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A FUSE
BOOK REVIEW
SUPPLEMENT Page 330

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*The Story Behind
Organized Art*



NORTHERN LIGHTS: An Interview with John Hanson

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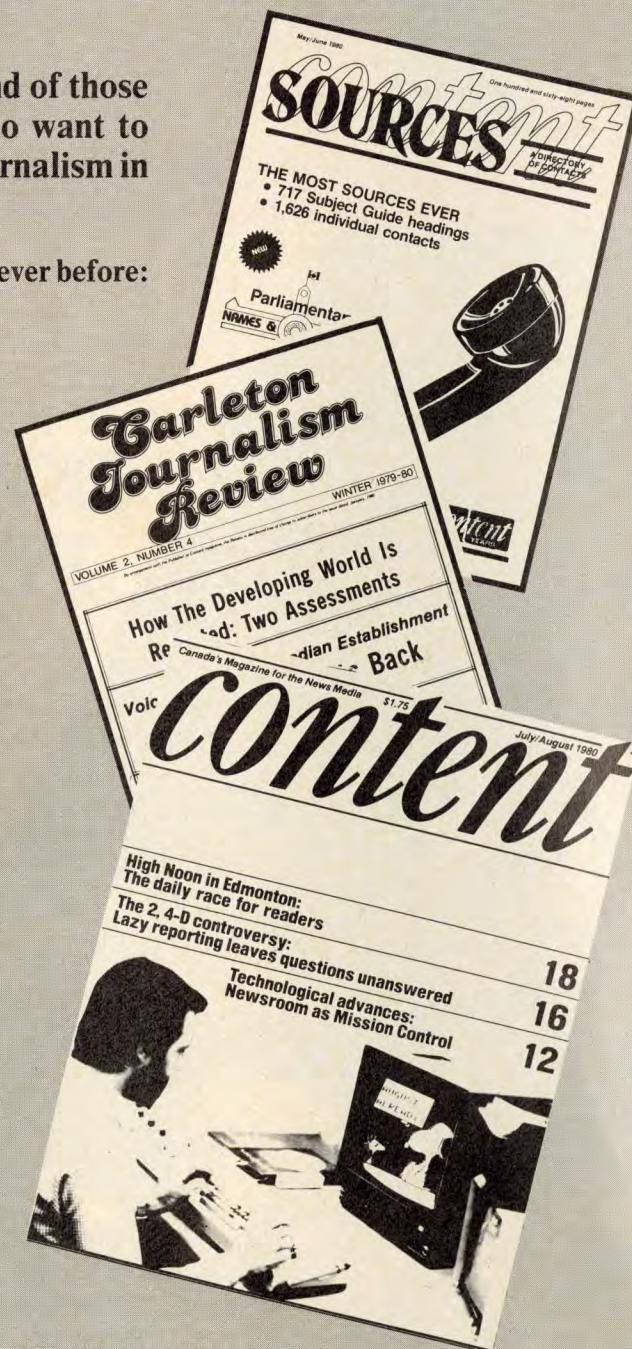
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CONTENTS

FUSE

NOVEMBER 1980

VOLUME IV NUMBER VI

FEATURES

THE STORY BEHIND ORGANIZED ART

By Clive Robertson
Canada's cultural funding is said to be a little piece of heaven. But what's it like for those involved? For artists' organizations, it's crumbs, Pavlovian intrigue, plus a side order of political manipulation. So what's new? A good helping of history and look who's trying to steal dessert.

Page 318

NORTHERN LIGHTS: AN INTERVIEW

By Richard Fung
Winning the Camera d'or for Best First Feature was quite an achievement for this small-budget picture. Fung talks to Hanson about the response of the North Dakota farmers to Northern Light's view of their history and the political intentions of this unusually cooperative venture in filmmaking.

Page 326

THE FUSE FALL BOOK SUPPLEMENT

The Monetarist Counter-Revolution, Canada's Crippled Dollar, Canada's Political Economy and "Our Lagging Economy"

Reviewed by Tom Walkom Page 330

Men in the Shadows and Deference to Authority

Reviewed by Jeff House Page 332

The Transsexual Empire

Reviewed by Nancy Johnson Page 334

Self Portrait: Canadian and Quebec Cinema

Reviewed by Ara Rose Parker Page 335

The Washington Connection & Third World Fascism
Reviewed by John Duncan Page 336

The Imaginary Canadian

Reviewed by Robert Reid Page 338

Labirinto

Reviewed by Martha Fleming Page 339

The Unmentionable Vice, Coming Out In the Seventies and Homosexuality and Liberation

Reviewed by George Smith Page 340

Voices of Discord, Dangerous Foreigners, The Organizer, Indians at Work, We Stood Together, and Soon To Be Born

Reviewed by Karl Beveridge Page 342

Community Media and Access

Reviewed by John Greyson Page 344

Beyond the Fragments

Reviewed by Tim Guest, Gary Kinsman Page 345

Sociology of Rock

Reviewed by Jody Berland Page 346

REPORTS

NICARAGUA REBUILDS

By Geoff Barnard Page 313

FESTIVAL OF WOMEN ARTISTS

By Nell Tenhaaf Page 315

REVIEWS

GAY GRAPHICS ARTS

By Tony Whitfield Page 348

THE TIMES SQUARE SHOW

By Tony Whitfield Page 350

MANAGING EDITORS: Clive Robertson, Lisa Steele. EDITORIAL BOARD: Karl Beveridge, Carol Conde, Martha Fleming, John Greyson, Tim Guest, Kerri Kwinter, David Mole, Bob Reid, Clive Robertson, Lisa Steele. CONTRIBUTING EDITORS: Hank Bull (Vancouver), Kenneth Coutts-Smith, Tom Sherman, Tony Whitfield (New York). CONTRIBUTORS: Geoff Barnard, Jody Berland, John Duncan, Richard Fung, Jeff House, Nancy Johnson, Gary Kinsman, Ara Rose Parker, George Smith, Nell Tenhaaf, Tom Walkom. PHOTOGRAPHER: Paul Collins. CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHERS: Geoff Barnard, Lynn Davis, Nell Tenhaaf. DESIGN: Steven Bock. PRODUCTION: Steven Bock, John Greyson, Clive Robertson. ADVERTISING AND DISTRIBUTION: John Greyson, Gillian Robinson, Ara Rose Parker. TYPESETTING: PinkType. PRINTING: Maclean-Hunter Ltd. PUBLISHER: Arton's Publishing Inc.

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17,000 Join LRT Fight

Not Their Ambition

Kenneth Coutts-Smith's review of *Pea Soup* is, at best, a paternalistic misinterpretation of the work and, at worst, a fine example of racism. In his desire to attain a leftier than thou position, he merely reflects a traditional weakness; the continuing estrangement of the academic theoretician from the worker. He conveniently ignores Falardeau and Poulin's earlier 'political' works such as *Continuons le combat*, 1971, *Les Canadiens sont là*, 1973, and *A force de Courage*, 1977. He mentions *Le Magra*, 1975, once only, in the very last sentence, contradictorily allowing it the status "videotape."

Coutts-Smith fails to address himself to the important issue of why Falardeau and Poulin would make a so-called "pre-political" tape. Can he really assume that after years of political analysis in other works, interventions and communal theatre activity, that Falardeau and Poulin have suddenly reverted to a "pre-political" state? Coutts-Smith says that *Pea Soup* "fails in its claim to a political analysis." What is obvious to all viewers, with the exception of hackneyed formula thinkers, is that *Pea Soup* makes no such claim. Deliberately.

Pea Soup is made to be seen by "pre-political" communities. (Coutts-Smith also refers to such people as "irredeemably lumpen" or "clinical alcoholics," when they appear on the screen.) The viewing audience is not meant to be already-converted professors with their hard-back copies of the Bedside Marx. It is meant to be shown to and discussed by "pre-political" groups. The "trivializing" he mentions is Falardeau and Poulin's effective usage of existing codes and content in the culture to create empathy with a particular audience. This is not a "movie," but a tool, made by Falardeau and Poulin, over a three-year period to work as a basis for consciousness raising. These are not artists who keep one eye on the recent aesthetic movements in the art market while watching their socialist consciences with the other.

The real clue as to the context in which *Pea Soup* is meant to be seen is the heavy slang, or joulle, on the audio track throughout. The "analytical clarity" that Coutts-Smith pines for would be in 'French'; the language of the ruling class. (Falardeau and Poulin enjoy offering to have their works translated into 'French'.) *Pea Soup* uses a 'guerilla rhetoric' (Burgin's term); the language of the audience. Coutts-Smith is really complaining about a kind of aesthetic overstatement or exaggeration, which he finds unfashionable and intellectually primitive. Fortunately, Falardeau and Poulin have enough experience in Quebec to recognize that not everyone has the insights of a Coutts-Smith and his class. They continue to make works which undermine and teach by generating an accessible "analysis."

Coutts-Smith would deny Falardeau and Poulin as "the model of political art." He would, however, magnanimously allow that "...when the genre has matured, and I would like to think that it will bear the signatures of Falardeau and Poulin." Considering the incomparably Colonial condescension of these remarks, I hope it will not shock him to discover that the former is not their ambition and that the latter would not be an acceptable stamp of approval.

Bruce Ferguson, Montreal

Calgary — LRT Update

At the meeting of Council on July 15th, the mayor and aldermen voted 9-5 to route LRT through four blocks of homes on 9A and 10th Streets, removing 42 residential buildings and displacing 271 residents. The decision was met with what the press called 'a near riot' when some two dozen effected residents stormed the sanctity of council chambers, ripping up copies of the mayor's "Report to the Citizens", a blatant piece of electioneering propaganda which cost \$70,000 of taxpayers' money.

The action resulted in extensive press coverage which brought the situation into sharp focus throughout the city. A decision was made to collect some 17,000 legal signatures from eligible voters in order to force a plebiscite on the issue. The petition, which was organized by the 9A St. Civic Defense Committee, seeks to cause council to reverse its decision of July 15th and to introduce a new by-law which will prevent the expropriation of residentially zoned property for future LRT alignments when adequate transportation corridors already exist within the specified areas.

The petition was kicked off with a plebiscite party which was attended by some 300 people representing about 35 Calgary communities. The press, surprised at such a demonstration of city-wide support, have continued to give us excellent coverage.

A lawyer has also been retained to investigate legal aspects of the decision in relation to existing legislation. Because of the election in October, community members are confident that the petition, in conjunction with potential legal action against the city, will put pressure on council to come up with an acceptable compromise.

At the present time some 750 petitions are being circulated city-wide by about 250 volunteers. The decision made by council on July 15th was by no means an end to the issue but merely the beginning of a new chapter. In this respect, council's decision has effectively mobilized not only Hillhurst/Sunnyside but also several other inner city communities. This council has given us an excellent organizing tool which will strengthen the inner city and will perhaps be instrumental in forcing some significant changes this Fall.

Brian Dyson, Calgary
9A St. Civic Defense Committee

Send correspondence to be published to: LETTERS, FUSE, 31 Dupont St., Toronto, Canada M5R 1V3. Next deadline: NOVEMBER 14, 1980.

The Hand That Feeds

BY KARL BEVERIDGE

It was a simple funeral, and raining. Spring was just beginning to push up through the ground. I had flown in the day before on routine business, when a small item in *The Ottawa Journal* had caught my eye. Jeffrey Jade, arts executive, and former visual arts Director at The Canada Council, had died of contumelious.

I don't usually pay much attention to such incidents, life being what it is, but the article announced that Jeffery Jade was one of the last of his generation. Along with such men as the former curator of The National Gallery, Brydon Sniff, and the former President of The Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, Gary Canny, he had been one of the giants of his era. A bit sentimental, I thought, and unusual in that these once-powerful figures had died in abject obscurity. Canny's funeral, I recall, had been particularly touching and sad. As his coffin was being lowered into the ground a tape-recorded voice had recited random fragments from the obituary columns. Aside from myself, only his accountant had been in attendance.

Looking around now at the sparse entourage witnessing Jeffrey Jade's final directive, I saw only a few of the many once-celebrated faces from years past. These now-faded art dilettantes were not so much grieving as they were dazed and confused. Never having recovered from the tumultuous events of the 1993 revolution, they were not here out of love or duty, but out of habit.

Today the battles and angst of that generation of artists who flourished in the 1970's and 1980's seem insignificant. Yet Jade, Sniff, and Canny were instrumental in laying the foundations of Corporate Culture.

The irony, perhaps even the pathos of this meager funeral gathering bears out the fact that they were as much the victims of corporate progress as they were its perpetrators.

We're all bored with the epic drama of the final collapse of liberal democracy. But what we don't hear too often, or at least can only now appreciate, is the contribution made by such men as Jade, Sniff and Canny. For all their faults and benevolent illusions they were, in fact, the true cultural visionaries of their age, the forerunners of corporate cultural management. Without their imagination, their drive, the transition from the anarchy of post-monopoly individualism to the collective tranquility of state corporatism would have been more traumatic than it in fact was.

The fine arts, although a marginal sector of the leisure industry, were of critical import to that industry as a whole. As one prominent media executive put it in the 1980's, "Fine art is an upwardly-mobile area of entertainment appealing to a broader-based and increasingly more sophisticated audience that would enhance any investment portfolio." It was also clear that the chaotic marketplace of entrepreneurial delight was nurturing discontent within the artistic workforce. To orchestrate the rapid growth of leisure production sound management was, of course, essential. Pleasure and discontent do not mix. Jade understood this intuitively.

It was Jade who, along with Sniff and Canny, made the first rudimentary steps towards the scientific management of the fine arts. It was they who first developed such now-commonplace practices as account financing aesthetic acceptability ratios, institutional regional penetration guides, educational de-skilling programs, international market packaging modules, aesthetic diversification feedback systems, and so forth. Their greatest accomplishment

however, was to establish the Cultural Redundancy Grid. Under this program any member of the artistic workforce could be smoothly replaced by another without any loss in the level of aesthetic quality. This achievement, pioneered in Canada, freed a nascent arts management from a conceptual dependence on the workforce, a prerequisite in any corporate structure.

It was also under the guidance of these same men that initially bureaucratic routines were transformed into efficient and profitable management strategies. The old empire of bureaucratic intransience was replaced by the dynamics of a mobile management. Top executives moved from the museum vault, to the editorial office, from the gallery wall to the agency boardroom with frequency and ease. This not only encouraged the uniform development of cultural institutional sectors but provided a multi-skills executive strata. Jade himself, once art critic for *Time* (Canada), moved from the Council to take on the editorship of *artscanada* (now *ArtCorp*) in the early 1980's.

The policies of The Canada Council (and its provincial offspring) were continually re-designed, and their funding arbitrarily re-allocated at inadequate levels to prevent the development of any alternative organization structure that might challenge their funding monopoly. New blood was continually recruited either directly, or indirectly via 'independent' artists institutions, into management, creating dissension and divided loyalties in the workforce itself. The most effective strategy, however, was management's ability to deflate their own role, allowing the workforce to maintain their illusion of independence. It was not unusual to overhear a cocktail slurping arts executive tearing his agency to shreds, insisting that the only reason he stayed on was to secure what he could for the good of the artist. So successful were these strategies that most artists

Write The Warden

refused to see any similarity between cultural production and that of industry proper.

As artists were not hired labour, these pundits would argue, and as there was no direct relation between services performed and money paid, nor was there even a direct accountability to management, it hardly constituted an industrial, or even a wage labour situation. Although, strictly speaking, this was true up until the late 1980's, these artists predicated their position on a clear separation of economic and ideological forms of control. Fortunately, they failed to understand that the development of productive forms (both technically and artistically), have a direct bearing both on the social content and the accessibility of the work produced. The freedom of the 'independent' producer was dependent upon their being socially ineffectual. The strategy of cultural poverty in the fine arts was deliberate, until the time when the mechanisms of industrial management were securely in place and a fully developed corporate culture could emerge unchallenged. To claim, as these artists did, that those who pull the purse strings have no say in what was produced, was one of the great deceptions of the period. It was a deception that prevented the development of effective opposition and preserved the finer qualities of aesthetic brutality.

Most of us at the time, and I'm the first to admit it, had little understanding of the course events were taking. But Jade had few illusions about the unique sanctity of privatized taste and understood more profoundly the real centre of creative power, especially since it was embodied in none other than himself. But as with all men of vision, history devours their wisdom. For men like Jade, Sniff and Canny themselves did not grasp the full significance of their own achievements. What ultimately drove these men on, however, was a greater fear, the nightmare of all lean and hungry executives, the fear that those they manage might organize for themselves and turn against them. This accounts for both their unique and progressive achievements as well as their eventual dismissal and relegation to the dustbin of history. ●

Censorship assumes many forms. The western press particularly loves the minutiae of state censorship as practiced by Soviet block countries.

But what about the Odyssey Group at Millhaven Maximum Security Penitentiary. This group of prisoners, all serving long-term sentences, produces The Odyssey Newsletter *The Prisoner's Voice*. It seems that prison officials decided to make things difficult for them lately. And in small, arbitrary ways, the censorship began. Issues of the Newsletter which were submitted for pre-publication clearance were returned; clearance denied because of "changes demanded" — a word here, a phrase there, nothing major, just picky details. Incredible as it seems, at one point the Warden suggested that he be given space in the Newsletter to air his views. The prisoners vetoed his request; he was informed that he had many avenues open for his opinions while they had only one — their Newsletter. But by this time, the prison printshop was suddenly no longer

available to print the Newsletter. And of course, there's the donated typewriter that was returned by the prison officials and the desk that was given and then taken back and so many other petty, trivial details, maddening in their seemingly random nature but all aimed at one end — to disorganize and demoralize a critical voice within the prison system.

The latest Newsletter was finally printed and mailed, but Odyssey's most recent press releases have been returned unsent by the Assistant Warden of Socialization because the releases hadn't been "approved." Of course, press releases date very quickly. No doubt Odyssey's latest will be diminished in efficacy by the time it gains "approval." But that's part of the game.

One suggestion: subscribe to *The Prisoner's Voice* (\$4 for one year, six issues, available from Odyssey Group, P.O. Box 280, Bath, Ontario K0H 1G0) and when your next issue seems way overdue, write to the Warden and ask him what he's been up to. *Lisa Steele*

Fuse Goes Monthly!

Starting with this issue *FUSE* will appear ten times a year. While the number of pages has been reduced to 44 pages per issue, over a year it will create an extra 80 pages or a 50 percent increase in editorial content. This means that (when the initial problems of space are solved) we will be able to offer a better service in our News and Reports sections, as well as offering more timely perspectives and analysis in our features section.

Throughout the summer, *FUSE*'s editorial board met often to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of past issues. From these productive discussions we hope to build more consistency and continuity within all areas of the magazine.

FUSE also has undergone graphic repairs. Steven Bock, who

previously had designed some of the feature layouts, has redesigned our monthly format which we hope provides increased legibility.

Because we are going monthly our subscription rates have been raised to \$12.00. The newsstand price remains fixed at \$1.95. Our subscription rates have never reflected our true production costs and they still don't. *FUSE* has a circulation of 10,000 which means a high unit cost of 89¢ per copy. This means that for every subscription (including domestic mailing) it costs us \$10.80 to produce your ten issues. So what can we say? We hope that you will subscribe, re-subscribe and give gift subscriptions to your friends. This is no business. This is survival!

Clive Robertson

Reconstruction in Nicaragua

A year after Somoza's overthrow, the FSLN is rebuilding both the economy and the culture.

BY GEOFF BARNARD

Post-Revolutionary Nicaragua

July 19, 1979, brought the FSLN to a successful military seizure of power in Nicaragua. However, as in most Third World liberation wars, the tasks of reconstruction have been enormous. The protracted civil war resulted in a flight of capital and a systematic destruction of productive capabilities by reactionary forces within the country. Because Somoza had such extensive control

Managua still looks like a nuclear wasteland, and the new revolutionary government has inherited this chaos.

Beyond the destruction from the earthquake, in the last weeks of the civil war, Somoza carried out the aerial bombing of his own cities. In the final days of the war, his ammunition stocks depleted, Somoza chose to drop barrels of gasoline on suspected guerilla strongholds in urban centres. (The bombing was not particularly discriminate, as there is documentation of strafed non-military targets.)

The Literacy Campaign

A pamphlet produced by the National Commission of Literacy (CNA) outlines the principal objectives of the literacy campaign:

- to fulfill the revolutionary obligation to eradicate illiteracy in all the national territory, making the first step in the humanist transformation of the new Nicaraguan Society.
- to collaborate on the plan of the National Government of reconstruction in the year 1980: the plan of Economic Reactivation, to put



of industry, transportation, and communications in Nicaragua, he was able to seriously cripple the economy when he evacuated all liquid assets just before his overthrow. The present revolutionary government has requested foreign governments to freeze most of his holdings in foreign banks, claiming that they belong to the Nicaraguan people.

In addition to the extensive rebuilding and reorganisation of the economy, another major concern was the actual physical reconstruction of the cities. The earthquake of 1972 did damage to three major cities, Leon, Granada and particularly the capital Managua, which lay on the epicentre of the fault. International aid for relief served primarily to further fatten the wallet of Somoza, so that eight years later, downtown

With the economy devastated and the country physically in ruins, the new government also faced a cultural backwater, nurtured by three centuries of imperialist plundering and four decades of the Somoza family's dynasty. Under Somoza, there was no Ministry of Culture, no Ministry of Social Welfare, and an illiteracy rate over 50 percent.

A literate population is a presupposition of anyone trying to develop and build a social movement in Western industrial countries. The impediment presented by mass illiteracy to the organization of a mass-based and mass-informed revolutionary process, including an indigenous peoples' culture, is enormous. The new government recognized the primary need for an all-out literacy campaign and began to act.

emphasis on productive tasks, to ensure that literacy and production are the priorities of the revolution.

- to incorporate into the revolutionary process, by raising political consciousness, more than one million Nicaraguans involved in the literacy campaign. (The implication is that political consciousness raising is a two way street between those teaching and those learning to read and write.)
- to achieve a diverse education for young literacy campaign workers, informed by their experiences in the country with the peasantry.
- to give the popular masses the capacity to make use of the opportunities offered to them by the Sandinista revolution.
- to give special focus to a literacy program in the native tongues of the Atlantic coast inhabitants, in order to integrate them into the na-

tion.

Virtually every literate Nicaraguan is involved in the "alfabetizacion" campaign. All high schools and the university have been closed for the campaign, in order to free students, teachers and professors to participate in the process of eliminating illiteracy. The literacy campaign has been organized into squads, columns and brigades. A squad is composed of thirty "brigadistas" or "alfabetizadores," and a column is a grouping of four squads. There are six brigades in the campaign, each assigned to a geographic zone of the country, and each bearing the name of a revolutionary hero. There is a particularly high rate of illiteracy amongst the peasantry, or "campesinos." Because the literacy campaign brigadistas tend to have urban and mi-

Cultural Reconstruction

In light of the enormous problems of economic and political reorganization in Nicaragua, it is very encouraging to see an active and conscious cultural reconstruction going on. Throughout the country, there are about thirty "cultural houses." These are the homes of former Somozistas that were seized spontaneously by the people after the military victory of July 19. As well, there are eighteen "popular cultural centres" which were instituted and are directed by the Ministry of Culture. The Ministry of Culture itself is located in Managua, in the former estate of General Somoza.

As previously mentioned, there was no Ministry of Culture under Somoza. (There was one "cultural

that blatantly reactionary "culture" still has a market in Nicaragua. The same official said that the Nicaraguan Institute of Cinema, a department of the Ministry of Culture, would not allow *The Deer Hunter* to be shown because it portrayed "a serious misrepresentation of U.S. imperialism's involvement in Viet Nam." The Institute is trying to displace films from the U.S. by encouraging the showing of Mexican, Venezuelan, Cuban, German etc. films. The same is true of television programming. Although private radio stations still exist, all television is under state control.

In music, there is activity both at the conservatory, and in the area of indigenous/folk music. The conservatory begins to take students at ages seven to nine, or about



photos: Geoff Barnard

roots (and thus an education literacy drive has involvement of young people to try to side. Faced with a existence in a radically environment, there has been a demoralization. this, small dance/theatrical troupes tour the country forming for these brigadistas, in order to sustain morale.

Brigadistas of the literacy campaign who are teaching in the country serve a dual role. As well as teaching reading and writing, they research the flora and fauna of the country, gather folk stories and songs, do archeological investigations, and retrieve the oral history of the Revolutionary war. There are, as well, numerous other ways in which cultural activity (including the training of artists), ties in with the literacy campaign.

issue of cultural imperialism, the concept was stressed that at this point in Nicaragua's history, to simply throw out American culture entirely would create a vacuum that could not immediately be filled. Instead, a popular native culture would have to be encouraged, so that the people themselves could create their own culture, and consequently judge and discard those products of imperialism which no longer had relevance, and no longer satisfied them.

This does not mean, however,

Whereas before the revolution the conservatory placed emphasis on developing performance musicians, the new emphasis is on training music teachers.

The national orchestra, which before the revolution was composed largely of American and European or European-trained musicians, has been reorganized around a larger core of Nicaraguans. Professional musicians in the orchestra are paid approximately \$180.00 a month, and students approximately \$130.00. Since the

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Developing Feminist Resources

1. *FUSE* magazine is produced by a) a small self-owned company, b) a subsidiary of Maclean-Hunter Ltd. c) a group of artists and writers, or d) as a tax write-off for a large Toronto restaurant.
2. *FUSE* magazine is a) read by too many, b) read by a few, c) read by a few too many, or d) read by many too few.
3. How does *FUSE* survive economically? a) by large government grants, b) as a UNESCO project, c) as a charitable foundation, or d) by advertising and subscriptions.
4. *FUSE* is written by a) out of work journalists, b) practitioners, c) mostly academics on sabbatical, or d) a subversive collective.
5. *FUSE* is read by a) community workers b) minorities c) women d) artists e) labour f) bureaucrats g) journalists h) the new left i) liberals j) educators k) students.
6. *FUSE* existed for its first three years under the name a) Centerspread b) The New Forum c) That Magazine d) Saturday Morning e) The Painters' Politic f) Centerspin or g) Centerfold.
7. *FUSE* is available a) in Ontario only, b) in Ontario and California only, c) in every Canadian city or d) in Canada, the US and Europe.
8. *FUSE* calls itself the cultural newsmagazine. Does this mean that a) art is life? b) we see a profitable market where everyone else sees a desert? c) life is news? d) news is culture? or e) all newsmagazines print fiction?
9. What is *FUSE* missing? a) autobiographies of famous artists, b) indigenuity, c) national scandals, or d) a good survey of why so many independent magazines are folding.

Answers: 1) c. 2) d. *FUSE* does not reach our potential audience. If you find *FUSE* useful — don't keep it to yourself. 3) d. *FUSE* exists mostly by its self-generated income from advertising, subscriptions and distribution. This is also matched with invaluable volunteer labour. 4) b. 95% of our content is written by practitioners. 5) *FUSE* is read by all those from a-k-g. 7) *FUSE* is available in Canada, the US and less so in Europe. 8) All of the suggested answers are wrong. We view 'culture' as a common link between various communities, minorities, labour, etc.. What we print as news is often considered unnewsworthy by other forms of print or electronic media, not because it is not of 'mass' interest but more because of their ideological bias which refuses to recognize news when they see it. While many small magazines are also dedicated to a counter-news function, *FUSE* additionally sees 'cultural expression' as a thrust of this common link. 9) While we could look at d), what is missing is often our readers' input, though to date a large number of our new contributors (writers) are old readers.

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tion. Virtually every literate Nicaraguan is involved in the "alfabetizacion" campaign. All high schools and the university have been closed for the campaign, in order to free students, teachers and professors to participate in the process of eliminating illiteracy. The literacy campaign has been organized into squads, columns and brigades. A squad is composed of thirty "brigadistas" or "alfabetizadores," and a column is a grouping of four squads. There are six brigades in the campaign, each assigned to a geographic zone of the country, and each bearing the name of a revolutionary hero. There is a particularly high rate of illiteracy amongst the peasantry, or "campesinos." Because the literacy campaign brigadistas tend to have urban and middle class

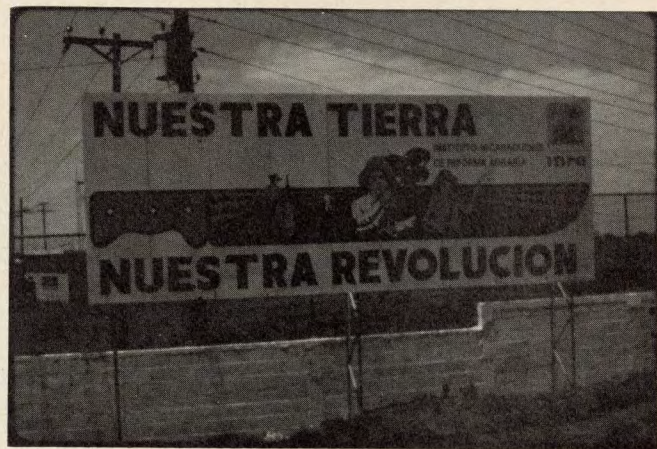
Cultural Reconstruction

In light of the enormous problems of economic and political reorganization in Nicaragua, it is very encouraging to see an active and conscious cultural reconstruction going on. Throughout the country, there are about thirty "cultural houses." These are the homes of former Somozistas that were seized spontaneously by the people after the military victory of July 19. As well, there are eighteen "popular cultural centres" which were instituted and are directed by the Ministry of Culture. The Ministry of Culture itself is located in Managua, in the former estate of General Somoza.

As previously mentioned, there was no Ministry of Culture under Somoza. (There was one "cultural liaison officer" who had a desk in

that blatantly reactionary "culture" still has a market in Nicaragua. The same official said that the Nicaraguan Institute of Cinema, a department of the Ministry of Culture, would not allow *The Deer Hunter* to be shown because it portrayed "a serious misrepresentation of U.S. imperialism's involvement in Viet Nam." The Institute is trying to displace films from the U.S. by encouraging the showing of Mexican, Venezuelan, Cuban, German etc. films. The same is true of television programming. Although private radio stations still exist, all television is under state control.

In music, there is activity both at the conservatory, and in the area of indigenous/folk music. The conservatory begins to take students at ages seven to nine, or about grade 3 level. From the age of



roots (and thus an education), the literacy drive has involved a migration of young people to the countryside. Faced with a subsistence existence in a radically different environment, there has been a problem of demoralization. To counter this, small dance/theater/music troupes tour the countryside, performing for these brigadistas, in order to sustain morale.

Brigadistas of the literacy campaign who are teaching in the country serve a dual role. As well as teaching reading and writing, they research the flora and fauna of the country, gather folk stories and songs, do archeological investigations, and retrieve the oral history of the Revolutionary war. There are, as well, numerous other ways in which cultural activity (including the training of artists), ties in with the literacy campaign.

the corner of another ministry.) As well, there was no state funding of the arts. Accompanying the absence of any institutions to encourage indigenous culture, the inevitable (and profitable) importation of American culture occurred. In conversation with an official at the Ministry of Culture on the issue of cultural imperialism, the concept was stressed that at this point in Nicaragua's history, to simply throw out American culture entirely would create a vacuum that could not immediately be filled. Instead, a popular native culture would have to be encouraged, so that the people themselves could create their own culture, and consequently judge and discard those products of imperialism which no longer had relevance, and no longer satisfied them.

This does not mean, however,

seven to twenty-one, music students attend regular school in the morning, and study music theory and practice at the conservatory in the afternoon. (This structure will not be implemented, however, until the one year literacy campaign is completed, and the school system has been reopened.) Whereas before the revolution the conservatory placed emphasis on developing performance musicians, the new emphasis is on training music teachers.

The national orchestra, which before the revolution was composed largely of American and European or European-trained musicians, has been reorganized around a larger core of Nicaraguans. Professional musicians in the orchestra are paid approximately \$180.00 a month, and students approximately \$130.00. Since the

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revolution, the orchestra has played only once at the Teatro Ruben Dario (the large new concert hall in Managua). They do perform more, however, in the suburbs, in churches, etc.

Perhaps the best example of the flowering of popular music is Carlos Mejia Godoy. A singer-songwriter and guitarist, he has written numerous songs around the revolution, Nicaragua's future, and Central American solidarity. He can neither read nor write music, and so works in collaboration with other musicians who transcribe his works onto paper. One of his major works is called *Misa Campesino* (peasants mass) which is a hybrid of Spanish, Mosquito Indian, and Black/English Caribbean musics. (The Atlantic coast of Nicaragua has a large Black English-speaking population.)

In the visual arts, activity is very integrated with the literacy campaign. In Managua, there are four squadrons of painters (five to six students and teachers in each), which work at four different locations in the city, each with a group of 100 to 150 children. Of several popular cultural centres visited in Managua, the teaching staffs were

composed entirely of youths in their late teens. There was no indication of any overt ideological "directing" of the drawing activity of the children. As well there was not the anticipated profusion of red and black, the official colours of the FSLN, which are highly visible in Nicaraguan society today. Activity seemed to be oriented to developing visual awareness. The whole situation seemed quite typical of primary school drawing classes anywhere.

The flattened rubble which now constitutes the main part of downtown Managua is slowly being rebuilt. Because of destroyed and previously underdeveloped productive capacity, in combination with an enormous unemployment rate among skilled tradespeople, reconstruction is very labour-intensive. Sports facilities, and specifically basketball courts, seem to dominate reconstruction plans. The central part of the city is being rebuilt with wide non-vehicular walkways, made of hand laid brick. All new construction is with earthquake-proof steel reinforced concrete.

I was told of discontent in the "barrios", the poor suburbs, because money was being spent in

this way when the people didn't have enough cooking oil. This serves to indicate the pressures and dilemmas of the financially constrained government: cooking oil is a basic necessity, but the development of recreational facilities is needed to visibly substantiate the revolution's promise of a new and better future.

Today, the consolidation of Nicaragua's revolution is a tightrope walk. Although the U.S. has officially recognized the government of the FSLN, there is still fear of a U.S.-backed counter-revolution. The Sandinista government must deal with President Carter's hypocritical "human rights" condition on U.S. aid, considerations that never impeded aid to Somoza's fascist regime. Nicaragua is anxious to avoid the U.S. trade embargo that has hindered the success of Cuba's revolution for the last 20 years.

The great unity of the Nicaraguan people in their fight against the tyrant Somoza has put their revolution on a solid footing. In the face of a host of contradictions, typical of those all new revolutions must deal with, it will be their own optimism and determination that will bring its success. ●

REPORT

Reclaiming the Mermaid

This Festival of Women Artists pointed to some of the problems of a truly world-wide solidarity.

BY NELL TENHAAF

An International Festival of Women Artists was held in Copenhagen, Denmark from July 14-30, in conjunction with the United Nations Mid-Decade World Conference for Women. The feminist context of this Festival, attended by women from approximately twelve countries, raised the inevitable question of how relevant women's art production is to the feminist movement and vice-versa. The majority of women participants represented women artists' groups in their countries, though several were unaffiliated, or were still students. Visual arts, literature, dance, music, theatre,

Nell Tenhaaf is a visual artist and the coordinator of Powerhouse Gallery in Montreal.

and performance art were included. Canada was represented by Marion Barling of Women in Focus, Vancouver, and myself.

The usual assumption that institutionalized art has little if anything to do with political activity was, at least on the surface, reinforced here. The art events were physically separated from the political events. The main Festival activities took place in the Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek Museum, a bus ride away from the Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) Forum where a number of events, workshops, and unofficial encounters were taking place daily. This "official alternative" to the UN Conference had also happened in Mexico City in 1975 and seemed to be where a lot of the real action was going on. Participants in the

art Festival had access to the NGO forum but not to the official UN Conference.

The Glyptotek activities — panel discussions, slide/talk presentations, literary readings, music, and continuous international slide shows — were attended for the most part by other Festival participants and passing tourists. But they were supplemented by several workshops held at the NGO Forum, artists' activities within "Vivencia" (Spanish for "an experience that becomes part of life," an open-ended program of events under the auspices of the Forum), plus nightly showings of feminist films, some performance and theatre presentations. These activities had a less insular feeling.

This Festival was essentially an American initiative sponsored by

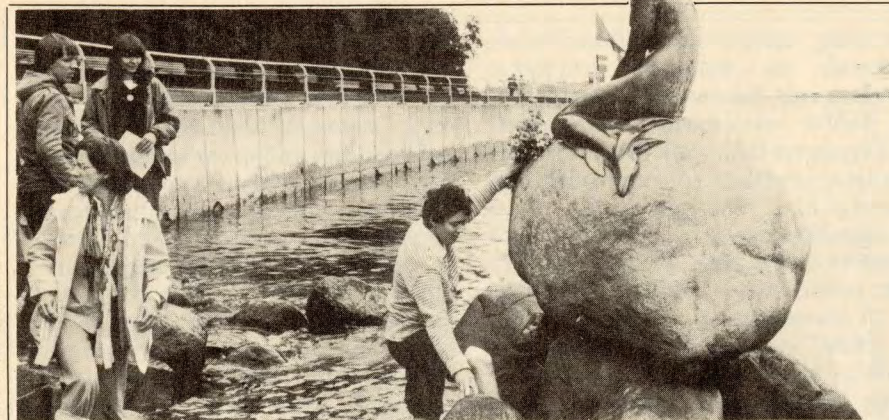


photo: Nell Tenhaaf

"Gathering of the Mermaids", Ann Mavor's performance in Copenhagen.

the New York City based Coalition of Women's Art Organizations, which represents 95 women artists' groups in the U.S. The CWAOW was organized so that a delegate could be sent to represent women artists' groups at the 1977 National Women's Conference in Houston, Texas. In retrospect, this seems like a healthy sign of emergence by women artists' groups from the cocoon of the gallery system. The Houston delegate, Susan Schwalb, was the American Project Director of the Copenhagen Festival.

It became apparent through the Festival workshops that I attended, and also through visiting some European women's art groups, that alignment of women's art production with a broader feminist movement is for the most part regionally or nationally determined. It depends on such overlapping factors as state involvement in the arts, the social climate vis-à-vis feminist political activity, the historical role of art and the artist in the society. Western European countries such as Denmark and Holland have the most in common with North America in this respect. Government programs are slowly increasing support of their activities on both an individual and collective level, through cultural funding agencies and/or social programs aimed at women. The latter usually have as a criteria some extension of programming or production into the realm of services for women, informational or educational in nature, thereby encouraging a feminist position. Besides the women's art organizations that I visited in Copenhagen and Amsterdam, there are apparently such spaces in Vienna and West Berlin as well.

The common problems faced by women artists were aired in one

workshop, and by now they read like a well-known litany: isolation, economic survival, responsibility for childcare, lack of role models, etc. But when one of the Danish organizers mentioned as a problem the lack of use of artists by political groups, and another the exclusion of women from (presumably male-run) artists' groups, the uniqueness of each national situation seemed like a more useful perspective. An artist from Cameroon in Central Africa, white and obviously foreign-educated, spoke about the traditional integration of artists in her country into the social order, how they are trained through their families and are by definition politically involved. They express the life of the people and are supported by their village. On learning that women artists in African countries are restricted to textile design for clothing, how can western artists, steeped in the notion of individual, personal expression, begin to formulate a position of solidarity?

Though a woman artist from Mongolia showed some slides of very traditionally-crafted work illustrating state ideology, there was virtually no Third World representation in the Festival. Obviously, women in developing countries have more pressing problems than art production. But the urge to establish links with unfamiliar cultures is there. Within the official UN Conference and NGO Forum, the craving expressed by the western Women's Movement for international solidarity was consistently thwarted on several occasions by political reality. One of the more publicized instances was the walkout of the PLO and African National Congress delegations when Egypt's Mrs. Sadat rose to address the Conference. In

one Forum workshop I attended, a group of women from six African countries expressed their disaffection with western involvement in the question of genital mutilation. Their message of "hands off our issue" to American Fran Hosken, author of a report which she describes as "the first comprehensive work" on the subject, was met with some confusion by those of us who consider this a compelling issue. If there is to be an international feminist art, the limits to commonality in references and traditions have to be taken into account. In the introduction to the catalogue of the International Feminist Art Exhibition that is currently touring Holland (For a review of this exhibition, see *FUSE* Vol 4, No. 2, Jan. 1980), the "traditional creativity" of the women among primitive people" is described as one source in the search for a feminine aesthetic, particularly the abstract-geometric elements used in decoration. While this search has been an important development, it's more likely that it reinforces a sense of female history among western women artists than that it provides any potential link to Third World women artists.

This catalogue introduction raises other questions that were present but never really confronted at the first International Festival of Women Artists: the existence of a specifically female visual idiom, or form language, i.e. the formalist approach to the issue of feminist art; the importance of video, performance and other new media in expressing feminist ideology; the isolation of visual artists from the larger feminist support group. Without any real overview from which to start, and working with restricted budgets, the organizers of the Festival can't be faulted for ending up with a rather haphazard product. At this point it can only be considered encouraging that the subject of art and feminism is complex and becoming wider in scope. The Danish organizers are planning to develop an international exchange of the slides that they gathered for the Festival, and another meeting of women artists is planned for Vienna in 1983. In Canada, *Festival '81: A Celebration of the Arts by, for and about Women* is being planned for June 1981 in London, Ontario. ●

THE STORY BEHIND ORGANIZED ART

THE NEW MUSEUMS • PART 2 • BY CLIVE ROBERTSON

Of all the recent recessionary lay-offs and shutdowns in Canada, one example sheds strong light on the disposable value of human labour. When two hundred union members recently occupied Houdaille Industries, an Ontario auto-parts plant due to be closed on October 31st., it was reported that 38 of the workers had more than thirty years service with the company. Under a collective agreement, those over 55 with more than thirty years service could collect pension benefits of \$605 per month. One maintenance worker would have been eligible three months after the plant is due to close. He will now have to wait until he's 65, ten years later before he can get a basic pension of about \$350. Another employee would have been only six days away from retirement after working for 34 years. Bill Newman told the *Globe and Mail*: "We've never had a strike since I was hired in November, 1948. We gave the company more production and now we're given this treatment." Houdaille Industries received more

than \$500,000 from the Federal Government three years ago for experimental work on a chrome-plated aluminum bumper.

Houdaille illustrates a failure of long-term labour "partnerships", a fact that artists, particularly artists who work in artists' organizations could and should look at more closely. In Canada, the state through its various federal, provincial and civic funding agencies is often the "partner" for such organizations. Some of these artist-run spaces have already reached the first ten years of their service. During that period of time the funding agencies have themselves grown as they have received fresh validation from a younger labour force that has provided endless educational services and almost costless research. Some funding agencies, notably The Canada Council have prudently developed one-to-one relationships with these new artists' Since 1971, Clive Robertson has worked within artist-run organizations as an artist, curator, publisher, producer and director.

organizations and their representatives. And, because the visible artist community is small, informal negotiations have developed between artists' organizations and the funding agencies that could be said to be in place of union-management discussions. Of course there have been no real 'contracts'. Grants to artists' organizations could be seen as 'Public Tenders' — you make a competitive bid for funding and promise maximum service. And like all arts organizations this process is repeated annually.

For artists' organizations it is a very demeaning process and no matter what is presumed, there are far too few alternate funding sources either from the private, business or educational sectors. It is essentially a one-company town, and you take what you can get.¹ The new cultural 'industry' in Canada which is being 'exported' to Europe and the U.S. as a shining example of state generosity and creative invention has largely been possible through cheap labour and

self-exploitation from within Canadian artists' organizations.²

In this second of a series of articles on "The New Museum" I intend to show an evolution that began at the end of the Sixties, with community artist groups and community-based social service groups as an aspect of counter-culture that developed into a problem for the government in Canada at the beginning of the Seventies. This youth crisis was sedated by heavy government make-work funding. On this wave of 'experimental' projects many artist-organizations were born and as the make-work programmes dropped, a select group of artists' organizations survived with funding from The Canada Council. The new arrangement as I will attempt to demonstrate was politically weak for those organizations from the beginning. When an association of artists' organizations was formed in 1976 there was an opportunity to formulate a common strategy and strength based upon the considerable achievements of the individual structures and their constituent artists. What was possible and what factors prevented the development of a new artist-public structure that could have permanently changed the production and distribution of art in Canada?

ARTISTS AND ARTISTS' ORGANIZATIONS

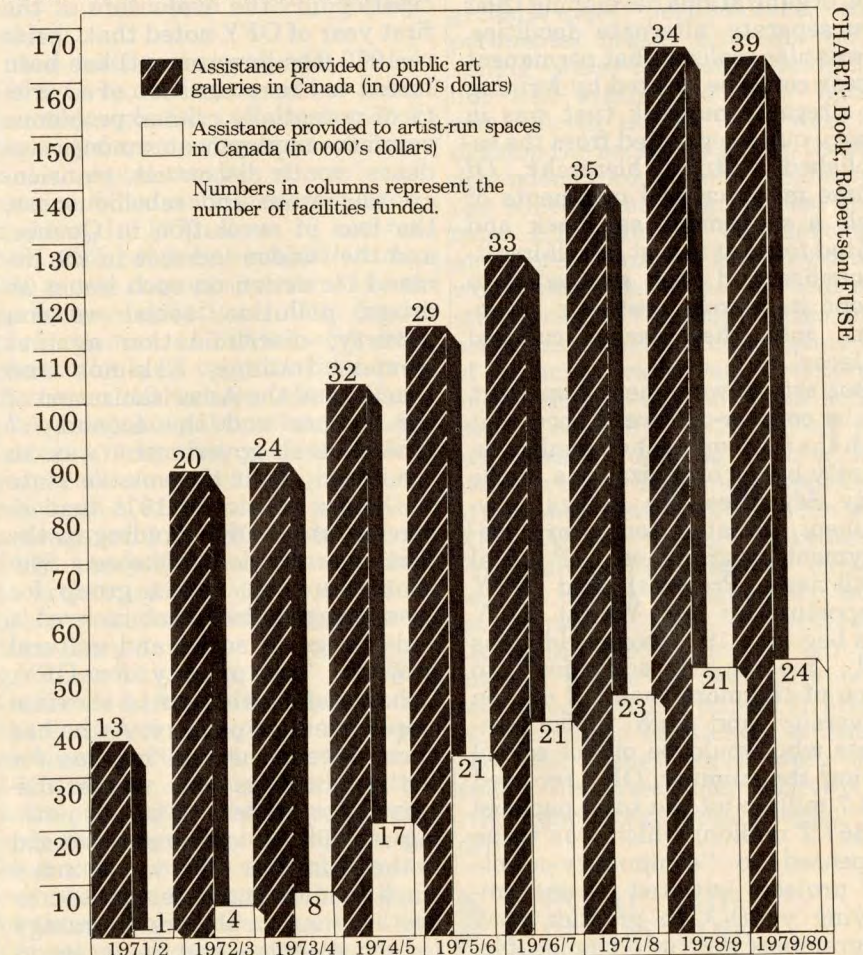
Historically artists, unlike artisans, have continually been linked with patrons, be it the church, the wealthy, or the state. Needless to say this historical relationship has coloured the social image of the artist as a quasi-intellectual bum, a perpetual adolescent, an opportunist and so on. The patrons and validators in turn have over-valued and mystified the social role of the artist within recent history. Much is said, most of it negative, of the 'privileged' position of the artist within society. While this 'privilege' could be said to occur in very special instances e.g. within institutionalized educational structures, for the most part artists' labour is unprotected. There is no privilege in being "self-employed" if that term is used to cover-up a state of being unemployed/underemployed. For many artists the self-description 'artist' is so associated with historical decay that they prefer

plain handles like writer, painter, musician, sculptor, or dancer. Many artists now call themselves 'independent producers' which is another term for "self-employed", still others prefer 'cultural-worker' which again suggests paid labour. But there has also been a change in what artists do, and while twenty years ago this multi-functional role was considered *avant-garde* it is now *ordinaire*. This 'new' work is not always so new. It is an admixture of older expressions with (often) new technologies. An artist may make video/audio tapes, write, build props or tools, give public performances and lectures, work both collaboratively and independently, self-organize exhibits, publications etc.. While all 'new' artists don't do all of these things, many do most of them. As can be seen many of these functions involve both distribution as well as production which should be remembered in the following definition of artists' organization.

So what are artists' organizations? Like the above broader def-

inition of artist, artists' organizations tend to be multi-functional. They are primarily shared production, display and distribution facilities, begun, organized and administered by artists. They could be as specialized as a video access centre, a photo-gallery, a women's co-operative or a film distribution centre.

The major impetus for the growth of artists' organizations was the failure of those public institutions that had been established supposedly to "encourage the development of the arts". The pre-1970 history of artist groups in Canada is badly documented. But there were a number of such groups who set out to replace the *function* of an inadequate public gallery, a stagnant art magazine, inaccessible funding sources, or to make the various (media) tools of production more available. This move by artists who saw the need to develop collectively has often been described as being necessary because the traditional institutions were not prepared to accommodate



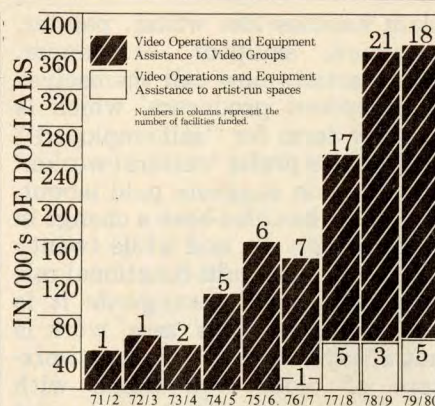
In 1977, 18 artist-run spaces received \$412,100 in Canada Council funding while 18 public galleries got \$1,069,800 for programming alone.

"experimental" activities. This explanation, while not being entirely false, does conveniently omit the need for structural and social changes. As these artist groups developed they discovered that many of the intermediary functions of gallery, critic, museum, art market magazine, were to put it simply, "in the wrong hands." Or, more directly: "It is surprising that so many uninformed and inexperienced agents (of the arts) can have so many prejudices and state them with such strong conviction."³

GOVERNMENT MAKE-WORK STIMULUS

Despite the counter-culture inspiration of early Seventies artists' spaces in Canada, much of which was idealistic if not bohemian, conversational if not inarticulate, there was still recognition of the need for a radical change. This challenge did in many cases grow into replacement not only of *function* but also of *structure*, with artists' organizations developing their own separate 'alternate' facilities. It was also realized that permanent access could be created by forming an alternate network that was in *theory* quite separated from the established cultural hierarchy. Of course many critical opponents of such a movement sat back and waited for that thrust to self-institutionalize and then proceeded to co-opt its purely aesthetic inventions into their larger cultural 'palaces'.

But artists were merely one part of the counter-culture. Concurrent with the development of small community-based organizations in the early Seventies, the Federal government initiated temporary employment programmes: LIP (Local Initiatives Projects) and OFY (Opportunities for Youth). OFY was begun in 1971, to provide jobs and "meaningful activities" to some of the more than 2.4 million university and high school students who would be out of school during the summer. OFY received \$24.7 million (of the total package of \$67.2 million) which was to be dispensed to "community-oriented" projects initiated by and employing youth.⁴ In practice both programmes were interchangeable: LIP projects ran through the winter and could be sustained through



The Canada Council's video funding.

the summer by employing the youth (under 25) component of the project. A number of existing artist groups received their initial funding from LIP or OFY and a large number of artists' organizations (here meaning alternate theatre co-ops, music groups, artist spaces, dance groups, etc.) cut their administrative teeth on such employment programmes. As Martin Loney documents in his essay, "A Political Economy of Citizen Participation",⁵ "the evaluators of the first year of OFY noted that, 'prior to 1970 (the government) has been forced to the recognition of a variety of potentially critical problems: summer employment among students, youth discontent, transiency, alienation and rebelliousness, the fear of revolution in Quebec, and the sudden increase in the demand for action on such issues as drugs, pollution, social welfare, poverty, discrimination against women, Indians, Eskimos and Blacks, and the Americanization of the culture and the economy'." (The federal government was so concerned about the volatile state of Quebec politics in 1971 that 40 percent of all OFY funding in the first year went to Quebec.) Students were the target group for these programmes that covered a wide range of social and cultural projects. The priority for OFY, Loney states, was not to alleviate employment or poverty. As he has documented, the real reasons for the programmes were neither disguised nor hidden: "There is nothing startling or even controversial in the claim that OFY was in many ways no more and no less in its conception than an elaborate strategy for social control and the incorporation of dissenting youth into the great liberal pluralist framework."

In talking with OFY staff workers Loney also confirms that "OFY was successful in employing a disproportionate number of activist youth since they were likely to be the ones with the 'good ideas' for projects and the initiative to get the project organized and funded."

MORE POLITICAL OPPORTUNITIES?

To frame artists' organizations within their actual political context in Canada presents a useful if loaded juxtaposition. What was the relationship between The Canada Council's funding at the beginning of the Seventies and the federal (and provincial) government's concerns of a 'youth revolt'? The Canada Council repeatedly claims that it is at "arms-length" from the government, but Brenda Wallace, former Arts Officer (responsible for public art galleries, museums, and artist-run spaces) has admitted: "...my greatest disillusion with the Council was to discover that it is extremely involved in politics, politics that too often had very little to do with the real needs of artists."⁶ Quebec has been an inseparable aspect of such politics. The Canada Council's video programme chose to fund Vidéo-graphie, Montreal (a pioneer community video access centre) after the NFB (National Film Board) had supported this progressive organization. In fact from 1971-7 Vidéo-graphie was the major recipient of the new video programme's funding for organizations, and the sole recipient for the first two years. It is notable that the video programme developed out of The Canada Council's film programme, that the NFB in Quebec under the Société Nouvelle programme decided to use video instead of film, and that Vidéo-graphie was a recognized centre for *social action* productions. From the outside much can only be speculated. Was The Canada Council involved in more than just setting up a new programme? If so, was this used to demonstrate that despite The War Measures Act (1970) the federal government through The Canada Council supported cultural divergence in Quebec? Coincidentally, or not, there was a venue in which to get this message across in no less a place than France.

In 1973 at *Canada Trajectories*, a

large Canadian exhibition held at the Musée d'Art Moderne, Paris, Vidéo-graphie set-up a free video workshop/demonstration: Le Mini-Vidéo-graphie. "Most French critics agreed it was video which had the greatest impact," wrote Joan Lowmes, reporting the event.⁷ Lowmes also quotes *Le Monde* critic, Jacques Michel's review: "The Canadian government... even runs the risk of liberally subsidizing artistic 'research' without being sure of what will be found or whether it will actually agree with its views. You will be surprised to discover an atmosphere of social challenge throughout the works. It is institutionalized creative challenge... at public expense." Was there — is there — such a "risk". Of course not. Once artists' organizations switch to government funding and are allowed and encouraged to grow and *depend upon such an economy*, pulling the plug, or even cutting back can and usually will eliminate all such risk.⁸ The control mechanism used is the maintenance of marginal status.

TO REPLACE OR RUN PARALLEL?

Of less importance, but still significant was the transformation of some artists' organisations to a status of being 'parallel galleries' when The Canada Council, also in 1973, picked up some of the artists' project threads from both OFY and LIP. The term 'parallel galleries' originated from the Canada Council.⁹ The programme for these galleries was initiated by then-Arts Officer Philip Fry who "foresaw a national network developing."¹⁰ While there were at that time three or four artists' spaces requesting funding, by 1976 this "national network" membership had been created by The Canada Council. This 'creative' tendency further manifested itself in 1976 when The Canada Council summoned the then 22 artists' organisations that were funded under the programme to Ottawa to form an Association of Parallel Galleries. (Such artists' organisations have many self-terms: artists' space, artist-run centre; alternate space, multi-disciplinary centre.) The drawbacks of accepting the definition of parallel galleries become clearly apparent: it immediately defused the notion of



Directory from Video Inn, Vancouver.

replacement. Chantal Pontbriand, editor of *Parachute* (a bi-lingual contemporary art magazine) and a former member of Véhicule, Montreal says: "Parallel galleries exposed the importance of ephemeral art but because of their marginal status they haven't been able to validate such work to the level that more durable institutions can...all we seem to be able to do now is keep the traditional large institutions going and they can hardly be said to be even absorbing new roles."¹¹

The artist-run galleries since 1973 have, as one part of their function, curated and displayed or presented over a thousand exhibits and an equal number of combined music, dance and literary performances. In 1977 alone 17 centres held 222 exhibitions/installations, 280 music concerts/events, 115 art performances/actions, 101 dance performances, 150 video workshop productions, 82 original video productions, 19 artists-in-residence, plus 7 regular publications and 64 lectures.¹² In that year 18 artist-run centers (parallel galleries) received a total of \$412,100 an average of \$22,894.00 per space. This money included salaries, fees to artists, exhibit costs, rent and other overheads. This money came from the Canada Council's Programme of Assistance to Art Galleries & Artist-Run Spaces. In the same year, 18 public galleries received \$1,069,800, an average of \$72,316 per gallery. Unlike the artist-run spaces these funds were only for programming, that is exhibit costs. And it is probably no exaggeration to suggest that all 18 of those public galleries combined did not provide the same amount of *original* programming as the most productive of the artist-run cen-

tres. The artists know this and so do the funding agencies and yet the disparity has remained the same over the last five years. The artist-space funding from The Canada Council has increased 53 percent from \$330,400 in 1975 to \$506,000 in 1980, whereas the public galleries funding has increased 37.5 percent from \$1,126,400 in 1975 to \$1,637,600 in 1980.¹³ They are indeed running parallel with a three-to-one ratio in favour of the unproductive public galleries. As we will see later this abundance of programming and underfunding places the artists who work with and in these organisations in a continual position of labour exploitation, and potential collapse.

ANNPAC: FALLING AT THE STARTING GATE

In 1976 (at the Ottawa meeting convened by The Canada Council) when ANNPAC (Association of National Non-Profit Artist Centres) was formed, most of the formative aesthetic directions had gelled. Video, performance, experimental music, alternate publishing were the still-developing but well established foci. What was left to do in 1976 was to develop the social structure, the independent production capability, the educational programmes, and most important — the development of a common strategy that would necessitate the political restructuring of funding policies and programmes. The accomplishment of replacing traditional structures and functions has not been sufficiently used by ANNPAC as an argument for ongoing funding. Instead weaker and more spurious arguments have evolved such as: ANNPAC's "Living Museums" Proposal¹⁴; the potential exportability of new Canadian art; and government use of artists' technological works as an illustrative tool to demystify new technologies to the public! In other words instead of sticking to basic economic issues which were virtually uncontested, ANNPAC, with encouragement, began to drift.

ANNPAC: THE COMMON LINKS

The formation of ANNPAC initially was of equal convenience for

both artist-run spaces and The Canada Council. For the Council it streamlined administrative tasks, and established a certain amount of funding competition where before, little (if any) had existed, by introducing smaller regional spaces to their larger urban counterparts. For ANNPAC, programme exchange became more feasible encouraged by the introduction of *Parallelogramme*, a monthly programme news publication. The publication is the only common link that ties all of ANNPAC's 34 member organisations together. ANNPAC has one annual general meeting a year and a number of regional meetings and yet regions do not define substantial similarities between these various artists' organisations. ANNPAC's members could be divided into four groupings. The first would include organisations like Niagara Artists Association, St. Catherine's; Photographer's Gallery, Saskatoon; and Latitude 53, Edmonton who each maintain strong regional support for their artists. A second grouping would include Ed Video, Guelph; Women in Focus, Vancouver; Powerhouse, Montreal; and Direct Media Association, Port Washington who share specialised functional strengths. A third group might include ArtSpace, Peterborough; S.A.W. Gallery, Ottawa; Eye Level Gallery, Halifax; and Off-Centre Centre, Calgary, who with a regional base have altered their programming as input from ANNPAC and elsewhere has become available. The fourth group is more definite, and is the power base within ANNPAC. This core group was self-established on a mandate of both size and seniority.

▶ ANNPAC: THE CORE

A Space, Toronto; The Western Front, Vancouver; Video Inn, Vancouver; The Music Gallery, Toronto, and Art Metropole, Toronto maintain perhaps the closest relationships with The Canada Council. A Space, The Western Front, The Video Inn and Art Metropole command this position within ANNPAC (although Art Metropole has only had peripheral involvement) because of the size of their 'constituencies,' their age, but also as a result of their past or present productivity. A Space began in



Al Mattes, ANNPAC spokesperson.

1970, The Western Front in 1973 (many of its artist-directors have been active in earlier artist groups since the late Sixties), The Video Inn in 1972, and Art Metropole, 1974 (again its artist-directors have a longer group history). Though the Music Gallery only opened in 1976 it has been a productive and loud voice for experimental music. The Music Gallery's Allan Mattes is the current ANNPAC spokesperson. Apart from Mattes the other two most consistent representatives for ANNPAC have been Glenn Lewis, The Western Front and Victor Coleman, formerly of A Space. Lewis has written "The Value of Parallel Galleries."¹⁵ Coleman has prepared two reports: "A Brief Concerning The Status of Parallel Galleries, Interdisciplinary Artist Centres and the Role of Individual Artists in the Management of their Art" (1977) and "The Living Museums Report" (1979).

▶ OTTAWA: NO ROOM FOR REFORM

ANNPAC has used three major strategies in dealing with The Canada Council and other funding agencies which in turn the artist-centres themselves also employ. The first is co-habitation, a tactic based on the premise that friends don't hurt each other. The second method is confrontation — in this case largely based upon personal aggression rather than political strategy. The third is based upon statistical lobbying. Lewis tends to choose the first, Coleman the second and Mattes the third. Which is not to say that each separately or that a combination of any have not produced results in the past. But now the federal government is not giving increased funding to

The Canada Council which means that the Council is working with frozen budgets. Since The Canada Council itself has proved that it cannot reform its existing programmes — it can only create new programmes (as it has done in the past) — presently it has no room to proceed. Rather than reform its Assistance to Galleries and Museums Programme the Council introduced an additional section for Parallel Galleries. Rather than overhaul its Music, Theatre, Publishing, Film and Dance Sections it first introduced an Explorations Programme (which included Heritage projects) and then an Interdisciplinary Section. Most of The Canada Council's amended programmes which were made to accommodate both cultural growth and change are mere stop-gap measures. To suggest that further support must come from the private sector (which in effect means more donated artist labour) or from the corporate sector (which refuses to risk its public reputation) is highly impractical. And though there have been a few exception, the provinces act as if a national culture (that is beyond regional) is in the federal jurisdiction.

▶ ANNPAC'S PAPER PARADE

Since 1976 all of the funding agencies that have dealt with ANNPAC have profited more from the Association than the individual artist-spaces have gained in service from the funding agencies. And the more research studies that ANNPAC provides the more that imbalance will grow. Such studies serve to extend the 'make-work' ethic with short-term advantages of providing several salaries. Surely ANNPAC can look around at other similar Canadian associations and see that few major issues have been won to support indigenous culture and so much federal lobby money (provided by the government for the purposes of lobbying the government) has been squandered that is badly needed for simple day-to-day production operations?

Al Mattes believes that some of these problems could be solved if and when the federal government formulates a cultural policy. He admits that "ANNPAC's victories

have been small, but they are nonetheless victories." Currently ANNPAC is conducting what Mattes terms "a data base for long term use; if you are going to deal with the government you need to define ground zero."¹⁶ ANNPAC is working on five research projects. The first was a Toronto study to research the economic effects of the artist organisations on Queen St.W. "We don't just take money, we generate a lot of money," Mattes says quoting StatsCan who has documented that every dollar that is given for cultural funding is re-used ten times. Historical models such as Greenwich Village; Gas-town, Vancouver; Old Montreal were looked at. Of course such redevelopment doesn't assist the artist community (except for artists who become landlords) as the real estate prices soar and the artists are then forced to re-locate. Another study sponsored by the Ontario Arts Council, who is apparently looking towards setting up a Parallel Gallery Programme of its own, researches the "ideal" artist-run centre. What does an artist-run center cost for staff, fees, programming? how much programming? what audience statistics could be expected? are some of the questions. Mattes says there are sixteen artist-run centres in Ontario. The Ontario Arts Council is using ANNPAC to document a demand that they know already exists. Again the transfer of a bureaucracy from, in this case a large administrative complex (The Ontario Arts Council) to a small association is in itself an arrogant move. It points clearly to the fact that artist-run organisations (whether in publishing, video, or project programming) service The Ontario Arts Council, which is a dexterous piece of role switching. ANNPAC's other projects include a Standard Video Fee Contract and a Performance catalogue that is being prepared as a tool for both artists and programmers. Perhaps the only study which is of direct use for ANNPAC is a research project on provincial funding policies. The thirty-five page bi-lingual questionnaire will provide comparative statistics and could provide a better base for artists' organisations who are currently being visibly ignored by their provincial funding agencies.

AA Bronson, Manager of Art



AA Bronson, Art Metropole/A Space.

Metropole (and Chairman of the Board of Directors of A Space) finds ANNPAC "a bit of a mystery." He concedes that "for the less sophisticated spaces it gives them a chance to mingle at the meetings and find out what everyone's doing, find out how people do things and learn from other people's experience."¹⁷ Many of the spaces who perform that 'mingling' role have been annoyed with ANNPAC's avoidance of ideological debates, and, as importantly the lack of defence that the Association provides for its members. The organisations that are not in large urban centres have less power and are accordingly mistreated by The Canada Council. There are numerous instances of this continuing practice and one illustration should suffice. Brian McNevin recently left the Centre for Art Tapes in Halifax. McNevin suggests that what ANNPAC currently defines as a 'network' is no more than a promotional device, and that the Association is a tentative formation where the rule still is 'survival of the fittest.'¹⁸ McNevin has spent two years running Art Tapes on a budget of \$14,000 a year. His administrative salary of \$7,000 (curator, book-keeper, maintenance man) will now be split among three persons (the requested budget for Art Tapes was \$31,000). It was a video centre that operated without any equipment. The equipment it needed was loaned for two years by Video Theatre, Halifax. Both organisations had different mandates but maintained a good working relationship. Recently Video Theatre experienced an internal crisis — a condition common in artists' organisations where labour demands are high, and wages (where they exist) are low. The

Canada Council, according to McNevin, took 25 percent of funds allocated for Video Theatre and transferred them to Art Tapes so increasing Art Tapes' grant to \$24,000. Though the gesture could have promoted competition and split the video community in Halifax, both Video Theatre and Art Tapes are determined to prevent such a move from creating its effect.¹⁹

AA Bronson from his vantage point at Art Metropole and A Space feels far more secure. He says: "The government's been really crucial in its support of the arts in the last ten years, but my feeling right now is that they are not crucial for the next ten years. They've laid a groundwork and hopefully they'll continue to provide the funding that keeps the groundwork solid, but the next transformation whatever it is has to be generated in some other way and at our initiative."²⁰ Art Metropole, a specialised artists space, is unique within ANNPAC in that it has its own tangible economic base with last year's sales of \$30,000 in books and \$30,000 in rentals and sales of videotapes.

▶ SO WHO REALLY PAYS?

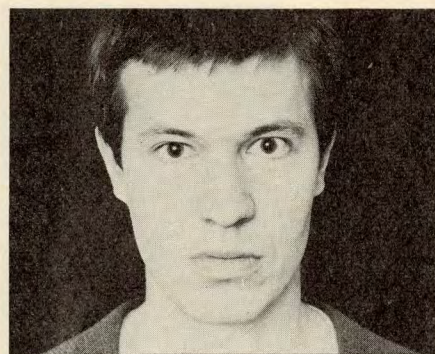
Up to this point I have ignored the inherent contradiction of state funding for the arts. The common impression would be that it is both naïve and foolish to complain about the inadequacies of such a situation which is after all under state control. This view of funding implies that the artists and their self-run organisations are passive charities. However the actual economic function of State funding (How does it economically benefit the state?) should be briefly looked at. So must the value of artist labour and the serious desire for self-government.

As Victor Coleman outlined in his report: "Artist Fees...Currently the artist absorbs all the production and exhibition expenses incurred in the mounting of a visual arts exhibition or in the production of performance pieces. The artist must pay out of pocket expenses: material costs, transportation and shipping costs, studio rental and in some cases even gallery rental. It seems unacceptable for the artist to live on an income far below the

poverty line, while the pressures from the arts agencies is for more professionalism, higher public acceptance, media recognition and the like. We live in a very expensive culture. Baseball and hockey are multi-billion dollar operations. The art bureaucracy on the other hand, is secure, even comfortable. No amount of academic training or experience will afford the artist his success — he must work consistently, unhindered, at his committed task; and he must produce works of art that will receive recognition from the purveyors of official culture — and he must consistently do it on a shoe-string."²¹ While I don't doubt Coleman's emotional argument he knows as well as I do that artists' organisations often stimulate massive programming by using unpaid artist labour. A Space, which Coleman directed, has been notorious for building its programmes and its somewhat overblown reputation on the same promises of validation common to larger public institutions. Though A Space dramatically changed hands (see *Centerfold/Fuse*, Fall, 1978) the current administration still has not prevented artist-labour abuse.

AND WHO REALLY GAINS?

In a brilliant but numbing essay: "Art and accumulation: the Canadian state and the business of art"²² Robin Endres points out who benefits from state financing of the arts. Not only do we learn that the state benefits from direct and indirect taxation, direct and indirect accumulation, but also that board members of large performing arts organisations have access to economic advantages. "Members of boards of museums and galleries are able to profit even more directly...they can influence acquisitions in such a way as to increase the value of their own collections...they can purchase art works cheaply; and by making donations of their own collections they can pass the sometimes very high costs of insurance and upkeep on to the taxpayer." Endres reverses the economic weapon that is normally used to defame artists by stating: "the artists themselves are the real subsidizers of art in this country," followed by "the public as excluded audience is also the real subsidizer



Robin Collyer, artist and curator. of the arts." (emphasis in original).

In a commissioned independent study on A Space made by ten Toronto artists (published June 16, 1978) the following appears in their report to the Board of Directors. "Future Administration:...A common problem of grant-supported systems is a tendency towards programming overkill in an attempt to justify the spending of public money. The situation is intensified when the funding is for programming and more programming and not for programmers."

The following account should again, by illustration, emphasise one specific aspect of the labour problem as it exists within artist-run centres. A Space is run by a board of directors, all but one of whom are artists. It has two full-time paid staff both of whom are not artists, both were hired as professional administrators. The senior staff member is Peggy Gale, who in the past has worked for the Art Gallery of Ontario; the nascent Video Section of The Canada Council and was the Video Director of Art Metropole before moving to become the Administrative Director of A Space. This year there have been three major production projects guest-curated by artists. *Television by Artists*, curated and produced by John Watt. *Radio By Artists*, curated and produced by Ian Murray, and 222 an installation, performance and video festival curated and produced by Robin Collyer. The first two projects have an extended function; their producers not only worked on the series but also have to establish distribution by getting each series on the air — a feat that is difficult in itself for independent programming. Murray's fee from A Space was \$1,000 for eighteen months work. Watt's fee was also \$1,000 for an unfinished twelve months work. Robin Collyer work-

ed daily on his project for six months and was paid \$2,000. All three have voiced dissatisfaction with A Space's current staff, Peggy Gale and Jane Purdue. Gale is a frequent traveller on the international art circuit and while A Space's domestic programming remained understaffed, Gale has occupied her time largely organising two prestigious projects. The first is a north American visit by five German performance artists who will be working at A Space as well as visiting nine other institutions. (Apparently Ms. Gale is the overall co-ordinator.) The other programme is an exhibition of Gerry Schum tapes.

John Watt submitted his objections to A Space in writing, many of which have yet to be resolved. Robin Collyer is equally vocal: "They have stamped these (artist-curated) programmes without any clear idea of what it means in terms of a further commitment on their part. If you're going to do a Radio Show or a TV Show whatever, there are more administrative complexities than just hanging an exhibition...it's really a learning process in this case for A Space's employees because they don't seem to know what it entails. If they're not willing to do the amount of work that's needed maybe they shouldn't do them — they just can't expect artists to keep putting out so much. The 222 Warehouse show probably cost me \$2-3,000, stuff that comes out of your pocket: meals on the job, gas, transportation, maintenance, etc...Between Ian Murray, John Watt and myself there was probably \$10,000 that came directly out of our pockets. The irony is that A Space originally didn't have to give a cent to the project (it was sponsored by Harbourfront and Art Toronto '80) — it does now because it went over budget. The show in aftermath reads 'A Space' rather than Harbourfront/Art Toronto and I did the majority of the work."²³ Collyer's problems existed beyond A Space. He created a successful event despite being undermined both by Harbourfront and Art Toronto '80, a situation that should have been dealt with by the A Space administrative staff and not by the guest artist-curator.

AA Bronson defends A Space's staff claiming that "all three of

them (the artist curators) were pretty hazy as to what was really going to happen — how many hours, what were the possible problems. What was originally foreseen as the administrative part was also much smaller because it was not understood by either the administration or the curators that the projects were going to be as big as they ended up being."²⁴ The reasons that Bronson gives as to why the professional staff could not cope with these three programmes is very reminiscent of the arguments used to defend large institutional galleries which the artist-run spaces were supposed to replace! John Watt had said earlier: "They knew that they were doing this programme (Television by Artists) eighteen months ago. Right in my original proposal it states that on completion of the tapes they were to be distributed as TV broadcasts. It stated the percentages for the artist (65 Percent), the distributor (20 percent), the producer (10 percent) and A Space (5 percent)."²⁵ Watt's budget was \$4800 to commission six artist-video programmes to be made for television. The artists received \$225 for the production cost and a \$250 fee. The artists had complete copyright on the work for closed-



John Watt produced TV By Artists.

circuit use. Watt's estimate of the actual cost (labour, production, etc.) is \$30,000 which amounts to a \$25,000 donation to A Space.

Collyer says after the experience: "As artists we know that this programming should happen, the majority of larger public galleries won't rise to the occasion and sponsor programmes of this type." The illustration of how a large artist-run space like A Space works, suggests that professional administrators may be suitable for the funding image (A Space has a budget of \$120,000) but less adaptable when challenged by the actual work to be done.

While it is true that through the process of institutionalization artists' organisations can and have

exploited artists' labour, we cannot afford to accept such a defeated and reversible position. Equally it must be said that those organisations involved in collective production are the only models that effectively meet the needs of artists. Galleries, as a structure for distribution and public engagement, are not only anachronistic social models; they are unnecessary superstructures. This applies as much to galleries run by artists as it does to those that exist as public institutions.

To fully answer the question who really gains, one could say that the state accrues validation through the mechanism provided by the finding agencies and so the artist-run spaces involuntarily have joined the long chain of cultural organisations that form the 'ornamentation of power.' ANNPAC must understand that there are inherent class and capital barriers between themselves and their public funding, and insist on better service, from their government, for their legitimate economic demands.

Lastly, I must admit that it is easier for me to construct this analysis in retrospect than it was five years ago when such an overview would have been of substantial use.

Footnotes

1. There are perennial examples of artist-organisations being underfunded. More importantly there are no workable mechanisms for appeals.
2. While not drawing attention away from individual artists, the activities of video and performance have taken place within communities often centering around artists organisations for the technical (or polemical) services that have been available.
3. This anonymous comment was specifically directed at the arts administration at the Ontario Arts Council.
4. From Martin Loney's "A Political Economy of Citizen Participation" an essay published in *The Canadian State: Political Economy and Political Power*, edited by Leo Panitch, University of Toronto Press, 1977. This book is invaluable for a more thorough political analysis of the Canadian state, its economic, employment and cultural strategies.
5. *ibid* p. 460.
6. "Brenda Wallace on Parallel Galleries" interview by France Morin, *Parachute*, Montreal, No. 13, Winter 1978, p. 51.
7. "The Canadian Presence in Paris," Joan Lownes, *art-scand*, October 1973, p. 78.
8. Cut-backs here mean 'underfunding' as well as eliminating grants. Underfunding creates a continual focus, leaving little time for 'subversities.'
9. "The Value of Parallel Galleries," Glenn Lewis. *Parallelogramme* Vol. 3 No. 2, February 1978.
10. see footnote 6.
11. Interview with Chantal Pontbriand, August 5th 1980.
12. see footnote 9.
13. I have not included \$56,000 here from The Video Sec-

tion for artist-run centres (1980) as there already is such a disparity between the public galleries funding only being for programming while the artist-run centres funding also has to cover operations.

14. The Living Museums project includes a network of computer terminals to connect each space to assist administration and programming. This development is premature considering that funds have yet to be found to actually pay for the programming. "The Living Museums" proposal is probably the best example of how off-track ANNPAC is in terms of basic economic demands.

15. see footnote 9.

16. Interview with Allan Mattes, August 7th 1980.

17. Interview with AA Bronson, August 13th 1980.

18. I do here mean ANNPAC. Within cities where there is more than one member gallery there are many attempts to co-operate and avoid the implicit competitive survival instinct.

19. Conversation with Brian McNevin, August 10th, 1980.

20. see footnote 17.

21. "A Brief Concerning The Status of Parallel Galleries, Interdisciplinary Artist Centres and The Role of Individual Artists in the Management of their Art," Victor Coleman (1977).

22. "Art and accumulation: the Canadian state and the business of art," Robin Endres. Essay appears in *The Canadian State: Political Economy and Political Power*, ed. Leo Panitch. University of Toronto Press, 1977.

23. Interview with Robin Collyer, August 11 1980.

24. see footnote 17.

25. Interview with John Watt, August 13 1980.

NORTHERN LIGHTS

An Interview with John Hanson

BY RICHARD FUNG

Northern Lights is set in North Dakota in 1915. The action takes place in a country mostly populated by Norwegian-speaking farmers. Wheat is the crop and the small farms are subject to large Eastern-owned corporations which control the banks, railway and grain trade on which the farmers rely. In this bleak landscape live Ray Sorenson, a young farmer, John, his brother, and Inga Olsness, the farm woman Ray is about to marry. The couple's plans are thwarted when Inga's father falls into debt after an early blizzard ruins his crop and his farm is foreclosed. Inga is then forced to move away. Searching for a way to resist the corporations Ray, at first reluctantly, starts organizing for the budding Nonpartisan League, a farmer-based, political movement. Though Inga is also active in the League, the two are pushed apart by distance and Ray's increased devotion of time to the League. After many arguments, Ray convinces his sceptical brother to join in the fight for both their dignity and their land.

Northern Lights was produced by Cine Manifest, a San Francisco based group devoted to making politically progressive films. *Northern Lights* achieved world recognition when it won the 1979 Golden Palm award at Cannes for Best First Feature. The film costs a mere \$300,000 and took four years from the initial conception to its world premiere in the North Dakota town of Crosby. The movie was directed by John Hanson and Rob Nilsson, two filmmakers with roots in North Dakota: Hanson's grandfather was a League organizer and Nilsson's grandfather was North Dakota's first filmmaker. I talked with John

Richard Fung lives in Toronto. He is a member of the collective of the Asianadain Resource Workshop.

Hanson in June, just before the Canadian premiere of *Northern Lights* in Toronto. (The following edited transcript was prepared by the author from the ninety minute interview.)

Richard Fung: What do you feel about the Non-Partisan League?

John Hanson: My perspective on the League is that it was a necessary reform movement that for a while did some crucial things to help farmers. Some of the laws they passed, like that preventing large corporations from farming in North Dakota are still in the books. It's kept agra-business out there. But the League really didn't get at the real systemic problem...a lot of band-aids. Ultimately I think it gave the farmers some hope. This is partly from talking to my grandfather who was a member of the League. It gave them a sense of power for the first time.

RF: What happened to the League and the people who were in it? What did they move on to?

JH: Well the League was the victim of three different things: one was internal dissention. Another was red baiting during the first world war. League organizers were tarred and feathered and hung in effigy, the whole thing. The third thing, which is the most ironic, was the League believed that if a constituency elected someone to office they had the right to recall them. So they initiated something called the "Recall Election." If you got enough signatures on a petition you could hold a special election and recall the people in power. You didn't have to wait till the next go-around. So in 1921 there was a recall. They held power for six years. They were recalled and they fell apart. In the Thirties it was revived in a little different form and the Non-Partisan League stayed on as an entity until 1956 when it merged with the

Democratic Party. It also formed the basis for the Farmer Labour Party in Minnesota which emerged in the Thirties. This finally became in the late Thirties the personal, political machine of Hubert Humphrey. So the League had a long life and it influenced mid-Western politics through all those Plains States.

RF: Did the making of the film lead to a discussion of the way you saw the League and the way the farmers thought of it?

JH: Yes it did and it brought out the old feuds and the way people were looking at their problems today. There was a lot of discussion. After a hard day of filming we'd end up in a bar or a farmhouse drinking together and we'd inevitably get into discussion about the problems of farming and the economy. That was what was on their minds. We would never sit around and talk about the old days or something. We would always end up talking about "what's going on here and what are we going to do about it?"

RF: What's the political climate in North Dakota now?

JH: In general it's like the rest of the country. It's turning toward conservatism yet there're a lot of unhappy farmers, losing their farms and having a hell of a time keeping up because there's a drought in North Dakota now and the price of Durham wheat which is what they grow there is very high. But they have no crop. And the crop they stored from last year they've had to get loans on at three dollars a bushel or something and they're now selling at \$6.50. They're screwed! The climate now is desperate.

RF: How did the farmers like the film? Did they feel it portrayed a part of their history that they lost?

JH: Some did but it was more that they felt that we had told the truth about them. Once the film started that first night, there was this incredible attention by all the people in the theatre and there was standing room only in this town of 1,800 people. They came out of it and they were crying, they were laughing. They were feeling good about the experience, and after the film was over they rose up as a mass and gave a standing ovation to the film for five minutes straight. We were all in tears. It was a wonderful thing.

JH: What sort of participation did the farmers have in the making of *Northern Lights*? A lot of the cast were farmers weren't they?

JH: Yes there were only three actors, Ray, Inga and John. We went out there with an idea about the film and the script. After meeting the farmers they immediately embraced us. It was winter time and they didn't have much to do anyway. Half the characters in the film were introduced to us because of those original farmers we lived with. As time went on farmers would stand next to us as we were filming a scene and they'd say things like "You sure you've got this covered in close up?"...To say nothing of their ability to just sit down and play a role in front of the camera in a completely naturalistic way...absolutely unselfconscious. I can't describe how crucial this was for the film.

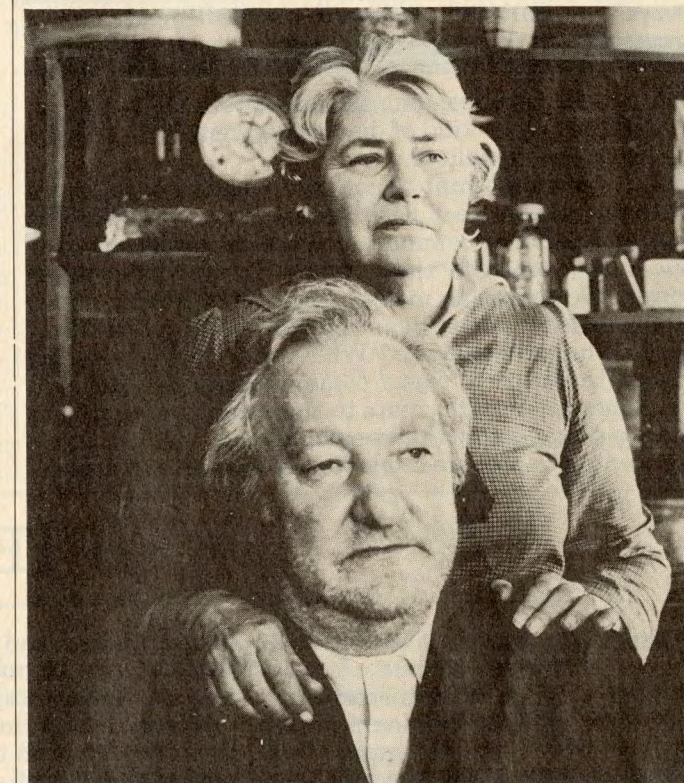
RF: Yes I could sense that they were playing themselves.

JH: All the lines were scripted. We improvised in the rehearsal periods but when it came time to shoot the scene everybody knew what they had to say. To me it's a testimony to their security about who they are.

RF: Is there any sort of revival of interest in the League?

JH: Last summer there were meetings around the state to try to revive the League as a third party. The problem is there is no real focus now in the American agrarian movement. When it comes to local control farmers have no power because they're not taking any stands. To me farmers have to band together to take economic control before they take political control. But not enough farmers participated so they didn't have enough bushels of grain to have any leverage.

You see the problem is that the small farmer is still an independent cuss. He does not want to join with the other farmers to create collectives or communes or things that can in fact compete with the large corporations. He wants to hang on to his own in-



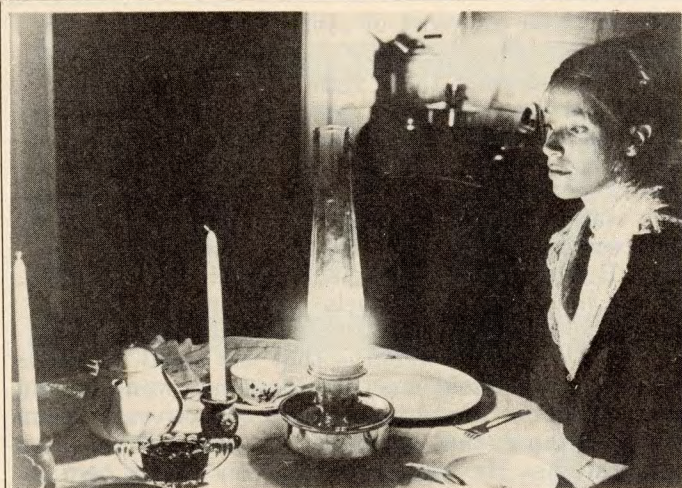
The film has appeal for the North Dakota farmers.

dependence. He's going to die with that independence. Not only that but he's probably going to vote for Reagan. I'm very frustrated with dealing with those contradictions. Every time you talk to somebody; wonderful people, rooted in the earth, love the land, want to grow crops and they're the most conservative people, racist people. you know? Aaaa...

RF: Did you intend this film to somehow deal with these contradictions for the audience, for the farmers looking at it?

JH: Yes. The way we tried to do that was to make the characters in the film real. Our intention was not to try to lead people by the hand to a different behaviour but to confront them with the contradictions in their behaviour with alternatives.

RF: It seemed to me that you were trying to say something about how interpersonal relationships are set in an historical context and an economic one. Inga



Overall, the portrayal of women is unchallenging.

felt herself powerless but she also knew she had to do something. What kind of discussion went into developing Inga's personality?

JH: It was an attempt to not try to make a heroine out of Inga. But to treat her dilemma in a very realistic way and make it common; not the exception but the rule that women in those times did not have much power. We talked to many, many farm women about how they felt in those days and what their frustrations were. What did they do? What were their strengths and all that? There was a common theme: "The men would not let us participate to the extent we wanted to and we didn't know that we could've if we'd done it." We wanted to prepare a role for the woman as a charac-

ter with an emerging consciousness. It wasn't simple in those days. The League gave women the right to vote before the rest of the country in 1917. Yet at the time the film was set (1915-1916) there wasn't a tradition to build on and a lot of the men were treating women like "you stay home and take care of the kids, I'm going to be gone for a week organizing."

RF: Wouldn't there be a situation, especially among poor farmers, where women would be able to participate more in actually putting bread on the table and therefore have more power?

JH: It was not necessarily that they had more power. They were expected to milk the cows and help with the thrashing but they were also expected to cook and take care of the kids. So they had no more power because they were doing any of these things, except when the husband was a weakling or an asshole or dead. My grandmother was a very strong woman but she was completely under the thumb of my grandfather. What he said went. But when there was a problem she solved it and she accepted that kind of dichotomy. There wasn't then for most farm women the kind of anger that motivates a prairie woman to take control. At least in the Prairie at that time power was not a question. Some did consider it but they were the exception. I'm much more interested in creating a dilemma than creating some sort of role model. There are many women who were very disappointed in that role. They wanted Inga to assert herself and take a more active role in the organizing earlier. That was the Gorley-Flynn, the Mother Jones, etc. The real leaders who somehow leapt forth but it wasn't the ordinary woman. Ray's no leader either.

RF: A film that's in black and white and has subtitles

AFTER THE INTERVIEW

When I first saw *Northern Lights* I knew nothing about North Dakota's agricultural history and had never heard of the Nonpartisan League. Now I do — I suppose this is the strength of the film, not that it told me all that much directly, but it did spark my interest to read and discuss with other people some of the issues.

Hanson follows the filmmaking tradition of pure "realism": showing people as they are. *Northern Lights* reflects this. The film is slow, following the pace of farm life. And except for three professional actors as the main characters, the cast is composed of actual farmers from the region. Their naturalism gives the film a near documentary atmosphere.

But *Northern Lights* is not a documentary. Its "reality" is very carefully contrived: conceived, written and acted. We see and hear the director's intention. The filmmakers are responsible for their

subject matter and how they represent it. This is a political as well as an aesthetic choice.

According to Hanson, *Northern Lights* attempted to reconstruct a mirror image of North Dakota farmers so they could be "confronted with the contradictions in their own behaviour." But the film doesn't really deal with contradictions other than those between farmers and Eastern business. In many ways the film is a formulated success story. There is a hero and cause who eventually find each other and do great things.

I found in talking with Hanson that he felt the League's potential for change was limited since it didn't confront capitalism — the heart of the farmers' problems. There is no hint of this criticism in *Northern Lights*. In fact the League is portrayed as the end in itself. It seems that Hanson and Nilsson sacrificed political debate for a pleasant, easily understood

story.

The relationship between Ray and Inga also lacks dialectics. Their playful hide-and-seek among the trees is lyrical and romantic. It suggests asexuality and a lost innocence that we often imagine of our parents and grandparents (and which they often present of themselves) but was seldom true.

The main male/female contradiction is between Ray's commitment to organize and Inga's need to a stable family life. Ray feels guilty and Inga is counselled by other women to accept. This might have been a common enough situation, but why choose it as the main contradiction? In *Northern Lights* all the women other than Inga (there are four altogether in the cast credits of twenty-four) are seen either cooking or doing some other household chores. In their commitment to a passive "realism" the directors show a division of labour but not its con-

is not the kind of film that one would imagine to be a mass-audience-getter in the U.S. Did you make this strictly for a regional audience?

JH: I have to say we were very naïve. I'm glad we were. If we decided, "God we better not shoot this in black and white because no one will see it" or "We better use name actors," the film would have been a disaster. We were just saying "We're going to make the film that we want to make and then we're going to bring it to people."

RF: What sort of reaction did the film get from the established filmmaking world?

JH: It's mixed. Some of the established film world received the film with open arms, particularly older directors like Frank Capra and King Vidor and Martin Ritt. But I speak up against Hollywood a lot. I don't like it. So they feel pretty defensive. They write us off as a couple of iconoclasts who are going to go on making a lot of low budget films which they complain don't have the acting quality or the pacing quality. But I reject those yardsticks. I can't tell you how many distributors said "this film isn't commercial." The film's reached five million people now.

RF: The film seems to follow more the tradition of Italian neo-realist films or say Bergman. How do you feel about the artistic tradition of American filmmaking, not just the relations of production in Hollywood?

JH: I have two thoughts on that. One is that in general, the American cinema tradition is something I don't feel very close to. You know, the Western, the slap-stick comedy, the musical. But there is an American tradition that I do relate to and that is someone like Flaherty, Cassavettes or to a certain extent somebody like Capra who tried to put some sort of

content into a comedy form. But a lot of people I respect are European filmmakers. Neo-realism in Italy, the Brazilian cinema, Bergman of course and the first couple of Bertolucci films. And well of course the old Russians: Eisenstein and Pudovkin.

RF: Now that you've won the Camera d'Or award at Cannes do you find it easier to raise money for your next film?

JH: No. It's just as hard. Particularly with the state of the economy people are very tight with their money. I suppose if I were doing a film which people could say was more commercial or if I had a star in it. But I'll be in a little corner of the country that nobody's ever heard of writing a film about a woman mineworker. The way they're going to have to put their money in it is if they really believe in the film. That's the way I want the money to be put in. I want a human connection to my work...and that's hard to come by.

Produced, directed,
written and edited by John Hanson & Rob Nilsson
Director of Photography Judy Irola

Cast
Ray Sorenson Robert Behling
Inga Olsness Susan Lynch
John Sorenson Joe Spano
US agent New Front Films,
1409 Willow Street,
No. 505,
Minn., Min., 55403

Canadian Distributor

D.E.C. Films,
121 Avenue Road,
Toronto, Ontario
M5R 2G3

BY RICHARD FUNG

traditions. I'm not even sure of the historical accuracy of this account. Where is the Women's Auxiliary of the Nonpartisan League? Where are the lone women farmsteaders? When the crew of this film interviewed North Dakotan women they found the common theme in their experience was that "men wouldn't let us participate." But Inga never discusses politics which seem to be men's business. We know that she's involved with the League but shows little interest in farming, in fact she seems more at home in the store than the farm house. It's notable that in the film all the women are first to desert the farms.

In the scene where Inga gets to bare her feelings about Ray's absences, Susan Lynch fumbles with some very cliched lines which sound like a bad Liv Ullman or a three o'clock soap opera. In this scene, unlike the rest of her excellent performance, she is just not

convincing.

Aside from the issue of historical accuracy I don't think an audience would find the portrayal of women's roles at all challenging. I can't picture farmers leaving the cinema and examining their own sexism. For me this is a test of a political film. Ironically *Northern Lights* had great crew participation from women. Judy Irola's cinematography is always competent and often striking. But these women seem to have little impact on the product's content.

The farmers of North Dakota liked this film, I suspect because it deals seriously with their problems. The film tells something of their history, they way they remember or would like to have it remembered. The film's use of Norwegian dialect increases its North Dakota audience but together with its black and white format the film would be characterized as an "art film" in

other places. This is unfortunate since the one advantage of a narrative feature film is that it can gather a larger audience.

The makers of *Northern Lights* seem to be unclear who the film was made for. A film about the League for a general audience should be instructive about the specifics of the organization and the period. Such a film for purely a North Dakota audience would have to concentrate on the contradictions in the League itself, taking into account contemporary conditions. *Northern Lights* attempts to reach both groups and suffers from its split focus.

But this film must be seen within the context of North American filmmaking which seldom gives serious attention to any struggle against business or state. For all its problems *Northern Lights* is an important film, one which should give further incentive to other progressive filmmakers.

THROUGH HELL AND HIGH INTEREST RATES

**The Monetarist Counter-
Revolution**
Arthur Donner and Douglas
Peters

Lorimer and the Canadian
Institute for Public Policy
(Toronto), 1979.

103 pages; \$6.95 (paper).

Canada's Crippled Dollar
Lukin Robinson

Lorimer and the Canadian In-
stitute for Public Policy (Toron-
to), 1980.

204 pages; \$6.95 (paper).

Canada's Political Economy
Grant Reuber
McGraw-Hill Ryerson (Toronto),
1980.

308 pages.

"Our Lagging Economy"
Richard Needham. Series appear-
ing in *Globe and Mail*, Toronto
(August 4 — 8, 1980).

By Tom Walkom

The "science" of economics in North America is waging a fierce ideological war. As with most ideological wars in this continent, the power, money and heavy artillery are on one side. Monopolistic corporations (called "free enterprise") fund economists to tell workers to work harder (called "productivity") for less money (called "living within our means") and allow higher profits (called "incentives") to accrue to capital.

Of course not all economists take orders from General Motors; most are as pleasant as anyone else — all of which demonstrates that the capitalist conspiracy takes place on a structural level rather than on the plane of individual consciousness. What biases most economists — or at least the economists which one tends to hear most about — toward one side in this current ideological offensive is their belief that the market really works.

While there are differences between the rabidly right-wing Fraser Institute and the moderately right-wing C.D. Howe Institute for instance, both — and these are the two best-known economic think tanks in Canada — operate on the assumption that capitalism is a stable, self-correcting

Tom Walkom is a freelance writer living in Toronto.

and ultimately beneficial system.

That's why two recent studies which challenge these assumptions are like the proverbial breath of fresh air in the fetid atmosphere of orthodoxy. Both studies, *The Monetarist Counter-revolution* by Arthur Donner and Douglas Peters, and *Canada's Crippled Dollar* by Lukin Robinson, are publications of the relatively new Canadian Institute for Public Policy. The CIPP is chaired (and presumably funded) by Walter Gordon, aristocrat, former cabinet minister and nationalist. Donner is an economist with a regular column in the very grey *Globe and Mail* *Report on Business*; Peters is vice-president and chief economist of the Toronto-Dominion Bank.

Donner and Peters are ostensibly writing a critique of Canadian monetary policy over the last five years. In reality, their study is an attempt to slow the ideological juggernaut loosed on the world by U.S. economist Milton Friedman. The monetarism of Friedman is based on the notion that the state should be confined to its 18th century role — primarily war and imperial expansion.



Domestically, except for limited tinkering with the money supply, it should withdraw from the economy; in particular, it should withdraw welfare benefits so that capital may more efficiently discipline an uppity work force through the mechanism of recession and wage cuts. Donner and Peters look closely at the management of the money supply carried out by Canada's monetarist central bank, and find, surprisingly enough, that it has not only not solved our economic problems — it has made them worse. They conclude that the problems are "structural" (which is a euphemism for saying that capitalism is not inherently self-stabilizing).

Their solution for inflation therefore involves explicit state action: in particular, the state should discipline the work force through wage controls rather than wait for the market to do so. Wage controls are a typical "structuralist" answer to inflation; Donner

and Peters add the wrinkle that these controls should be imposed through the income tax structure rather than directly, presumably in the hope that nobody will notice them. (The fact that a study which advocates wage controls, which is funded by a former Liberal cabinet minister and which is co-authored by a bank vice-president, can be viewed as an attack on economic orthodoxy, tells us volumes about the ideology of this orthodoxy.)

Lukin Robinson's study for the CIPP, *Canada's Crippled Dollar*, is another "structural" analysis of the ills of the Canadian economy. In this study, the author, who has worked as an economist both with Statistics Canada and the International Union of Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers, focuses on the country's balance of payments.

The analysis behind the focus is a familiar one — the 1980 version of a venerable opposition strain in Canadian economic thought, which has run from Harold Innis in the 1930's through to (yes) Walter Gordon in the 1960's. Robinson, like Innis, argues that the Canadian capitalist economy is even more unstable than others, primarily because of its excessive reliance on resource extraction and a concomitant reliance on foreign capital. Both express themselves in a persistent drain on Canada's overall current account balance with the rest of the world. (The current account balance is the net sum of exports, imports, services and dividend flows.) This drain seriously limits the government's freedom to manage the economy in any kind of rational fashion.

Robinson's solution to this problem has the federal government making the current account deficit a priority when analysing all policies. What this seems to be is a veiled call for more national control of the Canadian economy — in order to avoid dividend outflows — and more explicitly, a call for heightened import controls.

Both suggestions would make Grant Reuber's hair stand on end. Reuber, a conservative even by the standard of Canadian economists, was deputy finance minister under the short-lived Clark government. He is now doing something else. If Clark had stayed in power, *Canada's Political Economy* could have been of some interest. Unfortunately for Reuber, the whims of parliamentary democracy have relegated his book to the status of a collector's item — along with Brian Mulroney buttons and Edsels.

Canada's Political Economy is useful in one sense though, in that it can tell us how most economists will view critiques such as Robinson's. Anticipating *Canada's Crippled Dollar* by six years, Reuber stated in 1974 that the current

account critique of foreign investment was a "common fallacy" based on an "irrelevant comparison." While the Reuber critique begs the question of whether his categories of relevance are relevant, it will undoubtedly serve as the basis, within the monolithic structure of the religion known as "economics," for dismissing the CIPP's timid questioning of orthodoxy.

The front lines of the current ideological offensive are not in the think tanks, but in the press. Of all the media, *The Globe and Mail* gives perhaps the purest example of the way in which the press can translate the analysis of monetarist economists into self-justifying rote. Not only is the *Globe* pre-Keynesian, it is virtually pre-Adam Smith (Adam Smith at least acknowledged the existence of social classes).

Until recently, the senior economic theorist with *The Globe* was its former publisher, Brigadier-General R.S. Malone. To the Brigadier, the solutions to Canada's economic problems were simple — a return to the virtues of World War II, when we all "pulled together," and a spanner in the money-printing presses of the Bank of Canada.

Now *The Globe* has a new theorist, homily writer Richard Needham. Needham, who seems to be vying with Gordon Sinclair for the "Most Irascible Curmudgeon I Have Ever Known" award, has gone beyond the Brigadier in a series of articles entitled "Our Lagging Economy."

The problem is not merely the printing of money, says Needham, it is that workers are lazy, or lack productivity. Productivity may be improved only if we take a lesson from the Japanese (in newspapers, the Japanese always signify or symbolize the idea of productivity). This lesson includes getting rid of unions and replacing them with "quality circles," a group of employees which regularly and voluntarily gets together to figure out ways of producing better things faster." Moreover, Needham would better the Japanese by "allowing" 4.5 million students and old-age pensioners to work. This of course would increase the supply of labour, lower the wage rate and make workers more "productive."

While *The Globe's* economic analysis sticks out because it is so rabid, it is not isolated, nor ultimately is it any more foolish than much of the material produced by the Hoover Institute or Fraser Institute. All are part of the same complex of ideology — a web which links the elegant mathematical abstractions of university economists, the tedious publications of the think tanks and ultimately that which is accepted as common sense in barroom conversation.

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THE LAW: WATCHING THE DETECTIVES

Men In The Shadows
John Sawatsky
Doubleday (Toronto), 1979.
302 pages, \$15.00.

**Deference to Authority:
The Case of Canada**
Edgar Z. Friedenberg
Sharpe (New York), 1980.
170 pages, \$10.95.

By Jeff House

On July 24, 1979, Constable Robert Sampson, of the anti-terrorist unit of the RCMP Security Service, injured himself while planting a bomb at the home of a Montreal businessman. That bomb blew away the deep shrouds of secrecy which have enveloped the Security Service since its founding, riveting national attention on the Service for the first time. Both books reviewed here are indirect fallout from that explosion.

The Sawatsky book is an exceedingly informed, even intimate portrait of the S.S., Canada's 4,000 member strong, secret political police. In a country whose institutions provide the maximum degree of darkness in which the S.S. can operate, Sawatsky's historical section, and his painstakingly thorough information on structure, recruitment, chain of command, etc., are, on the whole, a formidable achievement. The two chapters on harassment of government-employed homosexuals in the 1950's and '60's, for example, are a tour de force. Ironically, Sawatsky makes an overwhelming case for the proposition that the present Internal Security Branch, which utilizes random wiretapping and surveillance of today's Mounties to assure us that their home life does not stray from monogamous two-child-per-family, is a direct descendant of the the anti-gay unit.

The book's discussion of S.S. anti-Communism falls short of the standard established in the "gay" chapters. Next to his scornful, withering treatment of anti-gay abuses, one notes a lack of similar vehemence concerning activities targetted at the Communist Party. A potted history of the Party, complete with allusions to Moscow gold (and no source for this allegation), leads to a discursive run through of the outlawing of the Party by way of Section 98 of the Criminal Code. Sawatsky opines that it was a mistake to jail par-

ty leaders such as Tim Buck, for it made them undeserving martyrs. Presumably it would have been o.k. except for that. This section ends with the Gouzenko allegations, and the interesting tidbit that the Canada Council Act was written by S.S. and MI-5 operative Peter Dwyer, who later headed the Canada Council for many years. Surprisingly, Sawatsky thinks it was quite normal for a security policeman to have run one of Canada's main cultural organizations.

But the most serious flaw of *Men in the Shadows* is its methodology. Incredibly, the preface claims as a virtue the fact that Sawatsky did not consult the evidence produced by the McDonald or Keable Commissions. Instead, he chides fellow journalists for relying on "officially-sanctioned sources." This, with respect to the Keable Commission, Parti-Quebecois appointed and militantly determined, is a calumny of the first order. Even the Liberal-Party-lining McDonald Commission, while keeping the Federal Liberals out of the line of fire, has turned up and published important information. Sawatsky's "broader sources" turn out to be "personal sources in the security and intelligence community," who, as one might imagine, often provide a pretty rosy picture of what the S.S. may have been doing. Take, for example, the break-in by the S.S. at the Agence Press Quebec Libre. Sawatsky's account is so close-up that one would swear that his sources were involved in the night's action themselves. One Inspector Cobb tries to find out from one Sgt. Pelletier where the warrants authorizing entry are. "Montreal didn't get them," Pelletier replies. That, as far as researcher Sawatsky is concerned, is that. But the evidence of the McDonald Commission shows that there was more to it than that. RCMP memos clearly indicate that the object of the operation was the destruction of the political and legal defence organizations located there. "Removal of records would be of no strategic value if it could be traced directly to the police" states one Mountie memo. "The idea of a legal search was therefore abandoned." For the clearly illegal entry which the plan required, no warrant was likely to be forthcoming. Areas of fruitful inquiry are also closed off by lack of familiarity with the transcripts. When he mentions the previously unreported fact that the S.S. took their stolen documents out of Quebec in a truck which they had rented using the name

of FLQ lawyer Robert LeMieux, he leaves it at that; how interesting his inquiries might have been, had he been aware of the evidence of an RCMP memo that the S.S. intended to "plant" the stolen documents on someone in the separatist milieu "so that the theft could be attributed to a specific person or group."

Men in the Shadows has its words of criticism for the Security Service. Yet because he never confronts all the evidence, and relies too much on the security "community" for what are often exculpatory explanations of skullduggery, the overall moderate approval with which he views the Service becomes, in consequence, disinformation.

Edgar Z. Friedenberg would no doubt call Sawatsky's book overly deferential to constituted authority. An American who came to Canada ten years ago as an act of moral witness in support of Vietnam draft evaders, Friedenberg uses the civil liberties abuses of the past decade as a jumping-off point for a thorough-going critique of Canadian society and institutions from the point of view of an American left-liberal, albeit one with a solid knowledge of Canadian politics and culture.

According to Friedenberg, Canadian society is deficient in the respect it accords "liberty," by which he means a certain area of human activity, such as free speech, which ought to be ever impervious to government effort to penetrate it, or sully it with legislation. Canadians, he says, trust their government overmuch, because they have no tradition which identifies government as the source of oppression. For Friedenberg, the phrase "Congress shall make no law..." is the very preface to any notion of a free society.

It is a commonplace that Canada has been forever influenced by the decision not to rebel against the King in 1776. Yet Friedenberg is fluent and persuasive as he draws out the consequences of that fateful decision. He has no trouble in demonstrating that on paper, at least, Americans have far more liberty than we; on one side of the scale are placed writs of Assist, The War Measures Act, and The Official Secrets Act. On the other, the Bill of Rights, Freedom of Information, separation of powers.

That is not to say, of course, that Americans are in fact freer. For the American theory, which calls for a truncated state, has little to counter-balance corporate power. Freedom belongs to the rich and the powerful. As a recent Supreme Court case held, no one can be denied an abortion, but those who cannot afford one ought not to expect the state to intervene in their favour; they are at "liberty" to do it themselves. Friedenberg is aware of this aspect of American liberty, though

he does not stress it. Yet he does seem genuinely unaware of another of the possible objections to the American approach; in making certain rights unalienable, the U.S. Constitution is in effect barring U.S. citizens from vesting those rights in government. They can literally not be "alienated" from their holder. A political programme of nationalization of property without compensation, for example, would offend the Bill of Rights, and therefore would be "unconstitutional." This makes imputations of treason easy to level against the left.

The first chapters of *Deference to Authority*, which contrast the American and Canadian systems of state secrecy, civil liberties, and punishment, are easily the best in the book, and perhaps anywhere. As Friedenberg says, "Canadian and American practice are especially effective in illuminating each other just because there are so many similarities, yet the differences are fundamental." For example, the Canadian love affair with the Ombudsman is acidly sketched by Friedenberg as particularly clear evidence of subservience of the populace to government. If people were asserting rights, he says, they would turn to lawyers. The Ombudsman can make public, bring moral pressure, criticize, and the like. But the institution depends on a citizenry will-

ing to accept Papa's definition of a situation, and Papa's resolution of it.

Of course, a juxtaposition of the two systems is most illuminating if the details of the two are correctly laid out, and here *Deference to Authority* falls somewhat short. Friedenberg states correctly that the Canadian Bill of Rights has no application to Provincial law and practice. But he claims that the U.S. Bill of Rights has applied to the states since 1865, when the 14th Amendment to the Constitution became law. This is a view which is endorsed by American radicals, but which the Supreme Court has explicitly refused to accept. While there has been some incorporation of the Federal Rights by way of the 14th, Friedenberg vastly overestimates the U.S. advantage over us in this respect. But he is not systematically wrong; for example, he thinks that Canadians can lose the right to a jury trial at the say so of a judge. The reality, which is far worse for civil liberties, is that the Crown has this discretionary power to decide whether or not a defendant is entitled to a trial by jury in the case of all so-called "mixed" offenses — a category which includes up to 70 percent of serious offenses brought to trial in this country.

Friedenberg writes convincingly about all this, and his anger that Canadians accept without protest the op-

pressive legislation and practice of government, is refreshing. Yet his argument goes seriously awry when he plunges on with the uncausal "Deference" explanation. His chapter entitled "An Economy of Deference" asserts that Canadians have a deep-rooted "propensity to yield to — indeed to seek — economic domination by others." As with much other pop psychology, this assertion is backed by little in the way of evidence. The Canadian psyche serves, for Friedenberg, the same function that "the state of nature" served for 17th century political theorists; all one's preferences can be stored there, to be called up to fill chinks in one's factual argument. It is, indeed, hard to take this argument seriously. While some of our elites may find it profitable to service foreign or transnational corporations, this is not out of deference, nor is the power of these corporations "authority." Friedenberg ought not to deduce "consent to domination" from the existence of domination; rape is not made consensual by its successful completion.

In spite of weaknesses, Friedenberg's work repays study. At the very least, it will be read throughout the United States as the decade's most authoritative study of Canada. Much of what the American intelligentsia will be thinking about us for the next long while can be found within its covers. ●

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TRANSSEXUALISM — A FEMINIST ISSUE?

**The Transsexual Empire:
The Making of the She-Male**
Janice G. Raymond
Beacon Press (Boston), 1980.
220 pages, \$5.95.

By Nancy Johnson

Janice Raymond calls transsexualism a 'sociopolitical program,' whereby the 'medical empire' perpetuates the sex rules and identities generated by a patriarchal society. For Raymond, transsexualism is a conspiracy, a conscious invasion into feminist territory. She quotes Mary Daly, the meta-ethicist of the radical feminist movement, as saying that transsexuals whole presence becomes a 'member' invading women's presence. According to Raymond, the transsexually-constructed lesbian-feminist not only colonizes female bodies, but 'appropriates a feminist soul.' And in this case "the loss of a penis does not mean the loss of an ability to penetrate women — women's identities, women's spirits, women's sexuality."

Moreover, the factual existence of what is known as gender dysphoria irritates Raymond. It offends her sense of "ecobiological integrity." Raymond feels that the single determining factor in establishing one's sex should be found at the chromosomal level — that is by the chromosome xx or xy found in every cell structure. Raymond believes that transsexuals can reject surgery, submit to their own form of consciousness raising, and reveal their revolutionary potential. In short, transsexuals should do what women are doing.

Raymond will not attribute any characteristics to transsexuals or their situation that do not parallel the experience of the feminist, and more specifically with the 'coming out' aspect of homosexuality. Gender dysphoria, like homophobia, can be attributed to sociological origins. Rather than unify feminists against transsexualism, I think her treatment will be viewed as unnecessarily intolerant to the point of severe paranoia, and self-serving to the point of gross distortion.

First of all, female-to-male transsexualism does occur — in a ratio of male-to-female transsexualism of 1:4. Raymond dismisses all females with gender dysphoria as objects of

Nancy Johnson is an artist and curator of Gallery 76 in Toronto.

'tokenism,' designed to "promote the deception that transsexualism is a supposed human problem, instead of a uniquely male problem." But this ratio for transsexuals approximates the ratio that visible gay women occur to visible gay men. Raymond has no right to say that the female-to-male transsexual experience is not valid.

Secondly, Raymond insists on addressing herself specifically to surgical transsexualism rather than postulating it in the broader term of gender dysphoria. In actuality, beginning with John Hopkins Gender Identity Clinic and followed by most other psychiatric institutions in North America, there has been a moratorium on transsexual surgery for over two years. These clinics have shown some ability to respond to the ambiguity of feedback on surgery and are at a point of reevaluation in their treatment of gender dysphoria.

Surgery is only a small component of gender dysphoria but by emphasizing it completely, Raymond can attack psychiatry for seeking "individualistic solutions" and transsexuals for complying with the role-playing of extreme social conformity. She seems to believe that the urge to trans-sex comes from the urge to leave one highly stereotypical role model in favour of another. There is an image of the male-to-female transsexual as becoming either the whore or the housewife.

Raymond herself acknowledges the existence of the lesbian-feminist transsexual and devotes an entire chapter legitimizing their purge from feminist groups. She is especially attuned to the fact that unless this transsexual makes an admission, she can rarely be identified. So presumably, some transsexuals have done more than trade their overalls for aprons.

There is no role model that could be classified as strictly transsexual. It is not the intention of the transsexual to live in a community of transsexuals with its own transsexual ideology. If Raymond demands that transsexuals take on an identity that is neither male or female, then she is really asking that transsexuals live outside of the context of human society. Men who trans-sex to become female take on the possibilities for role behaviour that are open to women, and as the framework of women's lives expands so will the framework of the transsexual.

John Money of John Hopkins Gender Identity Clinic has proposed

one of the more widely-accepted theories of gender dysphoria. Money thinks that an individual's personal history, his socialization, is one factor in causing gender dysphoria, but that it only augments a prenatal or biological disposition for its occurrence. These elements lock onto a specific core gender identity before the individual is eighteen months old.

She rejects Money's biological research in total because it uses what she feels are sexist categories. She rejects his entire theory as deterministic. After all, the transsexual cannot be held responsible if part of the explanation is biological. Although Raymond does no biological research, no psychological research and has scant contact with transsexuals themselves, she says nothing which proves that there is not a biological contribution to gender dysphoria and to make her case that transsexualism is solely a sociological phenomena.

Feminism is a much broader, integrated ideology than to fear 'invasion' by transsexuals. Transsexuals neither have the numbers nor the access for such demonstrations of power. As a sociological group, male-to-female transsexuals overwhelmingly come from working class backgrounds, with a large percentile being from minority groups. Moreover, the transsexual must persuade a male hierarchical structure to give him a surgery that will allow him to leave the sanctity of malehood. Post-operatively the newly-female transsexual feels the oppressive forces against women much the same as any other female. In terms of the range of male privilege, the transsexual's access is not great.

What is really at the root of Raymond's fears is the issue of whether or not to admit male-to-female transsexuals into feminist groups. I think that specific feminist organizations have a right to work with whom they want and if they can or cannot support working with a transsexual, that is their choice. But feminists have no right to broadly police against contact with transsexuals.

More importantly, I think it is a misplaced analogy that presumes that feminist ideology or a woman's spirit is 'invadable' material. Feminist ideology, because it is a caste ideology (rather than a specific analysis or literature) will always maintain a multi-dimensional profile. Like any ideology, it is public and not owned by anyone, not even the women who make it. It is not in its range of possibilities to be up for grabs. Feminism can withstand almost any kind of possible 'so-called' political interference as short term.

Janice Raymond calls herself an ethicist and as such says that lesbian-feminists must have no contact with

transsexuals, and the whole issue of gender dysphoria. It is one thing to rationalize working in isolation because you want to accomplish specific political goals. The feminist movement and the lesbian movement have

repeatedly worked in this way. It is entirely different to rationalize a separatist position because of the possibility that one could be morally tainted by outsiders. Raymond does not acknowledge the difference. ●

QUEBEC/CANADA: FILM OF TWO CULTURES

**Self Portrait: Essays on the
Canadian and Quebec Cinema**
Edited by Pierre Veronneau
English edition edited by Piers
Handling
Canadian Film Institute
(Ottawa) 1980.
257 pages, with index,
bibliography and filmography;
\$8.95.

By Ara Rose Parker

In the introduction to this present volume, Pierre Veronneau who directed the editing, discusses the evolution of the book: "In 1978, Cinéma-Québecois and Pierre Lherminier, Editeur, published the French version of this book. Intended for French audiences, it was entitled *Les cinémas canadiens*. In that book we wanted to talk about films produced in a territory — Canada — and the deep differences that we find there." Now with the publishing of an English version allowing the inclusion of writings on film from English Canada, Piers Handling asks: "Has our cinema given us a national image that helps define ourselves, that illuminates our similarities and our differences as a country and a people?"

This anthology of essays on film proves to be an educated and accessibly readable collection on the history, ideology, distribution and production, and literary analysis of films produced by the National Film Board, CBC, Commercial and Independent filmmakers from coast to coast, from the beginning of the film producing years, in Canada and Quebec.

As a resource book for filmmakers (there are lists of films and directors and a chronology of the cinemas at the back) and for those who question why our industry is at times as frustrated as it appears to be, *Self Portrait* thankfully does not protect a politesse in its academic perspectives. Instead the authors aim to clarify the often clouded Canadian film experience and point to the common and differential distinctions between the various regions and genres of film approaches attempting to encourage a greater appreciation of the work produced within

Ara Rose Parker is an artist and photographer living in Toronto.

Canadian frontiers.

Our industry cannot help but be compared to those in other film producing countries; the questions raised in part by this anthology ask, to whom should we compare our work to, and, should we find ourselves in competition with outside cinemas, on what grounds must our efforts be assessed.

The various chapters include thoughts on the anatomy of the Canadian film audience, American cultural imperialism in the film industry, Canada as Hollywood of the North, politics and cinema, searching out a national identity through our cinema, and brief as it may be, some mention of alternative filmmaking as an indication of our present explorations for a filmic, cultural identity.

Peter Harcourt's article, "The Beginning of a Beginning" stands out in this anthology because he assumes the challenge of exploring the nature of the cinematic message which is culturally bound. There is an underlying theme throughout the rest of the book attempting to establish a labyrinth of relative factors — geographic, historic, economic, political and governmental — to explain the background out of which Canadian films have emerged. In Harcourt's writing, the focus of his questioning is directed to the content and stylistic differences of the films themselves. By comparing an English feature film, Don Owen's *Nobody Waved Good-bye* to the Quebecois film by Gilles Groulx, *Le Chat Dans le Sac*, both produced in 1964, Harcourt argues that despite their similar cinematic traditions and shared concerns in their narrative address to the problem of "disaffiliated youths," their respective film aesthetics distinguish themselves by their cultural origins as well.

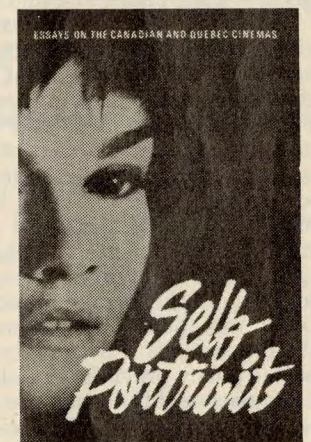
Perhaps because there is now a book available, the Canadian public will also finally be offered a festival of Canadian films, whose organizers might look to *Self Portrait* as a beginning of a beginning in the choosing of films. There are a few films however in *Self Portrait* which are mentioned in virtually every chapter, it is a pity that the choices for analogies are not more plentiful but then, that brings us back to the problem of discovering and defining our Self Portrait. ●

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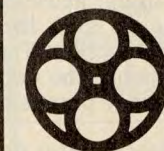
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ROOTS OF STATE TERROR

The Washington Connection and Third World Fascism
(The Political Economy of Human Rights, vol. 1)
Noam Chomsky and Edward S. Herman
Black Rose Press (Montreal) 1979.

441 pages, with appendix of case studies and extensive Notes;
\$16.95 (cloth), \$7.95 (paper).

By John Duncan

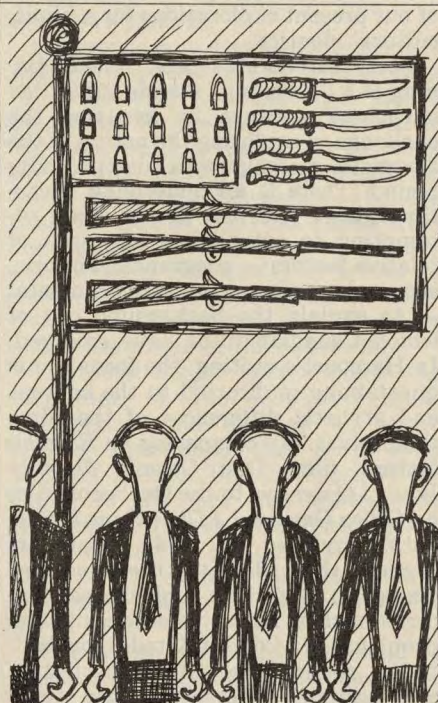
Chomsky and Herman want to make clear the disparity between a fact and a belief: the fact is the proliferation of fascistic neo-colonial regimes in the Third World under the aegis of American power; the belief is the ideological piety of American foreign policy that claims the spread of democracy and human rights. "Well," you may say, "so what's new about that?" Nothing, but Chomsky and Herman do it pretty well. Up to a point, anyway. But let me recapitulate first.

Despite most of the ballyhoo about "Communist suppression" and "left-wing terrorism" in the mainstream American press (here, the authors include TV, etc.), it appears that since World War Two, the growing trend in terror is its systematic (and often flagrant) use as an instrument of state policy by American-installed or supported regimes in the Third World. Why? Because ultimately such regimes are instruments of American foreign policy, which promotes freedom only in the form of 'freedom of economic manipulation for multinational corporations.' In any country where this policy prevails, exploitation and degradation of the mass of citizens is the inevitable result. The citizens then must be suppressed. When even minimal reforms would threaten the scope, or limit the ruthlessness, of this exploitation, even minimal reforms are ultimately enemies of the state. The governing minorities of such states, whose allegiance is primarily to their foreign corporate sponsors, use terror both to remove 'dangerous' activists and to keep the people at large in a state of disorganized subjection. Terror, by the way, is probably the only appropriate word. The grisly parade of

John Duncan is a freelance writer living in Toronto.

state torture, military or para-military massacres, death squads, and concentration camps, that winds its way through the well-documented factual sections of the book, makes that clear.

Behind this can be discerned the long arm of American imperialism. Military aid, loans, public relations propaganda — nothing is too good for a ruling clique, however corrupt and frightful, if it will guarantee 'political stability' and a 'favorable investment climate' (for American purposes, of course). Where such regimes are threatened or are not yet in power, America may intervene more directly. First comes the CIA with amongst other things: murder, conspiracy with right-wing terrorists, bribery, propaganda, infiltration and destruction of friendly organizations or parties. Last, if necessary, come the troops.



How, aside from sheer force, is this process carried out? Fraud, the authors tell us. Clearly, news is manipulated or selected to emphasize the wrongdoings of America's nominal foes, while downplaying or completely ignoring the actions of its friends. As if that weren't enough, the very words used are biased. 'Left-wing terrorists,' for example, disrupt 'law and order.' It is often not pointed out that, while the terrorists may have murdered their dozens, the forces of law and order have thousands on their conscience.

Language itself is twisted to serve the state, and we, often whether we want to or not, accept the twist.

Leaving aside the despoiling of these countries by such regimes, the implications for the citizenry of America itself are not pleasant: an over-inflated military apparatus, the gradually increased domestic application of terror tactics tried out in the colonies — in fact, Chomsky and Herman see a potential *Brazilianization* of the U.S. as the economic collapse deepens in the latter part of the twentieth century.

So far, so good. Nothing startlingly new, but *extremely* well documented and conveniently pulled together in one handy book. Although very little analysis is presented, Chomsky and Herman do raise interesting issues in what are almost asides. How neo-fascist regimes differ from 'classical' fascism, for example. (They have an *external* power base and very little internal popular support.) They begin to describe what they call the "National Security Doctrine" — the underlying ideological justification of these regimes. (Briefly, a justification of military totalitarianism and the answer to the ever-present threat of 'Communism,' either external or internal.) Yet it is not made at all clear how the horrors described are inextricably bound up with the whole logic and structure of capitalist imperialism. Nor, for that matter, how these may be bound up with the logic and structure of the state. This, I suspect, is the underlying thread of Chomsky's thought. He and Herman make clear that the socialist countries — and their client states — are not innocent in this area, though we have been propagandized to exaggerate their offences and ignore our own. Their aim, in this book is to clear away the myth that 'our side' doesn't perpetrate such crimes against humanity. That being said, however, the deeper question is: Why does anybody? Chomsky, whose ideological tendency appears to be either libertarian-socialist or anarchist, has already implied his answer in a previous collection of political essays entitled *For Reasons of State*. In this current work, his argument is still only implied. This is unfortunate, as it should be brought forward, if only so that one could know where the authors stand.

An unresolved, tripartite dilemma remains: Which of the problems and inequities of the world are outgrowths of capitalism? Which are the outgrowths of any 'state' society? and which are the outgrowths of industrial society? This demands more answers, as well as more facts.

Altogether, the implication that can be drawn from this book is: these phenomena are inextricable bound up with the structure of capitalist im-

perialism, represented in this case by American imperialism. But state terror and torture are not the exclusive province of capitalism (as witness, for example, events in Stalinist Russia) nor, indeed, of industrial society. The whole "National Security Doctrine" and its apparatus of terror stridingly resembles the organized persecution of witches in the 15th to 17th century Europe. The logics of 'anti-communism' and 'anti-satanism' are virtually identical: The state (church) is absolute; the state (church) is good; the state (church) is engaged in an endless crusade against evil (Communism), which would otherwise destroy mankind; any dissension from the (church) state aids Communism (evil) and probably results from an alliance with it; therefore any dissenters are Communists (witches) and must be suppressed; any means of suppression is justified so that the state (church) can triumph in its struggle against Communism (evil). Similar logics, and consequences, have occurred elsewhere in history, for example the Roman persecutions of Christianity.

We must ask, therefore, not only how state terror and capitalist imperialism are interdependent, but whether the interdependence is one of terror and the state per se (which would include any authoritarian hierarchical bureaucracy, i.e. the renaissance Church). Or does the spread of official terror signify the *decline* of those governing structures employing it? Glancing at the historical instances above suggests this is so — cheering note for those who eagerly anticipate the collapse of imperial capitalism and the rise of socialism. The other logic of Chomsky and Herman's book, however, requires some serious thought about the shape that socialism should take.

To reiterate: state, or otherwise institutionalized, terror has occurred in different historical circumstances, under various economic/political systems. The records suggest it occurs when the system is either in decline, or being supplanted by another system. Who, however, writes the records? Apologists for the new system write retrospectively about the horror of the old, apologists of the old ignore or justify, as they always have. Here lies the rub of Chomsky and Herman's work. Seeing the state, the multinational corporations and the media studiously ignoring or suppressing these facts, can we believe that any other historical society has behaved differently? Can we then go on to believe, automatically, that any historical move away from capitalism will automatically resolve the problems? This is not to say that we should not move; but rather, that we should do a lot more thinking about our route.

CANADA GAZETTEER ATLAS



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COLONIAL SUPERIORITY: OUR SENSE OF SELF?

The Imaginary Canadian
Tony Wilden
Pulp Press (Vancouver), 1980.
261 pages, \$11.95 (cloth), \$6.95 (paper).

By Robert Reid

Jacques Lacan, the well-used French psychoanalyst, worked out, in the 1950's, an interpretation of relationships which he derived from Freud with additions of aspects of the work of existentialist Jean-Paul Sartre and modern rereadings of the German idealist philosopher, G.W.F. Hegel. Lacan then conceived an individualistic and competitive relationship between 'self' and 'other' which teacher and communications expert Tony Wilden states, he called 'Imaginary'.

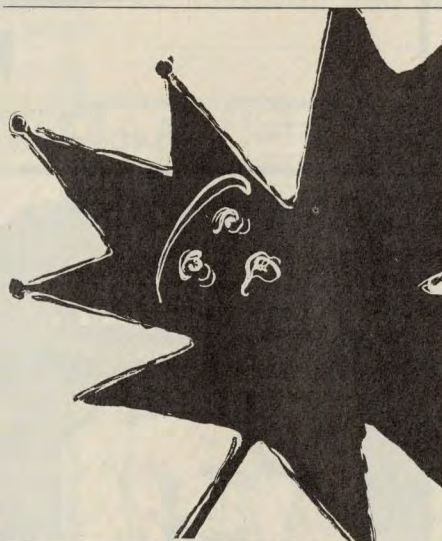
For Lacan, the 'Imaginary' is a stage through which a child passes into language and thereby into the world of rules and authority. As a specialized tool of psychoanalysis, the 'Imaginary' has application in one instance to the treatment of paranoia in individuals, a state in which the aggrieved is largely the victim of his or her runaway imagination. The sense of persecution, the fear, is real but the source of the distress is manufactured out of the unadmitted substance that it is the task of analysis to reveal.

The "conservative" Lacan however, has an "individualistic and male-imperialist perspective" in Wilden's opinion. He failed to see the larger application of his own concept. Furthermore, he could take no precautions against its use 'flaking-off' on the academic left.

In *The Imaginary Canadian*, Lacan's 'Imaginary' undergoes a hang-on-to-your-armchair transformation from relationships within personalities to relationships that are social and economic. The analogy is delicate but that is probably no less than can be expected from the "nature" of the handling of a capitalized adjective with elements of information and communication theory, general systems theory, linguistics, Marxist dialectic — in all, as Wilden claims, a "way of perceiving and analyzing social relations which is not yet taught or discussed in very many schools." Under scrutiny, the smear on the specimen slide to which the 'Im-

aginary' is applied, is the Canadian national identity.

It is perhaps unnerving to imagine ourselves, as Wilden requires of Canadians, to be the denizens of a Third World country — this colony, our dependence, we who are exploited, our history misrepresented to us by others, others who are masters in our house. Freedom and independence are too rare to be treated lightly. Nonetheless, *de-industrialization* is a word that has crept into the Canadian vocabulary over the past decade and the Canadian standard of living has plummeted. These symptoms and the continuing flight of profits from the country on top of examples of social injustice sufficient to fill out any two books let alone this one, ought to be more than enough to convince even the most



skeptical, of the authentic status of Canada and Canadians. How, in the face of the October Crisis, RCMP criminality, the secret trial of Peter Treu, the Riel affair, the unredressed grievances of francophones, and much more, can recognition of the fact of Canadian colonization and the systematic oppression of Canadians be avoided? Why does the imaginary Canada of the rule of law, British freedom and justice, and independence in the world community persist? In two tenuously connected theses Wilden attempts to reveal how the trick is concocted.

Canadians don't know their own worth or so it seems. In Wilden's view, they are the victims of an entirely fabricated mass sense of inferiority common to colonials. Because of the historical imperialist efforts of both

the British and Americans and their surrogates here, Canadians in general have succumbed to expressing a pernicious bigotry, symptomatic of colonial-status paranoia, toward 'natural inferiors' in the hope of salvaging some self-esteem. Equals become the objects of groundless fears and "real oppressors," through the course of class direction, media manipulation, and the self-deception of the oppressed, become nominal equals. The imaginary becomes the accepted truth while reality is opaqued. Or so it would seem.

As a piece of descriptive literature *The Imaginary Canadian* actually displays a positivist's regard for the virtues of information. As prescription it remains curiously quiet about recommendations for that information's use. Presumably an informed state is its own solution.

In one passage however, Wilden, in a contradiction of the empiricist's position that hasn't gone unnoticed, expresses a taste for proceeding eclectically. He speaks of an alternative method and point of vantage when facing the dichotomies of pro-British and anti-American, capital and labour, men against women, etc., when he says, "this is a position and perspective which allows us to take whatever we need from wherever we find it from whatever tradition...to transform them in whatever ways we find most fruitful and most useful."

This would explain his appropriation out of all clinical context of Lacan's concepts. It explains too, his constant fiddling with the several uses of the word "imaginary" and his insensitivity to indiscriminant shifting, back and forth, between the general sense and the particular case in terms of the concept of identity.

What it doesn't explain is the ominous, crypto-conservative message in a code when he writes, "we must be careful to distinguish between dominant Others who are necessarily oppressive Others, and dominant Others whose dominance in specific areas is humanly and socially useful so long as they don't abuse it. This may be a dominance earned through special training, a dominance delegated by a particular group, or a dominance earned by the exercise of special talents." This request for obedience before technical expertise should be viewed with serious concern when it is remembered that Wilden is a 'communications' expert. It becomes doubly disturbing when, in too many other ways, *The Imaginary Canadian*, an after-glow of the self-help manuals of the 1970's, appears as less of a contribution to the explanation of the workings of 'false consciousness' and more of an attempt to validate 'communications' studies. ●

Robert Reid is an Associate Editor of FUSE.

AN OVER-EXTENDED METAPHOR

Labirinto
Achille Bonito Oliva
Uni Editrice (Milano), 1979.
129 pages, plates; \$16.00.

By Martha Fleming

Since *Labirinto* does not have the good grace to call itself a catalogue, I made the presumption that it was a book.

But in fact, it is neither, in the way that vanity press publications are neither acceptable as books or as straight promotion.

The money machine of intellectualism is at work in this publication, allowing author Oliva to add a major publication to his resumé and bring, with the name he already has, another nod of recognition to the artists whose works are included. Both reputations appear to benefit from a solemn publication the intention of which is misty and which is steeped in a romantically intellectual text.

I picked the book up because of a renewed interest in the use of this kind of icon — the labyrinth — by artists. I had seen some work recently of young Italians who had used the symbol, and had been working with an architect who had been using the form of the labyrinth to exemplify the intricacy of architectural drawings and their representative powers.

However, the link between the form of the labyrinth and the work which accompanies the short text is an oblique one.

Oliva's essay, along with more than fifty plates in black and white, and colour, attempts to use the myth of Theseus' 'journey' into the labyrinth and his slaying of the minotaur as a metaphor for the 'ordeal' of the artist. But a metaphor should clarify something, and this metaphor does nothing but mystify in its tenuity. In everything — from Oliva's claim that the minotaur is the embodiment of the duality of language to his assertion that Theseus' careful winding and unwinding of Ariadne's thread through the labyrinth is indicative of the craftsmanship of the artist — he bends his somewhat debatable 'truth' about the act of creation to fit an old and loaded myth. This kind of analysis is the kind which turns in on itself in its search for motivations and clues.

Oliva's presumption that the duality

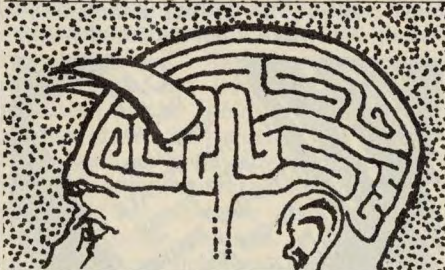
Martha Fleming is an Associate Editor of FUSE.

of the minotaur is matched by the duality inherent in the masculine strength of the sword and the feminine wiles of Ariadne's thread would in theory end the battle in a deadlock.

But not so. Oliva's Theseus kills the minotaur and "rolls up the thread and brings news of his undertaking... He needs the world's gaze and the sunlight in order to state the irresistible truth of art."

The almost laughable romance of this text is made less laughable when one takes it a step further to the realization that Oliva's hero/artist has killed language and brought back nothing in its stead.

It is in these holes that the danger of this kind of associative analysis lies. Is it language which we confront to transform our altercations with it into art? Perhaps partly, but not entirely. Oliva has fallen into the trap of using a creation metaphor which has a



strength so overwhelming as to nullify that which it is trying to be metaphoric of. A myth itself is a metaphor: Oliva is trying to re-inform it.

Further, the text's connection to mythology attempts to encompass in its universal appeal all the work of the artists represented. They are as disparate as Robert Morris, Gilbert and George, and the New Image painter Francesco Clemente. Some of the works are illustrative of labyrinths and others, one presumes, are illustrative of Oliva's theory of creation, since they are all 'art.'

In the way that the use of the myth fails to exemplify a theory of creation, it also fails to tie together a group of artists whom Oliva seems to have arbitrarily chosen.

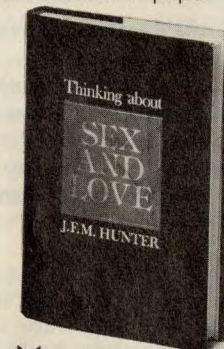
But Oliva has succeeded in doing two things. He has succeeded, in his use of something as pungent as a prehistoric myth, in historicizing all the work to which he is referring. And he has succeeded in perpetuating a dangerous romanticization of the role of the artist by associating him so directly with a mythological character. Two out of three is pretty bad. ●

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WHO IS THE OPPRESSOR: THE FAMILY, THE STATE?

The Unmentionable Vice
Michael Goodich
Ross-Erikson (Santa Barbara,
California), 1979.
163 pages, with index and
bibliography; \$8.75.

Coming Out in the Seventies
Dennis Altman
Wild and Woolley
(Sydney, Australia), 1979.
312 pages; \$15.95.

Homosexuality and Liberation
Mario Mieli
Gay Men's Press (London), 1980.
247 pages with extensive Notes;
\$8.95 (U.S.).
(Available from Glad Day Books,
4 Collier St. Toronto, Canada.)

By George Smith

Gay life appears in the establishment media on those rare occasions when it counts as news: Anita Bryant's offensive; in Toronto, the police raids on *The Body Politic*, and a year later on the Barracks steam bath; and in Winnipeg, the arrest of a number of prominent men for allegedly buying sex from a well-organized group of young men and boys. (Lesbians, as might be expected, rarely make the news in a society committed to the exclusion of women.)

What these stories do not report on is the enormous political change that has come about in gay life since the heyday of the gay liberation movement in the early Seventies.

The early gay movement committed itself to the politics of personal liberation. For many gays this made it easier to come out to family and friends. But it also led to an unwarranted crusade against "the family" as the bastion of gay oppression. This kind of personal politics quickly reached its limit, however. Today gays in Canada still stand outside the social order — in spite of the criminal code amendments of 1969, and in spite of the inclusion of sexual orientation in human rights legislation in Quebec. The early gay movement, unfortunately, has had little, if any, effect on curbing the state's efforts to administer the sexual lives of people.

The spread of the gay movement,

George Smith is a PHD student in education at OISE.

moreover, has developed an ironic twist, especially in recent years. Early gay liberation ideology was grounded in a kind of left-wing, critical-theory orthodoxy (e.g. Marcuse) that held that the revolution would be a matter not of class, but of culture. "All power to the imagination!" It held firmly to the anti-imperialism of the U.S. anti-war movement and of Mao. It attempted a Reichian integration of Freud and Marx (Reich's homophobia notwithstanding). And it took seriously the sexual politics of feminism as a social critique. Overall, however, in terms of the everyday lives of gay people, what the movement has produced has been a spawning of gay businesses and the growth of gay religion.

These developments are not peculiar to Canada. A new edition of an international gay bar guide for lesbians has just been published. And in the U.S., the government has called upon the Metropolitan Community (gay) Church to help with the sponsorship and settle-



ment of gays arriving with the recent wave of political refugees from Cuba. The left-leaning zeal of the early gay liberation movement has produced a strangely secular revolution.

The realization of this fact was brought home again this summer with the abolition of the Canadian Lesbian and Gay Rights Coalition in favour of a parliamentary lobby in Ottawa with strong ties to gay business. As the old order, in this fashion, gives way to the new, what is missing is any clear analysis or sense of direction. In France, there has been a revival of gay politics around writers like Michel Foucault and Guy Hocquenghem. In North America, however, gay intellectuals have been content to lead ivory-towered existences mainly within gay academic unions — politics being the farthest thing from their minds.

The same seems to be true in Australia. Dennis Altman's new book, *Coming Out in the Seventies*, is, as the title suggests, a return to the early politics of gay liberation. As a collection of Altman articles, interviews, and other memorabilia from roughly 1967 to 1977, it is a nostalgia trip: back to the days of the counter culture, back to the civil rights and anti-war movements, back to the debate about Freud and Marx. Like the period it represents, these themes run through the book as an ever-present background to the emergence of Altman's "Gay consciousness."

Typical of collections of this sort, the quality of the work is quite uneven. Some of the articles like "The Homosexual and the Family" (1974) or "The Homosexual Vision of E.M. Forster" (1977) are fairly carefully written. Others, like "Fear Loathing and Hepatitis" (1977), merely proclaim opinion as fact — the stock-in-trade of newspaper columnists. Overall, the book is more an autobiography of Altman than an intellectual history of gay liberation in the Seventies — something not all that strange given the personal politics of the period.

In an essay written as late as 1977 entitled "The State and the New Homosexual," Altman does not go much beyond Marcuse's writings of the early Sixties. There is, consequently, not even an inkling of Foucault's insight that it is the state, rather than the family, that organizes sexual oppression in a class society. This failure to see the state as the source of gay oppression probably led Edgar Friedenber, in a recent review of the book, to wonder aloud how a gay writer could be so lacking in paranoia.

Mario Mieli's book, *Homosexuality and Liberation*, is a *cri du coeur* of an effeminate gay man — in this case, a drag queen. It demands sympathy and support. Effeminate men often bear the brunt of gay sexual oppression. This places them, as in the case of the Stonewall Riot which began the gay liberation movement in America, in the forefront of the attack on the state; and makes of them, as they see it, a truly revolutionary force.

What is important about Mieli's work is that it puts forward the view that homosexual desire is universal and, consequently, that it is the work of gay politics to liberate this desire in everyone — gay or straight! This position which is the theoretical touchstone of many gay liberation groups in Europe, especially Italy's *Fuori*, stands in marked contrast to the civil rights strategy of North American gays.

But the book, unfortunately, is more rhetoric than argument. While it makes a number of useful and interesting points, its analysis is unable

to bear the full weight of its politics. Its militant gay chauvinism, for example, comes off as an ad hominem attack on heterosexuals, as though the oppression of gays was somehow grounded in heterosexuality.

Theoretically this work, like Altman's, is located within the politics of the early gay movement. It has, consequently, a kind of Marxist gloss. Typically, the last chapter is entitled "Towards a Gay Communism" and throughout the book there is sporadic use of Marxist terms like 'capital' and 'ideology.' But like a number of early gay liberationists, Mieli does not understand Marxism. Specifically, he does not understand that for Marxists, social phenomena — like gender, sexual identity or even "homosexual desire" — are produced historically in the activities and practices of people; and to understand these phenomena it is necessary to see them as being socially produced rather than as being "congenital" which is what he thinks they are.

Michael Goodich's *The Unmentionable Vice* is essentially a history of the administration of sexual life in the Middle Ages. It begins with a short chapter on the incidence of gay life in Europe between the 11th and 14th centuries, and ends with an account of the trial of one Arnold Veriolle. But for the most part the book is a compendium of medieval canonical and secular law dealing with sexual life. It concentrates especially on the Gregorian reforms and on the work of the various Lateran Councils, particularly the fourth.

Goodich presents his material factually and, consequently, without much attention to historiography. He appears, in fact, to know little about the writing of history. Apart from failing to provide any kind of analysis, the chief problem with the work concerns what is to be considered historically as homosexuality — a term invented in the later part of the 19th century. This problem is compounded by the fact that for the medieval authorities to distinguish same sex relations from other "sexual deviations" was not all that important. A sin against nature could be defined as broadly as "wasting one's seed outside its normal vessel," which could even include nocturnal emissions. What the church was after was not just "homosexuality," but any form of sexual non-conformity, irrespective of sexual orientation. To organize an account of this period, as Goodich has done, in order to emphasize its homosexual (i.e. modern) features, inadvertently involves a reconstruction of historical categories and therefore a reconstruction of historical reality itself.

The book, however, is useful for the light it throws on the organization of

sexual oppression in the Middle Ages. Clearly, it was not the nuclear family that was being defended by the suppression of sexual deviancy. Rather, it was something more like the social order, or better put, the social relations of medieval life and their management by the Catholic church. Attacks on sexual non-conformity, interestingly enough only really began, according to Goodich, in the 13th century. At that time they were closely linked to the suppression of political non-conformity and to xenophobia. In some instances, in fact, legislative reference to sodomy appeared ambiguously to apply to "homosexuality," other forms of sexual deviancy and to heresy. Even in the Middle Ages a charge of sexual deviancy was a popular form of political attack. The commie fag is not an entirely modern invention.

Goodich's material, and not his analysis or lack thereof, consequently, shows that it is not religion or Christianity, as such, that is against sexual deviance. Rather, it is the church as an administrative apparatus committed to the preservation of a particular set of social relations that is concerned to enforce sexual orthodoxy — hence the homosexual interpretation of the Sodom and Gomorrah story. What *The Unmentionable Vice* illustrates is how the church, with its commitment to social order and its selective interpretation of the Bible, prefigures the modern state with its use of the "scientific" work-up of gay life (for example, in psychiatric accounts) as a means of providing a rationale for handling what, on other grounds, is seen as a social/political problem. Unfortunately, Goodich does not make enough of this distinction between religious content and administrative practice. As a result, on the one hand, homosexual oppression appears in the book to be grounded in religion; much the way it is grounded in the family for Altman, and in heterosexuality for Meili. On the other, the administrative similarities between the medieval church and the modern state are virtually lost.

Faced with the challenge of forging a new political analysis for gays, none of these books really has much to say. They are, of course, more-or-less interesting in their own right. In terms of the new two-line struggle emerging among gay politicians between those who view the family as the center of gay oppression and those who see it as a function of the state, Altman's and Meili's works fall into the former camp, while Goodich's provides some evidence in support of the latter. Until these issues are taken up more concretely, most gay activists — in Toronto, at least — will probably continue to defend gay businesses against the state — be they small publishing ventures or steam baths.

WHY MEN RAPE

Interviews with Convicted Rapists
EDITED BY
Joseph Koenig and Sylvia Levine

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WORKING-CLASS HISTORY

Voices of Discord
Donna Phillips, ed.
New Hogtown Press (Toronto),
1979.
220 pp.; \$3.95.

Dangerous Foreigners: European Immigrant Workers and Labour Radicalism in Canada, 1896-1932
Donald Avery
McClelland and Stewart
(Toronto), 1979.
204 pages with appendix of demographic information; \$6.95.

The Organizer: Kent Rowley, a Canadian union life
Rick Salutin
Lorimer (Toronto) 1980.
163 pages; \$16.95 (cloth), \$8.95 (paper).

Indians at Work: An informal history of native Indian labour in British Columbia, 1838-1930.
Rolf Knight
New Star Books (Vancouver), 1978.
320 pages with appendix on historical background information; \$13.95 (cloth), \$6.50 (paper).

We Stood Together: First hand accounts of dramatic events in Canada's labour past
Gloria Montero
Lorimer (Toronto), 1979.
261 pages; \$9.95.

Soon To Be Born (A novel)
Oskar Ryan
New Star Books (Vancouver), 1980.
414 pages; \$13.95 (cloth), \$6.50 (paper).

By Karl Beveridge

One of the more tired maxims of English Canadian life is that we lack our own sense of history, and it is history, of course, that is the substance of national identity. And so it goes as we find ourselves slouched in front of the TV munching tortilla chips and watching the heroic parade of American thuggery.

Many a frenzied Canadian nat-

Karl Beveridge is an Associate Editor of FUSE.

ionalist has searched for the elusive Canadian hero, bemoaning the fact that we didn't have a bloody revolution, ravaging civil war, or that the Mounties got out west first, thus robbing us of a good TV script. When a hero is dredged up, like Louis Riel, the CBC botches it, and we obediently switch back to Lou Grant.

While Canada is being rapidly de-industrialized, *Macleans* runs a cover story on the new Canadian imperialists. Now here's the meat of national pride, the very item we as Canadians lack — a history of aggressive home-grown big capital. We could have J.R. Ewing shot by Eph Diamond of Cadillac Fairview.

The question of national identity is connected to the history of capitalism. As *Macleans* ruefully points out, Canadian capitalism hasn't been a major voice on the world stage of capital. Our participation in world affairs has been as a polite servant of foreign interests, which doesn't make for exciting reading. Unless we're satisfied with being what some might call "the first post-nationalist citizens of the American world," we have to look for our history elsewhere. Where it appears is in the history of opposition to big capital. It is here that Canadian history is an integral part of world history. National identity, rather than being a mysterious state of mind, becomes class determined.

Canadian working class history has been receiving a healthy and extensive exposure in the past few years. Numerous books on labour history, immigration and immigrant life, womens' history, native history, socialist history, working class life and so on have appeared. The following are but a few randomly selected titles that do not pretend to represent all this material, but indicate its nature. These, along with other recently published books, including accounts of contemporary situations, are forming the basis of a uniquely Canadian history: the national expression of a world process of historical transformation.

We Stood Together by Gloria Montero, is a series of first hand accounts told to the author covering labour struggles from the Winnipeg General Strike of 1919 to the Quebec Common Front of the 1970's. As history these accounts lack a context, but this is offset by a strong feeling of involvement in the events themselves. One of the difficulties of oral history,

however, is to distinguish between the lived experience of what is being described and the mediation of subsequent political opinion on the memory of the speaker. This, in itself, constitutes a kind of history and often in the book there is a sense of bitterness and irony in each narrator's reflections, particularly in the sections on the Sydney Steelworkers, the Mine and Mill workers of Northern Ontario and the Canadian Seamen's Union.

One of the most telling and interesting aspects of the book is the manner in which the radical political movements of the time, mainly the Communist Party (CP) in the 1930's and 1940's are down-played. It's hard to say whether this was the author's own intention, but it reads as if the narrators themselves, with the possible exception of Red Walsh describing the On to Ottawa Trek of 1935, shy away from a discussion of political circumstances. It can be argued that the book is primarily concerned with labour history, but it demonstrates that the temper of our own times is far from open.

A less successful book is *The Organizer* by Rick Salutin on the life of Kent Rowley who was instrumental in organizing the Valleyfield Textile workers in the late 1940's and later the Confederation of Canadian Unions. The description of the organization of Valleyfield by Madeleine Parent in *We Stood Together* for example, is more informative than Salutin's in *The Organizer*. This may be a quibble in that Salutin's main interest is in presenting Rowley's point of view. I have no objections to the approach of presenting a person's ideology, but it is hard to determine where Rowley leaves off and Salutin enters.

As presented by Salutin, Rowley's obsession is with the creation of an autonomous Canadian union movement. This is not the place to enter into that discussion, but Salutin's presentation so lacks in critical objectivity, to the point of admitted adulation (the last chapter is entitled "On the treatment of Canadian heroes") that the argument fails to convince. Salutin's nationalism leads him to ignore the broader political and social reality of Canadian life, and to build a Hollywood-type hero, casting Rowley as the lone voice of Canadian autonomy in the underbrush of international (American) sellouts. As history, it fails; as a polemic it is certainly passionate; as a description of the man it is compromised.

An excellent book is *Dangerous Foreigners, European Immigrant Workers and Labour Radicalism in Canada, 1896-1932*, by Donald Avery. It brings together three aspects of working class life which are most often treated separately; immigrant life,

labour history, and the history of radical political movements. It is, of course, an enormous field and the book can only touch the surface of its subject.

Fortunately the book does not idealize its topic which could happen in a short study. It deals with the contradictions and conflicts within the immigrant community; the role of immigrant labour agents exploiting their own people, the mix of homeland politics and Canadian issues within immigrant socialist organizations, the conflicts between immigrant socialism and Canadian socialist organizations, etc. What emerges is a picture of immigrant communities, particularly Ukrainian and Finnish, struggling against the ruthless exploitation by Canadian resource capital and fighting for their own cultural and social aspirations. It dispels the myths of both Anglo historical dominance and multicultural assimilation. A needed addition to this material is the history of the political roots of immigrant labour. For example, many Finnish radicals were the product of the Finnish civil war of 1917. Finnish history itself has only recently admitted that this was, in fact, a civil war, and not a repulsion of a Russian invasion.

Indians at Work, by Rolf Knight, also deals with a neglected aspect of labour history; the formation and existence of a native proletariat. The main point, which the author continually stresses, is that the myth of the un-skilled, work-allergic, noble savage is not only racist, but patently unhistorical. Concentrating on B.C. Indians, the author details their role and, in some cases, prominence as workers in the development and operation of B.C. resource industries as well as their participation in labour struggles. He is careful to note that the fortunes of Indian workers were apace with the general economic conditions of the region. Although Indian workers were victims of racial segregation this was more or less consistent with that of other racial minorities. The decline of Indian wage work from the 1930's on is only touched upon, and, as the author admits, needs an extensive study in itself. At times unevenly written and repetitive, the book, nonetheless, is an illuminating de-mystification of native Indian life.

Voices of Discord is a collection of short stories edited by Donna Phillips from left magazines of the 1930's (*Canadian Masses*, *New Frontiers*, and *Canadian Forum*). It includes stories by Dorothy Livesay, Mary Quayle Innes, Bertram Brooker, Sinclair Ross and others. The stories themselves constitute a better introduction to radical culture of the 1930's than some academic overviews, such as the book's own introduction. Beyond the fact that

they are competently written and interesting stories, they show a depth of radical culture in the 1930's that is often dismissed as politically simplistic and culturally naïve. There is a noticeable lack, however, of stories revolving around industrial urban life. Most of the stories focus on rural life and poverty and, in a few cases, that of middle class conscience. If, in fact, it is the case that the majority of writing in the 1930's had this focus, as did much of the radical photography and film work, it is more a reflection on the class location of the authors who could more readily identify with rural desperation than with industrial alienation.

Soon to be Born by Oskar Ryan is a recently published novel about the 1930's. Set in Montreal, it depicts the lives of three characters: Gabrielle, the daughter of rural French Canadians who eventually marries Arthur, the son of Jewish immigrants, and Fred, the son of an Irish longshoreman who participated in the 1916 Irish rebellion. Effectively alternating between the hospital bed of Arthur who was shot in a demonstration in 1939, and the past lives of the characters, it climaxes in Arthur's decision to reject his middle class affluence and become politically active; thus his arrival in the hospital bed. Fred, who has joined the Communist Party acts, in part, as Arthur's conscience while Gabrielle represents the partially liberated woman. (A flaw in the book is the relatively inactive role of the women.) The book avoids political rhetoric, as its topic could well imply, and succeeds in developing a convincing portrait of the period, including short vignettes of real life characters such as Leslie Morris, Matthew Popovitch and others. Oskar Ryan, known for his plays in the 1930's (*Eight Men Speak*, New Hogtown Press) and for his political involvement then and since is one of the few active connections to that radical cultural history. The book has a subtle optimism that is both refreshing and commendable given the subsequent history of suppression in the 1940's and 1950's. Indeed it would be interesting if he were to continue the novel into that period.

As this field of historical material develops and expands, so too should the beginnings of a new political analysis emerge. As much as Canadian history has been submerged by that of foreign glamour, so too have its radical movements been dominated by imported strategies. In this regard one can sympathize with Salutin's passion, if not his objectivity. Indeed much of what is commendable about recent historical material is its political openness to radical solutions. As the crisis of the capitalist economy in Canada intensifies, a historical sense of ourselves becomes politically more crucial.

PERFORMANCE

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- **Performance and the Voice**
lecture by Chantal Pontbriand
editor of Parachute Magazine
Thursday, November 13, 8:00 pm
- **Journies from Berlin/1971**
film by Yvonne Rainer
16mm, colour/B&W, sound,
120 min.
Thursday, November 27, 8:00 pm
- **Putting Yourself Into It**
Lying Low
two performance pieces by
Rae Davis
Wednesday, December 3, 8:00 pm
- **GEOMUSIC** presented by
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MEDIA FOR THE PEOPLE

Community Media: Community Communications in the U.K.
Heinz Higg and Graham Wade
Regenbogen-Verlag (Zurich), 1980.

269 pages, £3.95 (U.K.).

Access: Some Western Models Of Community Media
Frances J. Berrigan, ed.
UNESCO (Paris), 1979.
228 pages, \$12.75.

By John Greyson

Both books begin with the same 1970 quote from a long-time European media critic, Hans-Magnus Enzensberger: "The open secret of the electronic media, the decisive political factor...is their mobilizing power." He rightly takes to task the "New Left's purist attitude towards the mass media (where) in their analysis, the whole media sector is reduced to the slogan of manipulation" and goes on, as many did, to make a case for "socialized" or "democratized" forms of the new electronic media that were emerging then: educational and public TV, small-format video, community radio, cable TV.

The optimism of 1970 has given way to increasing disillusionment as the theoretical assertions were not met by what came to be the practice. These two books pinpoint some of the contradictions inherent in the changing concepts of process, product, participation, intervention, and of course, the key — access. Though at times the examples read like a litany of what went wrong, the very scope and range of the community media experiments discussed and the number that can be deemed successes, provide valuable insight into an area that has lately become less popular.

For a field that declares as its mandate: "Give the people the tools to speak for and to themselves," *Community Media* by Heinz Nigg and Graham Wade, despite its virtues, has a glaring, condescending flaw. Modeling itself after their subject's method, the authors choose to let six British media projects speak for themselves: West London Media Workshop, Channel 40 (Milton Keynes Cable), Liberation Films, The Basement Project, The

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Blackfriars Photography Project, the WELD Photography Project. Through interview and statement, these projects present their own self-criticism and history. Yet the interviews are conducted exclusively with the *organizers* of the projects, and not with the public for whom the projects supposedly exist. What we get is Maggie Pinhorn of the Basement Project heartily describing the group of East London teenagers who, under her guidance, made a film about their lives and neighbourhood. Similarly, the Blackfriars Photography Project in South London is described by organizer Paul Carter, who tells us how it was formed, who uses it, and its emphasis on the practical uses of photography within the neighbourhood. It is Carter who describes a pensioners group that, through self-documentation of the conditions of their daycare centers, was able to secure better premises from the local authority. A few statements from teenagers involved in the Blackfriars Project shift the balance only slightly.



Given this personalized, one-sided version of six projects, the two things this book does present are an administrative view of how a community media center can be run, and the central dilemma organizers face: the fine line between initiating a project and retreating to allow those involved to actually do it themselves. This role, sometimes dubbed 'social animateur,' is one the authors took on themselves; their error of going only to the professionals for statements makes it only half the record it could have been.

In contrast, *Access: Some Western Models of Community Media*, edited by Frances Berrigan, a communications theorist for UNESCO, distances itself from the outset, providing a useful if brief overview of community forms of broadcasting and electronic media in North America and Western Europe. Both the Canadian and European sections adopt a style of comparative example that becomes

repetitive — words like "meaningful" lose their impact when used twice in the same paragraph. The Canadian Study, assembled by alumni of OISE (Ontario Institute for Studies in Education), commences by pricking the over-rated National Film Board project, Challenge For Change. Beginning in 1967, this project dumped equipment and money in centers across the country and subsequently expressed genuine surprise when the communities involved didn't automatically 'plug in' and start producing films and video tapes for social change. Obviously, useful outgrowths occurred, such as Wired World, a now self-sufficient alternative FM station in Kitchener, Ontario. Although there were early successes, including the famed FOGO Island community access project, Challenge For Change seemed slow to learn that it's useful to have an issue to film *before* you plug in the equipment. The rest of the Canadian study includes a discussion of the various innovative projects in Quebec exploring cable and co-operatively owned TV (Videographe, Montreal; CTVO, Hull; and TVC-4, St Jerome). The European section, following the same case-study format, is similarly informative and comprehensive.

The U.S. study is the most interesting. Here, the examples are filler around a central thesis that sees the practice of community media as the key towards the fusion of work and education. It convincingly argues that a society built on a mutually dependent cycle of work and 'lifelong learning' (instead of their current cause and effect relationship i.e. learning a job, then doing it) would by definition demand a democratized media. The authors, Richard Kletter, Larry Hirschhorn and Heather Hudson, American communications theorists, work through their analysis of the case studies in a pragmatic fashion, providing special emphasis on education experiments, especially in the health and social services (e.g. the University of Mid-America, a multi-state cable TV project offering credit courses since 1971). They cheerfully dismiss as inadequate the American pluralist tradition of the media which says that if all the special interest groups compete for the ratings, the relevant ones will sort themselves out from the chaff. They then conclude that a truly democratic media can only be achieved when "the fundamental categories of social life — work, social services, and the daily time-budget (of work and leisure) — also change." The plentiful examples throughout legitimize this larger discussion because they are both specific and responsible to their subject — a guiding principle that typifies in turn most successful community media experiments.

WOMEN IN THE LEFT: WHAT'S GOING WRONG?

Beyond the Fragments, Feminism and the Making of Socialism

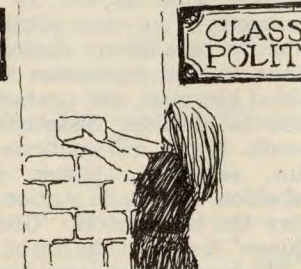
Sheila Rowbotham, Lynne Segal, Hilary Wainwright
Merlin Press (London), 1979.
253 pages, \$7.95.

By Gary Kinsman and Tim Guest

Beyond the Fragments is a reappraisal and a major critique of the socialist left's traditions of organization. It consists of essays by three prominent English feminists: Sheila Rowbotham, Lynne Segal, and Hilary Wainwright.

Significantly, the authors don't provide a manifesto or an authoritative solution to the problem of organizing. Instead, they set out to simply explore the contradictions through comparing and combining their experiences in the left and in the women's movement. And as much as the book concerns itself with a history of the New Left and modern feminism, it is also a piecing together of anecdotes, inspirational passages, and personal visions. It is so vividly written, and so precise in even its most obscure formulations, that it breathes life into the customarily stale and rhetorical categories of Leninist politics.

SEXUAL
POLITICS



Their objection is that the socialist left has failed to think critically about its methods of organizing, as well as failing to accomplish a solid understanding of feminism. The authors also claim that the women's movement has developed an alternate model, a different method of organization which throws the methodology of the left into question. In particular, Sheila Rowbotham describes the manner in which the left has divided 'sexual politics' from 'class politics' and discusses the

Gary Kinsman, Toronto, is currently studying the sexual divisions of labour.

necessity of understanding their intrinsic relationship. "An internal pull towards thinking about organizations has been experiencing a completely different politics within the women's movement since 1969. The differences between this kind of practice and socialist politics have seemed so great that it has been hard to compare them. I've increasingly felt this as a paralyzing split. There is a danger that we may acquiesce to such a division, accepting one way of organizing for socialism and another for feminism. Given the existing balance of power between the sexes in society as a whole this would undoubtedly mean that our organizing as feminists became ghettoized."

She also describes a concept of 'prefigurative change': "A problem we share with other groups of people who are not powerful, the ignoble, unknown people, is how to explore and reveal our experience in the moment of transforming our culture." Her concept acknowledges the possibility, indeed the necessity, of establishing new kinds of social relations before their 'material basis' has been achieved. In other words, social movements should not only fight for a transformation of society, but act as a laboratory for a new way of life, in themselves.

Some may find this book a heretical revision of traditional doctrine. But those of us who have intimately travelled in the circles of organizing for socialism and for sexual freedom will find this a powerful articulation of our experiences. *Beyond the Fragments* mirrors, and at the same time, provides words for our thoughts. This is especially useful considering both the newness of the discussion and the necessity which lies behind it. And however much the book remains 'unfinished', it only sets out to be a work in progress. Most importantly, this book is about the *process* of developing our politics. Sheila Rowbotham: "The theorizing about organization remains in the quicksands. It is unclaimed territory still. I see what I'm writing as part of a wider claiming which is beginning. The words slither around and seem to slip onto the surface of my consciousness unless I make an enormous effort to remain with them. The difference is that I know such huffing and puffing is not a personal eccentricity but a social experience and this knowledge is something felt, not just something I understand intellectually."

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KING & SPADINA

MUSIC AND ITS INDUSTRY

The Sociology of Rock
Simon Frith
Constable (London), 1978. In the
Communication & Society Series.
255 pages, with Notes,
bibliography and index; \$11.95.

By Jody Berland

Everyone knows these days that music is "big business." Bigger than sports, newspapers, TV or movies; probably bigger than all of them combined. Knowing it's an "industry" is as much a part of our culture as the music it produces — and probably helps to justify it to many people. But who wields the power, and how? How are record companies, radio stations, discotheques, instrument and stereo producers, promoters, and reviewers related? How does this actually affect the music, the musicians, the audience? And how do they in turn affect the business? Frith's book doesn't talk much about the music — but it covers everything else.

Frith's thorough documentation and careful analysis are due to his double career: as sociologist and as a critic writing for rock magazines, like *Creem*, since the Sixties. The story begins in the Fifties, when the combined forces of new recording technology and the development of a youth market with time and money to spend created an explosion in popular music. As young people discovered they could control their use of leisure time, a specifically youth-oriented musical culture (and business) arose. In the Sixties the earlier values of showmanship and entertainment were transformed by new values of "revolution and sex and no respect"; business flourished, as musicians and audiences sought a new anti-commercial definition of rock culture more in harmony with counter-culture values of honesty and freedom. But this didn't diminish the star system or the power of the music monopolies. Although independent companies tried to form around 1970, Frith shows that these have mostly either disappeared or have neatly, if subtly, contributed to the reorganization of the record industry on a grand scale.

The book begins with the music's audience. Based on extensive interviews, Frith describes the work (or lack

Jody Berland is currently writing about popular culture, art criticism and music. She lives in Toronto.

thereof) and lives of working class and middle class young people, their uses of leisure, their values about rock. In opposition to "sub-culture" theorists, he contends that groups only use music consciously as symbolic of group values when rejecting their given class cultures. This could explain the number of British rock stars from art-schools. For the rest, music is mostly ever-present "background" — to school, social lives, jobs, cars, free time. But while consumers may have different ideologies or needs for music, the industry has something for everyone.



Finding out what that something is, producing it, publicizing and marketing it, are all described in the second section of the book. Frith follows the production of music and profit through the A&R men, song writers, copyrighters and publishers, studio musicians, Musicians' Union, producers, studio technicians, record manufacturers, designers, distributors, DJs, record stores, concert tours, agents, managers, the press. Each of these has changed with the increased importance of records (and decrease of live performances — though there are always plenty of bands who will never see the inside of a recording studio), technological sophistication, and economic centralization. Producers, for instance, are shown to be a combination of technological whiz, entrepreneur, and psychiatrist. Not surprising, given the working conditions in the musical assembly line. One wonders how much of this is due to the economic centralization of the industry — about which Frith provides abundant statistics — and how much to the increased technological complexity of studio recording (itself tied to more available capital, sophisticated equipment, ambitious musicians, and audiences expectant of that "certain sound"). That is, how much alienation is really necessary? Just as musicians can expect about 6 percent of the final cost of a record (higher for stars), so they appear to have about 6 percent control. Legally they don't own the

product, nor do they all receive wages. They are paid instead in royalties, which Frith calls "incentives" to musicians from companies who can't directly control their creative work.

The music industry's integration, both "horizontal" (buying up smaller companies) and "vertical" (merging with distributors, publishers, promoters, instrument manufacturers, etc.) leads to a mammoth mutual dependence. In some ways this allows them more flexibility. Whether you are buying an amplifier, stereo, concert ticket, music magazine, or esoteric record, the monopolies are pocketing the money. Frith's familiarity with the structure and temperament of the industry is enlightening, particularly his detailed discussions of the legal and economic structure of record production, the music press's history and the "independent" media such as *Rolling Stone*, and the balancing of radio and other media between commercial pressure and audience desires.

While his analysis of the industry provides a comprehensive indictment, his approach is not irredeemably gloomy. In the last section he turns to cultural influences on rock, particularly black music. He compares various theories about rock as art, as folk music, as mass culture, as popular culture. Finally, Frith says, popular music is precisely that: popular music, whose value is in direct proportion to its popularity. The industry can't totally manipulate audience choices, and that dynamic underscores the whole process. At present, it's doing its best to freeze the market into predictable sets of consumer tastes. But as its history shows, its schemes don't always succeed. Even the consumption of entertainment has its "civilizing moments"; the contradictions within what he calls leisure ideology will continue to find expression not only in bland escapism and consumerism but also in idealism, dissatisfaction and revolt. Music will continue to supply fun, sexuality, power, joy, even rebellion — if radio stations wouldn't play the Sex Pistols' "God Save the Queen" it still hit the top of the charts.

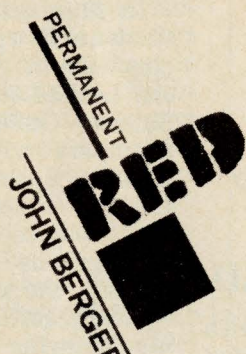
The book's weakness is its failure to go further in suggesting how these problems of capitalist community and leisure might be resolved. The Sex Pistols didn't break the industry, though they with other punk bands did stimulate a wider critical consciousness of its power. Frith never makes clear enough what musical or political resistance can successfully challenge the monopolization that he describes. His analysis may not sufficiently justify his move from economic pessimism to cultural optimism but it does give us the necessary information about the present situation. Perhaps he thinks the rest is up to us. ●

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MUSIC AND ITS INDUSTRY

The Sociology of Rock
Simon Frith
Constable (London), 1978. In the
Communication & Society Series.
255 pages, with Notes,
bibliography and index; \$11.95.

By Jody Berland

Everyone knows these days that music is "big business." Bigger than sports, newspapers, TV or movies; probably bigger than all of them combined. Knowing it's an "industry" is as much a part of our culture as the music it produces — and probably helps to justify it to many people. But who wields the power, and how? record companies, radio discotheques, instrument ar producers, promoters, and related? How does this actua the music, the musicians, dience? And how do they in t the business? Frith's book do much about the music — but everything else.

Frith's thorough documenta careful analysis are due to hi career: as sociologist and as writing for rock magazines, lik since the Sixties. The story l the Fifties, when the combin of new recording technology development of a youth mar time and money to spend er explosion in popular music. A people discovered they could their use of leisure time, a spi youth-oriented musical culti business) arose. In the Six earlier values of showmans entertainment were transfor new values of "revolution and no respect"; business flouri musicians and audiences soug anti-commercial definition culture more in harmony with culture values of honesty and

But this didn't diminish the star system or the power of the music monopolies. Although independent companies tried to form around 1970, Frith shows that these have mostly either disappeared or have neatly, if subtly, contributed to the reorganiza-tion of the record industry on a grand scale.

The book begins with the music's audience. Based on extensive interviews, Frith describes the work (or lack

Jody Berland is currently writing about popular culture, art criticism and music. She lives in Toronto.

thereof) and lives of working class and middle class young people, their uses of leisure, their values about rock. In opposition to "sub-culture" theorists, he contends that groups only use music consciously as symbolic of group values when rejecting their given class cultures. This could explain the number of British rock stars from art-schools. For the rest, music is mostly ever-present "background" — to school, social lives, jobs, cars, free time. But while consumers may have different ideologies or needs for music, the industry has something for everyone.

product, nor do they all receive wages. They are paid instead in royalties, which Frith calls "incentives" to musicians from companies who can't directly control their creative work.

The music industry's integration, both "horizontal" (buying up smaller companies) and "vertical" (merging with distributors, publishers, promoters, instrument manufacturers, etc.) leads to a mammoth mutual dependence. In some ways this allows them more flexibility. Whether you are buying an amplifier, stereo, concert ticket, music magazine, or esoteric record, the monopolies are pocketing the money. Frith's familiarity with the structure and temperament of the industry is enlightening, particularly his detailed discussions of the legal and economic structure of record production, the music press's history and the "independent" media such as *Rolling Stone*, and the balancing of radio and other media between commercial

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assembly line. One wonders now much of this is due to the economic centralization of the industry — about which Frith provides abundant statistics — and how much to the increased technological complexity of studio recording (itself tied to more available capital, sophisticated equipment, ambitious musicians, and audiences expectant of that "certain sound"). That is, how much alienation is really necessary? Just as musicians can expect about 6 percent of the final cost of a record (higher for stars), so they appear to have about 6 percent control. Legally they don't own the

go further in suggesting now these problems of capitalist community and leisure might be resolved. The Sex Pistols didn't break the industry, though they with other punk bands did stimulate a wider critical consciousness of its power. Frith never makes clear enough what musical or political resistance can successfully challenge the monopolization that he describes. His analysis may not sufficiently justify his move from economic pessimism to cultural optimism but it does give us the necessary information about the present situation. Perhaps he thinks the rest is up to us.

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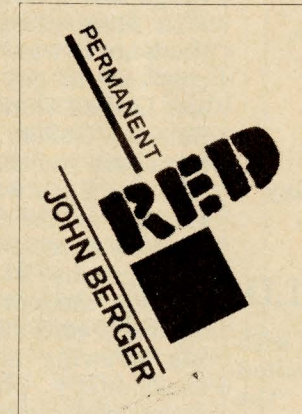
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REVIEWS

Exhibitions

Gay Graphic Arts Now

Part of the First American Gay Arts Festival, summer, 1980, New York.

BY TONY WHITFIELD

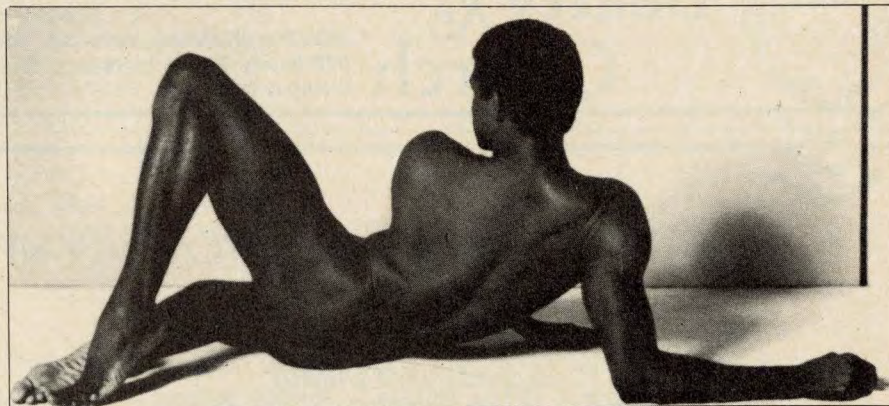
In a recent conversation with John Raymond, the silk-suited huckster who directs GSF, "the world's largest gay/bi social contact organization," I was informed that being gay is not a political issue, is not an economic issue but an issue of sexual preference and the right to that preference. While on the most simplified individualistic level this may be true, beyond that point Raymond's statement is a shallow paradox that demands that an oppressed minority view that oppression in isolation, and their lives in fatalistic dis-integration. If one were to assume that what was advertised as the graphic arts portion of the First American Gay Arts Festival accurately represented the concerns of gay visual artists working today, one would be inclined to give credence to Raymond's assessment of the situation.

For all intents and purposes, (and not unexpectedly,) gay art as defined by the work in this festival, finds its most potent form in male image erotica. (By most potent I mean most immediately accessible to the gay community in terms of subject matter and frequency of public exposure.) As such the works in the various exhibitions in this festival illuminate particular aspects of the gay psyche that deal not with the *nature* of same sex attraction, but with its visceral *fact*. The hot spot of its focus falls clear-

Tony Whitfield lives in New York and is a Contributing Editor of Fuse.

ly on the crotch while the rest of gay love's body and its surroundings fade into a half light.

In Manhattan, at the moment, there are five galleries that deal exclusively in gay image art. They are: Leslie-Lohman Gallery, Robert Samuel Gallery, Hibbs Gallery, Stompers and the Rob Amsterdam Gallery. Each was listed as a participant in the festival. With the possible exception of Lynne Davis' photographs at Robert Samuel Gallery, the works shown embraced the traditional media of painting, drawing and sculpture, and occasionally photography as a means of depicting non-traditional, homoerotic subject matter. To underestimate the importance of this work as a serious challenge to



Lynn Davis' photos of bodybuilders and dancers: essays in physical power.

the western art establishment which has systematically denied it the right to the public arena and economic validation on the open market would be to constitute a tacit agreement with the very moralistic value system that has oppressed gay people. To that establishment this work represents sin incarnate. In discussing homoerotic work one must not lose sight of the fact that this is the reaction it evokes among straight audiences and that in no way does it appeal to the masses. Its audience is found in those who share the desire it illustrates. It is for that audience that these artists are working and the galleries devoted to homoerotic work exist.

In a discussion group on gay graphic arts in the Eighties

Charles Leslie, one of the directors of Leslie-Lohman Gallery, stated that in servicing the gay community of artists he felt that it was his responsibility to, at times, place restrictions upon to whom he would advertise certain works. For instance, in the case of blatantly sado-masochistic work he would not go out of his way to make certain that *New York Times*' art critics saw the show for fear that it would provide them with ammunition for yet another homophobic barrage. The exercising of this protective instinct is to be applauded as a gesture of solidarity. The question, however, arises — At what point will we open the closet doors that we are now constructing? As a gay person viewing these works,

would a negative response on my part result in my name being added to the enemies list? The narrowness of the apparent definition of gay art does make me wonder.

Within the context of homoerotic art certain thematic devices appear with surprising regularity and cumulatively become issues that go beyond that of the usual notion of sexual desire. Perhaps most frequently used is that of the decapitated or dismembered body. In the "Pier Pieces" of Tava which were documented at Leslie-Lohman Gallery, twenty-foot-tall figures are severed at the neck and the knee. Impressive if for no other reason than their monumentality and their unexpected, but appropriate, location on the cruise piers of the Hudson, these works

photo: courtesy Robert Samuel Gallery

pay homage not to the beauty of the male body, but to the male body as sex machine cranking through the motions of masturbation or intercourse. Similarly, the penis appears frequently as a disembodied entity. In the carved wooden sculptures of Yan Khur it becomes the material for oddly architectonic configurations, while in the works of Wheeler at Hibbs Gallery the phallus assumes a fantastic life of its own and in groups, like long-awaited gods, are received by beautiful young men. Implicit in this approach to the human body seems to be the desire to remove sex from intellectually, emotionally charged realities. It is interesting to note that this treatment of the male body by males is not unlike that of the female which we do not hesitate to call "sexist." How do we label it here? What does this fragmentation indicate about a certain state of male consciousness, be it homo- or heterosexual?

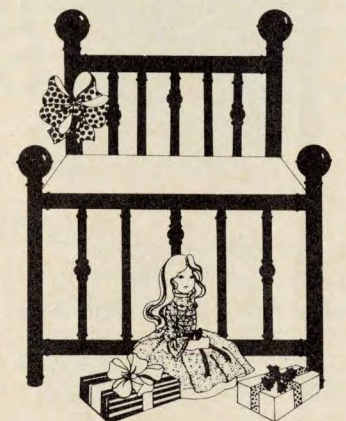
As an even more obvious means of relieving sexual relations from the pressures of the everyday world numerous fantasies linked to mythology are invoked. Couched in the realm of Greek mythology, as were the turn-of-the-century photographs of young Sicilian boys by Baron Wilhelm Von Gloeden, (first shown in New York by Leslie-Lohman Gallery) the watercolors of Nuji, also images of autonomous cocks in fanciful arrangements, use as their titular context a fragment from Aristophanes' "Hymn to Phallos" — "O, PHALLOS! Revel roaming! Glad companion of the gloaming and of Dionysus! O, lover of wives and young men!" At Leslie-Lohman Gallery, in the *June Group* show, the only group show on view during the festival, examples of homoerotic take-offs on mythological themes, as well as half-animal, half-vegetable, half-crankshaft fantasies were in abundance. The problem that surfaced most often in the works that drew on ancient myths was the fact the contemporary art-viewing audience no longer brings with it an adequate knowledge of those myths and a single traditionally-rendered canvas is incapable of filling in the details. Likewise, in a single fantastic work which implicitly proposes a new mythology, imaginary elements often remained

hermetic, incidental embellishments around genital couplings.

Perhaps the most disturbing general characteristic of works in the festival is the underlying presence of a sensibility that avoids specifics and personal details within the context of sexual relations. Bodies become types, idealizations, interchangeable parts. Cultural details are few. Surroundings become neutral interiors or voids. Figures such as those in John Mack's drawings at Hibbs Gallery, which entice the viewer through direct eye contact or Vivienne Maricevic's photograph of the nude dwarf who lifts a curtain to meet your gaze, are rare. Self absorption is too often the name of the game. When these absences begin to make themselves apparent, the fallacy of John Raymond's statement starts to ring out loud and clear. While our sexuality rests at the core of the struggle to claim our places within society, it is through our dealings with that society, our definitions therein, both self and imposed (our political life) and our uses of the modes of exchange available to us (our, broadly-defined, economy) that this struggle will come to an end. A sharp focus on our affective preferences, although absolutely crucial to our understanding among ourselves of who we are, is just a beginning. Steps in our art must now be taken, it seems to me, out of the bedroom into the more dangerous, ambiguous zones where gay experience comes into play with both hostile and receptive worlds. Movement in that direction has been made most notably in literature. The visual arts lag behind, not necessarily in the quality of the work available but in its breadth of scope.

Lynn Davis' photographs at Robert Samuel Gallery hold an anomalous position in this festival. In a one-person show, Davis was the only woman significantly represented. Given the fact that the work was installed in that particular gallery one would assume that the artist is a lesbian. The work however does not make this clear. It does, however, reveal a very particular vision, one that searches for ambiguities in subject matter ranging from portraiture to landscape. Her photographs of female bodybuilders and male dancers are careful studies of well-

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defined musculature balanced against painstakingly adjusted poses which become, in juxtaposition, essays on physical power. Alone, however, these photographs do not hold up quite as well. A certain formalism begins to dominate. In her portraits of the famous and not-so-famous this photographer's eye is most incisive. Often exhibited in pairs, these works in combination capture both the individual's protective facade and the vulnerability and weariness of the personality that lies beneath it. They are about the fragility of the images we project. While they are not specifically about homosexuality, they delve into that nebulous area between the illusion we create

The Times Square Show

Group show held in Times Square, June-July, 1980, New York.

BY TONY WHITFIELD

July 7, 1980. The hip-hop-boogie beat filtering through honking horns and the sound of water sloshing away the urine on the subway stairs from the night before.

— I got ten carats here m'man.
— No thanks.
Thirty-five Swiss teenagers in ill-fitting American jeans coming up from the subway tunnel and a blonde model asking, "Sir, which way is Fifth Avenue?" I point her in the right direction.

— Loose joints, black beauties, angel dust, ludes and dick.
— No thanks.

This is Times Square. All jive and hustle and business as usual. I am standing in front of the subway entrance. Behind me is a torn poster — "The end of a Superstar, a film from New York: Underground U.S.A., a film by Eric Mitchell." It is plastered on the wall of a rundown, vacant four-storey building on one of the busiest corners in Manhattan, in the heart of Times Square, in the heart of the midtown business district, in an area known for its theaters, its prostitutes, its junkies. Two teenagers go to the glass doors of the building and tug at the handle, read the sign — "The show is closed" — and walk away.

around ourselves and the actual material from which it is culled: how in self-defense, we attempt to make our fantasies real.

While homoerotica reigned over this festival, the keys to the castle were perhaps passed into those hands by default — default on the part of artists in their reluctance to identify themselves as gay and on the part of many galleries in their refusal to support gay theme works. Perhaps in the next decade this situation will change radically. For this to happen the general concession must be made that one's art is inextricably entwined with one's experience and that there is no true art which denies the truth of its creator's life.

A week or so before this building had been the scene of a type of activity not usually found in this area. The *Times Square Show* was in full swing. In what had been an abandoned massage parlour Collaborative Projects, also known as Colab, had organized a four-storey exhibition which consisted of the works of more than 120 artists. The instructions given to any artist who wanted to participate were very simple — "Do a piece that pertains to the Times Square area." What resulted was a bizarre fun-house filled with the heavy overtones of sex and violence found in both Visual Punk and on the street just outside the show's doors. On top of that was a good dose of the adrenalin needed to survive with the "stay hungry" philosophy that many of these artists have adopted and to which others have grown accustomed.

Several years ago the Colab group came together in an effort to solve the funding problems they were facing as individual artists working outside the mainstreams of the commercial art world and beyond the fringes that alternative spaces were willing to embrace. Since then they have mounted such exhibitions as *The Dog Show*, *The Doctors and Dentists Show*, *The Manifesto Show*, and *The Superman Show* which were limited successes; the *Real Estate Show* in a condemned building on the Lower East Side which was shut down by the city; and *Red Curtain*, the cable TV program which received considerable notoriety when it broadcast Tom Otterness' *Shot Dog Film*. With the *Times Square*

Show, however, it seems that the timing and location were right and the artists' energy and commitment to dealing with issues presented by that neighborhood were so clear that funding agencies were more than eager to support the project. So were the press and the public; and what had hitherto only come into being through guerilla-like means was suddenly deemed legitimate.

One of the major goals of this show was to present art that was accessible not only to the art-initiated New York audience but to anyone who happened to wander in off the street. For the most part this goal was achieved. The message behind Coleen Fitzgibbon and Robin Winters' "gun-empty plate-dollar bill" xerox wallpaper was obvious and the connections drawn, essential. Dick Miller's "Acciden-



The show was heavy with sex and violence, like Times Square itself.

tal Death," a sculpture of a man being struck by a falling air conditioner, Susan Pitt's three paintings for an animated film which depict a woman terrorized by enormous rats and Paulette Nenner's painting, "Endangered" give form to fears suppressed daily by New York City dwellers.

While Mike Glier and Bill Komoski abstracted phrases from disco music commenting on the manifestation of the macho male sensibility to incorporate into their wall drawings, Jane Sherry, in a bordello-like installation lined with bondage photos and playing cards of the Virgin Mary, speaks from the gut — "Pornography lies about women." From the other side of the camp Jimmy deSana installed outtakes from his book *Submissions* in the form of photos of enemas and people urinating, which, as rumour

has it were cancelled in crayon, at one point, by a well-known feminist art critic.

As a show focusing on the nature of life in a densely populated urban area, appropriately, the presence of the human image was virtually inescapable. Portraits, ranging from Klaus Nomi by Kenny Scharf to life-casts of Bronx residents to the bizarre "Hoof-head" paintings of Richard Mock, seemed to be stationed at every turn. A life-size mechanized puppet of James Brown presided over the lobby, temporarily assuming the title of "the godfather of art."

Breaking with yet another tradition of the art world, or perhaps just revamping the concept of the art gallery, a souvenir shop with a window opening onto the street sold everything from pornographic hand-held fans and postcards to

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For information on the exhibition or the catalogue contact Tim Guest, Art Metropole, 217 Richmond Street West, Toronto, Canada M5V 1W2. (416) 977-1685

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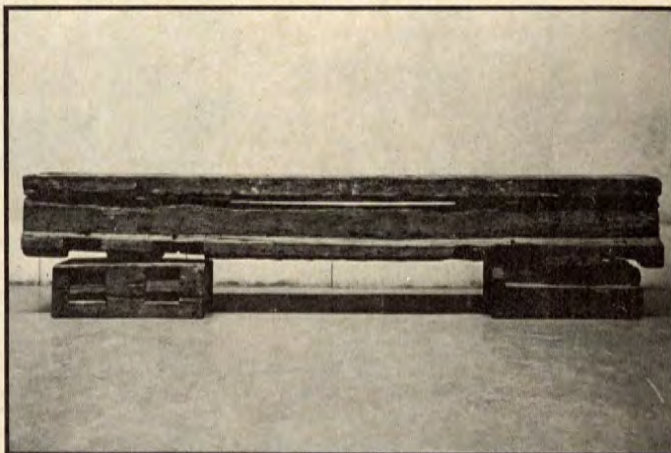
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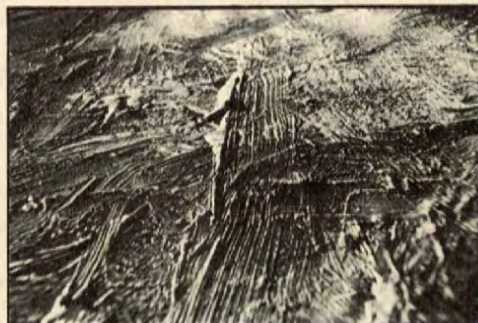
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