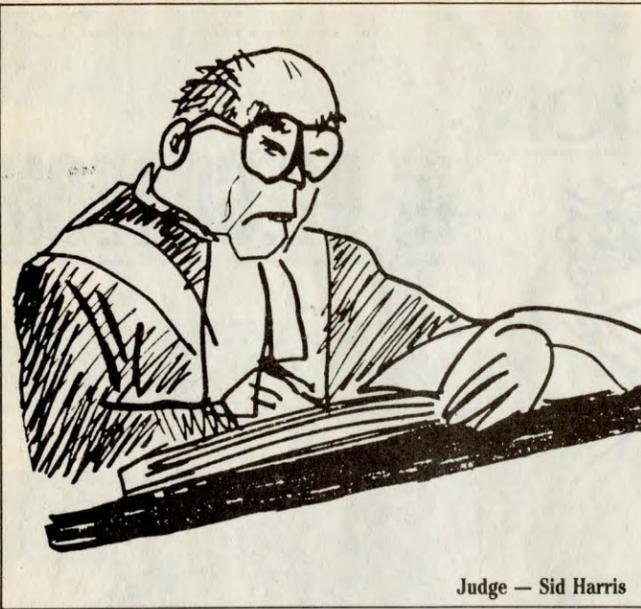
INTERIOR: PAGES BOOKSTORE, DAY OF MAY 15, 1985... Constable Gordon makes his way through browsing customers to the sales counter. Esther Bogyo, store manager, asks: "May I help you?" Gordon replies: "There'll be plainclothes police officers by in the next couple of days to take a look at the window. There's been a complaint about the merchandise." Bogyo corrects him: "It's *not* merchandise." Bogyo thinks: "You *are* a plainclothes police officer. Better call Marc!"

FEB/MARCH 1986

INTERIOR: PAGES BOOKSTORE, NEXT DAY, MAY 16, 1985... Gordon and his partner in plainclothes dismantle "It's A Girl" piece by piece, attach a label to each object, make a list, and stuff about eighty things into two cardboard boxes. Gordon's partner holds up an eyelash curler and asks: "What do you think this is?" Gordon: "Beats me. Call it something." He mumbles something, "Maybe 'round edged tweezers?'" Moments later...the blue backdrop, symbol of patriarchy, is all that remains of "It's A Girl." Marc Glassman, Pages' owner and humanitarian, is visibly trying to control his anger. His face becomes ashen on pale. He addresses Gordon: "Where did you get your M.F.A.?" Soon after...in the backroom of Pages, Marc Glassman and Esther Bogyo are issued their summons. They have been charged under the Criminal Code with the federal offense of 'exhibiting obscene material.' Gordon asks Toby Zeldin of Woomers: "What did you have to do with the display?" Zeldin: "I'm a member of Woomers, the group that created it." Gordon: "What do you suggest I call you?" Zeldin informs: "How about artists?" Gordon: "You'll get your summons in the mail." Zeldin: "Who, exactly, decides what's obscene?" Gordon says proudly: "I do." Zeldin: "O.K....what objects, specifically, did you find obscene?" Gordon: "The menstrual pads, the plaster penises, and the tampon." Zeldin: "The junior tampon in its wrapper?" Gordon: "That's right...The display obviously offends common decency." A customer is overheard saying: "I guess they'll be closing down the pharmacies next...?"

EXTERIOR: PAGES BOOKSTORE, STREET, THAT AFTERNOON... Glassman and Zeldin stand in front of a

FUSE



Judge — Sid Harris

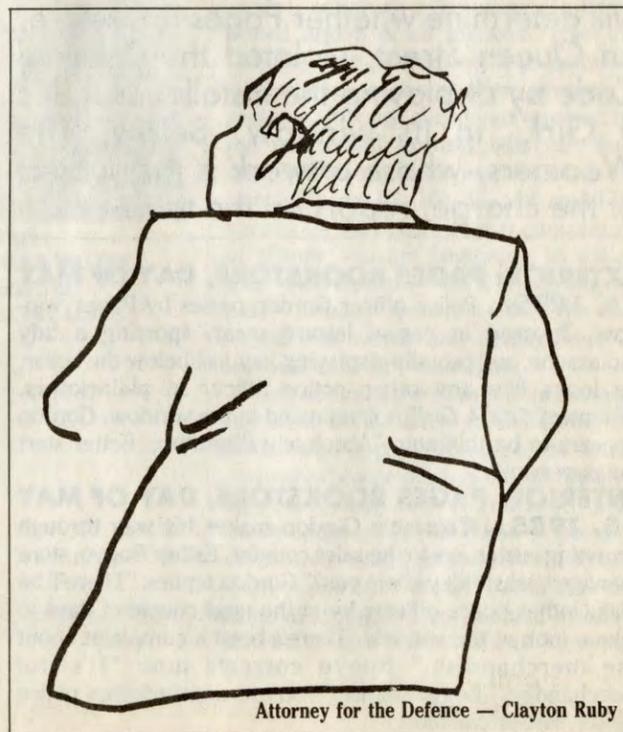
window in which hangs blue fabric and a Woomers poster. Reporter: "Can you describe what was in the window?"

SUMMER PASSES INTO FALL... non-stop debate, letter writing, visits to lawyers, petition circulates, lawyers' bills come in, the Pages Defence Fund is established, donation cans collect spare change, fifteen women authors, in support, take to the podium at Harbourfront. June Callwood takes a 2,000 name petition to Attorney General Ian Scott in an attempt to get the charges dropped. Ian Scott wants the case to proceed to the courts. *Captive!* — *Images of Women* film series curated by Woomers to raise money. Everyone irons the best suit in the closet for court...

INTERIOR: COURTROOM 123, OLD CITY HALL, TORONTO, NOVEMBER 25, 26, 27, 29, DECEMBER 19, 1985... Marc Glassman and Esther Bogyo face charges as clarified by Gordon: "Displaying a disgusting object to wit the display of sanitary pads and phallic forms."

All rise for Judge Sid Harris. Grey, kindly, patriarch with glasses and a slight slouch. Onlooker No. 1: "They say he asked for this case. He's keen on the issue of freedom of expression." Onlooker No. 2: "I think he likes Clayton." Defense attorney, Clayton Ruby, flanked by assistants and associate Lynn King, acknowledges Judge Harris with a smile and a nod of his polished head. Rookie Crown attorney, Laura Silver, is smug. (Stella Dallas learns law.) Onlooker No. 1: "I heard she considers this an open and shut case for the prosecution. Fifteen minutes...max." All eyes are on a pink Pampers box. It's contents are entered as evidence by the prosecution. Silver, with great disdain, perhaps even disgust, piles the sanitary napkins on the mahogany table top and proceeds to pass the plaster phalli like they were sausages dripping grease. Gordon takes the stand. Silver dangles a sanitary napkin dotted with red paint in front of him with her pinky raised allowing her minimal contact with the 'evidence.' She begins her line of questioning: "Is this the object you found disgusting?" Gordon: "Yes. One of the nineteen." Time

passes. The word 'disgusting' occupies the center of attention along with Silver's distinctly affected mannerisms (i.e. hand on hip, icy hawk stare, and glasses dangled precariously in the grasp of a gesticulating hand). Ruby gets tough with the prosecution's only witness, Gordon. In a classic style of cross-examination, Ruby asks loudly: "Do you have a degree in Art?" Gordon: "No." Ruby: "Do you know anything about feminist theory?" Gordon: "No." Ruby: "When was the last time you visited an art gallery besides the times you were on duty or had to use the washroom?" Gordon (greying around the temples): "In high school." Ruby: "How much do the objects in question comprise of the whole exhibit?" Gordon: "Five percent." Ruby: "And where is the other ninety-five percent?!" Gordon: "In the car." Ruby turns to Judge Harris in mid-bellow: "In the car?!...How is Your Honour to judge the rest of the exhibit?" Witnesses for the defence take the stand ...Woomers...Diane Nemiroff...June Callwood: "Women menstruate. It's a huge factor in our lives...I don't think anyone has the right to prevent someone from finding out everything they can about the world they live in." ...Judith Posner ...Joyce Zeemans: "If they (Canadians) don't believe art changes the world, it at least changes their lives." ...Elke Town: "An effective work of art draws attention to itself... Attendance of art/cultural events are equivalent to or greater than of sports events." ...Margaret Atwood reads from *Bodily Harm*... John Bentley Mays: "It's been one hundred years since there's been only one way of making art." (i.e. to create an aesthetic) ...Phillip Monk: "Feminism is the most important influence on art criticism in the twentieth century... The streets are a very important venue." ...Greg Gatenby: "People were shocked in the literary community by the arrest." ...Ken Danby: "My good intelligent human beings, it is 1985! If collectively, society disallowed this kind of work, society would be in the Dark Ages! Don't tell us what we can look at and what we can't."



Attorney for the Defence — Clayton Ruby

SUMMATIONS...

Laura Silver for the prosecution:

Art and artists are elitist: "The defence witnesses are the intelligensia of the art community... They have no idea what the average Canadian will tolerate." **A Canadian by definition:** "The police officer (Gordon) is the only ordinary Canadian that was brought before the court." **Standards:** "They (Woomers) were advertising a political message about women and feminism without respecting social limits... Advertisers' level of tolerance should be applied to art on the street." **Menstruation is disgusting:** "The public should not have to be exposed to these (the painted sanitary napkins) which I propose are disgusting... A private thing has been made public."

Clayton Ruby for the defence:

Meaning and context: "The objects are not inherently disgusting...The exhibit must be viewed as a whole." **Tolerance:** "It's A Girl would not exceed the limits of tolerance of the average Canadian...and does not go beyond the public good." **A motion of unconstitutionality:** "The word 'disgusting' is nebulous and subjective and has no place in law; this section of the Criminal Code creates a 'reverse onus,' making the accused prove their innocence."

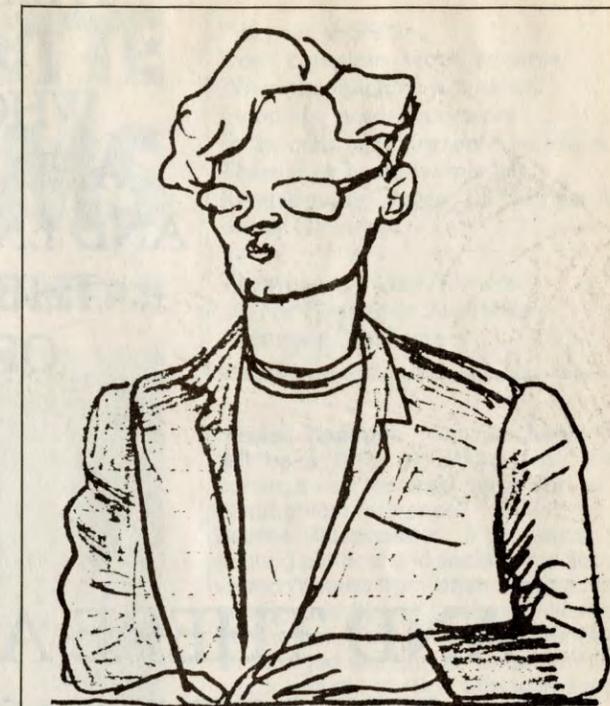
ON THE SIDELINES... On the second day of the trial, Gordon comments to Ruby's assistant: "If this display were put up again tomorrow, I'd have it taken down under another section of the law." The eyes of the assistant cloud over and he runs for pen and paper... On the fourth day of the trial, P.C. Gordon approaches Marc Glassman and says: "I'm sorry. I didn't realize that your store had such a good reputation." Marc thinks to himself: "You're sorry?...I'm sorry!"

THE COURT ADJOURNS... Ruby feels confident. Silver gave it her best. Harris has homework to do. Bogyo and Glassman return to the store and unpaid bills and await the verdict. Woomers put their minds to ways to raise money for the Pages Defence Fund. We imagine Gordon returned home to his wife and said: "Honey...guess what I learned today?... Is dinner ready yet?"

CONCLUSION... It is estimated that costs to the taxpayers for the prosecution of Glassman and Bogyo will exceed \$90,000; costs to the accused will approach \$10,000; time and energy spent by all concerned are inestimable. That's an expensive education!

TO BE CONTINUED... Part Two of *THE RE-EDUCATION OF P.C. GORDON* will follow Judge Harris' verdict April 18, 1986, at Old City Hall.

by Woomers
(Michele Fillion, Barbara Pavlic & Toby Zeldin)



Witness for the Defence — Philip Monk



Crown Attorney — Laura Silver

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AND ABUSE
AND ENDANGER
THE REST
OF US.

AND THERE ARE
THOSE WHO
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SOPHIE BISSONNETTE AND HER FILMS

AN INTERVIEW WITH HIMANI BANNERJI



AS THE ROOM DARKENS AND LIGHT CRYSTALLIZES into images on the screen, a metallic voice intones with, what to my anthropomorphic imagination seems to be a peculiar ring of distaste, 'Quel Numero? Quel Numero?' Many science fictions later, echoes dredged from our film unconscious, we hear the sound of the computer replacing the voice of the Quebec telephone operator. Rationalized labour is replaced by objectified rationality itself. Sophie Bissonnette's 'Quel Numero?' or 'The Electronic Sweatshop', as it is called in English, (A Quebec documentary, 16mm, colour, 81 minutes, 1985) is a powerful comment on the dark side of the so-called computer revolution, particularly on the location of women workers within it. This is a development from Bissonnette's well-known co-production 'A Wives Tale' (documentary, 16mm, colour, 73 minutes, 1980) based on the Women's Support Committee of the Inco Miners of Sudbury. I interviewed Sophie Bissonnette during the Toronto Film Festival showing (September 12, 1985) of 'Quel Numero?', and she explained much about herself as a filmmaker, her own films and film aesthetics.

Put your shoes on
Don't complain, work is scarce
When the machine has hands
I won't be needed anymore
In the cells of tomorrow's buildings
There may be no people left
Riveted to my screen, I'll wait for it
to say Go away!

Theme song: *Quel Numero?*
or *The Electronic Sweatshop*
Clémence Des Rochers

Himani Bannerji: Can we begin by talking a little bit about your film career, since we need some sort of a biographical reference?

Sophie Bissonnette: My interest in making political and social films about women comes from when I studied sociology and film at Queens University in Kingston. Then I moved to Montreal and started working as an apprentice editor and did my first film with Joyce Rockham and Martin Duckworth — *A Wives Tale* (1980) — which was a co-direction between the three of us. I also did a half-hour made-to-order film for the Confederation of National Trade Unions called *Luttes D'ICI, Luttes D'AILLEURS* (1981, available only in French). I have done some assistant editing and have taught film classes in a college (Eduard-Mon Petite College, in Longueuil). After that, 3 1/2 years ago, I started on this project (*Quel Numero?/What Number? or The Electric Sweatshop*), doing the research, raising the money, co-producing and directing the film.

HB: So you are doing it independently?

SB: Yes. The film is co-produced by the Educational Television network in Quebec, and most of the money comes from the Film Development Corporation — Telefilm — now the Quebec Film Institute, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry for Science and Technology, as well as the three major unions in Quebec.

HB: When was it first released?

SB: It came out on April 26th of this year (1985) in Montreal. We had a hard time finding a theatre because it was a political film, so we rented a theatre.

HB: What was the audience response like?

SB: So far I've had very good critical responses; the newspaper reports were very good. I think a lot of people identified with it either as clients of the services used by people who call Bell Canada, or as people who put letters in the mail. We all go to Supermarkets.



«QUEL NUMÉRO WHAT NUMBER?»

ou le travail automatisé

UN FILM DE SOPHIE BISSONNETTE

HB: These issues of control of Labour as well as the centralization of the administration of labour that are a potential in this technology — have they been discussed after the screenings?

SB: Yes, a lot. That's mostly what people talk about; they would like to see their work organized differently, in a way in which they could have more control. In fact, when I was doing the research, I didn't meet any workers who were against the technology itself. I think that was very important to me — that it be made clear that the issue was not being for or against computers, but rather understanding why computers were being brought in, how they were being used, and how work was being organized with the introduction of computers; I think I was successful in that. Personally, I took a computer course to find out more about the technology. And also there is so much coming out in the media in terms of how professionals are really enjoying these new machines; how we're going through this computer revolution; how we're going towards a leisure society; how nobody is going to be working; and how we are all going to be enjoying our leisure time while computers will be doing all the work.

It was much more in reaction to that type of thinking that I made the film. The benefits for people who are not in very qualified jobs, so far, don't seem to be very many. Most people, however, were very aware that the issue had much to do with management and labour relations.

I am not trying to deny that there is something very particular about this technology — that is, the centralization that's possible with it — that we have to be really concerned about, but the key difference [from older technology] is that because of the economic situation the damage is quite devastating. Because the workers are in a disadvantaged position in terms of bargaining at this point, they don't feel as strong in terms of getting their demands.

HB: Do you see any substantial difference between the way this technology is perceived by men and women, or how it affects them?

SB: Not very substantially. The difference I did find is very personal. I had an easier time relating to the women, though the men were affected by it just as much. But one of the

things that men talk about less often is how it is affecting them at home. I noticed that a lot of the men are taking courses in the evening — electronic courses. They could see the technology coming and were trying to take retraining in that field. That is something that women don't have the time to do because of their double load. So that's a major difference.

When we demand a shorter week or less work hours to solve this problem

of unemployment, we also have to determine whether that is going to be translated into more leisure time or into more housework. A lot of studies show that women who work part-time do more housework because women who work full-time feel less guilty. The women who work part-time add on the hours. Also, the family's expectation of them is higher. I think it's very important that we consider those problems when we think of solutions. I think that women are going to have their own battle inside the union movement to make sure that the advance of technology is sensitive to their own conditions.

HB: All this seems quite clear. Now I

«QUEL NUMÉRO WHAT NUMBER?»

ou le travail automatisé



UN FILM DE SOPHIE BISSONNETTE

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would like to link your present work with your previous work. How do you see *A Wives Tale* in relation to this film?

SB: I think the link is the continued interest in women and work. *A Wives Tale* was a film about housewives and how they think about themselves and the possibility of getting out of the house, how they are affected by their husband's work issues and how that affects the life in the home. After that I wanted to do a film about women in the service sector because there wasn't much that had been done about that. I had wanted to make a film about bank workers and just couldn't find a way of doing it. Then I sort of came across this issue of technology. Technology interested me very little, but what I found exciting was how I could use this issue to talk about women's work in a lot of ways. The relationship between technology and women's work is bringing to the forefront a lot of issues that were already there and prevalent in women's work but get even more amplified by the technology.

HB: I have some questions about your own film aesthetics. From what I have seen, you sort of straddle fiction and documentaries. Is there anything you would like to say about that?

SB: In the format of a feature film, an hour and a half, you have to have a lot of material and a lot to say because an hour and a half of documentary requires almost ten times the energy it takes to watch a fiction film. What I liked about the length is the kind of dramatic potential that it has. In fact, you have to construct and structure the film like a fiction film. In the film *Quel Numéro?* there are very dramatic moments, such as the cashiers who are very funny with the computer shows, the hospital women and the post office. It is to me like a descent into hell. It's like starting to realize the loneliness — how they constructed a whole plant that's completely computerized at the post office and put these people in it. Then the telephone operators are like the 'third act' where there's a synthesis of the funny and the dramatic, and the very sad part which you know comes at the conclusion. You don't need that in half-hour or hour films which are more informational or didactic. So that's why it takes me a while before I find a topic.

HB: Why did you choose to work with documentary films instead of fiction films?

SB: I feel very much in the tradition of camera direct, and one of the things I'm aware of is the kind of tension which is very specific to documentary film. That I find very exciting. There's the constant

tension between the voice of the filmmaker and the subject in the film. I've now become very aware of the importance of having to choose who you give priority to. That's one of the reasons why, in *A Wives Tale* as well as in *Quel Numéro?*, all of the women had to approve of the film before it got released. They all knew they would have a chance to change it or do something about it if they didn't like it. It's a risk you take, but at the same time it forces you as a filmmaker to stay close to their concerns. So there would be the inside look, and then there would be my voice; which would be what I, as an outsider, saw while filming in these work places. So that's how come there's music in those places; that's me talking.

HB: Can you describe your working relations with these women?

SB: There's a complicity that develops at some point. Where you say, "Would you do that?" and they would say, "Oh, that would be fun!" That sort of complicity is very key to me — "you have a film to make; I'll help you make the film." It's a pleasant experience for them and I get to make my film. And it is because I have something important to say that I give them the say in how the film finally comes out.

HB: But who has control of the whole film?

SB: As a filmmaker you're in a powerful position because you're the one who owns the film and knows what gets put on it, and you're the one who puts it together and finishes the product. But on the other hand, you have to recognize that the people who appear in the film also have a form of power which is what they are willing to tell you on film. There might be issues you want to discuss that they don't want to deal with. So that's not said in the film. This meant that I had to shoot, for instance, with some women I didn't particularly like. I mean, it was a real mistake. I ended up having to put in four lines of narration. I realized that there was no way I could get anything good out of that; there just wasn't that kind of exchange.

This type of documentary is very risky because you never know what you are going to get. You plan things and it never works out the way you planned. But on the other hand, reality gives out extraordinary accidents and happenings that you could never have imagined or scripted. I find it very exciting when you get some of those moments when you are shooting. Sometimes these moments last only a minute, but you feel you touched on something important, and everybody in the room feels it. That I call the 'heart of the sequence.' If you've set up a situation where things work out well, it sort of

builds up to this moment — people will say for the first time what they've always had in their head. Everybody feels that something important has been said and feels that everything is worth it for those moments; that quality of emotion is so real you just can't dismiss the truth of it. That's the result of



your relationship — the truth we get on the film is the rapport you are capable of establishing. An audience can't dismiss that.

I definitely think that what makes my type of filmmaking different from a lot of filmmaking that is going on — like that produced at the Women's Studio at the NFB, for instance — is that I am more interested in working with class issues, whereas the Women's Studio at the NFB more often deals with middle class issues. They are not being specific about the existence of different classes of women who also have different interests — even between each other.

That is Sophie Bissonnette from whose words I have constructed her voice, hopefully touching "the heart of the sequence." In the end I must include recent information regarding the overtures made by DEC to C.B.C. and TV Ontario so that *The Electronic Sweatshop* may be seen by those about whom it is made. It was turned down, without any explanation. What good are films of concern if no one can see them, or only a handful do? And what can we do about it?

Himani Bannerji

On Masculinism

To Argue and Die (violently) in L.A.

LISA STEELE

In considering *Feminism and the Media*, the overall umbrella of this column in FUSE, it will be necessary from time to time to also consider how masculinism is faring in its public face, how ideas of masculine dominance are changing and what kinds of portraits are emerging for men today.

TO LIVE AND DIE IN L.A. THE characters portrayed in William Friedkin's recent film are the most morally repulsive forms of low-life possible. They will all lie, cheat, steal, threaten, terrorize and murder with no apparent compunction. Only one suffers a few twinges of remorse and, in the end, he joins the rest — with a vengeance.

And then there's the title. It's misleading. If you didn't see the ads, you could almost fantasize a romantic, sweeping, multi-generational family saga, a "Dallas-on-the-coast" maybe. It's not. "To Live" isn't living in an ordinary sense. People don't sit down to eat dinner or talk over their day at work or go grocery shopping or watch tv. Instead the primary activity engaged in is arguing, followed closely by insulting and punching other human beings, and finally, as a last resort, blowing each other's faces off with large calibre hand guns. And "...Die" isn't ordinary either. I mean nobody just goes quietly in their sleep, nobody gets hit by a car while running across the street to buy a paper. Instead, for the most part, they suffer the afore-mentioned face removal, or, alternatively, get set on fire. Even the "...in L.A." part is misleading. The only thing particularly Los Angeles-like in this film is that people spend at least one-third of their time in cars. Otherwise it could have just as easily been Pittsburg.

So why bother to write on such a foul

film? There are two reasons. First, because *To Live and Die in L.A.* has cropped up on several of those year-end lists of the Ten Best Films and I, as you can see, don't agree. Second, I think the film deserves an examination in feminist terms. Why? Because the men in the film are vilely abusive, both physically

FEMINISM IN THE MEDIA

and verbally, to each other most of the time, while the women suffer relatively little harm. But don't get me wrong here. We're not talking about consideration or even politeness between genders. In fact, the women occupy about as much psychic space in the men's lives as a used j-cloth. Escaping direct brutality, the women exist as indentured servants to their creepy male partners, a relatively blessed state considering the fate which most of the men in the film meet, but odd nonetheless.

This film would seem to be an answer of sorts to the contemporary problem of how to make an 'actioner' — which in today's terms involves at least some degree of blood-letting — without offending those of us who are 'sensitive' to the issue of violence against women. It's simple really; give the women a gender

exemption. *To Live and Die in L.A.* isn't unique here, of course. Many brutal films, such as *Apocalypse Now*, simply omit women from the story. But what does this omission, this exemption, say? Does it really mean that women are any safer? (I'm speaking in representational terms here; this is, I am well aware, only a film.)

I would say at this point that I wouldn't have thought it was a better film if women had been brutalized or killed in it; it is simply, as I have said, notable for this absence.

In contrast, I refer to a recent all-male performance series in Montreal called *Moment 'Homme*. Here, Toronto artist Kim Tomczak presented a work called "Who's Looking?" The piece opened with a text (on slides) projected on the wall which said:

Masculinity is learned...
Aggression is part of the lesson.

Then, as edited selections from broadcast television of classic male poses and postures — including the hard sell and the hard punch — were played on television sets within the performance space, a narrator asked:

How does this compare with actual statistics on violence?
Most violence is domestic.
Most violence happens within the home.
Men inflict their dominant role on the family.

THE MX RESPONSE CYCLE

1. EXCITEMENT PHASE



Tull Kupferberg

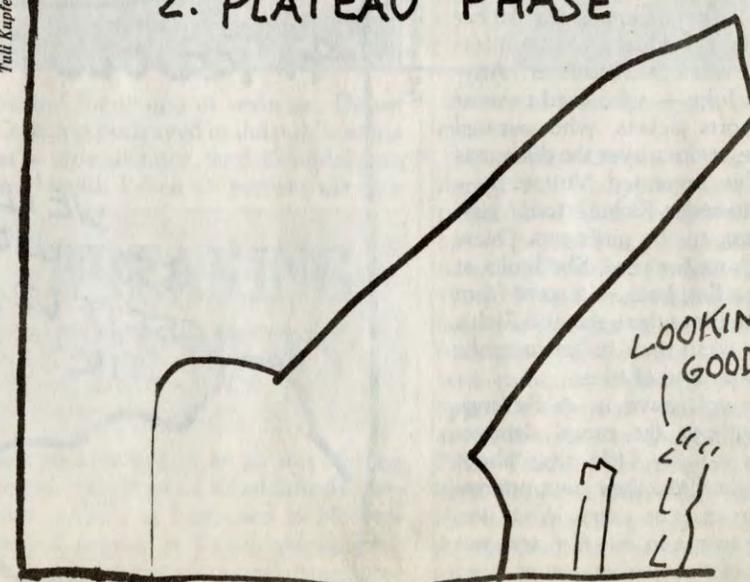
This work went on to discuss, visually and through text, the difference between masculinity and maleness. I quote from this piece because, through it, I think that Tomczak has raised an interesting issue around the representation of men in the mass media: that aggression most often is shown to occur between men and this representation conflicts with most men's actual experience, for various reasons.

In many senses, this is exactly what women found through the development of feminist critique and an analysis of images of women. In that way, this gap between experience and representation which Tomczak points out is not surprising. But it is noteworthy, especially since one finds that most (male) criticism of the mass media fails to point this out. Men have seldom said publicly, "That's not me you're talkin' about" when confronted with Rambo or the Terminator or Dirty Harry. I know why they don't, of course, because to do so could entail a relinquishing of the power and control embodied by these cultural icons. Not actual power and control, but representations of such. When criticism of violence and aggression do occur, male writers often rely on sociological laments such as "Oh, what a violent society we live in" and "Oh it's getting worse." Fingers are carefully pointed outward, in these cases.

FEB/MARCH 1986

Tull Kupferberg

2. PLATEAU PHASE



FUSE

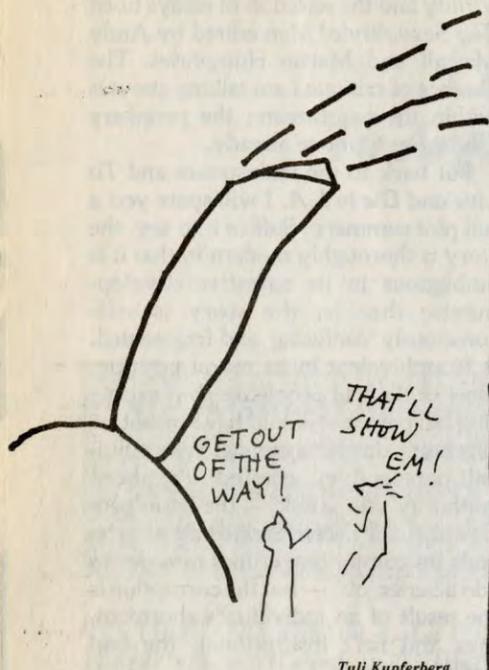
tain, there are many recent writings including Emmanuel Reynaud's *Holy Virility* and the selection of essays titled *The Sexuality of Men* edited by Andy Metcalf and Martin Humphries. The absence of critique I am talking about is within the mainstream; the periphery has begun to move already.

But back to the mainstream and *To Live and Die in L.A.* I will spare you a full plot summary. Suffice it to say, the story is thoroughly modern in that it is ambiguous in its narrative developments; that is, the story is self-consciously 'confusing' and fragmented. It is ambivalent in its moral position; most of the bad people die, but extracting full payment would have meant no survivors. And it is cynical in its political perspective; granted it's about 'authority' run amok — the main protagonist is a Secret Service agent who ends up committing crimes in order to "do a better job" — but the corruption is the result of an individual's shortcomings and isn't institutional; the bad apple theory.

Very briefly: the film opens with two Secret Service agents; one is killed while staking out suspected counterfeiter Eric Masters. The surviving partner, Richie, vows to catch the culprit "no matter what" and the rest of the film depicts his determined efforts. He, of course, goes "bad" in the process because he doesn't even know the meaning of the word. He hatches a scheme to steal money in order to make a buy from the counterfeiter, Masters.

29

3. ORGASMIC PHASE



Tuli Kupferberg

In the process of the robbery, a man is killed who turns out to be another undercover Federal agent. Richie and his new partner, John, persevere; Richie is killed trying to set up Masters. John perseveres alone, finally killing Masters. Then John, inexplicably, becomes the reincarnation of the dead Richie. He goes to the house of Richie's girlfriend. (Actually, to say "girlfriend" is to glorify the relationship somewhat. Although Richie had the key to her house and came as he pleased, he simply exercised power over her — including sexual power — threatening to revoke her parole if she refused to give him information. She was a paid informer.) Anyway, here's John — who used to wear rumpled sports jackets, who sweated and became anxious over the dilemmas which Richie presented him with — suddenly dressed in Richie's 'tough guy' outfit, saying to the girlfriend, "Now you're working for me." She looks at him; cut to a flashback — a scene from earlier in the film where she and Richie made love — cut back to her face; she smiles at John. End of film.

So there you have it. A Revenge Tragedy without the moral denouement, with a nasty little piece about women buying into their own oppression thrown in as an extra. What was remarkable to me in this film was not the amount of violence between men, or

even the degree; it was the spirit in which it was carried out. Time after time, the desired end seemed not to be simply disarming one's opponent, not simply knocking one's opponent down and not simply killing one's opponent. Instead, the aggressor sought to obliterate his enemy, to emasculate him and, finally, to humiliate him. For example, the primary blow delivered in all the fight scenes was a vicious kick to the balls. If the opponent was still standing, this kick was so powerful that it often lifted him off the ground. The undercover Federal agent who was killed in the course of the robbery carried out by Richie and John had his pants yanked down around his ankles and his shirt torn open before being shot. The first Secret Service agent who was killed — the initiating action of the whole plot — was shot while inside a large trash container. Not dead, he was lectured by his killers, "Buddy, you were in the wrong place at the wrong time," and then shot in the face before one of the killers delivered the final insult; he spit on him as he lay dead.

Now, imagine for a moment a gender switch in these scenes which I have described. Imagine that these were women with injured sex organs, a woman with her clothes torn off, a woman dying in a garbage bin, a woman with her face mutilated and her corpse desecrated. What you're imagining, of course, are depictions of rape and violent sex crimes. But that, of course, did not happen in this film; not exactly, that is. That's what I meant

earlier by the spirit of the violence, because the spirit of it is sexual and seeks to subjugate its victims. The fact that men are restricting these murderous humiliations to each other is, quite frankly, of moderate reassurance to me. I can only hope that men will begin, actively and publicly, to resist being portrayed as the victims of these kinds of assaults in the mass entertainment media. But that remains to be seen.

To Live and Die in L.A. is no aberration. It is part of the whole genre of "action films" which claim to be 'about' men. The only surprise is that films such as this one persist, in spite of the generally accepted opinion with the therapeutic community that extreme violence and aggression are symptoms, not of insecurity. And while I think we are a fair distance away from any counterpart to Paula Caplan's book *The Myth of Female Masochism*, I would welcome such an examination. I sincerely hope that *The Myth of Male Agression* can be written in my lifetime.

Meanwhile, I will address my critics. I think particularly of those who often say that I take things such as advertising, rock videos and movies too seriously. The critics have said, after all, it's just entertainment. One of those critics has been John Harkness, movie reviewer for *NOW* magazine. John Harkness rated *To Live and Die in L.A.* as one of the year's best.

Lisa Steele

4. REVOLUTION PHASE



Tuli Kupferberg

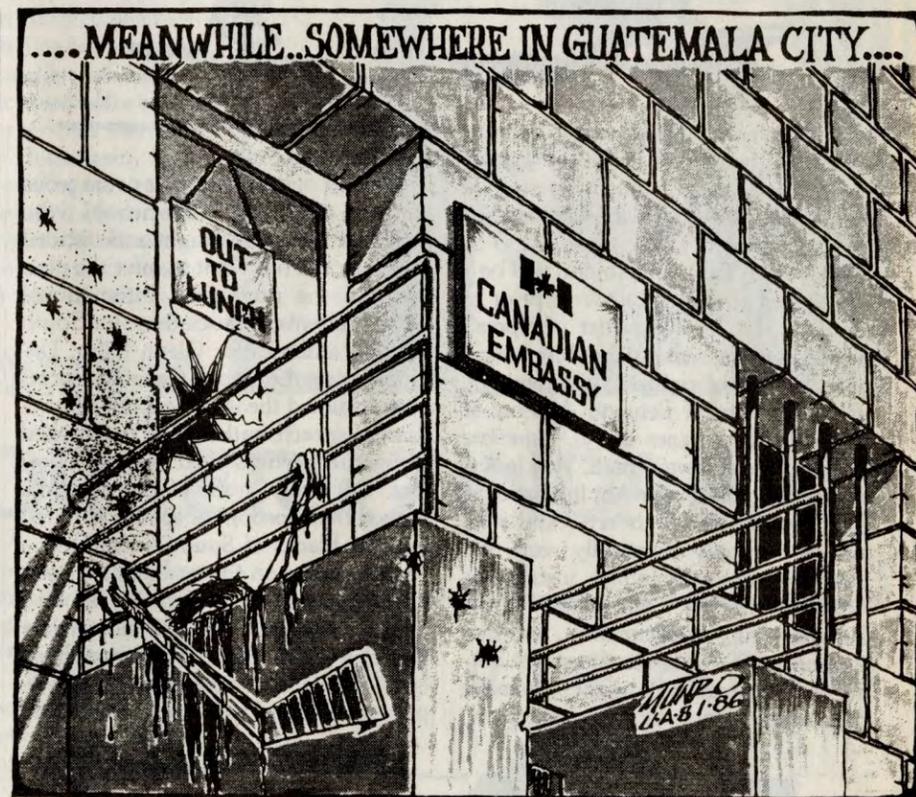
And We Note...

JEFF HOUSE

JANUARY SAW AN ANNUAL wintertime ritual here in Canada — the Ministerial scramble to grant refugee status to an East Bloc hockey player whose only claim to persecution is high-sticking or illegal cross-checking. (The U.S. celebrates a similar rite, but involving tennis players, who defect to Miami or L.A., and ballet stars, who defect to Broadway.) Most recent winner of the Hero of Freedom Medal is one V. Inacak of the Toronto Maple Leafs, whose loneliness in the new land was eased by Immigration Minister Flora MacDonald, who also granted refugee status to Inacak's girlfriend, who would normally be ineligible to come along as she was not part of his "family unit." But when the NHL Playoffs are on the line, mere regulations can be swept aside with relative impunity.

All this would be merely risible, were it not for the fact that people who are truly in danger of persecution must wait months for Canada to act, instead of the par-for-the-rink eight days in Inacak's case. The most obvious cases arise in Latin America, where Guatemalan, Salvadorean, or Chilean death squads cut short our refugee process. But this situation affects the East, too. In Czechoslovakia, anti-nuclear and democratic militants face harassment and sometimes persecution, but can seldom count on Canada's help. Sales of hockey tickets count more than the tattered remains of Canada's humanitarian tradition.

Washington P.R. handouts often end up on page one of Canadian newspapers as if they represented hard news rather than Reagan's fantasy-life. Allegations about Nicaragua normally fit this pattern, as does virtually all information about Muammar Khaddafi and Libya. Because the fact-checkers fall



behind the tempo of verbiage, Daniel Ortega is portrayed in the public arena as a little dictator, and Khaddafy an arch-fiend. When 69 persons die in a

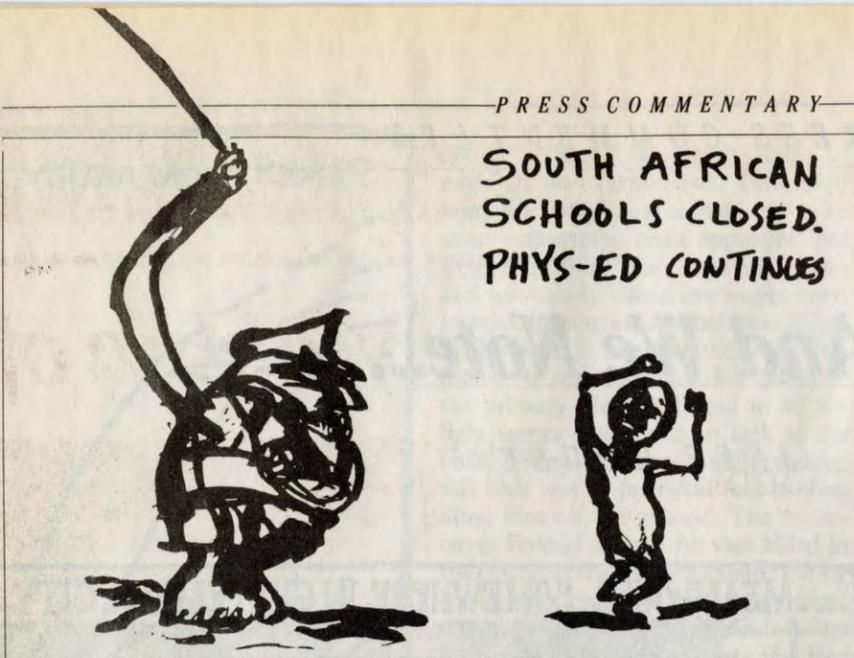
BREAKING THE NEWS

satchel-bombing of an airport waiting room, it is proof of Khaddafie-an perfidy, unless, as happened in November, it occurs in Kabul, Afganistan, and the perpetrators are American-backed Freedom Fighters. Then, in the

absence of press handouts, it is hardly even news.

A recent example of this came up during the Philippine election campaign. The *Globe and Mail* devoted half of page one to the stunning revelation that President Ferdinand Marcos' World War II war record as an anti-Japanese guerilla fighter was entirely fraudulent. Quite true; the fact has been common knowledge on the Philippine left since the mid-sixties, and is as well-known in the Philippines as Pierre Trudeau's war record is known here. What is interesting though, is that it became news only when the U.S. Army allowed a leak of official records to confirm the fact, two weeks before election day in Manila. During the near-

Mike Constable



SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOLS CLOSED. PHYS-ED CONTINUES

ly twenty years that Marcos has been an American henchperson in the Pacific region, no Canadian paper questioned his record, nor did leaks from the U.S. Army files occur. Of course, the U.S. assumes that Corazon Aquino will be a pliant reed, if elected (we write prior to election day), and that her vice-presidential running mate, Salvadore Laurel and his band of rightists will dominate the naive wife of Benigno Aquino. If that calculation goes awry, sometime down the road we'll read, no doubt, that neither Laurel nor Aquino have the right credentials to govern. And who knows, we may eventually read that Laurel's father was, in fact, installed as President of the Philippines by the Japanese army of occupation, and that Aquino's father was vice-president during the same regime. It might even make page one. But not during this election.

We doff our toques to the courageous students at U. of T. Law School, who braved a media onslaught and decided that they did not want to offer the platform of the prestigious International Law Students Association to South African ambassador Glenn Babb. Unanimously, the entire Canadian press corps claimed the issue was one of freedom of speech, rather than the implied recognition which such a podium offers. Curiously, none of the objectors argued that freedom of speech required that the blacks of South Africa have a representative on the podium; no, freedom of speech demanded that Babb be there, along with well-meaning white liberal Irwin Cottler for balance. Basically, the debate which Canada's newspapers suggested to be the embodiment

of a free society could as well have taken place in South Africa's white-only Parliament, and would have been as great a travesty of liberty. For students who truly want to hear both sides of an issue, we suggest that no invitations be issued to South Africa's white rulers, unless an ANC speaker is also on the podium. Then we'll see whether Babb is more interested in debate, or in implied recognition.

While Babbling on like this, a quiz: who is described in the following sentences? "A kinder, gentler person would be hard to find. Well educated, courteous, urbane, polished and civilized in the best English tradition, he/she fully understands the problem of apartheid." Was it:

- a) Mother Teresa?
- b) Desmond Tutu?
- c) Charles Roach?
- d) Glenn Babb?

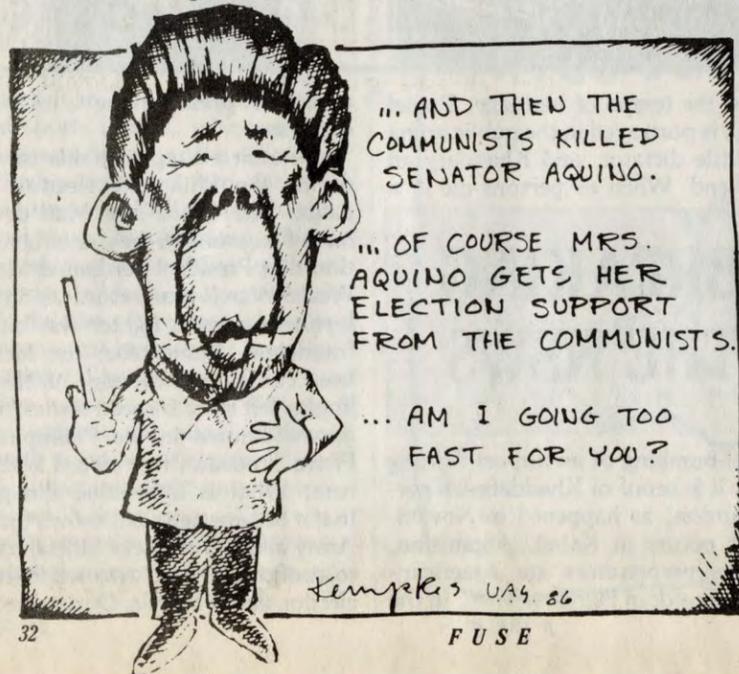
Hint: The above description appeared in the *Toronto Sun*.

A couple of years ago, your scribe did his democratic duty by standing in the snow outside the Royal York Hotel, yelling "Hoz, Hoz, up your nose!" The occasion was a visit between Toronto's business elite and the Economics Minister of the Argentine junta. In those days, before the Argentines had tangled with The Empire, the lords of Canadian industry sneered at our ragtag bunch who condemned Argentine fascism, and instead fawned over their uniformed guest. In the U.S., Caspar Weinberger called one of the Viola mob (otherwise known as the Government of Argentina) "magnificent," and Jean Kirkpatrick founded a whole political theory on their relative beneficence.

Now, an Argentine court has condemned the leaders of that government for organizing the murder of over 9,000 innocent civilians. We've been waiting for the apologies from the business types, their recognition that they have condoned monstrous crimes in the name of anti-Communism. In Canada, there's been nary a peep, while in the U.S., only William Buckley has admitted he was wrong. As an Argentine friend remarked when I mentioned this: "From their graves they thank him."

Jeff House

Courtesy of Union Art Service



... AND THEN THE COMMUNISTS KILLED SENATOR AQUINO.

... OF COURSE MRS. AQUINO GETS HER ELECTION SUPPORT FROM THE COMMUNISTS.

... AM I GOING TOO FAST FOR YOU?

Kempkes UAG 86

The Making of

CRAIG CONDY-BERGGOLD

FARMWORKERS, ZINDABAD FOCUSES ON THE role of women in the organizing of a unit of the Canadian Farmworkers Union. It is a docudrama, telling the story of four Punjabi women farmworkers who consider joining the union. It is based on a real event which occurred in the summer of 1984, when eleven mushroom workers, all women, were fired for organizing themselves at Hoss Farm. The farm had intolerable working conditions. The work day lasted fifteen hours, overtime pay was unheard of, as well as coffee breaks, holiday pay and sick pay. There were neither toilets nor clean-up facilities. Most of the women had children, and, as on all farms in the Fraser Valley, there was no daycare.

Historically, women farmworkers have been the most active organizers on a farm. They are often the key link



Still from Farmworkers, Zindabad

FARMWORKERS, ZINDABAD

between their co-workers and the union office. In the Punjabi community, family life, social life and work are tied very closely together. Any political discussion about workplace conditions takes place first in the home, before it is discussed publicly in the workplace. The C.F.U. finds it necessary to work with the family, as well as to organize in the workplace. The union plans many social events, and relies on cultural activity to encourage the social movement of farmworkers.

One of the initial problems in making *Farmworkers, Zindabad* was how to represent the political platform of a trade union. The women farmworkers had very clear demands. As well, the C.F.U. had clear rhetoric which expressed their point of view on effective ways to organize farmworkers. The first question we, the directors, asked ourselves was, "how to best represent the situation of the farmworkers to other farmworkers?" Was the video to be a documentary, or a fictional narrative? With a documentary approach it was going to be impossible to get the women to speak on video on their personal conflicts with their families. Instead, a fictional narrative was chosen with an unresolved point of view.

Though the women at Hoss mushroom farm had made a clear decision to join the union and set up a picket line, the scriptwriters represented an ambivalent environment where the women's decisions were influenced by their family and community. Because the video's purpose was to facilitate future organizing drives of the C.F.U., it was

notes on a labour arts production

decided that the story could not 'heroically' represent the choice each farmworker had to make for herself. *Farmworkers, Zindabad* is used both by the C.F.U. English-as-a-Second-Language program, and by C.F.U. organizers when they go to the homes of farmworkers for house meetings. Rather than employ rhetorical suggestions for joining the union, the aim of the story is to allow farmworkers to identify with similar conflicts in which they may find themselves. The video serves as a common starting point for dialogue between the audience and the union.

The C.F.U. has always used cultural forms to empower farmworkers in their struggle for democratic rights. Many different artists have joined the union to build an alternative culture, one which represents democracy for im-

migrants in Canadian society. Anand Patwhaden and Jim Munro have made a documentary film, *A Time to Rise*; Karl Beveridge and Carole Conde have produced photo stories and posters; David Jackson, the coordinator of the E.S.L. program, uses visual teaching aids, as well as photo stories produced in class. I have been an 'artist-in-resident' at the Vancouver office for the past two years, producing a photo exhibit on Health and Safety and the video *Farmworkers, Zindabad*. Many cultural workers from the Punjabi community have become union organizers, for example, Sukhwant Hundal and Sadhu Binning are the playwrights of *Picket Line*. Paul Binning has established a traditional East Indian dance company with teenaged boys which performs regularly at union benefits. Many others have made posters or performed at either benefits or on the picket line. Without these multiple forms of cultural expression, the C.F.U. would lack the necessary tools for organizing.

The following discussion focuses on the role of media as a tool for community and union organizing. The key crew members of *Farmworkers, Zindabad* recount their experiences of working with the Canadian Farmworkers Union. The production crew were 'artists-in-residence' to the union during the making of the tape. They participated in weekly union meetings, were active on the Hoss Farm picket line, and helped with the C.F.U.'s organizing drive in the Fraser Valley.

Craig Condy-Berggold is co-scriptwriter, co-director and editor; Alex Charleton, co-scriptwriter and co-director; and Glen McCauley is sound recordist and sound editor of *Farmworkers, Zindabad*. (Sukhwant Hundal, also scriptwriter and director, was on vacation at the time of this discussion.)

CCB: We saw that the family plays a key role in the Punjabi community, and decided it was to be the focus of the

videotape. But, it was probably the hardest thing for us, understanding the dynamics that actually went down. The relationship between women and men, mothers and daughters. What were the pressures from the family and community on the women when they decided to join the union? It was known at the union office, that one woman was a battered wife. The union wanted us to show that the traditional values in the community were holding back the changes

that were needed at the workplace. But the woman who was being battered was the 'militant' on the picket line.

GM: If the union comes out and seems to promote the breakup of the family, they are going to lose the very people who they are trying to get. So, it's part of the hidden agenda.

CCB: We decided on a fictional storyline because it was impossible to have the women speak on the personal conflicts they experienced. The content had to be *reconstructed*. Also, the fictional form became an issue. I believed that an audience of farmworkers could identify themselves with the union from a subjective presentation. Rather than a documentary, which would represent the union's position as educational, rational, objective, truthful...

GM: The whole issue as to whether this thing should be fiction or non-fiction is a non-issue. It doesn't matter if it's 'real' events or events we re-created. As long as it's something that the workers can accept as themselves up there, and valid.

CCB: Historically, the union movement has used the documentary as an educational tool. At the present time fiction isn't used. So, it is an issue.

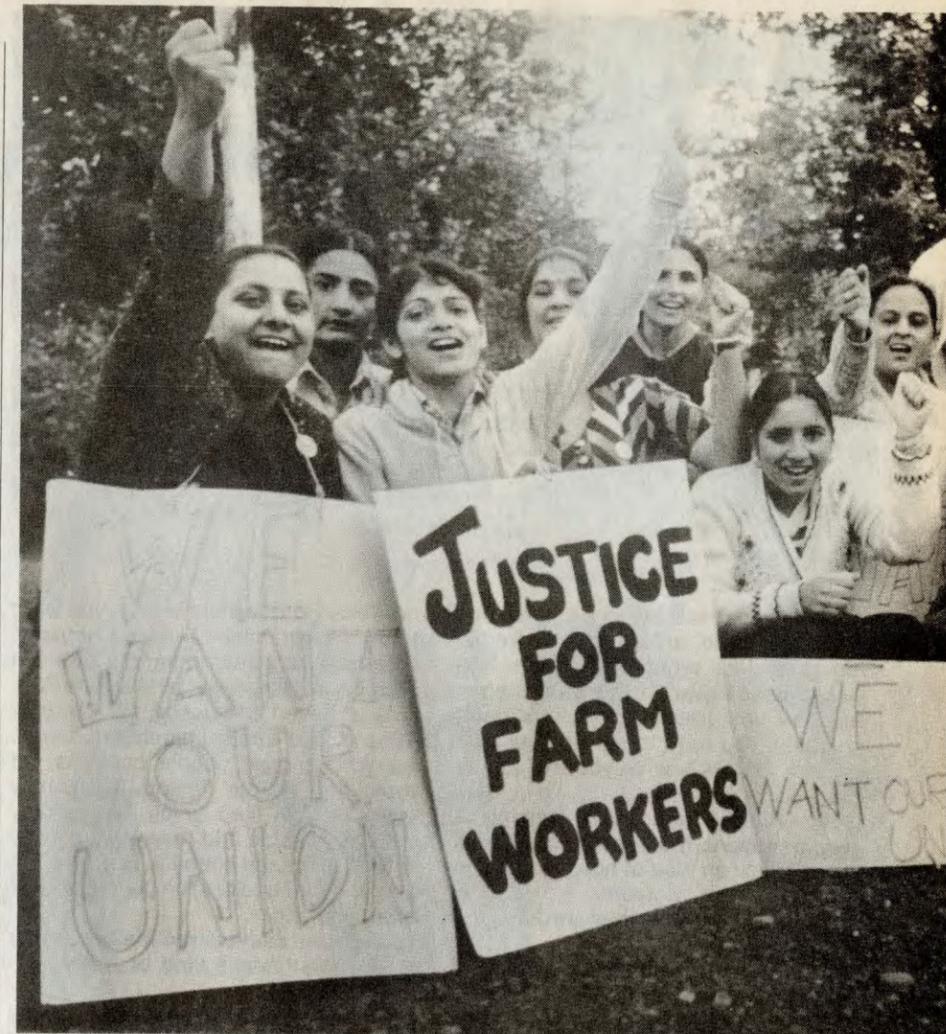
AC: We asked the union, "What do you want to get across?" There was a lot of information, and at first we tried to incorporate everything. And then, we talked to the women themselves, and we got a different sense of their feelings of the priorities. That is what we concentrated on. The information wasn't



Craig Condy-Berggold



Craig Condy-Berggold



Judy Cavana

different, but it was an attitude thing. **GM:** A personal one. "What working on the farm means to me," as opposed to "One should not handle pesticides." **AC:** So, now we have a video that farmworkers can discuss. Within the story a lot of connections can be made, and you don't have to catch all of them to follow the story. In turn the union is able to put over information around the story, so the end product is still an information package.

CCB: The union never said to us, "This is what we want." We put ourselves into positions to find out. Going out to picket lines, dealing with the script in union meetings, and the collective script writing — all of those things helped us as cultural workers. We got an idea of what had to be said.

AC: The example of the picket line is good, because of the conversations we had with the women. We told them our ideas for the script and got their feedback, and it was then that we changed the story.

GM: In that situation, you have to regard the script process as not really out to produce a script.

CCB: The other part of our research was looking at popular culture in the Punjabi community, especially Bombay musicals, Hindi movies and Punjabi films.

AC: We were seeing the two sides of their lives, the reality and the fantasy. A lot of them don't speak English, so they don't go out to the movies. Their entertainment is at home on VHS. They rent these films which are totally fantastic. Huge Hollywood kind of productions that are made in India.

GM: A bit like Hollywood in the Depression. People are out of work or making less than the minimum wage but the movies are producing eight million dancing girls and bubbling fountains.

AC: All your audience is sitting at home, often because, in the case of women they can't afford a babysitter. They are essentially homebound. So, you have to provide something that is going to get them at home.

CCB: The union wasn't too happy about us doing a Bombay musical in the Fraser Valley. From the union's point of view, they see these movies as a problem. In the same way, many people look down on Hollywood.

GM: Not ideologically pure.

CCB: The union had some problems, initially, about how we wanted to present the issues. We dressed up the actors in clothes other than what they would wear at work. My own research, having spent a year photographing working conditions in the fields, showed that farmworkers were not sympa-

thetic about having their photos taken in their work clothes. They wished to be perceived in better circumstances. We tried to bring some elements of the fantastic into what is an unglamorous job.

AC: Today, people don't have an emotional response to facts.

CCB: A style of presentation can limit your reaction; with a documentary it's coming from a very objective source when in fact farmworkers are the people who have the most experience with their conditions.

AC: And, we are just trying to be facilitators, trying to get them to speak out about those conditions.

GM: You've got to take the assumption that if things were really that bad, we wouldn't need to make the videotape to get them to join the union. We could walk in and say, "Listen see what we did in California, we can do that here, anyone coming?"

CCB: We avoided the trap of many documentaries, the portrayal of a victim. That somehow farmworkers could not get out of their situation, no minimum wage, no health and safety

regulations... Whenever you only portray the negative as a way to get people to come together, I think you are failing the community and collective processes.

AC: The emphasis was on farmworkers trying to do something about it.

CCB: That joining a union is as much a personal decision as a collective one. We talked about the different attitude the membership has towards the media, then what view the union has towards media. Most unions put their membership into a learning position, whereas the membership isn't always attracted to that. They may prefer a subjective story, personal or fantastic.

AC: It depends which side of the screen you are on; in some ways the union's relationship with media is from an active user sense. When they use media they take it out and show it to others. And they just don't have time to sit down in front of the T.V. and watch it.

CCB: They are not in the position that their own membership is in.

GM: Unions and community groups can't compete with the present visual

Say it With Sprockets

A Decade of Socialist Film Criticism

JOHN GREYSON

Jump Cut

Hollywood, Politics, and Counter-Cinema

Edited by Peter Steven
Between the Lines, Toronto; 1985, 400 pp.

Show Us Life

Towards a History and Aesthetics of the Committed Documentary

Edited by Thomas Waugh
Scarecrow Press, Metuchen NJ; 1984, 508

ANTHOLOGIES, LIKE REDISCOVERING last year's date book, serve to remind us where we've been. Two recent collections of socialist film criticism (and assorted business) celebrate the last ten years of the discipline's discourses, and provide a useful vantage point for assessing the vitality of the field. *Show Us Life* and *Jump Cut* share almost an embarrassing plethora of similarities: both draw on the same unofficial network of western film scholars; both editors are Canadian, though there are few contributions on 'Canadian content'; both feature several authors on virtually the same subjects (Julianne Burton on Latin American cinema, *Show Us Life* editor Tom Waugh on Joris Ivens, Russell Campbell on thirties newsreel in the U.S., Julia Lesage referred to by Waugh as the "unrivaled doyenne of feminist film scholarship," on feminism and film); indeed, both books are dedicated to the same three co-editors of the magazine *Jump Cut*, that veritable bell wether of film criticism that made much of this work possible in the first place.

Both editors provide excellent critical introductions to their respective collections, laying the theoretical groundwork of terms, tendencies and tactics in genuinely accessible language. As a result, it is tempting to generalize on the "dominant" direc-



Julia Lesage, *Jumpcut* editor, and Tom Waugh, *Show Us Life* Editor

tion of socialist film studies based on these anthologies (something the editors wisely refuse to do). If any conclusions can be drawn, it is that a tentative détente has been declared in the Methodology Wars, and most writers collected here now utilize several theoretical critical models simultaneously to address their chosen subjects. The result, no doubt impure, often allows for a more sensitive and engaged questioning process that respects both filmmaker and reader on their own terms, as opposed to forcing particular films into a predetermined theoretical orthodoxy, no matter how bad the fit.

For eleven years, *Jump Cut* has served for better or worse as the only consistent voice of socialist film criticism in the U.S. Adopting the exuberantly defiant ugliness of a type-written, letraset tabloid, it is best known (and most often criticized) for its often formulaic condemnations of patriarchal, capitalist Hollywood

cinema. While this anthology includes a few thankless examples of this genre (a humourless misinterpretation of Hollywood musicals, and Dan Rubey's endless attack on Star Wars), it more than restores the balance with subtle examinations of both commercial and 'counter' (also known in other circles as radical, alternative, independent, committed, other) cinema.

In the former category, Charles Eckerts' 1974 dissection of the Shirley Temple phenomenon during the depression era is a gem of historical criticism. Using documentary evidence (oral histories, newsclippings, speeches by Roosevelt) to capture the relief (the dole) vs. charity (foodlines) controversy of the times, and both Freudian and Marxist readings of the Temple legacy to deconstruct the spectacle of this moppet millionaire, he succeeds in a decidedly anti-deterministic way to demonstrate the mass media deployment of her magical persona on a nation in need of such subtle pacifica-

think that it has to happen. A crew can be sympathetic and that's another approach.

CCB: We were already working with an existing structure, the union. I believe you have to work with some kind of organized group within the community, as opposed to just going on to the street and filming street kids. The long-term relationship is as important as the product. It's also more credible...

AC: Credible with whom?

CCB: Credible to the subjects. If you just go into a community that doesn't have a community group already and you are going to portray their issues, they are not in a collective position ever to accept what you are presenting of them on the media. With a union or a community group, you already have an organization with roots into a community and you are accountable to that organization. You can't try to bypass them.

GM: The work I was involved in in Australia was interesting. Because Australia heard about these great things that were happening in Canada, *Challenge for Change*, for example, but as often is the case, they didn't get the whole story. They set up community media centres but, unlike the National Film Board which went to Newfoundland and made a film and then went home again, these centres still existed in the community. Their purpose was to provide training, hardware and resources for a community to talk to themselves, or to talk to the government. If they were trying to get funding for a daycare centre they would make a videotape and send it to the government. It wasn't 100 per cent successful but they were on to the right idea.

CCB: Individual artists can't feel that just because they have made a film or video on a social issue that somehow the community is going to be better off because of it. Traditionally, artists have been trained to be more concerned about the film or video as a product, and less about the process of production, and their relationship to a subject.

AC: How would you change that?

GM: I think one of the best ways is to get them involved, so that they are sitting in a room with a lot of people from the community.

AC: And recognize that some people will never like to work that way.

CCB: There is a definite role artists can play. Unions and community groups need to build a culture that sustains their messages. Artists, filmmakers and video people can bring their knowledge of the media and how it operates in this society. It's a two way street.

Craig Condy-Berggold

FEB/MARCH 1986



mediums that are being supported by T.V., Hollywood, art galleries, advertising agencies. When you figure that Coke spends over \$100,000 on a commercial, you [realize] that you can't compete, you have to set up your own criteria. Validity is what you are looking for.

CCB: Right. The union isn't trying to sell Coke. Nor any other commodity; it's trying to sell an idea of how people can serve their best interests.

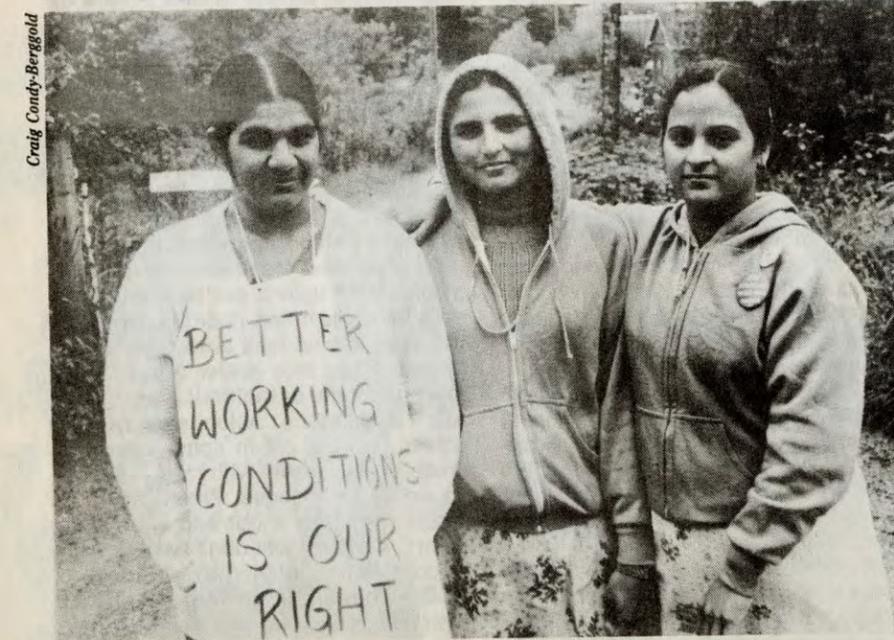
AC: Coke might say they are doing the same thing.

GM: The fact is that you are going to be out there competing with 7 o'clock television and *People* magazine. I think it's very easy to get trapped into the

next step, that somehow what you want to do is a version of *Three's Company*. One approach is the thing the National Film Board was doing in the early 70's. It was called *Challenge for Change*. They moved into communities, filmed everything, gave people cameras, let them film people filming. Then, they took the final step which may or may not be desirable and they walked away with the film and edited it. But, they did take the film back to the people and let them respond.

AC: I have some mixed feelings about that without some kind of training in there.

GM: I think training people to express themselves is one approach, but I don't



tion. Julia Lesage similarly utilizes both psychoanalytic and sociological critical tools to explore D.W. Griffiths' *Broken Blossom*. Her contribution is particularly compelling because she uses a vulnerable first-person voice to explore the dual identification/repulsion she feels as a woman and as a socialist watching the film.

Such a personal, questioning voice, breaking with the austere authori-

coverage. I was therefore surprised at the contents of the lesbian/gay section — departing from the specificity of the other sections, it consists primarily of manifesto-style introductions to the topic. While certainly laudable, they haven't dated half as well as, say, the two-part pro-and-con critique of Fassbinder's *Fox and his Friends*, or Waugh's survey of independent gay films (both in issue 16), which were



Shirley Temple and Shirley MacLaine

tarianism of traditional academic discourse, is found throughout the volume, both in individual chapters and in back-to-back discussions or debates. For instance, two articles take on the phenomenon of Shirley MacLaine, one in socialist feminist terms, the other in liberal feminist terms. What seems at the outset to be a fairly straight-forward debate becomes decidedly more complex when one realizes that the liberal feminist 'defence' of MacLaine, though certainly 'wrong' in all sorts of ways, actually demands a far more subtle reading of this 'independent woman in the system' than the more predictable socialist dismissal.

Feminism and sexual politics inform the book from cover to cover, a tribute not only to anthology editor Peter Steven but to the magazine over the years. Since its inception, *Jump Cut* has contributed centrally to the development of feminist and gay cultural criticism, unlike many publications on the left which only give feminist and gay issues token

not included in this anthology.

In contrast, reviews of independent feminist and third world films maintain their specific focus to much greater effect, particularly Linda Gordon's welcome critique of the much-acclaimed feminist documentary *Union Maids*, and Teshome Gabriel's thoughtful reading of Senegalese director Ousmane Sembane's feature *Xala*. These and other contributions like them attest to the strength and endurance of the *Jump Cut* project, which has persevered over the years without the safety net of academic sponsorship or state funding to publish the highs (and sometimes lows) of socialist film studies.

Waugh's *Show Us Life* takes its title from a story told by Dziga Vertov, acclaimed filmmaker of the Russian revolution and widely regarded as the founding parent of committed documentary. His legacy, which reverberates throughout the volume, is explored in the first chapter by Seth Feldman in exemplary fashion, and sets the tone and strategy for the re-

maining 23 chapters. By examining the aesthetic strategies of specific films and filmmakers in relation to their political and historical context, a history of sorts is sketched out, thoroughly grounded in the complexities and contradictions of different political struggles over the last sixty years on four continents.

The first section, dealing primarily with the international newsreel movements affiliated with the international Communist Party of the thirties, avoids nostalgia and manages both to celebrate and critique the rich (if limited, in retrospect) debates of the day. While longer studies have been published on the subject (including Jay Leyda's pioneering history of Soviet film, and William Alexander's study of U.S. Film and Photo League), the articles included here provide fresh and original insights, particularly Bert Hogenkamp's contribution on the workers' newsreels of Germany, the Netherlands and Japan.

The chronology leaps across the war to the sixties, with editor Waugh acknowledging that the work of reclaiming these 'lost' twenty years of radical film history has yet to be done. The documentary work of the new left, black and feminist movements is thoroughly scrutinized: from the rebirth of the U.S. newsreel movement to an exuberantly strident look at post-68 far-left work in France; from a thoughtful eulogy to Quebec's militant tradition to an all-too-brief look at a guerilla documentary project in Japan. Four contributions utilizing feminist film theory sum up different currents (or more accurately in retrospect, the ebbs and flows) of such discourse. While Claire Johnston interprets *The Nightcleaners* (a formalist documentary of a cleaners' strike) in structuralist and Brechtian terms, E. Ann Kaplan defends the classic 'realist' documentary *Harlan County*, claiming that because its "reactionary" signifying practices are undisguised, unapologetic and partisan on the side of the miners portrayed, they serve to make the film as politically effective as it was and is.

The third section concentrates primarily on the Latin American documentary movement, and compellingly demonstrates the cross-historical and inter-movement links of the medium. As Julianne Burton suggests, many Latin American film-

makers in the fifties grappled with dominant devices like voice-of-god narration (all too often signifying the discourse of the oppressor) and seamless editing techniques (disguising the manufacturing of the overdetermined storyline) for many of the same reasons that feminist filmmakers did a decade later. Similarly, exploiting a poverty of resources, Latino cineastes embraced fusions of narrative and documentary codes and out of necessity in similar ways to those pioneered by radical documentarists, like Joris Ivens, of the thirties. Bombay filmmaker Anand Patwardan provides a gripping account of the making of his guerilla documentary on the student/peasant Bihar movement, which bears striking parallels to the making of the legendary *Battle of Chile*, movingly described by Victor Wallis and John D. Barlow. Thus, between the chapters, *Show Us Life* reminds us that supposedly recent formal strategies (be they talking heads or verité, docudrama or montage, inter-titles or self-referencing), have their precedents through the decades in various contexts and countries. The varying results, both in terms of filmic and critical practice, remain compelling and provocative for readers today.

Because both books ably demonstrate where progressive film studies have been over the past ten years, they also through exclusion point to where they must go. Neither addresses the semi-autonomous development of the video documentary, or draws connections between film studies and communications theory, particularly the New International Information Order, or even visual arts criticism. All of the above are clearly (or at least should be) inseparable from any working definition of committed or counter cinema. While such scholarship is certainly being produced, such interdisciplinary cross-overs are still a recent phenomenon. In ten years time, such concerns will no doubt be central to new anthologies and collections. In the meantime, these volumes will serve, not as monolithic models to be aspired to, but as significant contributions to the ongoing project of a living, critical media culture.

John Greyson is a writer and video artist currently working on a new tape entitled *Moscow Does Not Believe in Queers*.

FEB/MARCH 1986

Love Means Never Having to Tell a Story

GARY KIBBINS



Courtesy of V/Tapes

HYGIENE, 1985

Running Time: 42:00

Director/Producer: Andrew Paterson,
Jorge Lozano

Cast: Ronalda Jones, Angelo Pedari,
Johanna Householder, Eva Macrey,
Gary T. Furlong
Distribution: V/Tape, Toronto

AFTER ENDURING A PERIOD OF disrepute, narrative is making a strong comeback. And while questions of what is and isn't a bona fide narrative can get pretty slippery, *Hygiene*, adapted from Andrew Paterson's unpublished story "Good Friday", is not explicitly designed to ask them. *Hygiene* is a story; it has a beginning, a middle, and an end, related in that order. It is without competing points of view, devices often used to disrupt the narrative direction and keep viewers on their toes; or first-person voice-overs, *Dragnet*-style. And while the tape employs what are called, broadly speaking, Brechtian 'alienation' devices, as well as the now commonplace 'quoting' or parodying of

other works, these serve more as aesthetic pleasure-points in their own right than self-critical techniques.

What is more, the 'meaning-effect' of the tape is crystal-clear. It is hard to imagine two people disagreeing about its premise, a premise which is also a consummate display of a kind of easy, textbook political correctness: a woman, the victim of relationships with men who are either active-aggressive (Rick) or passive-aggressive (Peter), arrives at the edge of the women's movement with the help, and something approaching martyrdom, of another woman. The story's like a homecoming. The viewer stands on the shore waiting for the ending to arrive; you can almost see the meaning

as it disembarks. The tape's authors arrive at Full Narrative, a fairly rare occurrence in independent video work, and were willing to take some risks to get there.

Acknowledging the problematic nature of re-writing a story with the intention to comment on it, as well as the dubious practice of extracting a story from the much more complex construction of a videotape, a synopsis proceeds as follows: Rachel asks Rick, her beau, for a date, but is refused. Rick is then seen demonstrating the correct way to spread butter on a cracker to a woman as yet unidentified

universally unpopular. They leave in Caroline's car; Rick, too drunk to drive, drives anyway — (here, a fast cut to a brooding Rachel) — and in a properly moral fashion, are offed in a car crash (two foreshadowings consummated). This section of the tape has been shot in black and white, film noir style (the lighting's terrific) occurring mostly at night.

Rachel, now in real despair, is comforted by a distinctly wiser Karen, who "had to get to know herself," and "then started working in the women's movement." Karen is a lesbian, but this scene, which occurs in Karen's apart-

taste of independence, but as soon as she hits the beach, we're back in black and white. This coincides with the viewer's reflexes, in a sense: we all have our eyes peeled for the sight of flesh, and for the look of the other. Karen chose isolation to get to know herself, but Rachel is still focusing outward, looking prematurely for a new relationship.

In returning to black and white, the narrative has anticipated its own logic, for sure enough: "Hi, I'm Peter. My cottage is next door. Would you like to come up for a drink?" The narrative zips right along here; they move in

Courtesy of V/Tapes



— the scene is slow and loaded, and has all the mannerisms of foreplay.

Meanwhile, Rachel is emotionally distraught and kept awake by an obnoxious neighbour's late night dissertation which is audible and inaudible in turn ("who do they think they are... forgiveness requires evil..."). Meanwhile Rick is getting into some hanky-panky with Caroline, the Other Woman. Rachel phones, and Rick, in a gesture which firmly establishes him as a bona fide dirty rat, places the receiver in the fish bowl which sits beside a hamster getting its exercise on a treadmill. The word 'hygiene' comes up on the screen. Rachel does not take this rejection well, and throws Rick's picture, framed in glass, on the floor, which dutifully breaks. (This, in retrospect, turned out to be a device English teachers call 'foreshadowing'.) It is Good Friday. Rick and Caroline crash (a punning foreshadow, maybe) a Good Friday costume party, suffer the insults of the other partygoers, deliver some in turn, steal some whiskey, and depart. Rick, it seems, is

ment, is scripted by the two actresses involved, and is careful to depict support, not a come-on.

In the only colour sequence in the tape, Rachel, having quit her job, is driving out of town, accompanied by her voice-over reading a letter she has written to her mother. She is "going to get to know herself" too.

Rachel is on the beach looking for a spot to sunbathe, and chooses one near enough to two cuddling women that she can easily sneak furtive glances at them. During this sequence a voice-over cites an excerpt from Adrienne Rich's *Of Woman Born*. It treats the subjective and inter-subjective aspects of power and powerlessness: powerlessness leads to lassitude and self-negation, but can also develop a keenness in analyzing the nature of oppression. Power requires willed ignorance of the personal reality of others, and also of oneself, an ignorance which is often puffed up as "objectivity," and even "sanity." A possible reason for the colour sequence is its coincidence with Rachel's brief

FUSE

together — into Peter's place, of course — Rachel adopts the loving-housewife mode; they're gonna get married "after Good Friday." Peter's surface behaviour is that of a Nice Guy. On Good Friday, however, Rachel learns from the news that Karen has been killed at a woman's bookstore, the victim of a religious fanatic arsonist. But when she demonstrates urgency and passion about something outside the domestic space, about something not immediately comprehensible to Peter, he flips out.

Rachel stands outside the "Black Orchid" women's bar, drawn to it, but hesitant. Nearby, a drunk delivers a soliloquy ("...bible thumpers...when men start thinking they're God...") not unlike the anonymous neighbour heard earlier. Three women emerge and briefly discuss organizing in response to the killing. Karen winds up in the mixed bar, but it is clear that she has left Peter, and is now making major changes in her life.

Despite the happy ending, *Hygiene* is not a utopia parachuted in from a

FEB/MARCH 1986

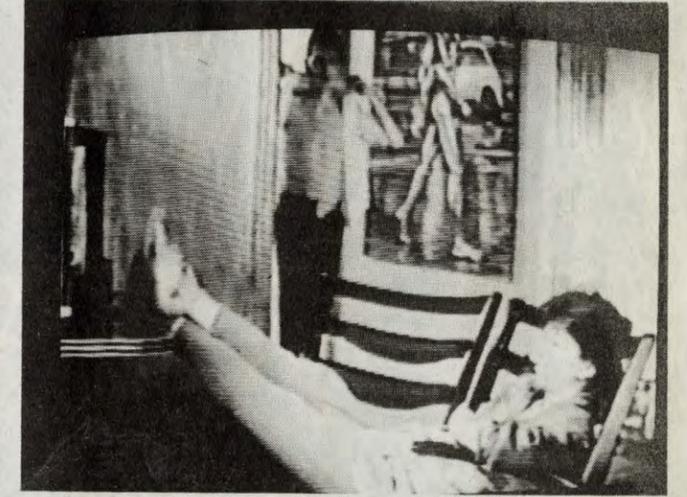
domain outside history; it is framed against a recognizable, problematic present. Yet this open and shut case of coming-to-enlightenment has a narrative inevitability about it which, while it might encourage a critique regarding what the narrative is about, does not encourage self-criticism, or a critique about what the narrative is. This is not an inherent problem with narrative itself, although that has been argued many times, but only a problem of particular uses made of narrative. In fact, in at least one instance, *Hygiene* does use an intersection of narratives to critical effect: for exam-

hand being faced with ambiguous representations which compel the viewers to make up their own minds. It is instead based on *presuppositions*, which presumably have already been 'approved' by the processes of critical scrutiny. Thus I felt obliged to infer that: either a good man is hard to find, or, in fact, they are all louts (the gender of the tape's authors notwithstanding); there is a process called "getting to know oneself" which leads one, not to simply re-confirm sexist socialization, but to emerge into self-autonomy and progressive politics; the women's movement is a single, coherent, unified

interruption, and a well-chosen one. It performed the dual service of 'pinching' the storyline, while drawing the characterological study out into the social.

But another approach to the tape comes to mind, an approach which allows the viewer to work *with* the narrative, rather than at critical cross-purposes with it. One might accept the terms of the linear narrative form, and choose instead to extract what the tape "says" through its characterization, its plot understood as a sequence of events,

Courtesy of V/Tapes



ple, Rachel has initially embarked on a narrative of a well known type: you're born, you get married, you buy a comfy house, you beget children, you die. This Scarborough nightmare-narrative is interrupted by Karen, who proposes an alternative narrative, or a range of alternative narratives, or perhaps the possibility of life without narratives at all.

The presentation of a linear, inexorable narrative has a tendency to discourage self-criticism, and in *Hygiene* this is manifested in the way in which the narrative relies almost exclusively on the representation of the *behaviour* of individuals. Because little social framework is provided other than that reflected through behaviour, the viewer is obliged to construct that framework from the behavioural evidence provided. The result is a series of interpretations or speculations which are very "strongly implied" by the logic of the behaviour and the narrative. This is quite a different response than either being told, didactically, that certain conditions exist, or on the other

body; and so on. You see these propositions from the window as you chug by on the single-track narrative. There is nothing in the structure of the tape to prevent the viewer from questioning them, but a critical perspective on these 'propositions' is secondary to the work; what is important is anticipating the arrival.

The emphasis of the tape on the behaviour of individuals, as well as the goal-oriented nature of the narrative, gives rise to a process which is essentially *moralizing*. By moralizing I don't mean that it points to the moral dimensions of an issue, or that it conjures up a discourse of Morality. Moralizing occurs when individual and psychological behaviour is treated in detail while the social conditions in which it occurs are either taken for granted, are themselves personified or psychologized, or are ignored altogether. The discomfort that may be caused by moralizing is deepened when framed within a linear narrative. For this reason, the voice-over excerpts from Adrienne Rich's text I found to be a welcome in-

and ultimately its relationship with a given concept of 'reality,' that is, its plausibility, and so on. This requires, I think, perceiving a significant shift to have occurred in our perception of representation. Because we are perpetually awash with pictures, it might be assumed that it is no longer necessary to call attention to the form of the work, that the conventions of representation are already well-enough known. And there is evidence for this. Many of the 'shock techniques,' 'alienation devices,' and processes of 'making strange' developed by artists of this century to encourage critical viewing have been taken up, in whole or in part, by mass cultural forms. T.V. shows satirize the production of T.V. shows; the American movie industry remakes (and so reclaims) a French New Wave film which had appropriated motifs from American gangster movies (*Breathless*); and what was *The French Lieutenant's Woman* if not a watered down and stylized Brechtian device?

At the same time parody (or 'appropriation' or 'intertextual referenc-

FUSE

ing,' or whatever emphasis it's given) has become thoroughly standardized. (From here a gazillion possible examples, think here of the recent *My American Cousin*, a standard narrative if there ever was one. Boy asks girl, "Have you seen *Rebel Without A Cause*?" "No," she replies, whereupon he puts his jean jacket around her shoulders.) This seems to have driven the producers of *Hygiene* to use less well-known references, particularly from Sirk and

weekly program produced by Stephen Spielberg and in this case directed by Spielberg as well (this'll be brief): World War Two bombing mission with excessive camaraderie amongst the young American crew members, sickeningly overdone (but overdone very well). The gunner who sits in a plastic bubble under the belly of the plane is particularly loved. He draws caricatures of the other crew members, which make them love him even more.



Fassbinder. (This writer confesses he missed them, and had to be told of them by one of the producers.) There are other devices which tamper with the narrative regularity of the tape: Rick's butter-spreading demo, which was acted out v-e-e-r-r-y slowly and without dialogue; the obnoxious-neighbour and drunken-soliloquy scenes, with their rambling and conspicuously narrative-less structure; snippets of ironic contradiction, like the Good Friday/Bad Friday setup (which was *not*, incidentally, a Moral Discourse. In fact I eagerly seized upon it as a sign that the viewer had been mercifully relieved of having to speculate on Rick's or Karen's death occurring on the anniversary of Christ's crucifixion.)

Yet it is evident that the status of the narrative in relation to the 'alienation' device is changing. A case in point is a recent episode of *Amazing Stories*, the

A Messerschmidt attacks, the gunner blows it up, but a large chunk hurls through the air and lodges itself in the side of the bomber, sealing the gunner into his bubble. They have just barely enough fuel to return to base. The gunner realizes with horror that the landing gear is blown away as well, guaranteeing him a grisly ending when the plane skids to a landing. Several efforts to free him fail, and the weeping crew members decide to shoot him in order to save him from an even more nightmarish fate. Meanwhile, the gunner is, strangely enough, making a well-rendered 'realistic' drawing of the bomber, but then adds these goofy, cartoon-like, oversized landing gear, complete with a kind of L'il Abner patch on one wheel. Plane is descending for a landing, billowing smoke; a shaking hand holding a gun is inching towards the gunner's head. Gunner radios the captain to try the landing

gear. Captain can't imagine why, but hits the toggle switch anyway, and — get this — these big, goofy, orange, looney-tune wheels actually descend, complete with patch, kind of gooey and glowing (sky-high production values here). The plane lands, gunner is cut from his bubble, the cartoon-God wheels disappear, and the now-empty bubble is crushed. I was shocked, and amazed.

There you have it, Spielberg and the gunner together demonstrating it so masterfully: the sheer power that representation wields over 'reality,' with a dash of emotional turpitude à la Spielberg, of course. (And the post-structuralists say that the sign doesn't have a referent in reality!) Is this not parodic? Self-referential? Is Brecht not *twirling* in his grave? Of course, these are not the techniques the avant-garde had in mind; they are more like a Trojan Horse of 'alienation' techniques. Yet Spielberg — a crackerjack storyteller, and crowned prince of contorted alienation devices — demonstrates that stories can be *too* amazing, that the Forces of Amazement, while capable of providing critical distance, can also serve to drive the viewer more deeply into the story. It seems that the old modernist need to bring critical attention to the form of the work has not disappeared, but that only the terms have changed.

Hygiene usefully and accurately identifies contradictions located in day-to-day life, but, much in the same manner as Spielberg's amazing stories, declines to live through contradiction within its own structure as an artwork, opting instead for a fictive resolution. Spielberg generally (including his 'turning point' *The Colour Purple*) proceeds from the notion that representations are self-sufficient, self-justifying, and self-satisfied, both aesthetically and morally. On the other hand — and although it requires some second guessing, *Hygiene* shows a different self-understanding. Its real target, it would seem, is not so much the construction of a self-contained story, but an investigation of the relationship between a videotape as a concrete and artificial thing, and the social environment into which its meanings are projected in order that they be perceived as possibilities.

Gary Kibbins

FEB/MARCH 1986

Betrayal A Southern Trauma

PAT WILSON

MARY BURDICK PAISLEY OPENED a one-woman show November 26, 1985 at Gallery 940. The show, entitled *Hide and Seek: A Southern Trauma*, thematically was concerned with Paisley's first pregnancy (at age 19), the secret confinement, and subsequent forced surrender of the child to adoption.

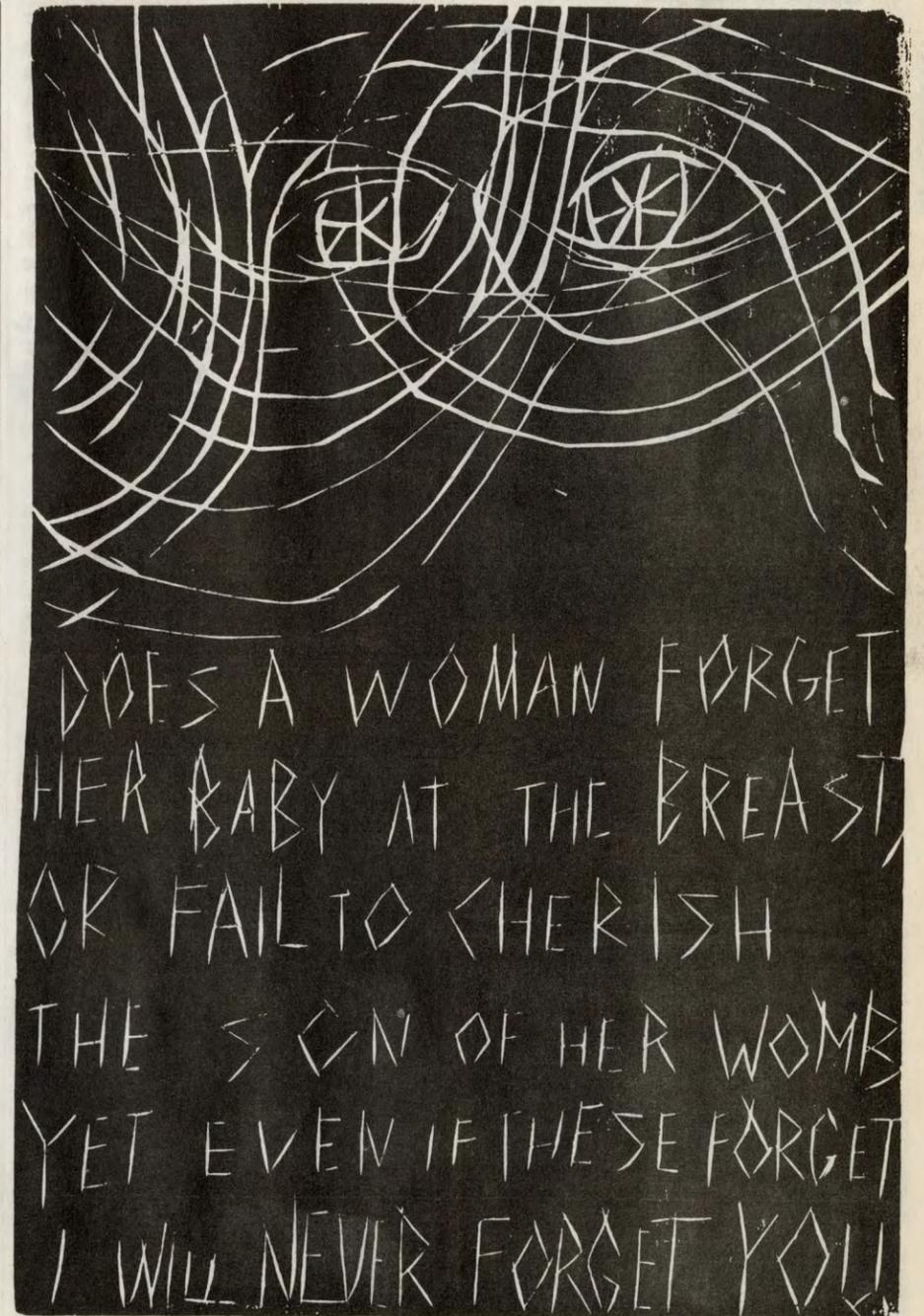
The show is a chapel-like installation wherein there are altars, books of holy verse with woodcuts, and sacramental objects garnered from Paisley's past. These last objects appear variously in an altar installation and/or combined in wall sculpture.

The narrative of the abandoned child is realized through several mediums, from paintings and wall sculptures to woodcuts and lino cuts. The artist has chosen to recreate a very personal story and, subsequent to her unearthing of that history and its artifacts, has created an installation in which we (the viewer) can simultaneously partake of her experience and compare it to our own similar experiences. M. Paisley has been a producing artist for over twenty years. And it was here in this exhibition that she made a quantum leap, bringing together years of experience and artistry into a show focused entirely on one subject — the trauma of forced separation from one's child.

Beginning with stark imagery, a certificate of live birth of John Paisley (M. Paisley's first born) is pinned casually to the door jamb. The certificate reveals that during the time span of the exhibition, he will celebrate his twentieth birthday.

In the window of the gallery, looking inward, is a huge black and white acrylic painting entitled *Demeter Mourns Kore*. This painting depicts a mother rocking the body of her dead child. It is the symbolic loss of eternal Spring, a fairly transparent reference to the Greek legend of Demeter losing Persephone to the God of Hades.

The viewer encounters immediately



FUSE

43

(as one's eyes sweep across the gallery wall) a wall sculpture of a woman's torso entitled *The Walking Wounded*. The breasts are pyramidal, the belly a bulls-eye waiting for the arrow. The primitive child-like symbology of this piece contributes to an overall sense of irony and easy humour.

Further along the wall is a woodcut entitled *Mardi Gras*, which is the first in the series of woodcuts and lino cuts which relate the entire story from conception to birth and separation. This



MARDI GRAS

woodcut illustrates a boy and girl making love, and the artist's routing lines recreate with passion the original moment of conception in long-ago tall Delta grass.

Besides this woodcut is a wall sculpture entitled *Queen of The Crewe of Comus*. Comus is the God of merry-making, the son of Pan. (At the Mardi Gras in New Orleans there is usually a float and performance dedicated to the Queen of the Crewe of Comus.) This wall sculpture is a carved wooden mirror, the top half the face of the Queen, the bottom half a mirror. The viewer, Narcissus-like, becomes a participant upon gazing into the mirror which reflects back a smoky self-image. It is fairly apparent that the reflected self-image refers both to the original Queen as well as to all foolish, love-sick females betrayed by hormones.

The Walking Wounded, the *Mardi Gras*, and the *Queen of Comus*, are examples of Paisley's use of irony throughout the exhibition. She jux-

taposes irony and comedy with pathos and tragedy. Examples of tragedy, evinced in previously described works such as *Demeter Mourns Kore*, are *The Death of Mary Saunders*, *The Delivery*, and many of the lino cuts relating to the confinement, delivery and adoption.

Beneath *The Walking Wounded* is located one of three altar installations. On this altar is placed a doll bride trapped in dusty veils beneath a bell glass. This was Paisley's first bride doll given to her a millenia ago in Florida. It is on display as a totemic reminder of the esteem given to bridehood or maidenhead. This doll is little more than a childhood object; and the elevation of it to an altar position is another Paisley poke at tradition.

Another altar displays the first gift from Paisley's young lover (of years ago), which is a book of woodcuts by Lynd Ward. The third altar bears the complete bound Books of Mary and of John Paisley (the son). These books are a series of woodcuts and lino cuts of the conception, confinement, delivery, and separation. These same prints appear along the walls in chronological order interspersed by paintings, sculptures, and installations.

This is a provocative show and a complex narrative told with clarity and humour. Many viewers (women especially are moved) were caught off guard by the ingeniousness of the presentation and found themselves inundated with personal remembrances.

It was necessary that the personal



MORNING CALL

FUSE

remembrances be exchanged. Some women toured the show a second time accompanied by different gallery visitors, speaking of similar or related experience, and long after the opening, women and men sat around in the back-room and exchanged stories of unwanted pregnancies, attitudes of doctors, parents, lovers, the system; or talked of first abortions, and the unsolicited horrors of being 20, unmarried, and pregnant in the 60's and 70's. This period, it should be remembered,



FIRST MEETING

pre-dated any significant effects by the women's movement in reforming the consciousness of either public representatives, social service agencies, churches, parents or the media.

Mary Burdick Paisley's exhibition concerned itself visually in making comment not only upon the foolishness (and fun) of passion and youth as well as the repressiveness of the multitudinous rules devised by a patriarchal society in order to retain all property (even to that issuing from the body of an 'unclaimed' female), but also deals in a very positive way with unresolved grief.

For those of us who have been unable to invent (for whatever reasons) the narrative for the releasing of this particular grief, M. Paisley's show was an affirmation that it is possible to release that grief through a re-creation of its history.

Pat Wilson

FEB/MARCH 1986

Prison of Images

Seizing the Means of Representation

DON ALEXANDER

THE POSITION OCCUPIED BY Native people in white culture is similar to that of women in patriarchy. From cigar store Indian, to cowboy and Indian movies, to the "noble savage," Native people live in a prison of images not of their own making. This carries over into the world of art where Indian artists face the pressures of turning out hack work for tourists on the one side, and paintings and sculpture (as with the Inuit) which are sufficiently 'primitive' for the art critics, on the other.

But there is a growing movement to take back the means of self-representation. One example of this is the new Native arts journal, *Akwekon* (pronounced: Ah-gway-go(m), which means "encompassing all") produced by the people at the Mohawk Reserve in upstate New York. (For more information, see "Mohawk Radio" and "Advocacy Journalism: Native Style" in *FUSE*, Dec. 1985.) Now into its second issue, *Akwekon* features poetry, visual art, music reportage, reviews of film, video and literature, essays, interviews and resource listings. Edited by an editorial collective of five people, *Akwekon* solicits work by Native artists from all over North America, and intends to extend its coverage to indigenous people overseas. I interviewed co-editor Alex Jacobs last summer, and in this review, I draw extensively from the interviews, essays and poems which appear in Issue 2-3.

The editors of *Akwekon* and many of the artists they've spoken with are concerned with two major issues — how to get out of the ghetto of 'Indian' art, be it tourist or primitive, and how to embrace new methods and materials while preserving the Native message and carrying it to a wider audience. In a conversation with Native artist Andrew Deslisle, Jr. (whose work is featured on the cover of Issue 2-3), an *Akwekon* editor noted the existence of "the Politics of



"People of the Longhouse" — oil on canvas

FUSE

Primitivism, where art has to look primitive or traditional...to a point where what [the art world wants] is artifacts...[When] people like the Maoris do modern fetishes with Coca-Cola cans, it's still real materials from the environment, but the Art World doesn't see it, they call it debased, touristy."

As Native artists investigate new mediums, new materials, and installation pieces, the attitude of the art establishment is not always one of acceptance. Peter Blue Cloud, a poet, visual artist, and one of the editors of *Akwekon* describes in a poem entitled "Portrait of An Art Born of Uncertainty" the angst that comes from being dependent on art world trustees for one's day-to-day existence.

But rebelling against the stereotypes is only one dilemma confronting Native artists. The other is how to get one's message across, without diluting one's Native identity. Indeed, the wisdom of Native artists reaching outside their own milieu is a matter of some debate. "When I talk about the magazine to Indian people, some say 'Well, why the hell do we have to share our culture with anybody?' It comes down to that assimilation and acculturation thing being both ways. You have to show people, it has to be right there on the page" (Alex Jacobs). In order to escape the stereotypes, Native artists need to communicate directly to non-Native people. In order to avoid assimilation, Indians need to acculturate the dominant society, teach it to respect and value what Native people have to offer.

What do Native people have to offer? Whereas most whites could clearcut a forest or stripmine a mountain (or consume the products derived from that) without feeling the slightest remorse, for Native people this would be an act of murder. The earth and its living things are sacred. For whites steeped in the scientific tradition, this would translate into the recognition that other creatures on the earth feel and, at a very rudimentary level, think and therefore have claims to existence equal to our own. The earth and its ecosystems form a complex whole which we disrupt at our own peril; rather than seek to dominate and control it, we should strive to find a balance. Not only do we need clean, uncontaminated air, food and water, but we need the spiritual nourishment that comes from experiencing nature in all its wildness, which means being able to appreciate "otherness" — that which does

not bear our stamp or imprint.

The derogation of nature characteristic of white society causes us to view ourselves as the centre of the universe and hence breeds an obsession with self. In the words of featured poet Linda Hogan:

We're full of bread and gas getting fat on the outside while inside we grow thin.

White culture stresses the development of self (or humanity) in opposition to other (or nature). From a Native perspective, self and other exist in a transcendent unity:

We become... the music balanced on a drum head, the softly shushing cocoon rattle, sharp tattoo of elderberry clapper, stomping of strange feet seeking red clay earth...

—Coyote/The Other Twin/Coyote by Peter Blue Cloud



Andrew Tatoroken DeLisle

If white society treats humanity and nature as separate and discrete, this tends to characterize its attitude towards phenomenon in general. In an essay entitled "The Politics of Primitivism," co-editor Alex Jacobs describes how white culture has transformed "living" Native art into dead artifacts:

While our lifestyles were romanticized (by both non-native and later native writers/artists) and elements were taken from Our Culture into Their Culture, it is also obvious that the intangibles were not taken in with the other gifts or elements. Each element had a relationship to all things, so many connections came together into one piece of everyday art. NOW, when

that piece of culture-that-once-was is displayed as Art, artifact, relic, object... where are the connections, the relationships? Their culture is all about this...separation...

The challenge for Native artists is to interweave form and content so tightly that they can't be split apart. To do so requires producing forms which possess sufficient universality to communicate to a wider audience, but which are unmistakable in their message. One rather unlikely example is that of comedian Charlie Hill, an Oneida Indian from upstate New York. Hill has appeared on T.V. talk shows and works the comedy circuit. He's fought hard to avoid being confined by the label of 'ethnic humour.'

When I started out a lot of them said... 'Oh, that's a good gimmick, being an Indian.' I say, 'Oh well, I can't help it, my parents are gimmicks.'

Hill's barbs at Catholicism ("I left being a Christian and became a born-again savage") have aroused the ire of some whites, "but if they're true Catholics, they gotta forgive me." Doing his routines in clubs, Hill sometimes gets the cold shoulder from whites who haven't learned to laugh at themselves:

My Dad told me once, 'White people discovered everything except their own sense of humour,' and I find that [if] you make a joke about Indians...they all go ha-ha, black people ha-ha, Mexican ha-ha, but make a joke about white people...what?

Hill is trying to get whites to "laugh with us...not at us," which is tantamount to accepting Natives as equals — no longer object to subject, viewed to viewer, represented to representer. To enter into a dialogue of equality requires that Native artists have their own venue where they can present their work and discuss it on their own terms, rather than being sandwiched into "special issues" as a tokenistic extra: "It'll be great when we can have our special issue...our special Czech and Polish poets issue" (Alex Jacobs).

For sample copy and subscription information, write to: *Akwekon*, Mohawk Nation, P.O. Box 196, via Roosevelttown, New York, U.S.A. 13683-0196.

Don Alexander

LEFT CURVE No. 10

Ermanno Olmi on the film "The Blue Planet"; **INTERVIEW WITH FRANCO PIAVOLI** by Silvano Agosti; **THE BLUE PLANET, a review with reflections on nature/art/politics**, by Csaba Polony; "HONEYBEES AGAINST DINOSAURS" by Akinyele Sadiq (article and poetry on the Grenadian revolution, invasion, aftermath); review of Allen Ginsberg's "Collected Works" and recent poems by Jack Hirschman; Poems by Sarah Menefee; **TRANSLATIONS OF ROQUE DALTON** by Sesshu Foster and Dolores Bravo; Fiction by Victor Hawkins and Jeff Goldthorpe; "GETTING PHYSICAL" by R.G. Davis; **MISC. WORKS, ETC.:** Update: "The Other America: History, Art, And Culture of the American Labor Movement" by Reinhard Schultz; **GRAPHICS** of Doug Minkler; **POETRY** by Todd Jailer, P.J. Laska, Mila D. Aguilar, Fritz Hamilton, Elsen Lubetsky; **ARTWORK** by Elliot Ross, Susan Schwartzberg, C. Polony; **THE CAPTIVE MINDS GROUP**, etc.; plus **CRITIQUE, DEBATE, & DIALOGUE:** letters by Bob Buckeye, Sesshu Foster, Carole Conde, Karl Beveridge, Ian Burn, & editor's response.

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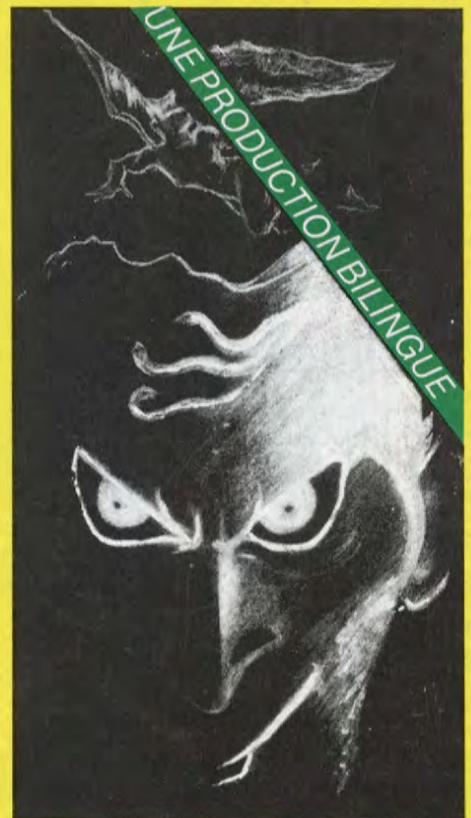
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