

# The Alliance For Cultural Democracy

MIDWEST

BULLETIN

Date APRIL '86

v. 2, n. 3

1886 ★ ★ ★ 1986  
**hc**  
THE HAYMARKET  
CENTENNIAL

## Propaganda "simple y habitual"

### THE MIDWEST CAUCUSES

On Saturday & Sunday, March 1 & 2, forty-three cultural workers from across the Midwest gathered in Madison WI for an intensive weekend of workshops and presentations. Titled "The Midwest Speaks", the conference was geared towards presenting the unique voice of the Midwest and its contribution to a national cultural policy. The sessions were held in a room richly decorated with examples of 80 years of IWW cartoons and the works of contemporary local Madison artists from Survival Graphics.

Saturday morning's program began with a brief history of the ACD by Deb Langerman and a series of presentations of the projects of local cultural workers. The presenters for the first session were Fool's Moon, a Madison-based folk duo doing programs in the public schools throughout Wisconsin; the United Mime Workers, a theater group based in Urbana IL; the Peace Ribbon Project in Wisconsin; and Laurie Ellen Neustadt, a muralist living in Whitewater WI.

From there, the group split into two sessions of workshops; each focused upon a different Midwestern issue. The first workshop dealt with relationships between rural and urban cultural workers and highlighted issues of networking and art within communities. The second, a workshop on cultural policy, examined the issue of a cultural bill of rights and its possibilities and limitations. The highlight here was discussion of that bill of rights as an enabling document rather than a limiting one.

After a short break, sessions resumed. The third workshop, on creating and maintaining communities, brought forth the concerns of responsiveness to the community and the creator/consumer barrier. The final workshop discussed the building of organizations of artists, particularly at the local level, and spoke of the needs of support, interaction and action beyond the confines of the group.

Saturday night featured an enjoyable social event with the screening of two films, "The Gathering" and "Windows on the Prairie", examples of other Midwestern cultural work. Afterwards, members of the group went to a housing co-op to dance to Pepe y los Gringos, a local band.

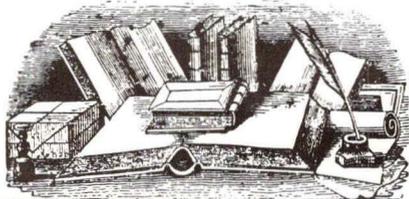
The weekend culminated Sunday morning with workshop reports and a presentation by Doug Patterson, of the University of Nebraska at Omaha, on the role of culture in movements for social change. The key issues of the weekend were charted on the blackboard in a workshop-style brainstorming session, in order to give the weekend its final focus. Participants able to stay until Sunday night were treated to a performance by Si Kahn, John McCutcheon and Susan Freundlich, in their "Signs of the Times" concert.



EDITOR'S NOTE: We are no longer producing this newsletter with any outside support (grants); as an organization dedicated to cultural democracy, we all have to pitch in to get it out. Please consider what you can do for the next issue, and think of how much cash you are willing to part with to keep this coming out. For this issue, we are still in debt to some ACD members. Send a few bucks TODAY to ACD, c/o Debbie Langerman, P.O. Box 2088, Station A, Champaign IL 61820.

The editorial policy of this issue, keeping in mind democratic principles, was to leave articles entirely untouched, except for typos. Editing was done for the news items, where bylines are not attached.

- Tom Vega - Byrnes



### HAYMARKET CENTENNIAL

May of 1986 marks the 100th anniversary of the "Haymarket Affair." In commemoration of this significant historical event, the Haymarket Centennial Committee is organizing a wide range of activities and programs.

The centennial marks more than just a date from our past. We celebrate a living history, the struggle of people everywhere for a better life. Key events include a torchlight march and rally at the Haymarket site, a Grand Centennial Concert featuring Pete Seeger and Jane Sapp, and labor education sessions in schools, libraries and galleries.

The following listing of events are those confirmed as of 3/19/86 (only art-related events are listed, for space reasons; full list available from Committee, see below):

- 4/20 - Peace Museum exhibit opening.
- 5/1 - Joe Troy exhibit opening, UE Hall.
- 5/3 - Workers Education Local 189, Labor Folk Sing, 5-9pm.
- 5/4 - Memorial ceremony, Waldheim Cemetary, ILHS.
- 5/4 - March & Rally, Haymarket site, HCC.
- 5/5 - Maternidad y Lucha exhibit opening, Inkworks.
- 5/5 - Haymarket Authors: Ashbaugh, Avrich, Adelman: Guild Books.
- 5/5 - Teatro de la Esperanza, UIC.\*
- 5/7 - Poetry Reading, Ruiz Belvis, 7pm.
- 5/9 - Utah Phillips: Benefit Concert for the Homeless.\*
- 5/9 - Poetry Reading, Axe St. Arena, 7pm.
- 5/9 - Federal Theater Project exhibit opening, UIC.
- 5/9-10 - "The Peasant of El Salvador", Sanctuary Benefit.



- 5/10 - Teatro Popular de Primero de Mayo, Comité Latino.
- 5/13 - Labor History & Cultural Program, S. Chgo. Branch Library, 7pm.
- 5/15 - Nat'l Writers Union/Art Meets Labor program.
- 5/16 - "Let the Voice of the People Be Heard!" Oral History in Story and Song with Pete Seeger & Jane Sapp and others.
- 5/17 - Haymarket Concerts: Pete Seeger, Jane Sapp & others.
- 5/23 - Haymarket Concert: John McCutcheon, Wellington Ave. Church.
- 5/24 - "Salt Lake City Skyline" by T. Babe, Americana Theater. A play about Joe Hill, Cultural Center, 2pm.
- 5/24 - Kartemquim Film Showing.
- 5/25 - Premiere of Haymarket Documentary, Lucy Parson Collective.
- 5/29 - Premiere "We Shall Fight Until We Win" by Chgo Women's Labor History Project, Women in Trades, Feminist Writers Guild.

\*Tentative dates.

Further info: Box 43054, Chgo IL//312/643-3407.

## WORKPLACE DEMOCRACY

## TAKING MATTERS INTO OUR OWN HANDS.

by Lyn Miller-Lachmann

As cultural workers, we are very dependent-- upon funding agencies, upon universities and arts organizations, upon corporations that fund art and claim to be the judges of artistic talent. This dependence is a means of controlling us, to make sure our message does not challenge existing power structures, or if it does, to insure that we do not reach a sizeable audience.

Political controls over culture become especially insidious when they employ the language of "talent". In a nominally free society such as ours, those who have the resources to disseminate our work do not tell us they don't like our politics; they tell us our work is no good. We tend, therefore, to blame ourselves, to see ourselves as lacking the ability to pursue our art. We do not give ourselves permission to say what we want to say. At the point at which we succumb to despair and cease to produce or to share our work, those in power have won.

As a writer of fiction for young adults, I learned about repression first-hand when I returned from a summer in Nicaragua to find that the mainstream publishers were no longer willing to consider my work seriously. Rationally, I knew it was because my writing and my political sympathies were too "controversial"; subconsciously, I saw myself as a talentless scribbler unworthy of publication. Knowing that my work would never be published, I stopped writing and began to investigate other careers.

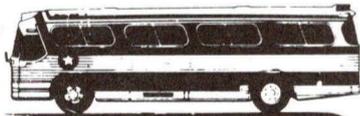
# Pluralism

At one point, though, I realized I was giving in to them, that nobody has the right to take my means of creative expression away from me. I thought of publishing my work myself and distributing it directly to people without the intervention of timid and reactionary corporations. I also recognized that many other people face the same problem and deserve to have a publishing enterprise that will give their work the attention and fair treatment denied to them by the mainstream presses. For these reasons, Stamp Out Sheep Press was born.

Stamp Out Sheep Press has as its goal the publication of young adult fiction that presents a clear alternative to the formula novels which dominate the market today. Some issues to be dealt with are alternative lifestyles and family situations, sex-role stereotypes, the experiences of minority youngsters in the U.S., and the lives of teenagers from other countries and cultures. The company involves teenagers in the evaluation of manuscripts and in the production of books; manuscripts by teenagers receive special attention. In its first six months, Stamp Out Sheep Press has received numerous queries, manuscripts and letters of support. Obviously, there is a need which is not being met in the young adult field, one of the areas most affected by the campaigns of the New Right.

I suppose the test of my enterprise will come when my first list of two books is published in September. At this point, however, I feel liberated and empowered because I have taken matters into my own hands rather than continuing knocking on somebody else's closed door.

If you would like more information or would like to get involved with Stamp Out Sheep Press, you can write me at 501 S. Prospect, Madison WI 53711, or call 608/255-8425.



CHICAGO CHOREOGRAPHER ROBIN LAKES presents a two-weekend concert of five original dances, 5/30-31 & 6/6-7 at 8:30pm, MOMING DANCE & ARTS CENTER, 1034 W. Barry, Chicago. Ms. Lakes' dances merge socially-conscious content, expressive movement, and innovative form.

For the MoMing concert, Ms. Lakes will premiere a group version of "Coming Together", based on a solo that won the MoMing "Best of Dance for a Dollar" choreography competition in 1983. The dance portrays prison life. Other dances on the program are scored to an eclectic blend of music and words including Bruce Springsteen, Jim Carroll Band and Sam Shepard/Joe Chaikin's "Savage/Love". The group and solo works include insights into women's oppression, alienation of youth and male/female relations.

Robin Lakes has been showing her original choreography since 1980. She is head of the Dance Dept. at the Chicago Academy for the Arts High School. Tickets for the concert are \$7.50 & \$5.00. 312/472-9894 for reservations.

AXE STREET ARENA is a collective of anti-imperialist artists who have rented the top floor of the old Goldblatt building in Chicago's Logan Square area.

We have chosen to use the term 'arena' as a rejection of 'gallery', with its middle-class business methods and upper class patrons, because we want to encourage an atmosphere of debate and controversy, even risk, in all that we do.



The collective is: Rebecca Wolfram, Laura & Michael Piazza, MariJo Marchnight, James Koehline, Bertha Husband & Tim Andrews. Upcoming events include: 4/26 - 1916 Easter Rising Commemoration, benefit for Irish American Defense Fund; 5/1 - May Day/Haymarket Centennial Exhibition of International Mail Art; 5/24 - Nicaragua & Chicago Children's Art Exhibition; 6/21 - Gay & Lesbian Pride Exhibition. Regular poetry readings, last Wed. of month. Hours by appt. weekdays, 12-6pm Sat/Sun. 2778 N. Milwaukee Ave., Chicago IL 60647, 312/252-6082.



MISSOURI NOTES: SANDY PRIMM of Rolla MO writes that MARGARET KELLER, who teaches at the University of Missouri-Rolla, has developed a slide show and exhibit of Missouri women artists. A group of Missouri artists and writers are involved in the HANDS ACROSS AMERICA project, and are also working against the deployment of Missouri National Guard units in Honduras. ALEX PRIMM published a commentary in the St. Louis Post-Dispatch against such National Guard involvement in Central America. TOM ASHCRAFT makes bioregional sculptures and is an artist-in-residence at UM-Rolla. The following article excerpted from the campus paper, the Missouri Miner, features a brief interview with Ashcraft:

Q: What exactly is this art supposed to represent?  
A: Again the piece is called "Calling Down the Spirit Bird", and when you call down the Spirit Bird of traditional alchemy, well, what spirit bird is that? The Spirit Bird is a transmuting bird, a bird that changes form. It seems to me that the Spirit Bird that has come is an atomic bird, is an uranium bird, is a bird that seems to me to be connected with the Hopi Indians of New Mexico who are being displaced now from their homeland...because of the uranium in their mountains (and the interests of large corporations). My prayer would be that we realize that our actions have consequences and that they not be disruptive of harmonious nature...and my prayer is for healing and balance. ...It's not necessarily a pleasant looking bird, it's an angry spirit bird...so what we have is an angry earth--Spirit erupting out of the dream in the very heart of the UMR campus for five days.  
Q: What is some of the background that went into your work?

A: My goal has been to be the open vessel for the work, and I've offered my hands up to the spirit, and the spirit has been working through my hands. That's why I call this a dreaming event. When I was working on it one night, a fellow came by and said, "It looks like you're building a radio telescope." And I said, "I really sort of am building a kind of radio telescope" ...a circuit for receiving dream energy, spirit energy, poetic energy.