

# FUSE

APRIL 1987  
No.44 \$2.50

## A History of Toronto's Anti-Apartheid Movement 1921-1986

*(Norman 'Otis' Richmond p.14)*

## Labour Working With Art

*(Susan Crean p. 24)*

## Interview: Performance Artist Mona Hatoum

*(Sara Diamond p. 46)*

## A Zambian Report on 'Graceland'

*(Stuart Cryer p. 41)*

## Women + Theft

*(Marlene Nourbese Philip p. 38)*

## CFRB: Listening to a Gas Station

*(Clive Robertson p. 8)*

## Lubicon Lake Band Wins Cultural Boycott

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Produced with the support of the City of Toronto through the Toronto Arts Council.

# Cultural Struggle & Magazine Survival

CLIVE ROBERTSON

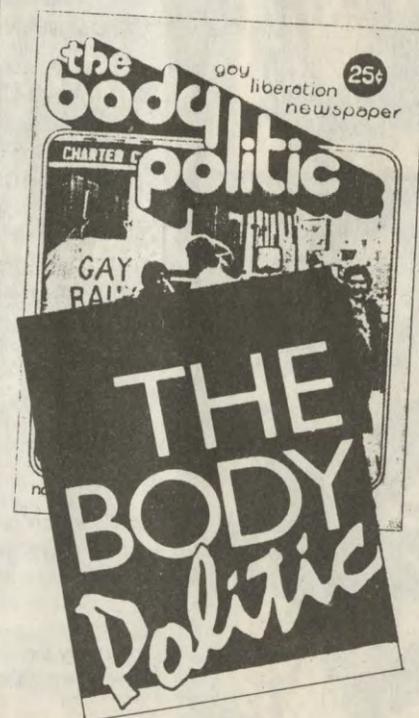
"We all bloody struggle don't we, I struggle, do you think it's easy for me, I tell you something for nothing, it is not easy, not one little bit, neither the struggle nor the bloody survival, the whole world's struggling for survival so why shouldn't you!"

—Norman, from Ronald Harwood's play, "The Dresser"

We don't know the exact fate of both *Herizons* and *Hysteria* magazines. We do know that they have been under attack by R.E.A.L. Women and anti-abortion groups. Alliance for Life, which publishes *Pro-Life News* in Winnipeg, admitted to lobbying the federal government to stop funding *Herizons*, which is exactly what the federal government did. *Herizons* was not funded by the Canada Council but by the federal Local Employment Assistance and Development program (LEAD), a program of the Department of Employment and Immigration. In an editorial titled "R.E.A.L. Problems" (July/August 1986), *Herizons* editor, Penni Mitchell prematurely cautioned against feminist 'paranoia': "the success of the right wing in the U.S. does not forecast the inevitability of a R.E.A.L. Women coup in Canada...while government bureaucrats sympathetic to feminist organizations may tell us in confidence of rumours of R.E.A.L. Women's effects on funding policies, the mandate of the Women's Program is still to support women's organizations who work toward the improvement of the status of women in Canada and promote the equal participation of women in socie-

ty. R.E.A.L. Women, on their own, can't change that."

I mention the Canada Council in the context of this despicable turn of events, because arms-length agencies like the Council and similar Provincial Councils have a role to play in supporting and defending a progressive critical culture, whether it is giving a Senior Arts Grant to the late Margaret Laurence to write *The Diviners* (which they did), or supporting those magazines who are among the first to fight



cut-backs (which they do). The Councils do like the term 'cultural agency,' but which other related arms of government are going to dig in when the going gets tough?

Unlike liberal cultural and social pluralism, contemporary right-wing culture is not particularly Canadian — and the issue should be confronted as such. 'If you love a patriarchal God, are against abortions, want Central Americans sent back, would rather look up and see a Cruise missile instead of a 747, are anxious for free trade, then head south and allow your consumer dollars to be used to produce cultural products like *Amerika*.' Though we are in no way anti-American, one sure way of defining a Canadian culture is to call it Un-American, and R.E.A.L. Women, the anti-abortionists and elements in the federal Conservative government don't exactly fit into that 'Un-American' category. (Conrad Black has sort of got the right idea, except he'd rather be British.)

But the issue at hand is magazines, and feminist magazines are, and have been constantly under attack. *Herizons* strategy was/is courageous, in that they were attempting to be 'self-sufficient' — something that most Canadian magazines would like to do, if we could get our hands on sufficient amounts of capital. (*Herizons* is continuing to publish without the LEAD funding.) Even a private sector magazine like *Canadian Art* (owned and operated jointly by Maclean Hunter Ltd. and Key Publishers Co. Ltd.) ob-

Continued page 4

## The Merchants of Love

The SAW Gallery is currently accepting proposals for work relating to: **The Merchants of Love**, a thematic exhibition that will explore the buying and selling of love in our society. We encourage artists to submit work that reveals the commodification of love, that is, the workings of a market in which romantic myths, images, dreams, objects, bodies, and human relations are exchanged, bartered or sold. All art forms will be considered. The deadline for submissions is: **May 30, 1987**. Late submissions will not be considered.

### Submissions should include:

- 1) 8-10 slides or other visual documentation (3/4" videotape or audio cassette where applicable)
- 2) A written statement outlining the proposed work
- 3) A curriculum vitae/resumé
- 4) A self-addressed, stamped, return envelope.

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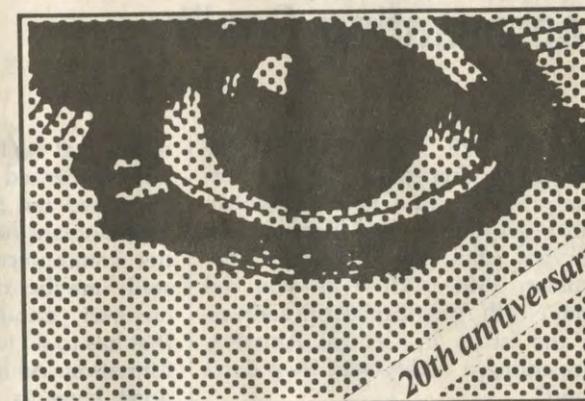
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tains grants from the Canada Council and the Ontario Arts Council, with or without the entire approval of the producing community in whose name they could be said to serve.

A magazine which did successfully go it alone, based upon the resources of its own immediate community, was *The Body Politic*. For those of us outside the gay communities, *The Body Politic* was a literate and satiric journalistic inspiration. In many ways there was a not-so-invisible parallel between feminist cultural groups, the development of gay and lesbian cultural groups and organizations and the artist community's development of its own production, service, and distribution networks. They all share roughly the same fifteen year chronology. They all were (some still are) beset by problems of excessive volunteerism, stretched mandates, and the awkward valour of a democratically-controlled non-profit status.

The 'Death of the *Body Politic*' was not a pretty event. In Toronto, *NOW* (admittedly Toronto's largest alter-nate print forum) carried tales of in-

fighting and failures to answer directly to both the needs and the whims of a very broad entity known as the gay community.

Not once did anyone in that final uncontextualized spat state the obvious but larger legacy of the *Body Politic* and its several infamous court battles. For fifteen years, and particularly in the last ten, the *Body Politic* enabled heterosexual Canadians (progressive, liberal or otherwise) to confront homophobia. The court battles, in part, publicly raised the issue of the rights-to-freedom of gay cultural expression. Whatever mistakes they made along the way, and all of us have made some of those same mistakes, you can be damn sure that Gerald Hannon, Rick Bebout, Chris Bearchell, Ken Popert and other long-standing editorial collective members are not going to get a sniff at an Order of Canada for their mostly unpaid community services.

Yes, this is in part a mixed message of both anger and nostalgia. The *Body Politic* had more readers, more advertisers and more reader correspondence

than any other progressive cultural magazine in Canada and yet it was internally and externally considered a 'failure' and, at the end, it had very few mourners. To be blunt: if the *Body Politic* was a 'failure,' what does that say for all the other Canadian magazines?

We cannot lay much of the blame for the end of a particular chapter of an activist era at the feet of yuppies or R.E.A.L. Women. And to be sure, while tepid for-profit enterprises surface yearly to capitalize on our past volunteer efforts, we still have many resources and institutions intact. And we certainly don't wish to be mocked upon publication of our 1,000th issue, an ignominious fate recently 'suffered' by the *Georgia Straight*.

For the time being, I therefore nominate the *Body Politic* as one of the founding members of the as yet unformed 'Canadian Magazine Hall of Fame,' with the hope that *Herizons* and *Hysteria* are not also imminent candidates.

Clive Robertson

## LETTERS

### Representing Reality

BECAUSE I'VE DONE A BODY OF work about Guatemala, I took a personal interest in Chris Creighton Kelly's question to José Ventura (An Interview with José Ventura, *FUSE*, Summer, 1986). "How do you feel about North American artists addressing the issues in Central America, representing a reality that they don't know?"

Behind the question I sense a moralizing stance (politically incorrect; appropriating other people's experience; you can't take part in a revolution until you've made your own...), a stance that I've often heard and one that I think should be examined rather than accepted as an unalterable gospel.

If by "representing a reality that they don't know," Chris Creighton Kelly

means that we North Americans have not experienced and felt what it is to be oppressed and tortured in the way El Salvadoreans have and therefore cannot communicate that experience... well, maybe that's true. There is, however, another kind of knowing that has to do with knowledge and information. As José Ventura says, you don't have to go there in order to understand. But unless you make a special point of finding out for yourself, information about Central America is hard to come by. I sense that Chris Creighton Kelly doesn't know very much himself if he can ask the question, "But can't the El Salvadorean people speak for themselves?" The answer to that is no, they'd be murdered, or they're busy fighting, or

they've had to flee for their lives as José Ventura did.

Central America is here. The violence and militarization has deep connections to our lives. It doesn't mean that one has to ignore or eschew social problems here or neglect one's own constituency. The people are suffering as José Ventura says and in a very real sense it is only by the outside world knowing about it that anything will change for them. We make a difference, our active participation in their struggle is necessary. For example, Canada recently renewed bilateral aid to El Salvador. Solidarity and church groups and others have been questioning, pressuring the government to reverse this decision. Can one make art of this? If you think that an artist's pur-

Continued page 6

APRIL / 87



Art and Reality  
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11 am - 12 pm

Toronto's only alternative, electronic, community and current affairs news show. Features include: Eco-Media, Shortwave excerpts, O.P.I.R.G. Radio, European Profile from Radio Netherlands, The City Hall report from Ald Jack Layton, Labour Reports, The Pink Antenna, David Roch - Almost Live, Sky Gilbert's Theatre Beat, Computer Watch, plus many more community interest columns

SATURDAY

FILE 88

10 am - 11:30 am

CKLN's international news magazine with reports and documentaries from The Development Education Centre on College Street, the Canadian Alliance in Solidarity with Native People (CASNP) and community groups active in world affairs. Other features include specials from Community Radio stations around the world including El Salvador, Chile, Cuba and European stations

CRITICAL CULTURE

11:30 pm - noon

Host: Ann Gibson

Insight from those who create, effect, challenge or change culture in all its forms. Interviews, documentaries and critical reviews of our culture.

SUNDAY

TITLEWAVES

7:30 pm - 8 pm

Hosts: Gordon Platt, John Ball

Produced by the Canadian Book Information Centre, the show is an up to date look at Toronto's literary scene. Titlewaves reviews new publications, interviews authors and announces local literary events.

pose is to express her or himself, then I guess the answer is no. Brecht spoke of an art capable of representing the powerful intangibles which so profoundly affect our lives, like the international market in wheat.

More than anything, I object to a kind of art criticism that says you should do this and you shouldn't do that because of a dictatorship of a cur-

rent theory, often misunderstood in its implications. As Conrad Atkinson put it, "the artist is not there to say yes or no, but as a participant in a creative series of debates which may in the end contribute to theory, and whose motivation is not to begin by illustrating a theory."

—Freda Guttman Bain  
Montreal, Quebec

## Blinded by Science

YOUR REVIEW OF BOB DEMATTEO's book *Terminal Shock* (FUSE, Vol. X, No. 4) delivers the specific message that VDTs are a significant health hazard. Health and Welfare Canada in a publication, "Investigation of Radiation Emissions from Video Display Terminals" states the emissions do not create risk for operators.

Their publication cites US National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health study of 1975's conclusion: VDTs did not appear capable of producing radiation at levels which would be an occupational hazard; Bell Telephone Laboratories study of 1979 concluded, "There is not experimental or epidemiological evidence presently available to indicate these levels of radiation could have any detrimental effects on the health of personnel using video computer terminals such as these examined in this study" (11 units of 8 models). M.L. Wolbarsht and others in a 1980 paper "Electro-Magnetic Emissions from Video Display Units: a Non Hazard" concluded that there was no radiation hazard associated with this VDT (IBM Model 2277) and that other environmental factors were more important in evaluating the effects of VDTs for long term use.

H. Vetter, International Atomic Energy Agency in Vienna, studying two models of VDTs detected no X-rays above normal background levels.

The National Radiological Protection Board and Electrical Research Association Technology Limited carried out a study of 200 different types of VDTs for the U.K. Health and Safety Executive and published results in 1980. This stated: a) X-ray emissions

did not exceed natural background of ionizing radiation, b) Visible light emissions were 25 times below the permitted limit, c) No microwaves were detected, d) Maximum RF level detected was 10 times lower than the exposure limit, and concluded that the very low levels detected did not pose a radiation hazard to operator in either the long or short term.

In 1980 The Institute of Occupational Health of The University of Milan measured 85 VDTs for X-ray emissions. None above background levels were detected.

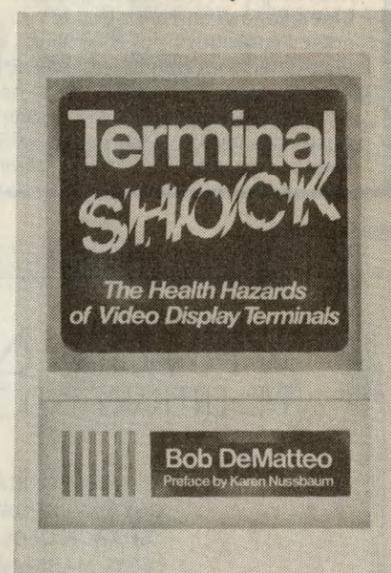
Four other studies cited in this same publication drew the same conclusions. I agree that ergonomics requires attention.

I would like to think that objectivity based on scientific evaluation would encourage publication of this letter.

—R.B. Atkins, Chairman,  
School of Graphic Communications  
Management,  
Faculty of Applied Arts,  
Ryerson Polytechnical Institute,  
Toronto, Ont.

TERMINAL SHOCK DOES DELIVER the specific message that VDTs are a significant health hazard, and DeMatteo backs it with a massive bibliography that is far more up to date than the articles R.B. Atkins quotes in his letter. This is significant in itself because DeMatteo states that "in the early 1980s, at the same time as the public was being told that VDTs emitted no radiation, the U.S. Federal Communications Commission was being flooded with complaints about radio frequency interference from VDTs.... These

were some of the first indications that VDT users were being exposed to potentially harmful radiation, indications that were ignored by regulatory agencies in Canada and the U.S. until very recently." He follows this with the statement: "Characteristically, both government regulatory agencies and industry follow the all-too-familiar pattern: they deny that there is any real problem. Workers' complaints about occupational hazards have historically been vindicated. The sad history of occupational health and safety shows that government and science are years behind workers in recognizing the toll (in death and suffering) of harmful products in the work environment." DeMatteo then goes on to illustrate this further with the story of how "it took



governments almost sixty years to acknowledge the health impact of asbestos despite worker complaints, a growing death toll, scientific reports, and campaigns by unions and environmentalists. By the end of World War I, many insurance companies would not sell life insurance to asbestos workers. ...Today we are spending millions of dollars to remove asbestos from our schools and public buildings, and much more in compensation claims and civil litigation, all of which could have been avoided had we heeded the early warning signs." DeMatteo goes on to cite other hazards that were "road tested" on an unsuspecting public, such as ureaformaldehyde, DDT, DES, contraceptive pills, thalidomide, and aspartame.

DeMatteo has done extensive research that proves that evidence of VDT-related illnesses is mounting, and his basic premise is that "while the industry tells legislators that VDT operators do not face any real health hazards, computer industry advertisements in trade journals, marketing brochures and industry newsletters implicitly and explicitly acknowledge that VDT operators' complaints are real."

Each computer in the workplace should be tested, according to DeMatteo, not only one "sample" from each model, since every computer emits a different level of radiation. While one computer might emit no radiation, the one next to it could be emitting dangerous doses. As for the emissions themselves, X-rays are only one type of radiation among about nine forms emitted by VDTs. X-rays may cause cancer, genetic damage, and premature aging; microwaves may cause cataracts, birth defects/miscarriage; visible light emissions seem mild with only eye strain or fatigue resulting; the radio frequencies

(RF) are responsible for the same potential damage as X-rays as well as disorders of the central nervous system, while the extremely low frequency (ELF) and very low frequency (VLF) radio frequencies can cause blood disorders, leukemia, immune system and cell membrane disorders.

As for testing for VDT emissions, DeMatteo notes that "it is our unhappy conclusion that few testing firms have the capability to carry out meaningful testing of VDTs," and indicates that testing requires measurement of static electric fields, radio frequency, ultraviolet and infrared radiation, X-ray radiation, and sonic emissions, using an electrostatic locator, an electromagnetic field meter, an exposure meter, an ELF probe, a VLF probe for magnetic fields, a radiometer, and a radiation hazard meter for radio frequencies and microwaves. Contrast this with the equipment used by government safety agencies that use one meter to measure X-rays only.

Because of the wealth of statistical

and analytical information in *Terminal Shock*, it should be required reading for anyone who works in the computer field, but especially for those who work more than twenty hours a week with eyes glued to one or more VDT screens. The last word is Bob DeMatteo's:

"Protecting the public from workplace and environmental hazards is not simply a medical or technical problem. It is also a political and economic problem, and the way to a hazard-free environment involves power and politics. Honesty and morality are as essential to science as genius. We will not progress much if research is designed to give pre-planned results. As the controversies over the health effects of potentially harmful agents rage, how is the public to assess 'expert opinion,' how are we to assess statements made by regulatory officials that 'radiation is emitted from VDTs, but the amounts are so small that no harm will be done to those "exposed"?' Is there evidence to support such absolute claims?"

—Isobel Harry

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MEDIA

# CFRB: Listening To A Gas Station

TORONTO — "Unlike movies, some things never change..." so says the nightly furniture TV ad. Among the changeless media formats are the "tabloids of the air," the phone-in-shows, offering their brand of service-station journalism with oil-checkups for the moral minds of conservative Canadians.

**Item:** CFRB, currently celebrating its sixtieth year and holding on to its position as the country's most listened to radio station (close to a million a week).

**Programme:** The Ed Needham Show.

**Topic:** Cultural boycott of entertainers perform-

ing in South Africa. Guests: Eartha Kitt; Norman "Otis" Richmond, Black Music Association (Toronto Chapter), both interviewed prior to the beginning of the show. Length of show: 3 hours.

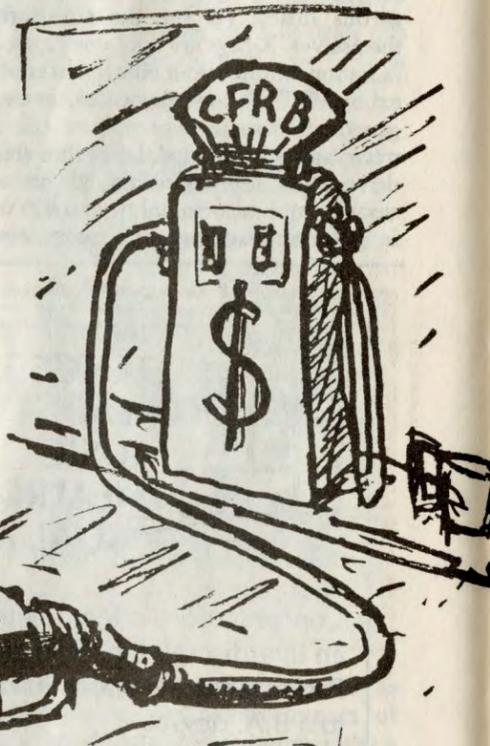
**Sub-plot:** CFRB was a promoter of Eartha Kitt's week-long venue at the Imperial Room, Toronto, though this was not mentioned during the programme.

**Script:** Such boycotts and demonstrations are illogical and "Un-Canadian." "The United Nations suggests that we should isolate South Africa, sometimes I think it is the United Nations that should be isolated."

Mr. Ed hee-hawed his way through 18 callers, only two of whom disagreed

with his "neutral" position. One of the two caved in when offered a free ticket to go see Ms. Kitt. After the other, a Caribbean-Canadian caller, refused the hypothetical free ticket argument (no actual tickets were offered on air), Mr. Needham delivered the following monologue:

"Nobody seems to care much, nobody's outraged, nobody's really upset about this. I'm being professionally neutral here, and what I'm finding is that though people are calling there's no fire. So I'm going to dump this subject at 8:00 because it's not working...I thought some of you



would be angry. I'm staying neutral but I'm burning, I can tell you that... and I don't understand why people are not really, really angry about this, but they aren't, and we're dying."

So what topic did Ed introduce to illicit some "real anger"? "When we come back at 8:10 we'll talk about abortion, watch the phone lines ring then!" Needless to say, during the boycott-bust segment, it was impossible to get through on air to counter Mr. Ed. He was just too busy — pumping gas.

Clive Robertson

Illustration: Chris Reed

ART

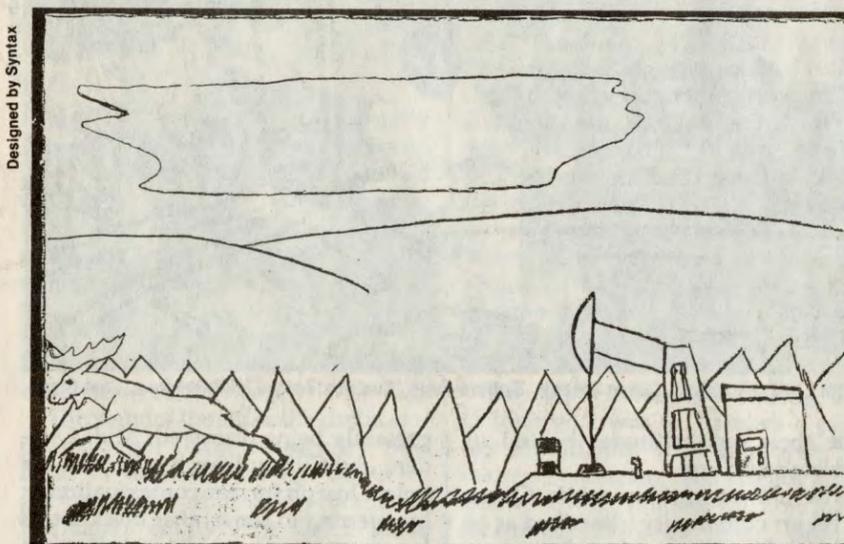
# Lubicon Lake Band Boycotts The Glenbow

CALGARY — The 450 members of the Lubicon Lake Indian band are currently stepping up their 47-year campaign for settlement of aboriginal land claims. Their land claims relate to four specific areas:

- The band has filed claim before the provincial and federal courts on a legally active aboriginal title to 8,500 sq. miles of resource-rich land in northern Alberta.

ferred to the band as a reserve last winter.

One strategy being used in its attempt to bring the issue before the international community is the call for a boycott of an exhibition of Indian and Inuit artifacts which is currently being organized by the Glenbow Museum as part of Calgary's Olympic Arts Festival to be held in February, 1988.



From poster "Where is our future?" designed for Lubicon Lake Band through local Committee Against Racism.

- Its particular concern is with an area of 4,200 sq. miles which contains burial sites and trap lines.
- The band has indicated that it will forego the larger claims in exchange for a 90 sq. mile section of reserve plus other benefits.
- The Province of Alberta has agreed to honour the band's jurisdiction over only 25.4 sq. miles of the total claim which the provincial government of-

University of Calgary Anthropology professor Joan Ryan recently resigned from the Glenbow Museum's program committee as a result of Glenbow Director Duncan Cameron's use of diplomatic channels to discredit the Lubicon cause. Ryan refuses to be associated with a group "which furthers its own interests by adding to the oppression of minorities."

Cameron, while expressing sym-

pathy for the Lubicon claims, said the Glenbow could not become politically involved in the issue. What Cameron actually did was take specific political action against the Lubicon by contacting Brian Watson of the Arts Promotion Division in External Affairs.

Watson responded by involving Canadian diplomats in several countries in a campaign to undermine the boycott.

Cameron also claimed "enthusiastic support" from native groups and has consistently tried to discredit letters of support for the boycott as not being representative of native opinion.

In fact, the boycott is supported by the Assembly of First Nations, the World Council of Indigenous People, the National Congress of American Indians, the Metis Association of Alberta and the Grand Council of Crees in Quebec.

In spite of Cameron's efforts, approximately a dozen museums of international standing (but not the Smithsonian) have respected the boycott and declined to lend pieces to the Glenbow.

The band is also considering calling a boycott against the Olympic Games themselves and does not discount the possibility of armed struggle, should their claims not be addressed to their satisfaction.

This January the band evicted a seismic crew who "snuck in" through the Northeast corner of the disputed 90 sq. mile area.

"We are prepared to do whatever it takes to protect our land," says Chief Bernard Ominayak.

The band, in its suit for settlement of its outstanding land claim, is fighting to preserve the integrity of a trap line economy along with its cultural history and traditions. If it loses in the face of continued insensitive resource development, the band faces no other option but total disintegration.

Six years ago 120 moose were killed by the band in the surrounding forests to feed its members. In the winter of 1984 only three were taken.

Currently upwards of a million dollars a day are being pumped out of the area while poverty, welfare and the complete destruction of a traditional way of life are threatening these proud and independent Cree.

Brian Dyson

## IAU — "Working Odds"

TORONTO — The Independent Artists Union and the Community Arts Committee of A Space sponsored a forum called "Working Odds" on issues of race in the art system. Five black artists and artists of colour, Beatrice Bailey, Richard Fung, Clifton Joseph, Midi Onodera, and Chet Singh participated in the forum, speaking informally and responding to comments and questions from the floor.

As Lisa Steele, the I.A.U. member who acted as a moderator, said in her introduction, "...we need to hear this information." "We" referred to the I.A.U. whose various efforts to democratize culture are sometimes at odds with the make-up of its membership, which is presently almost entirely white. An I.A.U. meeting featuring Judy Gouin from the Ontario Arts Council which took place last year may have weighed somewhat heavily on the minds of the I.A.U. In that meeting, the I.A.U. engaged in what were sometimes heated exchanges with Gouin with respect to the absence of black artists and artists of colour in the funding structure, all with the uncomfortable realization that none were in the I.A.U., let alone in the room, who might raise the issues for themselves.

The first thing that the I.A.U. learned was that its use of the term "affirmative action" required rethinking. Clifton Joseph, the first speaker, explained his "critical support" for the concept of affirmative action which, he said, is really the failed legacy of the integration and civil rights movements. While sometimes useful in isolated instances (for example, assisting a black or person of colour to find work or be admitted to a school) it can also be used in order to perform the most cynical acts of tokenism. When exploited for the purposes of public consumption, it can actually divert attention from accomplishing long-term changes.

Richard Fung emphasized the "sys-

temic" nature of racial and ethnic inequality. Imbedded in institutions, legitimized by social patterns of economic and social exchange, and propped up by a pious liberal rhetoric where it is "the individual" rather than a social group which is the central focus in society, "systemic" racism is undoubtedly racism in its most insidious and resistant form. It is all the more difficult to resist because of its anonymity; individuals can easily



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: Clifton Joseph, Richard Fung, Beatrice Bailey, Midi Onodera, Chet Singh.

hide their own attitudes behind its faceless structure.

The almost entirely white Queen Street art community (described as an "ethnic ghetto") was thought to be a very alienating environment, having as it does its own bars, restaurants, dress codes and conversation patterns. At the same time, not being involved socially and culturally means not being included economically: with few exceptions, if you don't have a presence or a name in the art community, as well as friends or acquaintances who sit on juries, the chances of receiving grants are extremely low. When applications were submitted, however, often black artists and artists of colour got the old "it's not art,

it's politics" line from the funding agencies. This turned a bias of taste not unfamiliar to some white artists into a form of discrimination, as non-white artists could hardly be expected to produce art for art's sake in the grand, white modernist and post-modernist traditions.

It was also stated that the white juries have proven to be simply incapable of adjudicating work by non-white artists; they don't have the information, and they don't have the tools for analysis.

A strange irony which may be illustrative of the double meaning inherent in the term affirmative action was raised first by Richard Fung, who claimed that his being a Chinese Canadian actually gave his career a "push." He was sometimes offered opportunities and visibility that he would not otherwise get, like being asked to participate in the forum

presently being discussed. Midi Onodera and Clifton Joseph reiterated the point. Joseph further contextualized it by referring to some other Black artists less accustomed to public speaking than himself, who would be characteristically ignored as they lacked that particular talent that the white art community happened to require at that particular time. Beatrice Bailey, on the other hand, made it clear that the art community sometimes dispenses even with the politeness of a "repressive tolerance" policy. Her personal testimony of trying several years ago to gain access to the art community — the usual way, going to openings and so on — only to consistently get the cold shoulder, spoke to a situation where systemic

racism was clearly supported through the culpability of individuals.

No white members were on the forum. This observation came in the form of a criticism from a black audience member, as it seemed that Black people and people of colour were once again on display. Perhaps, it was suggested, it would have been as useful to include whites who might speak to their own personal encounters with the concept of racism, their socialization, and their attempts to overcome it. Nonetheless, the criticism and discussion seemed in every case constructive, particularly when it was demanded that the forum actual-

ly accomplish something concrete rather than simply repeat, yet again, expressions of bitterness on one hand and guilt on the other.

A follow-up meeting has been called by the erstwhile Affirmative Action Committee of the I.A.U. in order to discuss organizational matters — such as whether or not a caucus structure is the most useful one to represent the various related but distinct interests of the committees — as well as strategies with respect to promoting change in the funding agencies.

Gary Kibbins

## FUNSCAD Settles Strike

HALIFAX — FUNSCAD formally signed a collective agreement on November 26th. The strike which had begun on October 16th ended on November 4th, 1986, when faculty members and librarians at NSCAD returned to work after ratifying a two-year first collective agreement. FUNSCAD believes that the agreement will bring major improvements to working conditions at the College.

Throughout the strike the Union emphasized four goals: job security, peer input in decision making, access to grievance and arbitration procedures, and salary equity. The Union made substantial progress towards all of these goals, although the salary package still does not totally resolve the inequities within the College and between the College and other universities.

**Job Security:** Although the administration of the College and Board members had hoped to retain the system of limited-term appointments, the Union believed that the lack of job security threatened academic freedom and created an atmosphere of fear in the College. In the settlement the Employer

finally agreed to adopt a system with a six-year probationary period followed by a continuing appointment. While the system is not tenure in the classical sense, it offers security of employment to employees provided they meet the required standard of performance (those who do not meet the standard may have their appointments reviewed at the end of any five-year period).

**Peer Input in Decision Making:** The Union's goal was to establish a place for consultation with employees on matters concerning their employment. Peer review committees will now make recommendations on hiring, promotion, sabbatical applications, and reviews of employees. Division Chairpersons (whose authority and lack of accountability to faculty had been a major problem at the College) are now required to consult with faculty on Divisional matters. Employees now have the right to participate in the process of hiring senior administrators (who in the past have been appointed at the discretion of the President without consultation).

**Access to Grievance and Arbitration:** Before the strike, the NSCAD Board

insisted that it could never agree to binding arbitration, for that would mean it would have to give up its power to make 'final decisions.' The Union insisted that without independent third-party arbitration its members could never have justice in resolving disputes.

One of the driving factors in unionizing faculty was the absolute power (and occasional unfairness) of the Employer; so the faculty could not accept a settlement without arbitration. Finally the Board conceded, and the agreement contains only one minor limitation on the right to grieve. (In a promotion, the employees cannot grieve the President's recommendations.)

**Salary Equity:** The Employer held off on bargaining salaries until the strike was nearly three weeks old, so that there was not sufficient time to work out all of the problems with the offer. Nonetheless, the Employer did agree to a salary structure similar in style to those in place in many Canadian universities. The amounts are very low in comparison to the salaries faculties are earning elsewhere, however. In April FUNSCAD re-opens on salaries, and the Union's goal will be to continue to attempt to address the internal inequities and to begin to attack the external inequity.

One of the last items to be resolved in the negotiations was the agreement of the Employer that it had been excluding some employees who should be in the Union. After the Union was certified to represent 'regular full-time and limited-term full-time and half-time faculty members,' the Employer ceased to hire 'limited-term full-time' faculty and only hired 'sessionals' (one-term) or 'double sessionals' (two or three terms). The agreement now covers those limited-term appointments, and also sets minimum standards for the working conditions of part-time (individual course) employees.

The agreement as signed is far from perfect, but it is a good first collective agreement for an institution which had none of the procedures and protections which even non-unionized universities take for granted.

Jill Grant  
(Chief Negotiator, FUNSCAD)

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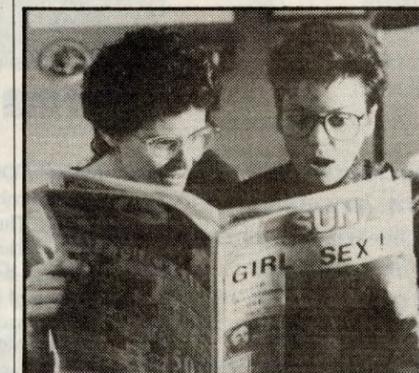
# VIDEO NEWS

THE NATIONAL GALLERY OF Canada has hired Susan Ditta for the job of curator in charge of film and video. Ditta was the executive director of the Canadian Images Festival from 1979 to 1984. Canadian Images was one of the largest and most important showcases for Canadian film and video in Canada. She went on to work at Art-space in Peterborough, then curated the 1985 Grierson Seminar and presently is a managing director of Mayworks (the festival of working people and the arts) here in Toronto. Ditta assumes her responsibilities at the National Gallery in May 1987.

It's worth pointing out that this newly-announced position of Curator for Film and Video at the National Gallery of Canada would not have been reinstated without the efforts of Rob McFadden, who was in charge of the exhibition and collection of video at the N.G. from 1983 to 1985. It was McFadden who informed the community at large of the N.G.C.'s plans to withdraw official support for video at the gallery in the winter of 85/86. The ensuing protests led to the reinstatement of video and film within the gallery's regular programming. Thanks to Rob McFadden for his ongoing support for the time-based arts in Canada.

WHEN VIDEO ARTISTS APPLY FOR production grants from the Canada Council they often wonder why it is that they have to give a copy of their finished tape to the Council only to have them in turn give it to the National Film and Television Archives. Artists are eligible to receive videotape stock from the tape bank at the Council. The successful applicants also receive a letter requesting that a copy of their finished tape be sent to the Council for inclusion in the N.F.T.A. Why are they doing this? Successful visual arts applicants (painters, sculptors, etc) are required to leave only a set of their slides at the council rather than the actual artwork as in the case of a videotape. I wonder why this kind of effort isn't being applied where it

might do some economic good for video artists. For example, we're still waiting for a clear commitment from the Art Bank to buy video art works. The Media Arts Section and the Art Bank have been tossing around a number of ideas to strengthen the Art Bank's role in the support of video art. It's time for some action!



Still from *Frankly Shirley* by Margaret Moores.

MANY VIDEO ARTISTS WOULD like more information on festivals. There are a couple of sources for this information, one is from Telefilm Canada, Festivals Division, Banque Nationale Tower, 600 de la Gauchetière Street West, 25th Floor, Montreal, Quebec, H3B 4L2. Organizations can subscribe to this information service which is updated on a regular basis. Many video organizations have this in their offices available for photocopying. The other source for festival info is The British Film Institute, 81 Dean Street, London W1V 6AA, U.K. There is a 4.95£ charge for this handbook. It's called the International Film Festivals Directory. ISBN 0 9016 96 9.

IN THE LAST ISSUE OF FUSE I MENTIONED that no "A" grants for video were awarded by the Canada Council. The council has recently released statistics which clearly indicate that the number of applications for "A" grants for the Media Arts has decreased quite dramatically over the last ten years. This may come as a surprise to most people, as the amount of activity in film, video and electronic arts has definitely increased. It's difficult to point the finger and say why this is or whose fault it is, but it is worrying. The effort that goes into applying for grants is significant, but read my lips: apply.

THE ONTARIO ARTS COUNCIL has joined with the efforts of many video and film artists by stating clearly and strongly their policy regarding prior censorship. It reads: "The Ontario Arts Council is opposed to censorship. Censorship is the imposition of prior restraint whereby a government or government agency reviews artistic creations for the purpose of altering content which it deems to be objectionable, or prohibiting its distribution to the public. Ontario's current practice of reviewing films and video material distinguishes artists who work in these media from all others. The Ontario Arts Council opposes this practice, which discriminates against certain artistic constituencies, and also supports the right of all artists to create and exhibit work."

In view of this, it would be an ideal time for the Art Gallery of Ontario to resume its commitment to showing and collecting video art. I believe the AGO stopped collecting and showing video art in 1978 over the censorship issue. Up until that time they had begun a significant collection. Let's hope the AGO and other art galleries in the province can support the stand taken by video artists and the statement by the OAC by showing video and film art which is, after all, an important element of the contemporary arts in Canada.

Kim Tomczak

## PART ONE

### A HISTORY OF TORONTO'S

# 1921-1986

### ANTI-APARTHEID MOVEMENT

## Norman 'Otis' Richmond

Norman 'Otis' Richmond is a widely-published Toronto columnist, radio broadcaster (listen to CKLN, Thursdays 8 pm) and President, Black Music Association (Toronto Chapter). Richmond's previous articles for FUSE include: "The Secret History of Black Music in Toronto," December 1980, "The Political Thought of Archie Shepp," March 1982, and "Crossing the Apartheid Line (interview with Thabo Mbeki)," December 1982.

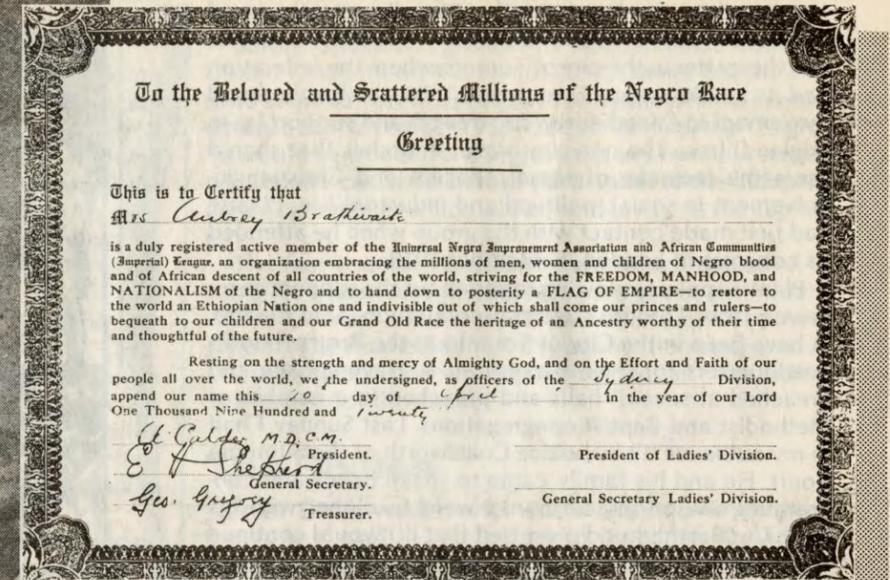
**TODAY THERE ARE MANY** anti-apartheid coalitions, ad hoc committees, and supporting organizations operating in Toronto. **The Anti-Apartheid Coalition of Toronto (AACT), The Biko-Rodney-Malcolm Coalition (BRMC), Canadians Concerned About South Africa (CCSA), and the Toronto Committee for the Liberation of Southern African Colonies (TCLSAC)** are just a few of the groups working to support liberation movements in South Africa and Namibia.

All of these groups, with the exception of the BRMC, give their exclusive support to the **African National Congress of South Africa (ANC)** and the **South West African People's Organization (SWAPO)** in Namibia. This is not to imply that the BRMC does not support both the ANC and SWAPO. They do. But they also claim to have a "non-sectarian approach" to the struggle in Southern Africa. The BRMC also supports the **Pan-Africanist Congress of Azania (PAC)** and the **Black Consciousness Movement of Azania (BCMA)**. No anti-apartheid group in Toronto supports Gathsha Buthelezi and his conservative **Inkatha** movement.

From Sol Plaatje: South African Nationalist 1876-1932 by Brian Willan



Courtesy of Daniel Braithwaite



ABOVE: Certification of UNIA membership issued to Aubrey Braithwaite in Sydney, Nova Scotia, 1920.

LEFT: Sol Plaatje's passport photo issued in December 1920 just prior to his visit to Toronto's Black community.

Despite the ideological differences around which South African liberation groups should be supported and other tactical questions, the above-mentioned Canadian groups have managed to keep the issue of apartheid alive in the minds of Torontonians. As well, all these groups are united in the fact that they owe their existence to the national liberation movement inside South Africa. One of the best kept secrets is the fact that all these local groups are also indebted to Toronto's African-Canadian community whose contribution to the anti-apartheid movement in this city has been largely overlooked, if not forgotten.

## The Twenties

This history begins in 1921, when official statistics show there were 1,236 African-Canadians living in Toronto. According to Tony Martin, an expert on Marcus Garvey and the **Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA)**, Garvey and **Solomon T. Plaatje** met in Toronto in 1921. Plaatje was one of the founders of the African National Congress (then known as the **South African Native National Congress**) in 1912. Plaatje was the ANC's first secretary-general, and prior to journeying to North America he was part of an ANC delegation to the post-World War I Peace Conference at Versailles, France in 1919. In France, Plaatje attended the Pan-African Congress organized by African-American scholar and activist, Dr. W.E.B. Dubois.

Contact between Plaatje and Toronto's small African-Canadian community laid the foundations of the current anti-apartheid movement. **Harry Gairy** who is the acknowledged "godfather" of Toronto's African-Canadian community remembers Plaatje's visit to the city. Says Gairy, "I saw the man. I was trying to get a copy of a book

of his that he wrote on South Africa.... I think I went to a lecture where he was and he spoke of the book and the conditions of natives of South Africa at that time. I would give my right eye for a copy of that book."

Plaatje's book, *Native Life in South Africa*, was a hot item in Toronto. It sold over 400 copies (at \$2 a copy). The book consists of an account of the events leading up to the passage of the Natives' Land Act, the effects it had when implemented, the campaign mounted by the South African Native National Congress to secure its repeal, and the story of the deputation to England and the British response. The book also contained an account of several historical episodes illustrating the loyalty of African people in South Africa to the cause of the imperial government.

Brian Willan, the author of *Sol Plaatje: South African Nationalist 1876-1932*, documents the South African's visit to Canada. Plaatje landed in Quebec without realizing it was a French-speaking territory. Plaatje was welcomed by whites in both Quebec and Toronto but especially by Toronto's African-Canadian community. He was delighted with the warmth of the reception he en-

countered at the hands of the **Canadian Brotherhood Federation**, first in Montreal where he spent two weeks, and thereafter in the city of Toronto where the federation had its headquarters. Founded in 1894, the Brotherhood movement in Canada drew its strength and support (as in England) from the non-conformist churches that shared the same message of social concern and Christian involvement in social, political and industrial life. Plaatje had first made contact with the group when he attended its congress in London, September 1919.

Plaatje spoke in glowing terms about the support he received from Toronto's general population. Said Plaatje, "I have been in the City of Toronto at the Brotherhood's headquarters for over a month now. Have spoken and preached at several halls and preached to a number of Methodist and Baptist congregations. Last Sunday I had in my audience a Mr. Justice Coatsworth of the Supreme Court. He and his family came to shake hands and congratulate me on my sermon. I went to dinner with his son...The Brotherhood promised that if I would continue to speak for them they would make an allowance next February to the World's Brotherhood Conference in London, and that when disbursements are made they would strongly recommend my South African work to the World Committee for liberal treatment."

Plaatje was even more impressed with Toronto's African-Canadian community and encouraged by the warmth of the reception he was given by Toronto's Black population. Since he had plans to take his campaign south to the large African-American populations of the cities of the United States, his visit to Toronto was a glimpse of what was to come.

One of the most influential local figures, **Arthur C. Holder**, an official in the Toronto chapter of the Universal Negro Improvement Association, has left a striking account of the impact Plaatje made during his stay in Toronto. Holder pointed out: "It is true that Toronto has had some distinguished Afro-American visitors like the late Booker T. Washington, Rev. C.T. Walker, Rev. A. Clayton Powell, the Hon. Marcus Garvey, and other bright stars in the Negro firmament of science and art; but they came and went before many Torontonians had much of a chance of meeting them intimately. The Hon. Sol Plaatje has been with us now over eight weeks, and in that time he has revealed to us the true inwardness of the African character and predilection. His humour, benevolence, good form and catchy conversation have earned for him a place in the hearts of many of us."

## The Fifties

Until the Fifties, all of Africa was under the thumb of colonialism. The English, French, Portuguese, Dutch and Germans carved up Africa like a Thanksgiving turkey at the Berlin Conference in 1884-85. The only exceptions were Liberia and Ethiopia. While a strong argument can

TOP: From *The Canadian Negro*, Vol. 3, No. 5, November 1955.

BOTTOM: Hattie Winston, Canadian rep to the International UNIA Women in 1920. Fundraising in the late 1930s was spearheaded by UNIA women to fight Italian fascists in Ethiopia.



## THEY WILL BE FREE!

By DANIEL BRAITHWAITE

...ing pendulum of continues to sizzle, has been which was ap- planted two years a revolution, has spiritual leader, th right in the rocco, Sidr Mob who was also in the war.



From Marcus Garvey, Hero by Tony Martin

Courtesy of Daniel Braithwaite



APRIL/87

be made that Liberia wasn't really "free" since the United States had a role in setting it up in 1847, Ethiopia was viewed as a state that was never colonized.

When Italy invaded Ethiopia in 1936, Africans at home and abroad rose up in righteous indignation. African-Americans and Africans from the Caribbean volunteered to fight in Ethiopia to save the motherland from being overrun by Italian Fascists. Toronto's small African-Canadian population did their part by raising funds. In Toronto the fundraising was spearheaded by the women in the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA). The UNIA was founded in Jamaica by Marcus Garvey in 1914, and the Toronto chapter was created in 1920. In 1936 the African-Canadian population in Toronto had grown to 1,344.

A year before the Black revolution, which began in 1954 in the United States, and the de-colonization of Africa and the Caribbean, Toronto's African-Canadian community mustered up enough strength (1,541 persons in 1951) to start a monthly newspaper, **The Canadian Negro**.

From 1953-56, Torontonians such as **Ray Greenidge, Don Carty, Harold Talbot, Wilfred Olbey, John and Alma White, Mildred Lynch, Daniel Braithwaite, Julius Isaac, Rev. N.J.L. Gonsalves, Donald Moore, Jean Daniels** and

others kept the issue of African liberation on the minds of Torontonians.

Before Ghana was granted its independence from the United Kingdom on March 6th 1957, Daniel Braithwaite (who came to Toronto in 1926 from Sydney, Nova Scotia) wrote in the November 1956 issue of *The Canadian Negro*: "It would be wonderful if representatives from our Negro community could be sent to participate in the independence ceremonies which will be held in Accra, the capital city."

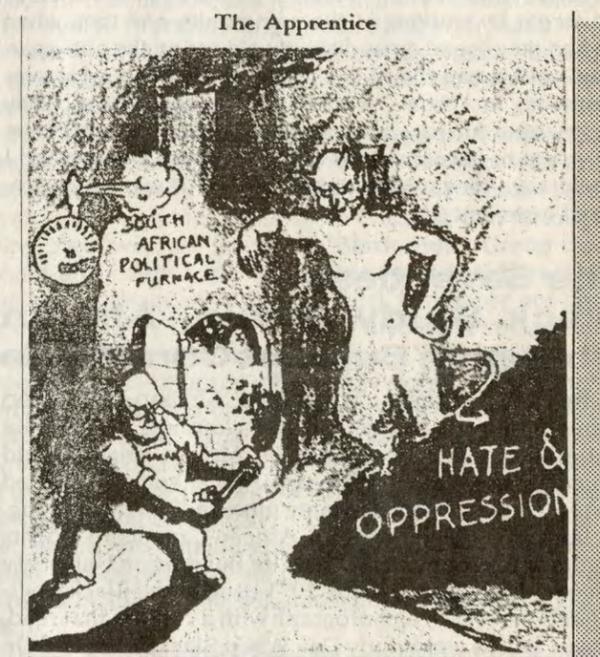
The first issue of *Canadian Negro*, which appeared in June 1953, carried a political cartoon about the "South Africa furnace" and a story "Defy Malan Laws. Teachers Jailed." The final edition of this publication appeared in December 1956 with an excellent editorial: "Recording Scandal in South Africa."

## The Sixties

Daniel Braithwaite and Jean Daniels emerged from *The Canadian Negro* to help found the **Canadian Anti-Apartheid Committee (CAAC)** following the Sharpeville massacre which took place in Sharpeville, South Africa on March 21st, 1960. The world reacted when 69 unarmed women, children and men were shot down while peacefully opposing South Africa's unjust laws requiring Blacks to carry pass books.

Says Braithwaite, "the CAAC came into existence

LEFT: Building at 355 College St., Toronto, housed the UNIA from 1928 to 1980.



ABOVE: Cartoon that appeared in the first issue of *The Canadian Negro*, Vol. 1, No. 1, June 1953.

FUSE

17

because of the Sharpeville incident. Some of us knew about the anti-apartheid movement in Britain and we said, 'we need one here.' Braithwaite remembers forming the group along with Daniels, Connie Belfon and sympathetic whites such as Jackie Schaffenburg. He also acknowledges that Daniels and Schaffenburg were the driving force behind the CAAC. Both had come to Toronto from Nova Scotia.

The CAAC worked against Canadian complicity in South Africa through demonstrations, rallies and the organized boycotting of South African products. They provided forums and observed important dates in the Southern African liberation movements.

The CAAC also supported the civil rights movement in the U.S. and the independence struggles in the Caribbean. Braithwaite is both quick and proud to point out that "everywhere Black people were being denied their rights, we were there. We always held our events at the UNIA Hall (355 College Street) or the West Indian Federation club which was across the street."

Under the leadership of Daniels, the CAAC succeeded in organizing a large demonstration against George Wallace in front of Maple Leaf Gardens; invited James Farmer, head of the **Congress of Racial Equality (CORE)** to the Royal York Hotel; and helped build Toronto's first Black library at 941 Bathurst Street.

The CAAC's strategy managed a fine balancing act between fighting for rights in Canada and supporting the world-wide struggle for African liberation. Braithwaite remembers, "we knew it would be more effective to work on issues where people would see results. So we tried to balance it by working in the community and then when we had developed an audience we'd spring the anti-apartheid activity on them! We'd let people know what was happening in Africa.... A lot of people used to say, 'Why worry about Africa, we've got to worry about what's here, we've got to get some jobs here.' And Jean Daniels and I would say, 'they're all interrelated' — it was an educational experience."

### The Seventies: Black Study Group, African Liberation Support Committee

In the late Sixties, Toronto's African-Canadian community grew in size and consciousness. By the late Sixties thousands of people of African origin would emigrate from the Caribbean, Africa and the United States. Young students became more militant and daring. In January 1971, a group of African-Canadian students occupied the lobby of the Sun Life Building on University Avenue. The February 14th, 1971 issue of the Black newspaper *Contrast* ran a photograph with a caption that read, "T'was a Cold and Windy Day When Blacks Marched On Toronto." The demonstration was to protest Britain's proposed arms sale to the South African government.

Bert Smith, who came to Toronto from Jamaica in 1970 refutes the argument that the African-Canadian community has always been apathetic about South African con-

Pressfoto from *Black Lives Under Apartheid*

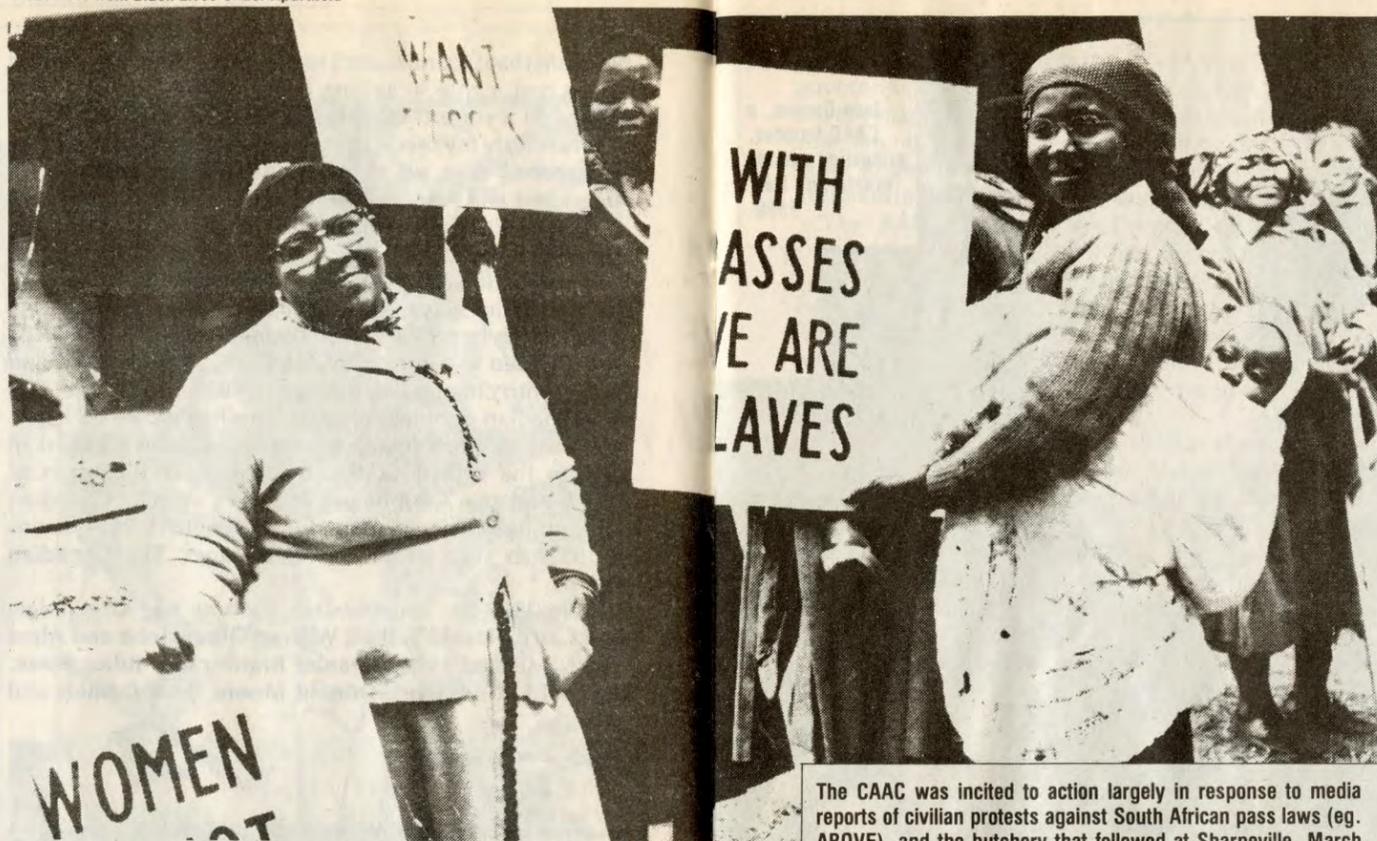


Photo from *Shooting at Sharpeville* by Ambrose Reeves

The CAAC was incited to action largely in response to media reports of civilian protests against South African pass laws (eg. ABOVE), and the butchery that followed at Sharpeville, March 21, 1960 (BELOW).



cerns. Smith recalled what was taking place when he arrived from the Caribbean: "I know that when I came here in 1970, there was the **Black Youth Organization, Black Liberation Front**, and the **Afro-American Progressive Association** which were organizations concerned with the whole area of Black liberation — not just in Canada — but world-wide. The whole question of struggle in Africa (Mozambique, Angola, Guinea-Bissau, Rhodesia, Namibia, South Africa) was being discussed. So when I came here I saw Black people trying to link us up with the world-wide movement."

Smith, who later became editor of the short-lived newspaper, **Black Labour**, remembered the debate about whether whites would even be allowed to participate in the 1972 African Liberation Day demonstration, period. A compromise was reached and whites were allowed to march in the back of the line. The first African Liberation Day march was called for by Owusu Sadauki (Howard Fuller) who headed the Malcolm X Liberation College in Greensboro, North Carolina. After spending thirty-one days in Mozambique with the liberation movement **FRELIMO**, Sadauki decided to organize support for the liberation movements in Southern Africa and Guinea-Bissau.

Sadauki was able to get support from activists in Toronto and Montreal as well as from Eusi Kwayana (Guyana), Tim Hector (Antigua), Trevor Munroe (Jamaica), and Maurice Bishop (Grenada). These activities proved extremely successful. The June 15, 1972 issue of *Contrast* reported that 3,000 people marched in Toronto, 30,000 in Washington, D.C., 5,000 in San Francisco, 6,000 in Dominica, 10,000 in Antigua, and 3,000 in Grenada. For the next two years African Liberation Day was celebrated in Toronto and other cities; however, in 1974 the movement split wide open.

By 1977 the **African Liberation Support Committee** was in a factionalist shambles in North America with the nationalists, scientific socialists (some of whom were loyal to the Communist Party of Canada), and Maoists going their separate ways. The **Black Study Group** dissolved and came under the direction of the Canadian Communist League (Marxist-Leninist). In a paper put out by the BSG they stated: "the BSG also led a struggle in the Black community around African Liberation Day to expose the bankruptcy of the revisionist Communist Party of Canada line on the international situation. CPC, echoing the Soviet social-imperialists, put forward a platform that divided national liberation in Africa and opposed the unity of the third world. The BSG later initiated the African Liberation Support Committee which included the League and anti-imperialist organizations. The committee organized African Liberation Day activities in Toronto in 1977." The BSG later pulled out of the CCL (ML).

Today African Liberation Day is a shell of its former self. In the last few years there have been two separate marches on African Liberation Day. The **All-African People Revolutionary Party** and various coalitions led by the **Canadian Concerned About Southern Africa (CCSA)** have held different events on African Liberation Day.

## The Seventies: TCLPAC, TCLSAC, CCSA, SACTU

In late 1972, a group of Canadians started the **Toronto Committee for the Liberation of Portugal's African Colonies** (TCLPAC). John Saul, one of the founders of the Committee explained: "We chose at that point to focus particularly on the struggles against Portuguese colonialism which we thought was not getting sufficient publicity in Canada."

During the fight for the independence of the Portuguese colonies, TCLPAC was involved in various campaigns in support of the struggles in Angola, Mozambique and Guinea-Bissau; TCLPAC supported the boycott of Gulf Oil, coffee coming from Angola, and attempted to question Canada's role in NATO. Canada came out in support of Portugal in opposition to the freedom fighters in Africa.

When the FRELIMO government came into power in Mozambique, it had little or no faith in the Canadian government. Says Saul, "the new Mozambique government under FRELIMO was aware that the Canadian government was on the wrong side. FRELIMO actually invited members of TCLPAC to represent the Canadian people at the Mozambique independence celebration."

In their early history, TCLPAC was a victim of right-wing violence. On April 7th, 1984 TCLPAC was attacked by the Western Guard. TCLPAC leaders were also threatened with violence on a number of occasions by people sympathetic to the Portuguese dictatorship.

After the defeat of Portuguese colonialism and the independence of Angola, Mozambique and Guinea-Bissau, TCLPAC then expanded its operations to support the liberation movements in Rhodesia, South Africa and Namibia. TCLPAC then became TCLSAC, **Toronto Committee for the Liberation of Southern African Colonies**.

**Canadians Concerned About Southern Africa** (CCSA) began in 1975 with the Toronto committee forming in 1977, according to its current Chairperson, Joanne Naiman. In February 1975, the African National Congress committee in Toronto convened a meeting of various Canadian organizations on Southern African issues to help plan a national tour of Canada by two representatives of the ANC in April, 1977. This broad committee requested that committees be set up across Canada and the CCSA was the local organization based in Toronto. The tour of Dr. Y. Dadoo, Vice-Chairman of the **Revolutionary Council of the ANC** and John Gaetsewe of the **South African Congress of Trade Unions** (SACTU) covered all the major cities of Canada and received substantial media coverage. It was during this tour, at the suggestion of Dadoo and Gaetsewe, that the idea of creating a Canada-wide anti-apartheid body arose. CCSA was thereafter transformed into a permanent body.

The CCSA claims to be the only Canada-wide anti-apartheid movement. Says Naiman, "our mandate is to offer support to the liberation movements of Southern Africa. When CCSA first began there was the struggle in Mozambique, Angola and Guinea-Bissau. Now we concentrate on Namibia and South Africa and we give support to SWAPO and the ANC. The work that we do basic-

Courtesy of Norman 'Otis' Richmond Archives



Jean Daniels, a  
CAAC founder,  
protesting outside  
Toronto City Hall,  
1968.

ally involves these areas: 1) Lobbying the Canadian government to change its policies, 2) Providing material aid to refugees from the struggle who are in camps, and 3) Assisting in political prisoner campaigns. We've also done some educational work, but our prime emphasis is action-oriented rather than education."

The **SACTU Solidarity Committee** (Canada) was created in May 1980, according to its Chairperson, Ken Luckhardt. It came under the direction of the National Executive Committee of SACTU in Lusaka, Zambia. SACTU (Canada) was created as a result of previous Canadian tours by SACTU leaders who were encouraged by the Canadian labour movement response to find support for the anti-apartheid cause.

SACTU itself was formed in 1955 as the first non-racial trade union federation in South African history. It emerged at the time of the **Congress of the People** and immediately became part of the Congress Alliance, and this alliance between SACTU and the ANC continues to exist. By 1964 all SACTU leaders were driven underground. Since that time SACTU has been a clandestine organization inside South Africa.

The highlight of SACTU's work in Canada has been the three areas in the labour movement in which they work. First, they do educational work which has been a success. They spoke to over 15,000 rank-and-file members in 1986. Secondly, the SACTU strike fund campaign has some 325 unions contributing funds that go directly to the workers inside South Africa. And, thirdly, the research on the sanctions campaign and the conversion of that research into actual campaigns and actions taken by union locals to demand the severing of all connections with South Africa. This includes refusal to handle, produce, dispatch or use any commodities destined for South Africa or coming into Canada from South Africa.

In August 1986, Peter Mahlangu of Lamontville, South Africa, arrived in Canada to take up his new position as SACTU coordinator in Canada. This placement was made by the SACTU National Executive Committee and follows a request from the SSC for a permanent coordinator, in order to keep pace with the increasing work by SACTU within the Canadian labour movement. After a full discussion by the SACTU National Executive Committee, it was agreed that the SACTU Solidarity Committee (SSC) would be dissolved and its structures fully incorporated into the new SACTU Canadian office.

*(This essay represents an incomplete account, particularly of the pre-Seventies Toronto anti-apartheid history. I am interested in receiving additional source information and documents that could be incorporated into further versions of this history.)*

Norman 'Otis' Richmond

**COMING IN PART TWO: THE BIKO-RODNEY-MALCOLM COALITION, THE BLACK MUSIC ASSOCIATION, THE BMA HONOUR ROLL, ANTI-APARTHEID AND TORONTO'S BLACK PRESS, CANADIAN MUSICIANS AGAINST APARTHEID.**

## The Seventies: U.N. Resolutions

Since the early Seventies, a host of international luminaries have trekked to South Africa for lucrative sums of money. Many of these entertainers maintain that their appearances in the apartheid state have helped break down the system. Others claim that they were ignorant of the conditions in South Africa and have vowed never to return. And still others say, a dollar is a dollar.

Today the issue of performing in South Africa is the most explosive issue in popular music. The United Nations and all South African liberation organizations have repeatedly asked artists not to play there until apartheid is uprooted.

The U.N. passed a resolution (No. 2396) in December 1968 which requested, "all states and organizations to suspend cultural, educational, sporting and other exchanges with the racist regime and with other organizations or institutions in South Africa which practice apartheid."

Over the years the wording of similar resolutions has undergone an interesting metamorphosis. In 1972, the General Assembly invited "all organizations, institutions, and information media to organize a boycott of South Africa in sports, culture, and other activities." Resolution No. 3324 of 1974 added scientific exchanges to the list. Yet by 1980, the General Assembly was appealing directly to "writers, artists, musicians, and other personalities to boycott South Africa."

The 1980 Resolution (No. 35/206E) also requested that the **Special Committee Against Apartheid** promote campaigns for the total isolation of South Africa. The Special Committee proposed a number of actions in accord with the General Assembly resolution and dictated by the U.N. General Assembly designation of 1982, as the **International Year of Mobilization for Sanctions Against South Africa**. In the Special Committee's 1981 report to the General Assembly, the committee proposed to "initiate a register of cultural contacts with South Africa in order to promote an effective boycott." The U.N. first published its "Register of Entertainers, Actors, and others who have performed in Apartheid South Africa" in October 1983. Shortly after, in February and June of 1984, the **Centre Against Apartheid** organized international and North American regional conferences to mobilize artists for action against apartheid.

Toronto organizations formally became involved with the cultural boycott in March 1983. The now-defunct **Stop Entertaining Apartheid Coalition** (SEAC) picketed two "Return to Forever" concerts at Convocation Hall in March, 1983 because the group's pianist, Chick Corea, had performed in South Africa twice.

Corea had already faced the wrath of the anti-apartheid movement in North America. Progressive forces picketed his concerts in Albany, N.Y. and at one of New York City's most famous and prestigious jazz clubs, the Village Vanguard. Corea defied the anti-apartheid movement until August 8, 1985 when the **Capital District Coalition Against Apartheid and Racism** in Albany, N.Y. informed Corea that the BRMC was waiting to picket his show in Toronto. Corea pledged not to play for apartheid again just before coming to Toronto.

## More on Sex in B.C.

SARA DIAMOND

FIRST, JOHN BLATHERWICK, THE head of Public Health for Vancouver suggests that there might be some value in educating school age children and youth about the dangers of AIDS. He poses this as part of a general curriculum of sex education: "A programme is needed in the schools. That's the next generation of sexually active adults." Sounds rational? Well, the fun has just begun!

Next, Premier Bill Vander Zalm steps into the ring. The Premier waxes eloquent on the dangers of telling young people that there are condoms in their local drug stores, and that sexually transmitted diseases are a current reality. He insists that the best prevention is abstinence. He blames the problem on the media: "The persistent questioning and coverage of sex education probably has people thinking about the subject more than they should."

The Premier is backed by Father Bill Menderhall, from the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Vancouver. He is more subtle than the Premier. The good Father tells us that sex ed is okay as long as it is based on the morality of the Ten Commandments. In his view the only safe sex is abstinence; there is to be no discussion of condoms as protection against sexually transmitted diseases because rubbers "frustrate fertility" and anyway youth do not need the details, for sex must only occur within monogamous marriage.

Then, there is a public outcry. The head of the Vancouver School Board (a Socred no less); Eric Buckley, the Chair of the B.C. Association of School Trustees; the Premier's own Minister of Health, Peter Dueck; the B.C. Teachers' Federation and of course Bob Skelly, the leader of the Opposition,

all come out in favour of sex education.

There is intensive organized pressure. On endless open line talk shows (a B.C. specialty) callers demonstrate a concern that youth receive at least some sex education. In interviews, young people insist on their right to have access to sexual information. The Premier, ever sensitive to the ratings, relents. He assures us however that his moral views will determine whatever sex education curriculum is developed in B.C.: "I influence the

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decision making, so my own views will without a doubt have some bearing." He reassures the skeptical, "I'm not a computer."

And what more do we know of the Premier's approach to sexual issues? He insists that these views are in line with those of all B.C. residents: "...I no doubt have a lot in common with people who value Christian or Judeo-Christian principles. That's not perhaps excluding anyone from the process." (This is the same attitude, by the way, that the Premier uses to vindicate his reimposition of the Lord's Prayer throughout the school system in the province.) This attitude represents a fundamentally racist stance of course, given the significant Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist, Jewish and other religions in B.C. It suggests a mentality that somehow missed the separation of church and state in the bourgeois revolutions of the 18th and 19th centuries.

Vander Zalm is virulently anti-choice on abortion and is establishing a

new programme which will "assist expectant mothers," has met with "Pro-Life" lobbyists, and is monitoring the performing of abortions in B.C.'s hospitals. He has vowed a fight to the death against the establishment of a free standing abortion clinic in B.C.

Before the heat cools, the Premier leaves for his tour of the Netherlands (local boy returns home triumphant). He begins production of a B.C. tourism movie while abroad. He sings a Christian folk song on Dutch television becoming known by the dignified title of "the singing man from British Columbia." In his words, "...I never, ever thought I'd become a singing star.... That's my dumb job, in there (Victoria). I'd much rather be a singing and movie star." — Some of us would rather you were too, Bill.

In any case, the Premier visits the red light district of Amsterdam — with or without his wife Lillian we ask? He is entranced. He suggests to a foreign correspondent that such an area might do well at home, as a resolution to the evils of Vancouver street life. What a classic solution: no sex education, just red light districts for the many underaged prostitutes (the fallen...)

Unfortunately, the Premier speaks for a very vocal current in the province — after all he was elected. The resounding theme is the Fundamentalist "sex as terror" — whether it be cities of sin or the framing of sex information in the schools exclusively as an anti-AIDS campaign. The sex threat is described in hysterical headlines by the *Vancouver Sun* as, "AIDS SPREAD SEEN AS DWARFING BLACK PLAGUE." Or as another writer stated, "The trick is to warn young people about the danger of AIDS without giving them information about sex." This climate interlocks

perfectly with the mobilization against pornography that led up to the introduction of the new video and film classification legislation.

Without question young people and adults need information about sexual abuse, assault and STDs. Many people in B.C., especially youth, support the development of a comprehensive sex ed curriculum in the province. Possibly, the current debate on sex education in the schools will open the potential for teaching a positive approach to pleasure. But defending sex in the face of the current right-wing context of the issue in B.C. will require a fight for a pro-sex curriculum and opposition to laws that make the development of materials that show human sexuality in



Illustration: Marcia Cannon

Planned Parenthood, Serena and other groups. The gay community has faced an obstacle in attempting to provide safe sex education. The barrier is Canada Customs. The B.C. Region has got its knickers in a knot over any material dealing with male homosexuality and lesbianism and has provided search and destroy services at the border. Little Sisters bookstore has lost thousands of dollars of books, mags and pamphlets and is undertaking a court challenge of the law. This repression has inhibited the availability of info about AIDS. What little seeps through has any material dealing with anal sex blacked out.

A central issue remains in the B.C. debate. Will sex education be a cover to educate youth into an attitude of sexual fear, loathing and homophobia, or will it inculcate positive attitudes towards sexual pleasure and towards choice as well as giving self-protective information? Who will develop curriculum? Should it be consistent throughout the province? How can we avoid different information being given to male and female children? What kinds of resources (audio-visual, learning kits, etc.) should be developed? How can a feminist perspective be included in the process?

Never have the efforts of the Coalition for the Right to View and other groups who have argued for sex education and against censorship rung so true. The new video censorship laws (the Motion Pictures Act) will inhibit the development of educational materials, especially those that ally sexual health with pleasure. Yet, there is tremendous potential in the province to move forward the discussion of sexually explicit materials and the impact of these on youth and adults.

There is the chance for media artists and producers to engage in developing materials that provide sexual information, especially for younger people. Beginning in May the Vancouver Artists League, the CRTV and other arts groups will offer Vancouver *Visual Evidence*: a series that explores sexual images in video and other media, past and present, and that deliberates on approaches to sex education in a major public forum. This will be one more attempt to move the discourse from the moronic to the believable.

Sara Diamond

# LABOUR WORKING WITH ART

by Susan Crean

**SCANNING THE LIST** of briefs submitted to the Applebaum-Hébert Committee on cultural policy you will find one surprising entry: United Steelworkers of America, National Office for Canada. Surprising not because it is there (there are a bagful of good reasons why labour should be speaking out on cultural issues); but because, outside of ACTRA, Actors Equity and the AFM which directly represent cultural workers, the Steelworkers was the lone trade union in the long list of arts organizations, community and women's groups, multicultural and educational associations, concerned citizens and John the Poet who bothered to comment at all.

Perhaps though, on second thought, it is not so surprising. For there isn't much of a tradition of the Canadian labour movement involving itself in cultural debate. It has been a rare month of Sundays when all the cultural unions could be found in attendance at the hearings and public meetings convened by the plethora of royal commissions and task forces sent in by a variety of governments over the past fifteen years to study our entrails in the hopes of finding a policy. So what bestirred the Steelworkers to a seventeen page document which opens with the line "The future of culture in Canada is everyone's business"?

The answer boils down to a couple of individuals who, by 1981, had developed an understanding of the stake the working class has in culture and had started hiring and commissioning progressive artists in the course of carrying out their own responsibilities for the union. Deirdre Gallagher, then editor of *Steelabour* and D'Arcy Martin, Canadian Educational Director, undertook an even bigger challenge that same year — the making of a documentary film, *Moving Mountains*, about women working in non-traditional jobs at the coal mines in Elkford, B.C. which required their persuading the union higher-ups to entrust money and their support to an outsider (in this case, independent filmmaker, Laura Sky). Not an insignificant mountain to move itself, and not a usual undertaking for a blue collar, industrial union. Also in 1981, Carole Condé and Karl Beveridge produced a photo exhibit called *Standing Up* in collaboration with Steelworker members at Radio Shack which later formed the basis of

*First Contract: Women and the Fight to Unionize* published in 1986 with additional help (the cost of colour plates) from Steel.

The Steelworkers' brief to Applebert, written by D'Arcy Martin, addresses the accessibility of the arts to working people and the working conditions of cultural workers as basic rights, noting that "Since much of Canada's economic wealth is produced by workers in remote areas, their right of access to our cultural wealth should receive higher priority than it has in the past." The document also talked about how the portrayal of workers on television reinforces stereotypes and prejudice against unions, and expressed a belief in the importance of community culture in which it recognized "the seeds of a more democratic and authentically Canadian culture."

In sum, because of the efforts of Martin, Gallagher and their colleagues (and possibly because of a large francophone membership which, being rooted in a culture where artists have often

been at the epicentre of union struggles, is disposed to considering cultural matters), the Steelworkers recognized the value of developing links with the artistic community. Over the past six years, they have done this in a variety of ways: by purchasing or commissioning original work by artists, photographers and designers; by contributing to the recording of music by local singers/songwriters and the production of documentary films and videotapes; by using musicians and theatre people in seminars and educationals as animators, facilitators and energizers — all of which is officially regarded as "a natural extension of our work." In 1985, the USWA went even further when it issued a general policy statement which highlighted cultural issues and announced the creation of two arts/media awards "for excellence in reflecting the lives of workers and unions" named after labour journalist Wilf List and *chansonnière québécoise*, Pauline Julien (and which will be awarded for the first time this Spring).



Poster: Carole Condé/Karl Beveridge

PHOTOGRAPHS BY: JOHN BOYD, CAROLE CONDE & KARL BEVERIDGE AND LOCAL PHOTOGRAPHERS ORGANIZED BY: DAVID SOBEL, ROSEMARY DONEGAN, CAROLE CONDE & KARL BEVERIDGE, AND LOCAL 222, CAW.

Local 222 poster for CAW Historical exhibit held in Oshawa, March 1987.

Painting from the  
Winnipeg General Strike  
series by Robert Kell.  
Stoney Mountain  
Number Ten, acrylic  
on canvas, 1980-82,  
4' x 4'.



And last January, the union was a sponsor of *Woza Albert*, the South African play performed at Toronto Workshop Productions, thus putting its logo up there on the theatre programme where the ad/ego space is usually monopolized by corporate benefactors.

The Steelworkers may be the only affiliated union in Canada outside ACTRA and Equity with an articulated policy on culture, but it certainly is not unique in the field of collaboration with artists on union related projects. There is a history, albeit it is disjointed and unacknowledged, of agit-prop theatre on picket lines, singing at union functions, skits at demonstrations, of banners, buttons and balloons festooned with cartoons, slogans and photos to accompany all occasions. However, in labour circles, at least in Toronto, there is definitely something new in the air as several organizations have recently begun making a conscious effort to develop the cultural side of their activities.

In the past five years or so, for instance, there has been a remarkable, though by no means universal, change in attitude towards the visual design of material put out by unions. As Dave Mackenzie, Organizing Department director for the Steelworkers says, "There is much more sensitivity to the graphic environment now. PR people who are good on visual design, and not just good speech writers, are in demand." Union editors who used to have to fight for the budget to hire professional photographers against accusations of wasting money on essentials, no longer have to make the case uphill. And unthinkable just a few years ago, would have been the Canadian Auto Workers' photo project for their founding convention where several professional artists were sent into auto plants across the country with instructions to "shoot what you see" and send back pictures which they felt had artistic merit. About sixty photos were selected and exhibited at the convention. Says Wendy Cuth-

bertson, CAW's director of public relations, "The exhibit was mobbed. People were just fascinated by the portrayal of themselves at work. The images ranged from formal Ashley & Crippen-like portraits, to shots of workers having lunch and laughing." For Cuthbertson the project was a milestone because it treated artists not merely as photo-journalists recording an historic moment in the union's life, but as image-makers.

At the same time as union publications are being spruced up by people with an eye for visual appeal (and an understanding that the message isn't only conveyed in words), educational officers are increasingly using artists-cum-animators at schools and seminars. There is hardly an educational department in the country now which doesn't regularly use videotape, some of it produced in-house and some contracted out. There are more people around like Doug Tobin, CLC Ontario regional director of educational services who considers art an essential ele-

ment of his work. Tobin describes how live theatre has transformed the experience of people attending the annual school at Port Elgin. "People arriving on Sunday afternoon are nervous and don't know what to expect. They come from all over so the chances of even three people knowing each other is very slim. Normally it would take people until Wednesday to develop a camaraderie; but with the play scheduled for Sunday evening it begins to happen immediately. They share an experience and that creates a dialogue."

This kind of collaboration is not really new either, having its roots in solidarity actions such as the public support visual artists and their union (CARO) gave the striking Artistic Woodworker employees in the mid-seventies. What does seem to be different is that a larger coalition is now being built up, as evidenced by the mammoth success of events like the Eaton's strike benefit held at Massey Hall in 1985. On the labour side there seems to be a recognition implicit in their participation in such events, that cultural action is more than entertainment.

Another concrete example of the change is the emergence of the Labour, Arts and Media Working Group (LAMWG) which functions as an ad hoc committee of the Metro Toronto Labour Council. In November, 1982 the Ontario Arts Council organized the Swedish Cultural Outreach Symposium on the role of popular movements in the development of Swedish culture which was attended by a number of artists and union reps who were equally appalled by a comment Timothy Porteous, then the director of the Canada Council, made to the effect that Canada didn't have any community arts. Galvanized by the idea that Official Culture doesn't even recognize the existence of popular culture, a handful of people decided to get together, in good Canadian tradition, for a beer at a local bar. In no time an ad hoc committee was formed with equal representation from labour (specifically from CUPE, the CLC, ACTRA, CAMERA, LCMT, OFL and the USWA) and the artistic community (in the form of Karl Beveridge, Steven Bush, Tish Carnat, Carole Condé, Rosemary Donegan, Catherine Macleod, Richard McKenna, Simon Malbogot and Kim Tomczak).

LAMWG's first project was a labour-arts forum, held in April, 1983 and



"Boycott Eaton's" poster by Barbara Klunder. Donated by OPSEU, USWA, and *Our Times*.

featuring a visual arts display, poetry readings, music, theatre and workshops on "mutual awareness," "projects and funding" and "a cultural policy for the labour movement." Seventy-five people attended and subsequently the committee had this to say about its new-found partnership: "artists whose creativity had for years been inspired by social issues, experienced the frustration of not having an outlet for their work. Labour representatives spoke of the need to find new and effective means of communicating with their membership...A single factor emerged as central to our discussion: that working people...are alienated from existing art forms and

that such alienation is detrimental not only to the worker but to the arts in general."

Out of LAMWG's deliberations came the idea for a Mayday festival modelled on the celebration held in Glasgow, Scotland each year which also was the brainchild of an arts/labour coalition. By happy coincidence, *Mayworks '86* occurred on the 100th anniversary of Mayday when the CLC was holding its annual convention in downtown Toronto. A fortuitous combination of events and the perfect opportunity for organized labour to show its new cultural colours. However, the experience of the organizers getting labour to follow

**A SINGLE FACTOR emerged as central to our discussion: that working people are alienated from existing art forms and that such alienation is detrimental not only to the worker but to the arts in general.**

through on the rhetoric is revealing. According to Catherine Macleod, the CLC was slated to kick in \$15,000 (the OFL, \$10,000 and the LCMT, \$5,000) but assumed that the donation would also cover organizing all the same old entertainment for the convention. This seemed to indicate that the whole point of *Mayworks* had been missed; or worse, that the project had been gummed up in the wheels of internal politics. Whatever the case, the CLC mysteriously pulled out followed by the OFL, leaving the LCMT philosophically muttering "the show must go on." And indeed it did, with the help of another \$5,000 raised from local labour organizations, but primarily because of the funding and early support of arts agencies (the Ontario Arts Council, the Toronto Arts Council, the Ministry of Citizenship and Culture and the Canada Council).

In any case, by this time the LAMWG had modified its original plan to organize nationally and refocused itself on the Toronto community. As an informal committee of the LCMT it had sponsored two "ground-breaking" Labour Arts Exchange Workshops organized by Susan Meurer who experimented with songs and skits created on the spot by participants. "The first year we put together a skit about the computerization of airline ticket reservations and took it up to the CALEA (Canadian Airline Employees Association) picket line on Bloor Street. It was incredible to produce that in one day and get an immediate response from an audience like that." But as of 1987, LAMWG's main activity seems to be the parenting of *Mayworks*.

For its part, the Ontario Arts Council has been gingerly testing the waters. Its \$12,000 seed grant to *Mayworks* came mainly from its Community Arts Development office with small amounts contributed by various discipline sections, predicated on the involvement of professional artists. Naomi Lightbourn who runs the community arts programme "on a budget that equals

about two-thirds of Stratford's grant," notes that the operational definition of community has thus far been a topographical one, referring to localities outside Metro Toronto, and unlike the funding situation in the U.K. where amateur and professional activities mingle amicably, the OAC is a bit flummoxed by hybrids like *Mayworks*. "It landed in my lap," says Lightbourn, "because it didn't fit anywhere else." She and OAC's Special Projects Officer, Ron Evans, are guardedly enthusiastic about the expansion into labour-arts and aware of the political reefs lying ahead. For one thing, the proposal raises the ticklish question of whether the Council should get into "social service arts" (as it's been called), if only to initiate programmes that could be turned over to other ministries. Then too, Evans acknowledges that certain factions in the arts community might well oppose the Council "travelling down this byway" when basic arts funding is under seige. (And



Painting by Connie Eckhert. *Brown Lung Disease*, oil on canvas, 1983, 4' x 5'. Collection of the Amalgamated Clothing & Textile Workers Union.

someone is sure to lambaste those responsible for letting standards slip — an accusation women and minorities have often run afoul of.) The perception that unions constitute a special interest lobby would also have to be countered, and the difference between them and, say, corporations or religious groups, carefully drawn in policy terms. Despite these obstacles, OAC is nevertheless trying to fashion "a response to labour without setting up a specific programme" and is considering an artist-in-residence pilot for unions.

Like many other individuals who have been working on an approach to labour-arts in Canada, Evans and Lightbourn have been studying the experience in Britain and Australia. The Australian Art and Working Life programme is without doubt the most progressive and advanced model to go on, operating as it does through a collaboration between the Australian (arts) Council and the Australian Council of Trade Unions. The ACTU formed a national arts sub-committee in 1977 to draft an arts and recreation policy (officially adopted in 1980) and subsequently hired an arts officer to oversee, with the committee, the programme's activities, but not, significantly, to initiate projects itself, this being left to local groups. Meantime, the Australian Council which is comprised

**F I R S T C O N T R A C T**

Carole Condé and Karl Beveridge  
*First Contract:*  
*Women and the Fight to Unionize*  
Between The Lines, Toronto, 1986  
\$16.95, Paper, 77pp. Colour



Photo: Carole Condé/Karl Beveridge

Photomontage from *Standing Up* (Linda Series), 1981.

THIS COLOURFUL AND INFORMATIVE BOOK IS THE LAST PRODUCT from Karl Beveridge and Carole Condé's first labour project begun in 1979. In 1980, the two Toronto artists had a meeting with national office staffers D'Arcy Martin and Deirdre Gallagher to discuss the possibility of doing an English-as-a-second-language project with the United Steelworkers of America. From that meeting it was decided to focus on the aftermath of a successful strike for a first contract, and work backwards. Though the story for many reasons does not specifically state which strike the project is modeled after, of the eight strikes mentioned in the chronology at the end of the book. It is possible that *First Contract* is an account of the first Radio Shack strike (August 9th 1979-March 29th 1980).

The book is divided into five sections. 1) A preface by the authors. 2) A Foreword by Frances Lankin, OPSEU on the recent experiences of women fighting for first contracts in Ontario (Visa, Eaton's, Irwin Toys, Maple Lodge Farms, Fotomat, Blue Cross, Fleck Manufacturing and Radio Shack). 3) A short essay "Art and Work" by Beveridge and Condé written predominantly for labour readers. 4) *Standing Up*, five sections on the strike, and 5) the already mentioned chronology.

"*First Contract* tells the story of working women — at home and in the workplace — and their struggle to organize into unions and win 'first contracts.' Using a combination of full-colour photomontages and fictionalized interviews, artists/authors Carole Condé and Karl Beveridge reveal the very personal side of the labour process: the anger, fears and conviction, the conflicts that arise with families and friends, and the growing strength that comes from the experience of organizing and taking action." (From Frances Lankin's foreword.)

Condé and Beveridge have a careful strategy in collaborating with Labour, which includes finding project monies elsewhere, and then going to the national office to gain entry, introductions, and moral support. Prior to the publishing of *First Contract*, the exhibition version (*Standing Up*) had stacked up an impressive list of venues. The work has been seen in some twenty institutions in Australia, with displays at Powerhouse (Montreal), ICA (London, England), Stuttgart (Germany), and the Los Angeles Centre for Photographic Studies. Sections of the project had already been printed in magazines such as *Obscure*, *Image Nation*, *After Image* and *Vanguard*. In total, probably more exposure than will be achieved by this first printing of 1500 copies.

*First Contract* is no small achievement for the Steelworkers, and its then-Education Director, D'Arcy Martin. (The Steelworkers contributed directly to the book by paying for the colour separations.)

Though the CLC only bought 100 copies (when they could have purchased the whole run and re-sold them to rank-and-file members at a more reasonable subsidized price), the book, in its small way, is part of the necessary contemporary re-building of the union culture, a culture which will play its own significant role in saving the entire union movement from endless erosions.

*First Contract* is told from the separate viewpoints of three fictionalized women: Natalia, Vicky and Linda. The narrative was written after Condé and Beveridge had frequent interviewing visits with nine of the women who had been involved in the strike. All three women are, for differing reasons, 'unlikely' candidates to be union activists. The stories portray fairly what others ignore as class struggles. The section on the three women employees is followed by "The Meeting" (that occurs a year after the strike) with a union organizer, Jane. The strike has strengthened some family relationships and seriously threatened others. In all cases the women involved grew from their experience. The last section "Four Years Later" mentions a second strike and helps complete the cyclical history of certification, negotiations, strikes, contracts, etc.

The sub-texts of the book are the support given women on strike by the women's movement; the re-established role of women in the current labour movement; and the beginnings of culture as a political issue for labour and not just a form of worker entertainment.

"Even though we use the same methodology as the traditional documentary, it's presented in a form where the subjectivity is foregrounded," said Karl Beveridge discussing the book. "Our work is seen as a point of view, which means that the people we portray can have a critical relationship to it and can say, 'that does not represent us.' Our politics are visible unlike the documentary which can be censored so that the politics are hidden."

Says Carole Condé, "the largest item on labour's agenda is jobs, how to keep membership. Under such seige conditions it is therefore quite an achievement for women in labour, at this period of time, to have made the gains which we have, in part, documented."

Beveridge and Condé have also recently completed a project with the Canadian Autoworkers in Oshawa (Local 222) preparing a 50th anniversary exhibit of CAW photodocumentation, to be exhibited together with their own Oshawa UAW history project.

Clive Robertson

**THE FIRST CRITIQUE of cultural policy that tends to emerge, then, is a class analysis expressed in terms of the twin issues of accessibility and portrayal (or the right of working people to see themselves reflected and respected in the media).**

of a community arts board, an aboriginal arts board as well as your regular Fine Arts board (all with the same status and funding) had developed a fairly extensive network of community arts officers working throughout the country, and the Art and Working Life programme was piggy-backed on that system and kick-started in 1982 with \$140,000.

What is striking about the Australian model is that it is predicated on the recognition that trade unions function as a specific community and that the widespread practice of artists working with trade unions is a legitimate artistic activity. Moreover, the community arts idea when applied to the labour movement produced a new phenomenon — the union arts officer, responsible for animating projects, orchestrating funding and administering the participation of professional artists. For socially committed Canadian artists who have a desire to work with labour groups, the Australian arrangement looks like heaven on earth. At the moment, however, outside of LAMWG there is no formal recognition, let alone a designated place for such activity to take place on an on-going basis here. There is only a vaguely remembered history and pockets of personal commitment on the part of a handful of enlightened bureaucrats. None of whom are betting on the appearance of union arts officers this side of the turn of the century.

For most unionists involved with the arts, the first and most obvious value of labour-arts productions which reflect the lived lives of working people is the validation they impart. In these days of yuppie-thought where reality is defined by television news which routinely deletes the working class from the picture, this is no small point. The experience of seeing/hearing an artistic rendering of an event in one's own community can be shocking, maybe radicalizing.

It is often followed by the realization that the arts in Canada are a middle

class pursuit which is deliberately exclusive. Larry O'Hara, a letter carrier for the post office and chairman of the *Mayworks* board, sees it as an artificially induced division. "Art is part of everybody's culture," he believes, "but somehow it got split and acquired this artsy feeling. You don't see people walking into the theatre in sweaters; they come in \$300 suits and mink coats. And the \$300 suits don't think that workers on Spadina have anything to do with the arts. My whole reason for getting involved is to close that gap — from both sides. Workers should have the right to go to the Toronto Symphony or the O'Keefe Centre and they should *feel* they have the right to go."

The first critique of cultural policy that tends to emerge, then, is a class analysis expressed in terms of the twin measures of accessibility (or the democratic right of workers to participate in activities which they pay for as taxpayers) and portrayal (or the right of working people to see themselves reflected and respected in the media). But unionists like Deirdre Gallagher, who

is now a regional rep with the Public Service Alliance, and Geoff Bickerton, research director for CUPW, see the arts as a natural way to build solidarity. Says Gallagher, "Art represents the spirit of our movement better than anything else can — even ideas." Both see cultural activity as an outgrowth of social unionism which Bickerton believes is still evolving. "For years CUPW felt it was not the job of the union to discuss services. Now it has turned completely around to look at the products our members are producing and the service they are providing to other workers. As the union movement gains confidence it will start looking at the right to say how plants should be run, what investment should be made and there will be a lot more debate about the kind of society we want *and* what our culture should be like." To which Gallagher adds, "Working class people are brutalized in our culture, and I don't say that in any way to be patronizing. Just as the labour movement fought for education and universal medicare, so I think it should be more involved in the fight for our class perspective in all public funding of culture."

Gallagher also regards the latterday greening of the labour movement to be partially the result of her generation's passage through the counterculture and the legacy of Women's Liberation, its coalition politics, collective practice and "the tendency of feminists to put



Artist Union agit prop performance, Labour Day, 1986.

Photo: Vid Ingelivics



Photo: Vid Ingelivics

Jim Miller  
*Poison Pen:*  
*A Story of Wrongful Dismissal*  
Exhibition — A Space  
November 18 - December 13, 1986

Installation shot of *Poison Pen, A Space*, Toronto 1986.

THE FIRST IMAGE ONE ENCOUNTERS IN THE EXHIBITION IS A MONTAGE of a box of Kellogg's Corn Flakes and a snapshot of a smiling woman. Similar elements can be found in dozens of Kellogg's advertisements, but with very different intention and effect. In the ads, product and person are equated, the women personify the cereal as 'sweet-hearts of the corn,' whereas the montage presents them as clearly separate 'facts.' This documentary approach sets the tone for the entire exhibition where all the elements are presented like pieces of evidence and left to speak for themselves.

The woman in the snapshot is Marjorie Carlyle; her story provides the focus for the exhibition. She grew up in a house across the street from the Kellogg's factory in London, Ontario and began working for them during the war when she was eighteen. After marrying, she continued to work and raised her own family in the same house. In 1976, after thirty-one years with Kellogg's, she was dismissed from her job. The police had implicated her as the author of several "poison pen" letters in connection with an office scandal. No formal charges had been laid and yet she was never given an opportunity to prove her innocence. The proximity of Marjorie's home to her workplace made her circumstances all the more difficult to deal with: "Someone from the company said to me, 'Why don't you forget about it all and try to carry on your life in dignity?' I said, 'Look, every time I open my curtains at home, I see Kellogg's — and you want me to forget about it.'"

Eight years after her dismissal Marjorie was still living in the same house. Over the years the factory had gone through a number of expansions and the neighbouring homes were being slowly bought up and demolished. By this time her house was virtually surrounded by the Kellogg's plant. They wanted to include her property as part of their new parking lot....

The gallery installation attempts to recreate her predicament. Three lifesize photomurals of the interior of her house are mounted on three corresponding walls in the gallery. Each mural shows us a view out of one of the windows, each window frames a view of the Kellogg's company. These three murals form a backdrop against which a series of smaller panels play out the story. Panels of text (which were edited from several interviews with Carlyle) are juxtaposed with a variety of images. Some of these are directly related to her, family snapshots etc., but the greater part of them are made up of reproductions from Kellogg's magazine ads. Placed alongside the text they correspond obliquely to its contents. Particular slants of meaning are amplified and unexpected connections are made.

Miller's previous work has often dealt with the dynamics of popular culture but when he first heard fragments of Carlyle's story from her daughter (a former work associate of his), he realized that he could develop a work which would have more grounding than before: "My

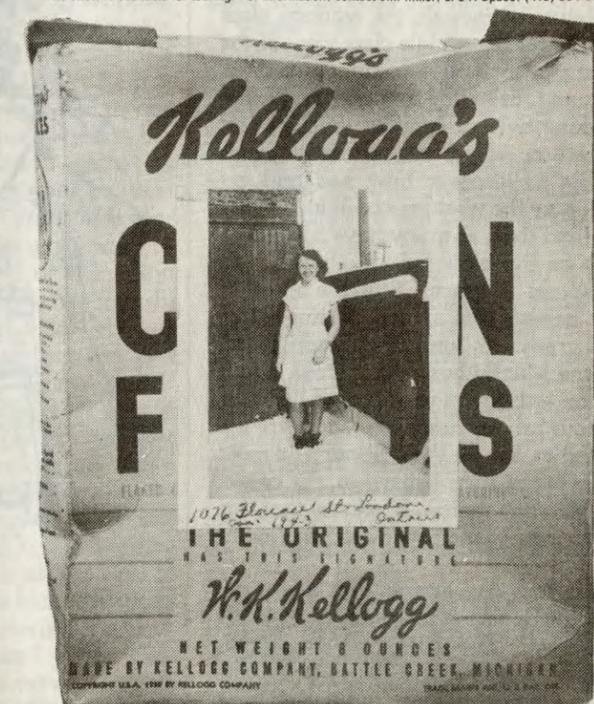
earlier work dealt with mass media from the point of view of the consumer or viewer, it was more distanced and detached. *Poison Pen* introduced the experience of a person who worked in a company; it became more specific and immediate."

It is when Carlyle's story is juxtaposed with the corporate 'story' that it takes on broader implications about social conditions affecting all of us, especially working women. Many of the issues this work gives rise to are central concerns of the labour movement, and although this work was produced independently, its subject matter has much in common with that of artists working directly with unions and labour groups.

Centred around the life story of one woman's relationship to her workplace, *Poison Pen* addresses the conflicts between personal and corporate histories.

Bryan Gee

The show is available for touring. For information, contact Jim Miller, c/o A Space, (416) 364-3227.



**IT IS ALL TOO EASY to set up a programme which essentially makes cultural missionaries of artists, peddlers of foreign and upper class exotica to the deprived masses.**

our mark on things, understanding that there is more to politics than picket lines which, with a little imagination, can be fun and can appeal to the spirit."

Constructing the coalition is still a delicate business and has to be done across an abyss of class prejudices where, on one side, artists are looked upon as tricksters who specialize in flattering the egos and serving the purposes of the ruling elite. To quote D'Arcy Martin, "The attitude towards anyone with cultural power is one of awe and resentment mixed in together. But there is also a common assumption that artists are economically and politically naive. They don't understand leverage (contracts, negotiations, bargaining) the way unionized workers do and they don't assume the establishment is against them. Moreover, as a whole the arts community shares the class arrogance of the country as a whole and even among progressive artists you find people who may be pro-worker but who are anti-union."

Naturally enough, the working class also shares the middle class view of the artist as a social and occupational derelict, and has little knowledge of the working lives of creators. It is a great revelation, therefore, to many union people to discover how bad and exploitative the working conditions really are (and that, as many have suggested, may be the basis for an alliance with unionized workers). Still the assumption persists that an artist's time is free and gratis. As long time union artist, Arlene Mantle has said, "Think about all the artists you've seen and heard at various labour functions. Most are expected to donate their labour and most do because they believe in the cause. People don't realize, however, that this is our work and we have families to support too."

As they say, and as you might expect, the working relationship between artists and labour isn't a rose garden. Things don't always proceed in harmony; unionist and filmmaker have been known to end up arguing over the

size of the lettering in the credits. Artists are often exasperated by the glacial pace of union bureaucracies and frequently mystified by the final decisions (yea or nay) meted out to their proposals (it still being the case that the main ideas and energy behind labour-arts projects comes from artists). Typically union reps like Gallagher are trapped in the middle catching flak from both sides. "Because [these projects] are chronically underbudgeted, artists often feel we aren't paying up fast enough. From my point of view, I put my reputation and my job on the line, and I often have felt [the artist] didn't appreciate what I went through."

Susan Muerer is more acerbic. "My personal opinion is that some artists have the impression they are dealing with a huge milk cow, an endless source of money for gigs, which is unfortunate. I also think some of them think they are dealing with illiterates instead of paying attention to what working people enjoy and why they choose what they do." You also hear about artists who operate on a "hit and run" approach, and others who are romancing the dream of a proletarian avant garde and who bring with them a left perspective hostile to union leadership. However, it is also true that through the seventies when many, if not most, artists on the left were cultural nationalists, the mainstream of the labour movement in English Canada was hostile to the national question, if for no other reason than the "internal" politics of its own international/American movement. The artistic community found scant sympathy for its primary struggle there. So



Drawing/mural by Chris Reed, *Get out from under: Unionize*, 1986, 6' x 7'.

it is highly significant that the labour-arts coalition now on the horizon coincides with an astonishing shift in the prevailing attitude towards Canadian autonomy which has made separation from American headquarters the fashion of the eighties.

If unions have been chary of artists, the feeling has been mutual. It's easy to see the propaganda value of the arts for labour, and there is equal opportunity on both sides for careerism. Inevitably tension arises over aesthetic and political content. To Joss MacLennan, a visual artist who works with Union Communications, a publicity firm which works exclusively for labour and progressive organizations, unions may have traded in the "horrible fifties functionalism" but generally it has been in favour of a "sixties minimal budget" look. "I often feel that the work artists do for unions is not appreciated at the level that's deserved. There is not an understanding of what we are trying to do. Yet when I do something for a union I want to communicate to as many people as possible; I'm not interested in taking the avant garde to the masses. But I also don't want to work beneath my own level because the union leadership assumes a less sophisticated audience than I do. I wish it were a case of unions feeling we should be creating an alternative mainstream look. That would be visionary."

So on one side there is the question of how (or if) the union's practical demands can be expected to mesh with the aesthetic purpose of cultural workers. On the political side, there are risks for both parties. Unions may indeed find themselves working with people who are personally critical of labour leadership (though exactly when that crosses the line and becomes 'trashing' as some unionists charge, is a matter of interpretation — and possibly freedom of speech), and artists who are lending their good names to the union enterprise will no doubt occasionally find themselves politically used. For instance, to what degree does a film like *Moving Mountains* actually advance the cause of women in male-dominated unions, especially when the filmmaker had no responsibility for the existing status of women in the union nor any in improving it? Five years down the road, Deirdre Gallagher wonders if it gave the Steelworkers credit they didn't deserve. "In trying to highlight women's



"Bookworm attacks contract." Mike Constable agit prop for Library Workers' Strike. Toronto, 1983-84.

achievement you have to wonder if that didn't create an illusion. I felt it was wonderful at the time; that the union was really moving on the issue. But that momentum hasn't been maintained."

To put it simplistically, art isn't politically neutral, and neither is working for unions. (Which isn't to say that a lot of artists wouldn't prefer working for the CAW than for Ford.) Be it a photo-history, a video on equal pay or a strike poster, the artist's work is being fitted into a context and it is definitely smart to keep your political antennae tuned and your independence intact. This brings us squarely to the issue of which end of the union structure artists plug into when they do pull off a proposal, and how this affects their ability to understand and embrace the workers' perspective. If the practice of art implies, as it does in this country, that a person becomes middle class by becoming an artist, then what ought the relationship be between artists and workers on the one hand, and artists and union bureaucrats on the other? It is all too easy to set up a programme which essentially makes cultural missionaries of artists, peddlers of foreign and upper class exotica to the deprived masses. (A top-down approach favoured by arts councils which treats the working class as

another market, working people as passive consumers and art as one more commodity.) So the relevant question is — where and how are these structures being challenged and redesigned? After all, union reps are caught in the same middle class dilemma artists are, so where does the rank-and-file come in? As spectators or participants? Are they expected to follow the leadership even though, in some cases, they may be following from in front?

From the vantage point of artists, moreover, there is a familiar ring to many aspects of the labour-arts project. Again your time will likely not be paid for properly (if at all), and again your work will be mediated, curated or packaged by administrators whose time invariably is. Union reps, naturally enough, come with their own cultural baggage and are equally capable of romanticizing their role — or for that matter of harbouring secret desires to hob-nob with the rich on prestigious arts boards. Whatever else is discussed, this means that eventually we have to confront the issue of whose culture is being promoted and why. What, for example, are the merits and demerits of including a quintet of TSO musicians playing classical music as part of *May-works*? Was that pandering to bourgeois notions of Fine Art or democra-

**POPULAR CULTURE does, most assuredly, exist in Canada, but most of it takes place outside the rubric of culture, beyond the pale of art and beneath the line of vision of the mainstream media.**

tizing an artform long since colonized by Official Culture? And what had it to say to Canadian workers in the 1980s?

Despite the keen interest in labour-arts, there are precious few strategies around and certainly no consensus about the role unions should adopt. At the moment, there are too few artists working consistently with unions to forecast a trend. Charlie Stimac is one exception to prove the rule that no one can make a living from the labour movement, though he admits to doing a bit of remedial carpentry from time to time. A third generation unionist, Stimac is self-taught and only began painting in the late seventies. His activities since have included large commissions for the USWA National and District offices, posters supporting union strikers, and artwork based on the working conditions in mills, mines and fabricating plants. This work has been exhibited in local union halls. Carole Condé and Karl Beveridge are another exception — a team with a surprisingly long track record (few artists, they acknowledge, can afford to stick to labour arts) and a prodigious reputation for knowing how to stick-handle a proposal to the right people in the right places at the opportune moment. The Condé-Beveridge approach has been to combine funding for their work as artists from arts agencies with support and some project materials from unions, as the case may be, in cash or in kind. The philosophy is based on a concept of community, says Beveridge. "One reason why we came back to Canada was a critique of that market approach and a realization that we wanted some kind of social base that made sense." Drawing on the British and Australian experiences which he has studied in depth, Beveridge notes that there has been a shift in the last decade from a focus on geographically defined communities (usually economically deprived areas as well) to an emphasis on *communities of interest* which could be the key for us.

Community development as a social and political movement had its heyday in Canada in the sixties with the Antigonish movement in the Maritimes and the Company of Young Canadians; but it did not translate into popular arts activism or a community arts movement that ever forced itself on the institutions of Official Culture. The impetus did have some unintended results when federal LIP and OFY grants inadvertently funded the start-up of numerous theatres, artists spaces and alternative magazines in the seventies. But, again, the cultural politics of the period were not formulated on a community approach, or dedicated to a re-interpretation of Art beyond ensuring that it had a 'made-in-Canada' label. To the extent that there was

pressure to democratize culture, it was co-opted by federal policies hailing decentralization and multiculturalism and pleading National Unity. Thus, there is nowhere in the country one can point to as an example of an integrated and articulated cultural practice where popular art — defined as the informal, spontaneous, locally-based creativity everyone participates in by virtue of belonging to the human race and some sort of community — is conceived of as the wellspring of all art. Of course, popular culture does, most assuredly, exist in Canada, but most of it takes place outside the rubric of culture, beyond the pale of art and beneath the line of vision of the mainstream media.

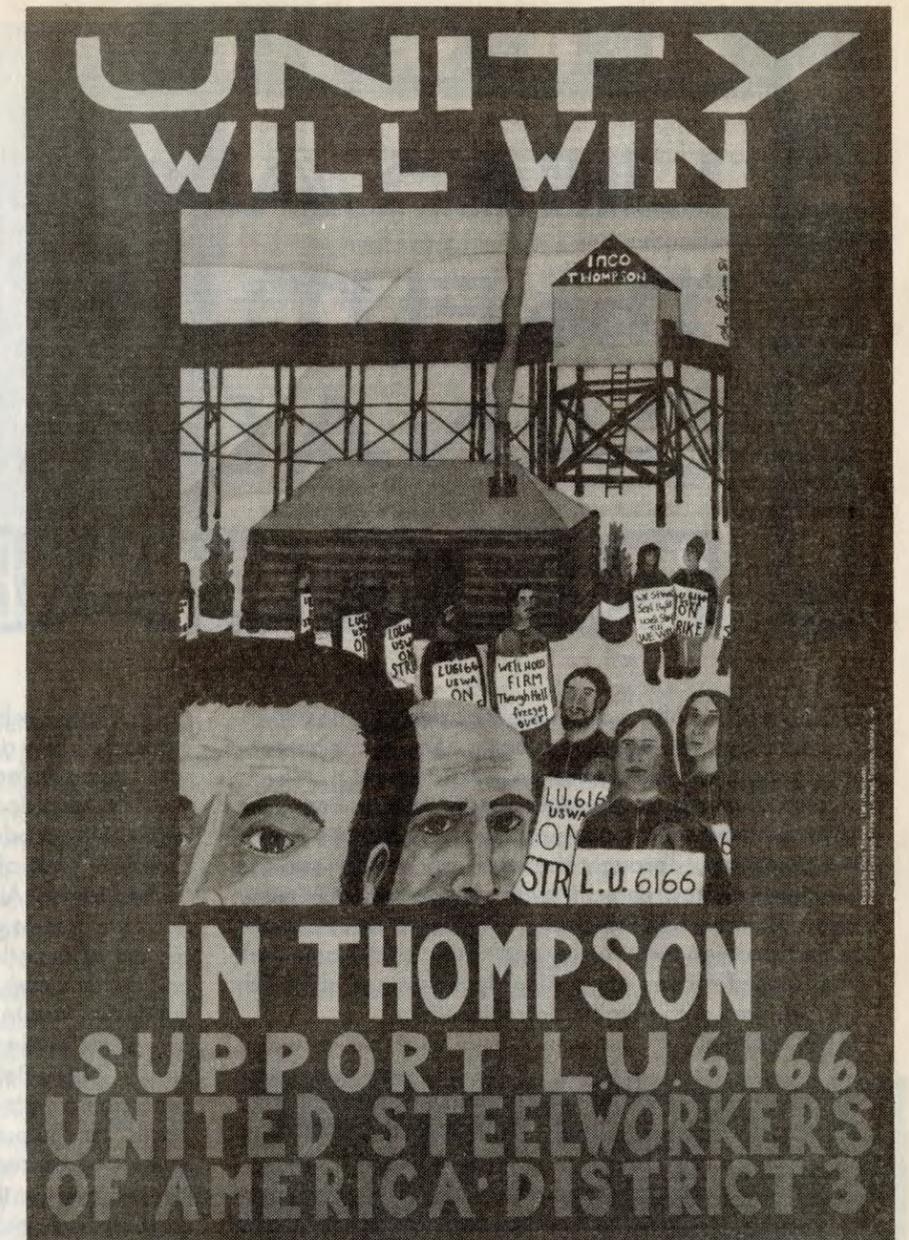
All this means that a great deal of theoretical — or ideological — work remains to be done before a genuinely progressive labour-arts coalition can emerge. For all their emphasis on things practical and immediate, there are union reps around who have begun to think about such issues. D'Arcy Martin, now the National Education Representative of the Communications and Electrical Workers of Canada, ar-

ticulates a notion of "union culture" which he describes as an oppressed culture, one which is virtually invisible and which can be broadly characterized as "diverse, dynamic and oral." Because Martin regards the union movement as the core of organized social opposition in Canada he also sees it as the logical venue for progressive cultural action. Just how far we can go with this notion of trade unions forming the basis for a revived community arts is debatable — and ought to be debated. Unions certainly represent a community of interest, but are they communities in any organic sense, such that people can share an important part of their cultural lives through union activities?

These are perplexing, perhaps painful, but necessary questions. They imply an analysis which recognizes that working class culture exists, has a history, but that it is badly fractured. A salutary union culture may be evolving, but the fact is that the leisure-time culture that is available and affordable to most working people is demeaning, distorted, and largely American. On one level, therefore, it is dumbfounding that the labour movement in this country has never taken up the mass media as a priority issue (further, that is, than tabling annual resolutions at CLC conventions calling for a workers newspaper). On the other hand, perhaps it is entirely understandable that labour leaders are as oblivious as everyone else is to the fact that we live inside an invisible ideology which has made a fetish out of separating culture from the everyday business of life, and especially economics.

The opinion of many artists that the union movement has a long way to go in understanding the cultural dimensions of its own struggle is echoed by labour leaders like Mike Lyons, chairman of LCMT and a LAMWG member. "We're in the early stages of raising consciousness. When I ask people to help with arts projects, true, it still seems very esoteric to many. We have to establish the connection between that and collective bargaining."

So far organized labour-arts projects (as opposed to spontaneous expressions of popular arts in a union setting) have come about because of common professional interests among a handful of artists and union bureaucrats. The issue of whether this activity will open



"Unity Will Win." Poster by Charles Stimac supporting Local 6166 USWA Strikers, Thompson, 1981.

up opportunities for working people who have their own artistic talents, imagination and energy to put to cultural use, to help heal a damaged culture, has only received rhetorical attention. If that were to change, if unions were to grasp hold of the idea that cultural action is the key to their own success (as Bob White and the CAW seem to have understood, at least in part, by their decision to allow NFB filmmakers to document the split with the UAW in *Final Offer*) then we would be looking at a new coalition that is artistically exciting, politically serious and pro-

foundly radical. The labour movement would join the cultural debate and art would become a bread and butter issue.

Susan Crean is a Toronto writer and critic, an editor of *This Magazine* and author of *Newsworthy: The Lives of Media Women* (publisher, Stoddart, 1985); due to be out in paperback (publisher, Good Read Biographies).

**PICASSO WAS A UNION MAN**

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1:00 What is a Union?

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5:30 PREMIERE OF MARCH 16TH PROTEST VIDEOTAPE

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"Picasso was a Union Man." Poster designed for Artists Union, Summer Symposium, July 1986, Toronto.

Poster by Independent Artists Union

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# Lillian Allen & The FUTURE of CANADIAN REGGAE

Dub poet Lillian Allen will certainly go down in the annals of Canadian popular music as being a key figure in establishing a distinctly Canadian brand of reggae.

Allen's first album, *Revolutionary Tea Party*, copped a 1986 Juno award in the reggae/calypso category and as she points out, "brought the music and myself into the Canadian music arena." The album is significant in many ways. Thematically the poems are rooted in the Caribbean-Canadian experience and within that framework the issues of racism, oppression, feminism and childbirth are explored with suitable dramatic effect.

The compatibility between Allen's vocal delivery and the musical accompaniment on this album breathes new life into poems previously published, performed or recorded elsewhere. The musical feel of the record is of the progressive, creative international character as opposed to the Jamaican dance-hall style of mainly "borrowed" rhythm tracks. *Revolutionary Tea Party* stands shoulder to shoulder with the best creative reggae coming out of Jamaica, Britain and elsewhere. Tracks like "I Fight Back," "Nellie Belly Swelly," and "Riddim an' Hardtimes" show that reggae can be a thought-provoking as well as a pelvis-moving rhythm. On the other hand rave-up cuts like "Subversives," a straight-ahead funk emanating the vitality of the women's movement, and "Rub-A-Dub Style Inna Regent Park" — with an excellent dance-hall mix — propel the feet to dance.

Considering the budgetary constraints of this independently financed project the musicianship is sharp and the overall production is very good. Billy Bryans — drummer of the Parachute Club — obviously did a tremendous job as a producer of this album. However, as Allen makes clear, "I hired Billy to produce the album and I worked along with him. Meetings were held at every step in the album's production." Even though Allen emphasizes that

"I had final decision over the production," she is adamant that "Billy also encouraged this dialogue and made sure I was comfortable."

While Allen does not possess the level of musical knowledge of the producer and other band members, she had a definite idea of how she wanted the music to sound. Consequently, Allen and producer Bryans had discussions for months during the pre-production phase in the context of experimentation with Bryan's drum machine and guitar. From the outset Allen was clear that "Rub-a-dub Style" was to be "a dance-hall style track, a celebration of the cutting edge of the Regent Park DJ-rap culture." "Nellie Belly Swelly" would have that melancholy atmosphere with the "music being in sympathy with the words" as she puts it. Another track, "I Fight Back" was essentially crafted by Dave Gray (Parachute Club guitarist) based on the way Allen vocalized the poem. The collaborative spirit and creative energy of the band and producer were high during the album's production. Apart from the Parachute Club's contribution to the work, bassist Terry Lewis and percussionist Quammie Williams provided invaluable musical input in the rhythm section.

The production of *Revolutionary Tea Party* was, from a financial standpoint, a total Lillian Allen project. Allen raised \$25,000 including \$7,000 of her own in order to make the recording a reality. It is a striking example to other Canadian reggae artistes that exposure and recording of their material does not necessarily depend on being "discovered." In this regard Allen is certainly within the reggae tradition and has displayed a pioneering spirit in the Canadian context.

In addition, Allen was clear in marshalling the fund package for her project that, for this particular production, she did not want corporate or government input. Instead there was a conscious effort to tap the resources of

Klive Walker is a reggae researcher and writer who uses the Jamaican origins of reggae to focus on the music's international impact. He lives and works in Toronto.

the communities that are part of the themes of the album. As Allen aptly states: "I felt that if I was to continue doing this work, I needed to know that I had a mandate to do so. Consolidating the decade of work reflected in the album could not be compromised by economic gain." Allen, though, is quick to add that she is "not ruling out compromise based on calculated gains in the future."

Despite the mainstream media attention and the album's Juno award, neither major nor minor record distributors have rushed to pick up *Tea Party*. Unfortunately the distribution of one of the best reggae albums produced anywhere in 1986 still lies, at this time, in the hands of Allen herself. Allen gives a hint that she does not always thrive on struggle in admitting that it is "tiring that one has to keep breaking down barriers to get distribution." This attitude is understandable when it is considered that the poet was able to bring to the light of day a good-quality product and won the major Canadian music award to boot.

Lillian Allen as a reggae recording artiste represents a particular level of maturity in Canadian reggae. Unlike many other artistes in the idiom, who prefer to convey either the Jamaican or British sound, Allen is not insecure about moulding the culture she came from with the influences of where she now resides. While Allen is not unique in reflecting this Caribbean-Canadian reality, she is an important element in its advancement. In relation to her Canadian framework Allen observes: "Having lived in Canada for the past sixteen years, I place myself in the Canadian cultural landscape...I am still concerned about social transformation in Jamaica and South Africa, but here in Canada also." Allen realizes that she must address the inequities and injustice that Blacks and women face in this country through the medium of culture. This is the cultural cousin of the trend which arose in Britain in

the late 1970s with Steel Pulse, Aswad, Linton Johnson and others. As mentioned previously Allen is not the first reggae artiste to take the Canadian path, as she succinctly points out: "If the work that was done by Truths and Rights had been consolidated the whole reggae scene in Canada would be further ahead."

Allen has plans for her Verse to Vinyl label in the form of releasing work by "new and existing artists who are socially conscious." She adds that the emphasis will be within the reggae idiom. Allen says, "I am working with sound-processing equipment and electronics and this experience will be integrated into the creative process." It is also interesting to note that prior to the release of a follow-up to her debut album, Allen would like to direct her next recording project at children. Using the same techniques and taking the same thematic slant, she wishes to employ the dub-story, as she calls it, as well as poetry to make her message accessible to youth.

There is no doubt that Lillian Allen will continue to be a significant figure within reggae music not only in Canada but internationally as more and more people discover and enjoy *Revolutionary Tea Party* and await its successor. However, Allen, seeing herself as part of a Canadian reggae trend, tempers over-optimistic expectations with this sober comment on Canadian reggae's future: "I don't think much will happen [in Canadian reggae] unless more people do more work in the creative vein. Nobody is giving [Canadian reggae artistes] contracts, we have to do it ourselves. My breakthrough, which will happen, will not move the reggae scene forward in a significant way unless other musicians and artistes join the momentum. If by the end of 1987 there are 7 or 8 significant albums both in music and content, we can break through. ●"

by Klive Walker



Photo: Ralfy

# Women and Theft

MARLENE NOURBESE PHILIP

SEVERAL MONTHS AGO I WAS asked to be part of a panel discussion at the Arts Against Apartheid festival — the theme: "Women and Poverty." I don't know what it must be like to be truly poor — having no options as well as having no money (I can only imagine it); my contact with poor people has been limited since I stopped practicing law at a legal clinic many years ago. So what could I say about women and poverty that would be new and not a repetition of old and hackneyed platitudes? What bothered me about the theme — women and poverty — was how well the words went together — women and poverty — as if they belonged together, like motherhood and apple pie.

I went to Rabbi Klein (dictionary of etymology) for help. Poverty, he told me, came from the word pauper meaning poor. Next I checked with Oxford, and they — all men undoubtedly — told me that poor was the state of having few or no material possessions — that I could identify with; the opposite of rich — we were getting a little closer to the meat of the issue here. I went back to the Rabbi, and he told me that poor was also the descendant of pauper which in turn was a combination of two words which together meant one who produced little. One who produces little. Women? Women produce little. Women are poor because they produce little. None of that made any sense as I thought of the vast quantities of work women have traditionally done. They are presently responsible for two thirds of all working hours.\*

I went back to Rabbi Klein on the subject of being rich; he told me that

the origin of rich was to be found in being kingly — not queenly, but kingly. Kings, paupers and women — I was on to something here, I felt. I certainly wouldn't have said that kings were noted for producing much — if they have had a lot and displayed a lot, it has usually been as a result of others producing — much or little — and be-

## NOTES FROM THE MARGIN

ing forced to give it up to the king, or having it taken away to make kings rich. And if the opposite of rich is poor — the state of producing little, surely we're entitled to assume that one of the qualities of being rich is producing much. Surely. But logic is not something the English language is noted for, and here were those kings in close association with the word rich, of which poor was the opposite. But I now had a lot more than I started out with — women and kings and between them poverty — the condition of being poor or producing little.

If we accept that women have traditionally produced much — and the statistics are there to support this — how do we get from the state of producing much to having little, and being described as producing little. Was there a word that could describe the process by which kings who produced little were made rich, and women who produced much became poor. I came at it another way — if women produced much and now had little, it was either because they gave it away, lost it, or had it taken away from them. I knew they hadn't lost it; in some in-

stances they may have given it away out of love for their families, but since they were very seldom, if ever, free agents, you couldn't really call it giving; so that left the last explanation. Theft. "Women and Theft" became the subject of my presentation. The word poverty, I argued, really only described the end result, omitting the process, the pattern and the series of actions which, over the centuries, has resulted in the inevitable link between women and poverty.



Illustrations: Pat Jeffries

I was, as I often do in a very serious way, playing with words in the hope of them releasing some hidden or forgotten meaning. What I hadn't known at the time was that there was very good reason, with a long and distinguished pedigree, why those words belonged together. It lay in the distinction, traditionally unacknowledged, Hannah Arendt\*\* argues, between labour and work.

This distinction, Arendt argues, has been largely ignored in political thought and modern labour theories, yet it is reflected in all European languages in the existence of different words for these two activities — labour and work — although these words are now used almost synonymously.

The word work has traditionally referred to that activity which produced new objects — objects that added to the world of things, and often outlasted the humans that made them. To labour meant to do work whose pro-

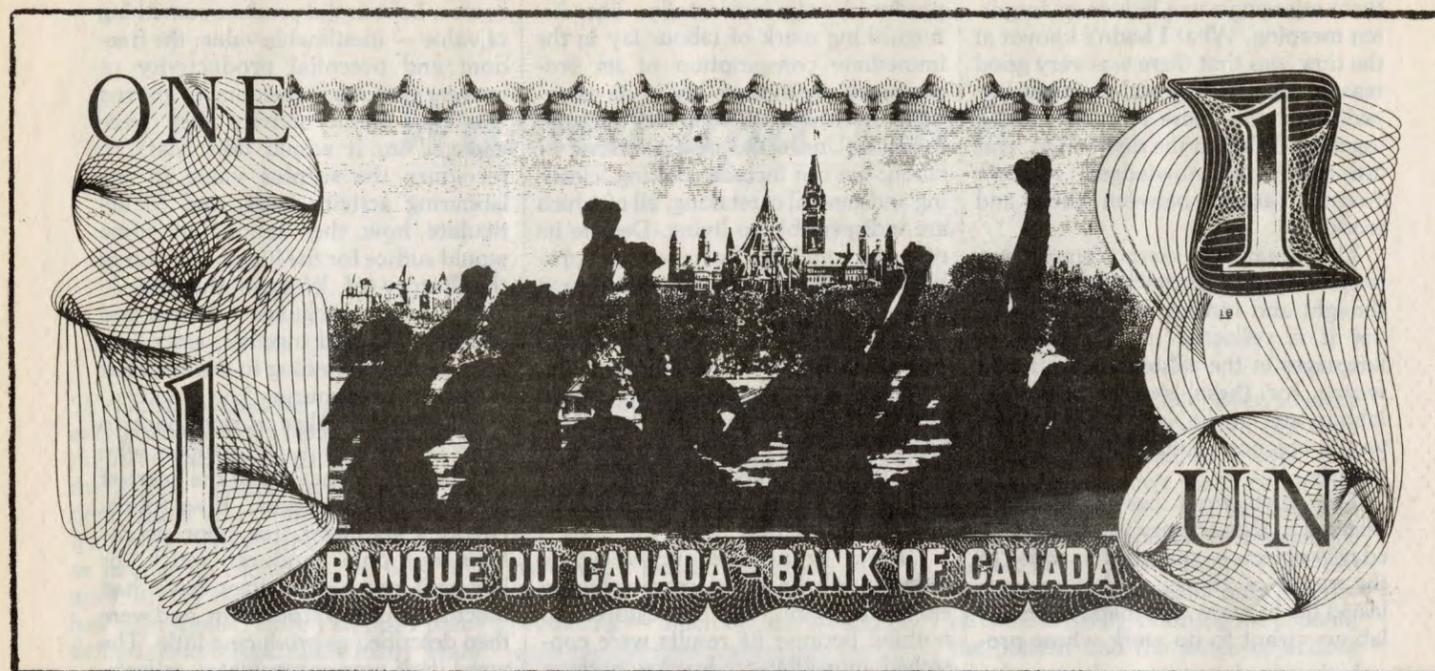
\*\*The Human Condition by Hannah Arendt. All quotations are from that work.

ducts or results were consumed immediately; objects, if produced, were produced only incidentally. The distinguishing mark of labour lay in the immediate consumption of its products; its significance lay in its essentiality: without labour life was not liveable. Under the general rubric of labour we can include cooking, cleaning and general caretaking, all of which are indispensable to living. Despite its essential quality, however, or probably because of it, every attempt was made to keep this type of work and those that did it — women and slaves — hidden and away from public life. "Women were hidden away," writes Arendt, "not only because they were somebody else's property, but because their life was 'laborious,' devoted to bodily functions." A classic case of blaming the victim.

Labour or non-productive work didn't enrich the world, reasoned those early thinkers, and it resulted in nothing because its results were consumed immediately, leaving nothing behind — except, of course, more work. These men were appropriately

contemptuous of this type of work and those who did it. They were wrong of course. Labour did produce something of value — inestimable value: the freedom and potential productivity of masters and men; freedom to pursue whatever public activity they were engaged in. It would take Marx to recognize the surplus value in the labouring activity itself, and to articulate how the "labour of some would suffice for the life of all." But in the history of Western thought — reflected in the language — labour and poverty belonged together, since "the activity corresponding to the status of poverty was labouring."

All of which takes us right back to kings — the rich — and paupers who produce little. The flaw at the heart of the word poor, is legion, if we follow Arendt's argument, for poor people have not only produced much, or laboured much, but they have had much taken away from them, and were then described as producing little. The word itself now encapsulates, reflects, perpetuates and so magnifies the theft. And within that traditional category of



the poor were women whose work was laborious. So the words women and poverty did belong together after all. Historically. Socially. Politically. Etymologically.

So what? We know about the oppression of women — by men, by the patriarchy — am I not just stating the obvious? Perhaps — but the obvious is still not yet received opinion, and the statistics that appear in Robin Morgan's *Sisterhood is Global* help buttress my argument that what we ought to be talking about is women and theft: "women represent one half the global population, one third the labour force, they receive only one tenth of the world income and own less than one tenth of world property."

But there is more to it than that. What I'm interested in is how language continues to betray itself, its sources and its context — how it continues to imprison us. My question is this: is there anything to be gained by talking of women and theft, rather than women and poverty? I believe so. Poverty describes a state — a rather passive state, and most public discussions on the issue of poverty pay little attention to how the state of poverty is brought about — how integrally re-

lated it is to our own system.

As a Black woman when I think of women and theft, I make the immediate association with even more blatant forms of theft that Black women — and men — in the New World were subject to — not only theft of their labour, but of their spouses, their children, their religion, their culture and their languages. So too the native peoples of the New World. In the universally tragic contact of the West with other cultures, the leitmotif of theft and impoverishment will always be found.

Maybe it's my arrant belief in the power of the word, but it seems to me that if we start talking about women — Black and non-Black women — and theft, we have to start asking questions like who did the stealing (and in some cases women stole from women as well), and what was stolen. In some instances theft of material possessions, or of remuneration for one's labour was the least of the crimes committed. Maybe we can even start talking about reparations for women, instead of affirmative action. What are we affirming? That women have been victims of theft for centuries, or men's overwhelming generosity in recognizing

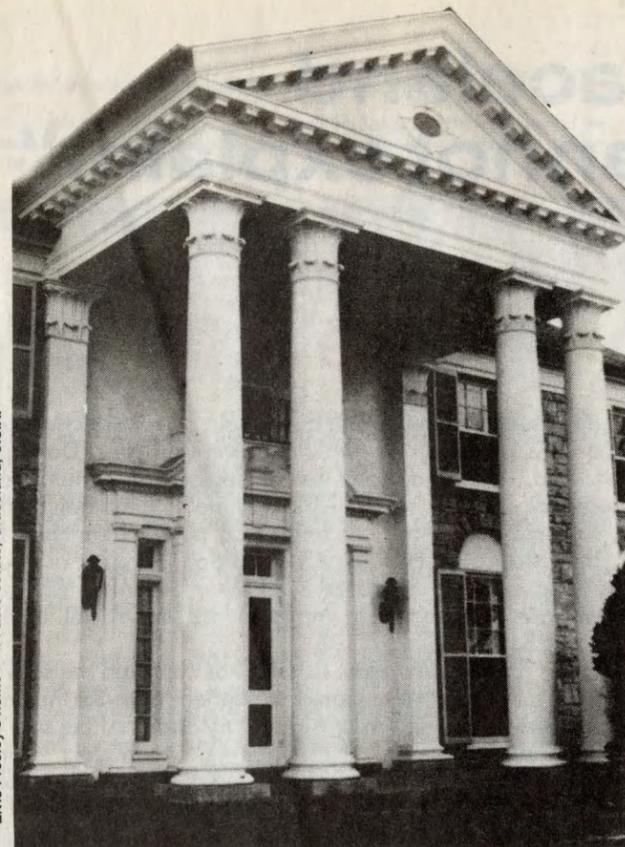
themselves as thieves. Strong language? Perhaps. But what I am most interested in revealing is that even when we believe we are being objectively descriptive by using a word like poverty, or poor, we continue the myth that poor people are poor because they produce little: we have all, I'm sure, heard the modern variation of that argument about Blacks, native people, women and poor people.

So let's really start deconstructing the language that surrounds us — here's a start: instead of aid to Africa, let's start talking about reparations to Africa (the first word suggests hand-outs, the latter acknowledges the existence of a wrong); instead of women and poverty, let's talk about women and theft — then let's talk some more about compensation for that theft.

A tall order? Undoubtedly. But as a writer nurtured on the bile of a colonial language whose only intent was imperialistic, I see no way around the language, only through it, challenging the mystification and half truths at its core.

Marlene Nourbese Philip

## MUSIC



Elvis Presley's home — 14-acre estate, Graceland, U.S.A.

## Paul Simon's DISGRACEDLAND

In a short story by Alice Walker, a character who could have been Elvis Presley keeps on returning to the older black woman who wrote the song that started him on the road to fame and wealth. He showers her with gifts, which she doesn't need. She is happy in her life. She is a woman of the people. The young rock star is not happy. The basis of his frustration is the need to understand the song that made him famous. He persistently asks his mentor, "What does it mean?" This young man, whose roots are poor white, has been alienated from his world by his manager and he can't cope. Continually questioning the black woman, he is seeking a meaning totally divorced from his soul. These are not his roots. They derive from the culture and struggle of another people and the words and music have been stolen and decontextualized.

by Stuart Cryer

# "I'm going to Graceland For reasons I cannot explain."

Paul Simon, like Elvis before him, has thrived off the roots and culture of people he doesn't understand and the system has made him wealthy at their expense. He has culturally robbed the migrant workers who immigrated from Latin America. For example, one song on his album *Graceland*, "All Around the World," has a Tex-Mex flavour, but Simon's racist historical allusion "ever since the watermelon" belittles the nobility of the people. He has also in the past used native South American instruments, such as the Andean flute, only to overdub the haunting notes with his increasingly demeaning lyrics when that South American sound was in vogue. Another example from *Graceland* are the French of Louisiana, whose musical heritage are the Cajun licks of "That Was Your Mother." Their culture was mostly assimilated in America's melting pot. The melting pot is a mix of different ethnic cultures sacrificed for the gumbo of the dominant culture. Paul Simon's lyrics support this mix. "That was your mother, that was your father. You are the burden of my generation." Simon carries the white man's burden. He must negate other cultures to alleviate himself. However, Paul Simon's *Graceland* is mostly a gross theft of the cultural heritage born of the struggle of the people of South Africa.

Paul Simon chose as the album title *Graceland*, which symbolizes the home of the white slave owner. The labourers who built these plantation mansions for the Southern bourgeoisie came from Africa as slaves. It was and is their African cultural heritage that provides the background for Simon's racist album. *Graceland* is also the home that Elvis built using the profits derived from the white American working and middle classes. The music that these "poor boys and pilgrims" paid for was the music the American blacks, such as Alice Walker's character, created out of their struggle to be a free people. Paul Simon was going to *Graceland*, "cradle of the Civil War," a war with conflicting capitalist interests and slavery at its roots, not for reasons he couldn't explain, but to pay homage to a system that has served him well.

## "As if everybody knows What I'm talking about."

It's important that everyone knows what Paul Simon's talking about. He professes to be apolitical. However, his is the lament of a person trapped in the meshes of a dominant ideology. To someone like him, opposing ideologies,

and thus their culture and their music, are overtly political, but his is a neutral, apolitical, non-ideology. Don't be fooled. Paul Simon talks the ideological line of monopoly capital. The fact is that he tries to hide his lyrics behind the rhythms and sounds of oppressed peoples enriched by their struggles. His intent is to co-opt the music of South Africa, to decontextualize it, to divorce it from its origins which arise from the striving for a free, non-racial, democratic South Africa.

This modern day spirit catcher has captured the soul of the South African musicians on magnetic tape like the photographers at the turn of the century captured the soul of the Amerindians on their negatives. Simon paid willing musicians up to three times the going studio rates to record tracks at Ovation Studios in Johannesburg. He decided to break the cultural boycott of South Africa without consulting the liberation movement. He then took those tracks produced under the racist regime and using them to his own purpose, ended up with an abusive mix which carries a powerful ideological message, one of racism and imperialism.

The indicators of racism are many. The song "Homeless," beginning with distinctly African vocal harmonies, has more African flavour than most other pieces on the album. (This is a sure clue that the music is co-written.) The initial bars are pure in their African rhythms and language. Suddenly, Paul Simon's voice orders, "Sing!" The tone of the song shifts dramatically to a crooning that is reminiscent of the "darkies," evoking the image of Al Jolson in black-face, the racist American style of decades ago. Simon's contribution to the song thus detracts from the strength of the African cultural roots, and introduces racist overtones in style.

The song "Under African Skies" has been termed by one critic "a tale of the links between African and American music. Paul Simon sings with conviction, 'These are the roots of rhythm and the roots of rhythm remain'..." What this critic has totally overlooked is the lyrical and thematic context in which Simon sings these words. "Under African Skies" is another piece that is evocative of Africa at the outset. The sound of the guitar and the percussive lilt are unmistakably African. However, the song is quickly transformed into a revivalist hymn! The lyrics speak of "Joseph...mission music (and the) Lord." This is the Africa of the religious missionaries who brought with them the ideology of the colonizers in order to prepare the indigenous peoples for subjugation. This is the culture

\*Nigel Wrench, Weekly Mail, September 12, 1986.

All quoted lyrics are from *Graceland* by Paul Simon, 1986.

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of the colonizer. It is a song about the workings of imperial power. And Linda Ronstadt's syrupy harmonies destroy any "roots of rhythm (that) remain."

Each song exhibits the overbearing presence of Paul Simon's musical influence. His rock riffs are electronically generated by the excessively expensive Synclavier (which someone had to help him to program). These musical digressions underlie lyrics which are a combination of insipid, self-conscious New York patter, and together they override any African themes he tries to use. In this crazy-quilt of conflicting ideologies between the struggling South African people and American imperialism, here is one last musical example of the problems raised by Paul Simon. It is from the song "Graceland" itself and it is the cry of the pedal steel guitar. The voice of the pedal steel expresses the anguish of the migrant labourers and pioneers of the American West. The pedal steel track for *Graceland* was imported from Johannesburg, where hundreds of thousands of African labourers, forced migrants, are housed in barracks and torn from their families. (They are the real "Homeless.") By divorcing the pedal steel from its American cultural roots and by denying the empathy its sound evokes from within the South African struggle, Simon robs the unique wail of its essence. Since there is not reference to the peoples' struggles from which this sound emanates, all that remains is the racist imagery of Elvis' Southern mansion, Graceland, oppressing the plaintive cry of the pedal steel.

As Elvis was the filter to make the oppression of American blacks palatable to the white middle class of the Fifties and Sixties, so Paul Simon makes palatable the suffering of the South African people in the Eighties. In so doing, he in no way supports the struggle of the people and he certainly doesn't mobilize people in support of the struggle.

## "Who am I to bow against the wind?"

The music of the people of South Africa will continue to evolve through their culture born of the struggle for liberation, notwithstanding the Paul Simons of the world. The counter-revolutionary forces will continue to attempt to misappropriate and abuse the fruit of people's culture. In the end, however, the sound of the people will be heard clearly as the winds of change blow over Paul Simon and his music of oppression.

**Stuart Cryer is a writer living in Lusaka, Zambia.**

# GRACELAND

## SIMON'S SAVING GRACE?

Paul Simon has been pardoned by the United Nations Centre Against Apartheid. On January 29, 1987, Simon wrote the following letter to Major General Joseph N. Garba, the Chairman of the Special Committee Against Apartheid:

"Sir: I write to you as an artist completely opposed to the apartheid system of South Africa. Like millions of people of conscience in that country and around the world who have contributed to the struggle to end this system, I am working in my field towards achieving this goal.

"As an artist who has refused to perform in South Africa I reiterate and intend to maintain this position in the context of the UN cultural boycott."

Shortly after writing this letter, Simon headed for Zimbabwe where he performed before 20,000 people in Rufaro Stadium in Harare. This was the same stadium that Bob Marley and the Wailers played at in April, 1980, when Zimbabwe gained its independence from England.

Simon's appearance in Zimbabwe raises serious questions for the anti-apartheid movement. Activists in Toronto, Los Angeles, Albany, N.Y., and New York City are calling for a new strategy to deal with the cultural boycott.

Norman 'Otis' Richmond

Slip, Slidin' Away: Singer Paul Simon, accompanied by choral group Ladysmith Black Mambazo,

by Sue Donaldson

A VIEW FROM THE

FRINGE

GIVEN THE SURFEIT OF ACTIVITIES in 1986 in Vancouver, it seems at first remarkable that the second annual Vancouver Fringe Festival increased its attendance by fifty percent over 1985 figures.

The 8,000 audience members hitting the ten day festival of alternate theatre and performance art, however, were generally not the same people who were coughing up twenty dollars a day at EXPO or forty-five dollars for the Bolshoi. Instead, they wandered around under the September rains consulting their newsprint programmes, and forked out a top price of five dollars for any one of the four hundred performances at seven venues in the Mount Pleasant district. There were no advance sales, so those shut out of the small theatre studios, like the twenty-five seat Bruhanski or the fifty-seat Grunt Gallery, after sell-outs, repaired to the Fringe Club for a drink or ran off to catch another performance.

Vancouver Fringe Festival producer Joanna Maratta battled for funding from government agencies reluctant to front money to yet another Vancouver event. She maintained that there would be little audience crossover from EXPO and the City Centennial

activities; that the Fringe catered to an audience market neither tapped nor served by existing programming.

It required a massive display of political action in July, on the part of Vancouver Fringe participants and supporters, for Maratta's hunch to be proven correct. Festival workers organized a one day blitz of the phone lines of B.C.'s Cultural Services Branch and Ottawa's Department of Communications offices by Fringe supporters. They followed up with a deluge of support letters lobbying both agencies for funds. The monies came through from both levels of government and augmented the support already in place from the city of Vancouver, Centennial Commission, Canada Council and federal Employment and Immigration.

For the ninety performance groups from the U.K., New Zealand, Mexico, the U.S. and across Canada that mounted shows in the Vancouver Fringe, the government and volunteer support allowed them to take home one hundred per cent of their box office receipts. This helped to cover their production and travel costs to some extent. Of the four top grossing shows in the festival, only one, New Zealand's Dramadillo production of Homer's *The Odyssey*, was from outside B.C. Some local fears that home-grown talent would be swamped by the exotics were allayed.

What national and international participation in the Vancouver Fringe

Festival did accomplish was to point out a rather sad reliance on content among the majority of festival participants as the criteria to consider themselves "alternate" theatre groups or performance artists. The excellence of such productions as *A la recherche de M*, from Montreal artists Marie-Hélène Letendre and Jacques Belanger, showed a meld of both form and content unexploited by most other productions in the Vancouver Fringe. In this piece, Letendre carried around a video camera while taping her monologue for display on four stage monitors, while her lover's monologue ran on two other monitors.

The unjuried, first-come, first-serve nature of the festival guaranteed a liberal drizzle of self-indulgent pap produced by anyone with fifty dollars in hand for the application fees. This is not to call for one more invited-only juried festival, though. The artistic stimulus inherent in such an eclectic festival as the Vancouver Fringe should be enough to heighten the production calibre and content in succeeding festivals. Besides, application fees are going up to one hundred dollars per production for the 1987 Vancouver Fringe. This should ensure applications by artists of more serious intent.

Festival front-of-house statistics showed that there was higher audience interest in multi-media and interdisciplinary productions, which indicates a real demand from Vancouver audi-



Mari Novotny-Jones in *Persephone and Hades*.

ences for original work staged in an imaginative and multi-layered manner. This is not to suggest, however, a call for many more offerings in the style of Boston's Mobius performance group where audiences suffered through four-hour interactive meanderings in the *Persephone and Hades* and *In the Flesh* productions.

The very successful Fringe Readings Series and New Realities in Canadian Video Art components of the Festival, were sponsored by Kestrel Books and the Western Front, respectively. These drew in artists and audiences from outside the theatre, dance, music and performance segments traditionally associated with the Vancouver Fringe and were welcome additions to the festival's scope.

After only two years of existence, the Vancouver Fringe Festival presents a very different profile than the five-year-old Edmonton Fringe, the only other annual festival of alternate theatre in the country. Maratta characterizes Vancouver Fringe productions as having a more serious nature than those in Edmonton. She attributes the difference to a number of factors, not least of which is the weather.

Edmonton's Fringe occurs during the hot month of August in the old Strathcona section of the city, conducive both by virtue of weather and physical layout to street performances, beer tents, busking and a general air of lightheartedness. In a larger city with a spectrum of cultural activities, the Vancouver Fringe must contend not only with the September rain, but with specialized markets and lack of cultural funding from governments with other priorities, such as tourism and a bankrupt primary resource economy.

It is difficult to predict whether the Vancouver Fringe Festival will follow the Edmonton example and double its festival attendance each year, given the differences between them. What is certain is that there will be a third annual Vancouver Fringe Festival for 1987, one with a strong rationale for its continued existence — thanks to a local public with a hunger for seeing new work on stage and to artists willing to provide it.

Sue Donaldson is the administrator of Women in Focus Society in Vancouver. She also works with alternative theatre in Vancouver.



# PERFORMANCE

an interview with

# MONA HATOUM

**MONA HATOUM** is a Palestinian video and performance artist who resides in London, England. She has developed live performances for many gallery and community venues in England, North America and Holland. **Variations on Discord and Divisions, The Negotiating Table, and Changing Parts** are some of her performance and video works developed for Canadian audiences. Her video productions include live interaction with the audience and experimental works. Hatoum's works center on issues of war and displacement. In this interview, she speaks with FUSE writer, **SARA DIAMOND**.

**Sara:** Where are you living and working now?

**Mona:** I'm a Palestinian. I was born and brought up in Beirut and I lived there until 1975 when I went to London for a visit. That was my first trip to Europe, and I was stranded there because the civil war broke out at that point. So I have been living and working in London for the last 11 years. I went to the Slade School of Art, where I ended up getting involved in performance and video.

I was attracted to performance because it has always been — well maybe not always but at least at the beginning — meant as a challenge to the status that painting and sculpture had been given by the art establishment, you know, as the ultimate and unique art objects. And this sort of action was a comment on the art object as a commodity, the art market and the gallery system....

What I like about performance is that the work is impermanent and the emphasis is on communication and a direct rapport or interaction with the audience without the mediation of an art object. Afterwards, it's all dismantled and all that remains is a memory in the mind of the spectator. This is how things are in life: they come

and go and the memory fades or gets transformed in time by people according to their own experience and background and what they bring to it and how they interpret it.

So I was really attracted to this challenge or critique of conventional art forms, and to the subversive element in performance. But I'm still aware that even with this kind of work there's still the mediation of the institution and this is becoming more and more the case since performance has become legitimized by the art world.

**Sara:** Do you change every performance depending on the context?

**Mona:** I have usually done a performance for a space and that's it. But the last time I came to North America, I had six galleries to work in (5 in Canada and 1 in New York). I decided to do something that could be adapted to any space. Although there were lots of variations — it was entitled *Variation on Discord and Divisions* — after the fourth performance it became like a routine. I've never experienced that before because I don't usually like doing the same piece twice. ▶

Photo: Corry Wyngaard

**Sara:** Can you describe the performance that you did at the *Strategies for Survival Conference* in Vancouver in 1986?

**Mona:** I allowed myself a week here before the performance because I wanted to create a work that would be relevant to the conference which was about issues of survival and to relate it to what was happening outside in the consumer world. I knew about EXPO '86 because I was in Vancouver last year when the preparations for EXPO were very much underway. I was aware of all the changes that were taking place, like property developers evicting local tenants, so I knew that EXPO would be something that I really wanted to oppose, work with, make a statement about. When I first arrived, I spent the whole day at EXPO, looking around, trying to find something to work with. I got really depressed because I found it was such a gigantic concentration of all that is negative in the West. In the end I just bought a slide of that dome that has become the symbol of EXPO '86.

The next day I thought, "I'll look around the Western Front and see if there's anything there that I can use." In the basement I found these really nice, beautiful old signs for different countries (the Western Front building had been a masonic lodge, and these old hand painted signs on brass bases had been left behind). I wanted to use the slide of the dome and project it above where I was performing, because I wanted it to look like the fantasy up

there and down here the reality. You go to EXPO and there are pavilions for big powerful countries and they are all happily living together. But the reality is not like that at all. On the floor I had the country signs dotted all over the place on a black plastic sheet and I put barbed wire in a chaotic tangle separating the different countries. I wanted to use sound that would be reminiscent of war, but I did not want it to be too obvious. I did not want to use sound effects. I decided to arrange it so that whenever I accidentally touched the barbed wire, the scraping sound was amplified. Basically the action consisted of me crossing from one country to another. The first thing I noticed when I walked into the conference room where the performance was to take place was this huge installation of speakers from floor to ceiling. I thought, "I must do something with this."

The performance was happening in a side room open to the main space, but the sound of the barbed wire was filling the entire conference hall, like thunder or bombing.

I imagined that people would spend five or ten minutes in my space and then go away. But because the sound was so powerful it was like people being reminded wherever they were in the hall about war somewhere in the world, far away. They hear the echoes of it but they don't want to be part of it.

**Sara:** Even if I wasn't in the room I knew you were caught on the barbed wire because the sound was being

generated only when you connected with it. It wasn't an abstraction about war and conflict between different countries, it was a human equation with people being destroyed or caught.

**Mona:** I was visualizing it very much as the 'above' and the 'below' — the fantasy and the facts. The slide of EXPO was not overstated. You could just see it, and my shadow travelling across it as I moved. While I was doing the performance I suddenly thought, "Oh, My God this is about me!" I started thinking about my family and how my sisters and all my cousins and relatives are spread all over the world. This is true of all Palestinian families. They are scattered around.

**Sara:** Your work deals with issues of displacement, war and the experience of victims of war. How do you keep working with and developing these themes?

**Mona:** I keep hearing about "Keeping the Peace." We keep hearing this in relation to the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND). The implication is that we've had peace for forty years and we want to keep it. I feel very cynical about this concept of "Keeping the Peace" because in my experience there hasn't been a year without war since the day I was born. It's not just the experience of Lebanon but many parts of the Third World, which makes me wonder sometimes whether their definition of the world is just the West. There's nothing more violent than dying of hunger. I don't call that a state of peace.

I am not a pacifist. I think that people who are pacifists accept the idea of nations as they are at the moment. They are the privileged ones who have an interest in keeping things as they are. They are basically saying "The situation is okay, but we want to have a guarantee of peace."

My work often refers to hostile realities, war, destruction, but it is not localized, it refers to conflicts all over the world while hopefully pointing out the forces of oppression and resistance to these forces — cultural, historical, economic and social forces. In fact I can think of only one piece which referred specifically to the invasion of Lebanon. It was entitled *The Negotiating Table* and it was more like a 'tableau vivant.' I was lying on a table covered with entrails, bandages and blood and wrapped up in a body bag. There were chairs around the table and sound tapes of speeches of Western leaders talking about peace. It was basically a juxtaposition of two elements, one referring to the physical reality and brutality of the situation and the other to the way it is represented and dealt with in the West. This piece was the most direct reference I had ever made to the war in Lebanon. I made this work right after the Israeli invasion and the massacres in the camps which for me was the most shattering experience of my life.

But in general my work is about my experience of living in the West as a person from the Third World, about being an outsider, about occupying a marginal position, being excluded, being defined as 'Other' or as one of 'Them.' I work with groups of Black people in London on shared issues of colonialism, imperialism, racism and stereotyping of people from other cultures.

**Sara:** In producing the work that you did last year at the Western Front and the one you described previously,

what do you want your audience to learn from the work?  
**Mona:** I want to remind the audience that there are different realities that people have to live through. The video, *Changing Parts*, which was produced at the Western Front during my residency last year, is about such different realities — the big contrast between a privileged space, like the West, and the Third World where there's death, destruction, hunger. But I don't think that any artist's work is going to move armies. I don't have any illusions about that. If the work creates an awareness of certain issues, a questioning in the mind of the spectator of certain assumptions, then that's something — I don't think that an art work will provoke political action.

**Sara:** Could you elaborate on that? I think some artists whose politics are very much engaged in what they produce do see their work as having almost an agitational role, that it will inspire people to act or deal with issues.

**Mona:** I feel you can only inspire people to act if they share with you a common concern, if they are directly affected by the issues you are talking about. I have worked a lot with political groups in the past and I found that you only get support from other groups of people who are dealing with similar issues. So in a sense, there too you are preaching to the converted. You don't win people over just by presenting them with a carefully thought-out argument even if you are using the most direct and simple language.

I'd like to tie this in to the issue of working outside the art establishment. I recently took part in an event called *Roadworks* which was taking place in the streets of Brixton. I found the freedom of working outside the confines of an isolating gallery environment, and the very different nature of the audience, very satisfying. Basically the audience was the people on the street, a non-specialized, chance audience casually experiencing the artists' actions while passing by. But also because the Brixton community is predominantly a Black community, I found myself in this rare situation of creating work which although personal/autobiographical, had immediate relevance to the community it was addressing. I found that I was working 'for' the people in the streets of Brixton rather than 'against' the indifferent, often hostile audiences I usually encounter in the art world.

If you've heard about the riots in Brixton, then you know it's a very charged area. I wasn't going to do something very heavy — it had to be lighthearted. If you do anything for a long period of time, and you gather a crowd around you, you get into trouble with the police. So I had to do things that were either very quick or moving. In one of the pieces, I walked around barefoot, dragging a pair of big, heavy Doc Martin boots attached to my ankles — that's what the police wear. These boots have become a symbol of the fascists because the National Front wear them as well. I just walked around an area of 3 blocks, in and out of the street market there. I got very good comments.

**Sara:** How did your audience respond? Did people follow you? Did they stick with you?

**Mona:** One comment I really liked was when a group of builders, standing having their lunch break, said, "What the hell is happening here? What is she up to?" And this



Photo: Hank Bull

Mona Hatoum in performance at the *Strategies for Survival Conference*, June 1986, Vancouver.  
"...the sound of the barbed wire was filling the entire conference hall, like thunder or bombing..."

Black woman, passing by with her shopping, said to them, "Well, it's obvious. She's being followed by the police." Very cool, and just went off. One guy came up to me and said, "Excuse me. Do you know you're being followed?" And old people with their shopping, stopping and watching as I went past would suddenly burst out laughing, or people would come and look inside the boots to see what was in there.

**Sara:** That's a very different kind of relationship to audience because people in galleries, when faced with performance, tend to go completely passive. I remember the performance that you did at the Western Front. You pulled entrails out of your clothes, put them on plates and fed them to people. It was a powerful image. You had been trying to create a domestic environment by feeding people within the complete chaos of war and destruction. But the 'food' was both from your body and a product of war. I remember people in the audience just accepting these plates and not refusing complicity, not reacting. People within the gallery audience assume a kind of spectator role; however, when you're dealing with a public that doesn't have such a conscious sense of their 'role,' people are a lot less passive. If they don't like what you're doing you're going to know it, or if it fascinates them you're also going to know it.

Let's get back to the gallery context.

**Mona:** Well yes, what I wanted to say about the Brixton event is that even in this case where the work was taking place out in the streets, we were documenting the performances and building up a record of the actions back in Brixton Gallery. Okay, it's very much an alternative space which is run by a collective of artists. But we got money from the Greater London Arts Council — although very little — to support the event. So you're always dealing with the art establishment in one way or another and all you can do is intervene within it. I am not sure to what extent you can be totally independent and work outside of it.

There is also the issue of community arts. There is a lot of pressure on Black artists to work within their own community. We are being told, "The most useful contribution you can make is to work with your own 'ethnic' art within your own 'ethnic' community." In other words, "Leave the mainstream art space for the 'more important' Western white male figures to project their fantasies in." It seems to me that this is a deliberate attempt to keep Black people in their place. What I'm hearing then is marginalization, and there is an implicit racism in this attitude. The implication is that we do not have full creative potential and we are not capable of participating in art activity at all levels. I am not saying that there is something wrong with community arts, but it will never be my main area of activity. I would like to use every platform available to me to fight for access to those spaces that are denied me.

**Sara:** To what extent is your presence central to making the piece work as a statement? Why do you always perform alone?

**Mona:** My presence is important because my attitude toward performance is that the artist is being herself, making her own statement and not pretending to be someone else, somewhere else. When you get people to do it for you it becomes a theatre piece. They are acting out something that you've scripted for them. I never script



anything. I just have an idea and I hope for the best, and if while I am actually doing the performance things don't work out as I'd hoped, if the circumstances or the audience's reaction tell me that I should make changes, I am quite often open to that and work with it. For that reason it doesn't ever occur to me to ask someone to do my performances for me. I feel that the work is presenting my own view of the world according to my own history and past experience. But often I do work collectively, by organizing with Black artists' groups, women's groups. I present my performances myself, on my own, because I have not yet found other people who are involved in this area who work with the same issues or have the same concerns.

**Sara:** It seems that there's a point in your work where the audience is tested on an emotional level, in terms of the physical risks that you take. To what extent is that consistent in all your works? The piece at *Strategies for Survival* put people into a state of anxiety as to whether or not you were going to fall into the barbed wire and cut yourself.

**Mona:** In my performances there's always the risk of something going terribly wrong — I might fall into the barbed wire. I was afraid that my feet would get sweaty



Hatoum performing *Variation on Discord and Divisions* at The Western Front, Vancouver 1984 (see p. 46).

and I would slip on the plastic, or I would lose my concentration because the performance went on for two and a half hours — a couple of times I wavered and had to hold on to something. In this one I was taking the most risk because I was actually cutting myself on the barbed wire, which I was trying to avoid but it still happened. Usually, although it looks dangerous, I never cut myself. I'm not into the S&M aspect of it at all. These actions are metaphors for the brutality and injustice we are subjected to by the politically oppressive social system we exist in.

**Sara:** How much of the risk is about building consciousness in the audience? How much is it personal?

**Mona:** I just want the work to have a raw edge to it, which seems to be a reflection of my own experience in life. The tension is there when you're taking risks and it's a metaphor for oppression and harsh reality. In the performance I did at the Western Front in 1985, I crawled on my belly for about fifty feet. I started crawling from outside because I wanted to be visibly tired by the time I got to where the audience was. It was quite a struggle to crawl on my belly from one point to the other. I was actually tired and short of breath when I got in there. I wasn't pretending.

**Sara:** You implied that performance is changing as a

medium. In what areas do you perceive change and with what implications?

**Mona:** Performance has become a legitimate area in the art world. In England, the Arts Council has started what it calls the promoter's scheme, where it is working out a way to promote performance and give it a 'high profile.' The Arts Council is distributing the grant money — which in the past has gone to individual performance artists — amongst 3 or 4 spaces across the country. It is now up to those promoters to come up with a package and each one of these organizations has a specific definition of what performance is. It is becoming very bureaucratized. You have the Zap Club which is a cabaret/night club-type of venue and obviously doesn't suit everyone. You have the Midland Group in Nottingham and it's a space that very much wants to raise the profile of performance and usually goes for more fringe theatre-type of work. They are very much into the tried, the tested and the safe. And you have Projects U.K. in Newcastle which I think is the only group which is not too rigid about its definitions and therefore they allow a great variety of approaches in their programming.

**Sara:** It sounds entertainment-oriented which is a significant direction in Canadian performance. Some of it is

cabaret, some of it is installation.

**Mona:** When I went to the States in 1983, I was amazed to see how much performance was entertainment-oriented. I felt the Hollywood influence was travelling right across the whole American culture. But this influence has travelled across the Atlantic and the situation in England is very much the same now. There are none of these unstructured, chaotic, anarchic interventions any more.

**Sara:** The role of choreography and scripting is much heavier. The level where it's random, or where that edge that you describe exists, is when artists don't have the budget or six months to rehearse.

**Mona:** Six years ago I used to send documentation of previous works to galleries and say I'd like to do something there. It was okay then to just turn up and do something and be invited on the strength of your previous work. Now they ask you for an advance, really precise description of what you will be doing and sometimes they want it six months ahead. So if you are creating a site-specific piece and you say that you'll be working on it till the last minute, that's not on at all. The Midland Group recently decided that it can't trust artists just by looking at the documentation they send, it doesn't want to take any risk so the Group organizes audition days — the performer goes, presents the actual performance and gets selected or rejected. It's just like theatre. They say, "We want you to premiere your piece in our gallery." The implication is that the performance gets repeated again and again and again.

**Sara:** Your work is very disciplined and you combine formal elements of performance with political content. How have you trained yourself and how do you maintain your discipline?

**Mona:** Training has been the subject of much debate in England recently. I was trained as a visual artist and I consider myself to be a visual artist. I've never actually trained to walk or move or act in a specific way and I

don't see the necessity of that. I don't think my performances are about exhibiting a skill that others don't have. I feel each performance requires different things of me and because I don't rehearse, it is always a challenge for me to see if I can actually perform the intended action for the length of time and within the conditions I set up. So it is very much a process of discovery; in a sense I learn about what I can do while I am doing it. I haven't had any formal training in movement, dance or theatre. I would like to have more technical knowledge, of how to make multi-track sound recordings for instance, and I will probably do a course about that or advanced video editing techniques.

Why I have said that training seems to be an issue in England at the moment, is because there have been some debates recently between the formalists and those whose work is more content-oriented. Incidentally, I don't really subscribe to the view that there are two distinct categories; although my work is issue-based I think formal considerations are very central to my work. The so-called formalists are calling for more training, for establishing an academy of performance and raising the level of the art. There is talk of 'excellence.' I wonder who's going to set up the terms of 'excellence.' Obviously some 'wise men.' The last issue of *Performance Magazine* — published in London — was all about how performance artists are now training in ballroom dancing, scuba diving, etc. Performance artists have always brought different disciplines to their area, but I don't think it is necessary to have any extensive training or any special 'performing' skills. Generally there is a call for making things more polished, more skillful, more formally spot-on. But of course there are some people who have some skills and use them effectively without it becoming just a display of those skills. A very good example is Rose English. She's wonderful!

(See Interview with Rose English, by Gillian Chase, *FUSE*, Vol. VII, No. 5, February 1984.)



Photo: Patrick Gilbert

Mona Hatoum dragging Doc Martin boots in the May 1985 street action *Roadworks*, Brixton.



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# The FEMINIST STATE

by Pauline Barber

Armstrong, Pat, et al. *Feminist Marxism or Marxist Feminism: a debate*. Toronto: Garamond Press. 1985 (68 pages) \$4.95.

Burstyn, Varda, Dorothy Smith, & Roxanna Ng, *Women, Class, Family and the State*. Toronto: Garamond Press. 1985 (89 pages) \$4.95.

Do you remember when explanations of social life placed women at the centre of hearth and home, a nurturing complement to the public, political male? This was presented as the natural order of things in North American sociology until relatively recently. "Sociology of the Family," as one of the few subfields in the discipline to acknowledge women, was a prime culprit. Further skirmishes with sociology written in the 1950s, 60s, and all too often in the 70s, will also reveal how a variety of typical experiences for women such as divorce, childlessness, remaining unmarried, etc., were described as unnatural or deviant. Clearly, today we recognize that these sociologists were doing no more than mirroring the pervasive ideology of gender so successfully entrenched during the post World War II era and right through the 1950s in North America.

Why a sexist, male-dominated social science would/could describe present ideology in the guise of science, using description to stand for explanation, is one story. And why social processes/conflicts, including those posed by feminist critiques, have challenged this particular idea of the gender division of labour — namely the naturalness of the "life-long intact nuclear family" assigning

economic and political functions to the male and nurturing and emotional functions to the female — is another, if not the over-riding issue.

As Meg Luxton notes in her introduction to the three essays presented in *Feminist Marxism or Marxist Feminism: a debate*, the most helpful theoretical resource for articulating the nature of women's oppression in capitalist societies derives from the analytical tools of marxism. Given Marx's concern to explain the inter-relationships between a society's material conditions, the basis for meeting people's needs, and the social relations arising from these, the theory has potential for the examination of central social institutions such as the family and state. As men of their time, Marx and especially Engels had noted some oppressive aspects of the sexual division of labour and property relations in families in capitalist society. However, serious problems have been identified in their treatment of women. What to do about this motivates lively discourse in feminist theory, a discourse well represented in both books reviewed here.

Three essays in Armstrong's *Marxism and Feminism* volume explore the strengths and weaknesses of classical Marxist theory through reference to a series of articles which came to be known as "the domestic labour debate." From the wisdom of hindsight, it is possible to write large criticisms of various arguments proposed in the original debate. In this instance the "legacy" of the debate is debated.

It is impossible to even summarize the various contributions to the initial

exchange which struggled to include work done by women on behalf of other members of a household, into the parameters of Marxist theory. Marx and Engels had little to say about work located in the domestic sphere, or what can also be called the arena of social reproduction. Of much greater concern for them were relations of production where labour exchanged by workers in return for a wage could be calculated according to the labour theory of surplus value. Domestic labour, argued some theorists, could be incorporated into this theory of value despite the fact that work in the home took place outside of, although not independent from, the marketplace. Impossible, retorted others, and so it went.

This debate is now generally credited with reformulating questions rather than suggesting answers in the form of theoretical puzzles. As a result of these pioneering endeavours, both paid and unpaid work done by women are accorded serious consideration in Marxist and even mainstream sociology. In the first essay in *Feminist Marxism or Marxist Feminism: a debate*, Pat Armstrong and Hugh Armstrong provide an excellent overview of the domestic labour debate (no mean feat given the complexity of the issues and the obfuscation in some of their sources). Marxist methodology is, they conclude, adequate for the task of theorizing gender. That is, the sexual division of labour specific to capitalism can be analyzed in conjunction with social class.

Angela Miles writes the second essay in *Feminist Marxism or Marxist Feminism*. Through reference to a

Canadian collection of essays on the domestic labour debate, Miles views the orientation of the debate less positively. In her opinion, economism pervades the book *Hidden in the Household* (edited by Bonnie Fox). Miles' argument is exemplified through specific references from the Fox volume, a strategy of argument which presupposes some familiarity with this book. Preoccupation with the economic aspect of the relations between women and men, it is argued, supersedes any commitment the contributors to *Hidden in the Household* might have to (radical) feminist theoretical and political concerns. Unfortunately, Miles' point of view would have been more clearly expressed to those readers unfamiliar with the domestic labour debate had she been able to refer to the Armstrong essay.

The final essay in this book by Patricia Connelly clearly situates the author's perspective relative to the other contributors. This is most helpful. Connelly seeks to resolve the problem of conceptualizing gender within Marxist theory through reference to the work of British scholar, Michele Barrett. Using Barrett's distinction between the overall abstraction of *the capitalist mode of production*, and *the social formation*, which includes the full arrangement of various modes of production which can/will be co-existent in any given capitalist society, Connelly allows for disjunction between class and gender struggles. In her scheme this is neither Marxism with feminism tacked on, nor feminism with class tacked on. The significance of "getting it right" theoretically is clearly expressed by Connelly (and in a final response to Connelly from Pat Armstrong and Hugh Armstrong) with a concluding list of issues for the Marxist feminist agenda.

Roxanna Ng introduces the companion volume *Women, Class, Family and the State*. Here, in longer essays, Dorothy Smith and Varda Burstyn explore ways in which social class analysis, again based on the essentially genderless Marxist model, might be related to a theory of women's oppression as this is intensified in industrialized societies. Patriarchy, conceptualized as "men's political and personal domination over wo-

men," is linked to various social institutions which legitimize and perpetuate the class structure in Smith's analysis. Institutional processes, for example education, are constructed to orchestrate both ruling class and patriarchal hegemony. Parts of Smith's text will make useful reading for anyone researching the subordination of women through the workings of various agencies of the state. Theoretically-inclined readers may, however, find Smith's terminology and her periodicization of historical developments less rigorous than Burstyn's. Rejecting the concept of patriarchy, or rather choosing to reserve it for a particular set of productive relationships, Burstyn offers the concept "gender class." Masculine dominance plus the idea of groups in a particular set of oppositional relationships are suggested by Burstyn's replacement. In the rest of her paper, this author charts much the same territory as Smith but with different emphases. These articles are thus quite complementary and informative.

Another version of this introduction to these two books on recent feminist scholarship might present a different scenario, one that is less optimistic. The above assumes we, members of society and academics both, all now appreciate the ideological hegemony which precipitated the construction of the streamlined nuclear family of the 1950s: an institution justified politically and in other ways by a distorted albeit expedient *misunderstanding* of women's capabilities and experiences. And yet, there are many signs of an anti-feminist, anti-woman backlash. We see this in the state's desire to retreat from established levels of commitment for social and economic programmes. Funding supporting women as marginalized workers, as single parents, as victims of violence, for day care, for health clinics, and so on, is already inadequate.

If you listen carefully you will also hear echoes from the 1950s evoked in the rhetoric of those who mourn the decline of the nuclear family in the 1980s. We must ask the key question "Whose interests were/are served by this retreat into ideology?"; a retreat which ignores current Canadian family practices in terms of membership,

organization, and economic strategies in favour of a male-dominated "ideal type" family. As sociologist Margrit Eichler states in her book *Families in Canada Today*, one-breadwinner nuclear families provide no guarantees that women and children's economic and emotional needs will be met. In fact, as research probing women's and children's experiences emerges, the situation is quite the contrary for significant numbers of abused and impoverished women (and children both directly and indirectly). No matter that this new talk is sometimes labelled "feminist."

Our understanding of the implications of the various positions being espoused in the social policy arena, especially those invoking *familism* must be informed by historical, anthropological, political, and sociological analyses of the *structure* of relations between women and men; in short, uncompromising feminist theoretical understandings. Debates in feminist theory offer powerful suasion *not* to accept the surface appearance of political issues. Further, feminist analyses present compelling grounds for the inevitability that church, state, and corporate interests will act in ways to perpetuate the domination of women as a group by men as a group.

Indeed, it is urgent because of current political and ideological trends that the debates detailed by these authors receive exposure to a wider audience than might ordinarily read/listen to this work. Garamond Press is to be congratulated for publishing these attractive and affordable books. One final caution — read patiently. The language is chosen to communicate precisely and most of the authors clarify the concepts they develop while outlining their arguments in these highly recommended and challenging books.

**Pauline Barber is a social anthropologist living and working in Halifax.**

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