

The Alliance For Cultural Democracy

MIDWEST BULLETIN



Date FALL 1987

Number 4

Message from the President

Dear Friends,

Good things are happening in ACD these days despite our chronic financial ill health. The contents of this bulletin are evidence of the activities abounding in the Alliance.

Of special note in this issue is a completed first draft of the Bill of Cultural Rights! After two years of discussion and planning with all of us, the Bill committee, consisting of Mark Miller, Maryo Ewell, Bernie Jones, and Lucy Lippard, has written an initial document, which is intended for all of our use. The distribution of the Bill of Cultural Rights to all of us is not the end of this project, but is actually the beginning of a process of conscientization of friends, colleagues, community groups, lawmakers, educators, bureaucrats, and ourselves. The value of this Bill will be measured by its usefulness. So please share it with others and let us know whether or not it is useful.


The Michigan Chapter of the Midwest Region was host to a successful ACD conference in Ann Arbor in June. Entitled "Artists and Community Struggle", the agenda was quite impressive. I encourage folks in other regions to organize your own local events. Ann Arbor had the largest participation for the Saturday night performance, so concerts and performances might be the way to go if you want to introduce local folks to ACD and also raise some money for your regional activities.

ACD has received a grant to publish a membership directory. We hope to have it finished in time for our next national conference. So you will all be receiving a questionnaire about your work soon in the mail, and I hope you will take the time to answer it quickly so that we can complete the directory with you in it!

Speaking of the conference, ACD board member Lincoln Cushing has been working hard organizing a Bay Area committee made up of local cultural organizations interested in helping to plan for the 1988 ACD Event. This year we hope to make the conference more of a festival, with lots of performances and workshops. It is tentatively scheduled for February 1988, so mark your calendars now! For more information about the festival contact Lincoln Cushing at 415/658-9523 or 415/845-7111.

As always, the Alliance is in need of money. Some good news is that we will be receiving a large donation through the Haymarket Donors Fund for general operation. However, we still need money to help us put out a pre-conference issue

of Cultural Democracy, to help pay our day-to-day bills, and to help us hire an intern who will be assisting us in writing grants. Much of ACD's monthly income and expenses depends on incoming memberships. If you haven't renewed your membership, or if you know of friends who should be members of the alliance but are not, please help us build our treasury, but, more important, build our ranks. Membership inquiries should be sent to me c/o ACD at P. O. Box 2478, Station A, Champaign, IL 61820. I look forward to hearing from you.


Deborah Langerman,
President, ACD

IMAGINATION III: CULTURAL VISION AND STRUGGLE IN THE 80's

Several local organizations are helping pull the conference together including La Pena Cultural Center, Redwood Records Cultural and Educational Fund, Galleria de la Razà, San Francisco Women's Building, and other groups including Everybody's Dance Company, Life on the Water (formerly the People's Theater Coalition) and Kearny Street Workshop. The idea has been to involve organizations representing a variety of local groups. We have been meeting once a month and have come up with the basic shape of the conference, which will run February 19-21, 1988. Right now we are getting together a form for people who would like to present workshops, and this will be sent out to anyone interested. The goal is to create a conference that is 50% regional and 50% national and international. There are several areas we have identified as very important to cover, these include: multicultural and multiracial work, labor and culture, cultural rights, internationalism and solidarity work, cultural apartheid (which includes the notion of the dominance of high culture), gender culture and culture of sexual preference, class and culture, rural culture, new and old forms, and finally cultural administration. And of course we are open to other topics that people might submit.

Anyone interested in submitting a workshop topic should write: ACD/1988 Conference Committee P.O. Box 9570 Berkeley, CA 94709 or call Lincoln Cushing days at (415)845-7111, or evenings at (415)658-9523.

We hope to have a lot of space for performance and presentation in this conference, and we look forward to your participation in this weekend.

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Voices in Harmony?

On April 10, I (Olivia Gude) grabbed a middle of the night flight to Philadelphia because I finally decided that I couldn't bear to miss Voices of Dissent, A Symposium on the Arts as a Force for Social Change. Sponsored by The Painted Bride Art Center and coordinated by Big Small Theater, Voices of Dissent was a multimedia celebration of culture's role in defying injustice and demanding a better world. Along with the familiar weekend conference mix of performances and panels, Voices was also a month long festival celebrating diversity and dissent in contemporary culture.

Any attempt at giving a summary of this great event would end up as a list of names and performances so instead I'll tell about a few comments and ideas which I found myself ruminating on during the weeks since the conference.

The Withering Away of Censorship

On Saturday morning, a group of folks addressed the question, "What has been the nature and effect of censorship imposed by the political climate, the commercial market, and self-imposed restraints on artists?"

"Our opinions are strongly influenced by the need to eat," said panel moderator, Barrows Dunham, a man who has had extensive experience with censorship in America. In 1953, he was dismissed as a professor from Temple University because he refused to testify before HUAC.

Dunham observed that Common Sense (seeing and saying clearly) is customarily called Arrogance by those who don't want change. He charged that all too often Academics become masters of a particular art, the art of accomodation. The trick is to come up with ideas which are intelligent enough to be believable and acceptable so the academics don't look like fools--but the ideas have to be safe, ideas which aren't likely to cause people to consider the need for change.

As I listened to Dunham, it sadly occurred to me that the word "artists" could often be substituted for the word "academics." We, artists, are encouraged into the pitfall of "professional disagreement." We are trained in a system which encourages us to be contentious, to always find fault with others work, to point out how it contains unresolved or overlooked issues. We establish our identities, our individualism, by seeking out differences. Dunham, speaking as a voice from the Old Left to the New warned that until we get beyond the habit of disagreement, we won't be able to make effective mass actions.

Ishmael Houston-Jones, a NY-based performance artist, told of performing a piece about AIDS in which he wrestles with a real carcass of a dead sheep. Anti-vivisectionists bitterly protested the piece. His story vividly illustrated the problem of the real, seemingly irreconcilable differences which can exist between progressive people. The whole question of how we can create a movement which enables us to be critical of each other without destroying each other is a crucial one which is too rarely addressed.

Images of Empowerment

At various times during the the conference, the belief was expressed that artists feel particularly hard-pressed these days because of the hard economic times, the scary and repressive political climate, and the lack of a sustaining movement. Bernice Reagon, a longtime Civil Rights activist/artist, vehemently reminded us that there really is a movement. Hearing her speak, I thought about the fact that one can travel throughout the country and without too much trouble find poets, musicians, visual artists, organizers and others who while not identical in political philosophy, share and act on deeply held beliefs about the need for change and the possibility of doing a whole lot better than things are now.

Bernice Reagon talked about the need to stay in for the long haul, to not burn out in 10 years or so. "Why can't we sustain 40, 50 years? It has to do with the assumption that the minute you understand your position you go to battle."

People need a home base, a place to go back to for strength. "You have to feed yourself; don't apologize for feeding yourself." Reagon sees her work "work as nurturing those people (I don't know who they all are) who would choose from our side of the palette."

I like the moral Reagon drew from her work experience with a past boss who made a lot of money, lost it, and made it again several times. "I learned from white men with ties that going bankrupt is only the place you rise up from."

contra cola is it!

contraband diction
starts with a spastic c...(:)
occlusive, an ache
in the entrails
entails, then assails
an acute scream.
indigestible inarticulation?
or birth panging
as the gasping last breath
of an elevator's
closing door
passes:enter
the labyrinth
of gutter duplicity.

When a word
falls from grace
to fouled usage
a syntactical saboteur's
bowel runs amok, inscribes
in excremental matter
a graffiti of madness;
a grammatical morass
(which by-the-by rhymes with
a fanatical sore ass)...:

"hemming and hawing, a willy nilly
hurly burly lodges hodge podge
a dubious crinkum-crankum
and smokes pell mell hoity-toity
holly shit."

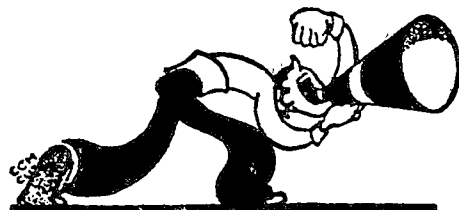
now how do you spell relief?

read: spastic c = elastic veracity.
untwist the viscera, bleed
the spleen.
disabuse as you will.
see: signifier assassinate signified;
a fossilized father
figure in a big
white house, banking
on oxymorons,
bathing his calloused
hands for hire.
see: a speechless child
in the mirror
fallen after his third world
tongue in pain.
see: light
chained in the heart
of punctuated darkness, begging
the real question
in the end.
savvy: the use/exchange value
of the Word....

and for every polyp removed
a cry of distress was heard.

Mark David Aumann 1/9/87

ART ON THE LINE



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**Poetry & Militancy
in Latin America**
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 - 2 César Vallejo:
**The
Mayakovsky Case**
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 - 3 César Vallejo:
**Autopsy on
Surrealism**
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 - 4 Vladimir Mayakovsky:
**How to Make
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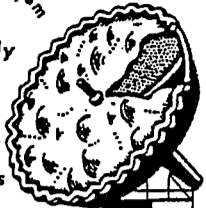
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Housing
Women
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Racism



MIDWEST CONFERENCE HELPS RENEW COMMITMENT TO
REGIONAL ORGANIZING

Approximately 40 people attended the ACD Mid-west Regional Conference, June 12 - 14 in Ann Arbor, MI. The conference, with a strong theme of the relationship of art to labor struggles and social change, provided an excellent forum to discuss regional issues and our connectedness as a region. A great deal of interest was expressed in continuing to meet on a regular basis and work on specific projects together, such as a regional directory and regional theatre festival.

The opening plenary session focussed on Cultural Work and Economic Crisis and posed the question "Can Artists Contribute to Social Change?" Presentations were given by Elise Bryant concerning her work with Labor Studies Center in Ann Arbor and Workers Lives/Workers Stories; Denny Mealy, a muralist who shared his experiences facilitating the mural inspired by the strike against the Hormel Company by Local P-9 in Austin, MN; Michael Moore who talked about his current work-in-progress, "ROGER AND ME," a tongue-in-cheek film about the impact of GM president Roger Smith's decision to close the GM plant in Flint, MI; and Sharon Grady who spoke about her midwest adaptation of "WE CAN'T PAY! WE WON'T PAY!" using stories and experiences from GM workers as the central conflict of the play.

Afternoon workshops were structured to allow special interest groups (video/film, theatre, visual arts, and community song) to meet and focus on their particular discipline. Discussion then continued in a session called "Culture and Social Change" in which a strong representation of regional theatre-makers, frustrated with not having hands-on workshop experiences at gatherings such as this and a lack of connectedness with others in the region, began brainstorming about ways to improve the situation. A midwest theatre festival was suggested as a way to share and critique each others work and learn new skills in workshop settings.

Saturday night featured an evening of political performance, emceed by Roger Kerson, which included an inter-generation singing group called Finland Station, music & storytelling by Candace Anderson about "Women in Michigan History", a preview of Michael Moore's film "Roger and Me," and a presentation of short skits by Workers' Lives/Workers' Stories.

A racism workshop opened Sunday's activities, which concluded with a conference wrap-up discussion that yielded a renewed commitment to regional planning and organizing. Interest was expressed in additional regional meetings (w/ workshops that are really WORKshops), a directory of cultural workers and art-makers in the region (similar to WE WILL NOT BE DISAPPEARED) and a Midwest theatre festival - tentatively scheduled to take place in June 1988. A theatre festival committee quickly formed and has agreed to meet in Madison, WI on Sept. 26 & 27 to begin planning for the event.

Conference organizers Buzz Alexander, Elise Bryant, Kathy Devecka, Roger Kerson, June Loeffler, Gwynne Sigel and Barbara Thorne should all be congratulated for a very well put together and productive weekend!

WHEN PIGS GO BAD

The news conference took place in a warehouse out on Willy St. somewhere. The journalists' cigarette smoke filled the air. The question was raised: "Why do Marines in today's Corp have to have such short cropped hair?"

The General replied: "It's for filming purposes. A crew cut skull looks better on film when it's blown apart than a long-haired skull does. We keep their hair short because it makes better movies."

The journalists looked at each other.

"Go on," said the General. "You can write that. It's the truth, dammit!"

The journalists began to twiddle their thumbs in boredom.

"Dammit," said the general, "I said you could write that! I said it, so write it down!"

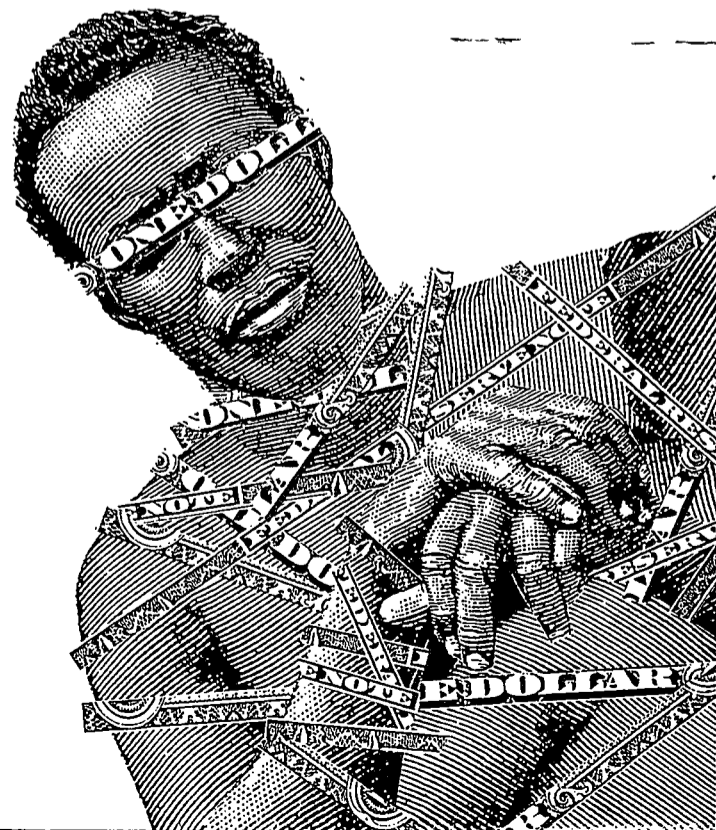
The journalists began to filter out of the room one by one. A faint halo was forming around the General's neatly cropped head, and an old John Lennon song could be heard through the walls.

"You put me here, goddamnit! I don't really want the water! I'm just going to look at you!"

Eric Mader

PEOPLE'S THEATRE RETREAT TAKES SHAPE !!!

The planning committee for the Midwest People's Theatre Retreat (which formed as a result of the Midwest ACD Conference in Ann Arbor) met in Madison, WI on Sept. 26 & 27th to begin brainstorming. Tentatively the retreat, scheduled to take place between May 15 - June 15, will be a 4 - 5 day affair with workshops, performances, critique sessions, lecture/demonstrations, affinity group meetings and cabarets. The site committee is currently searching for a camp or school that participants can both live and perform in somewhere in Wisconsin or Illinois. If you are interested in attending or being involved in the planning of this event, please call Buzz Alexander (313)665-5369 or Sharon Grady (608)255-1877 for more details. The next planning session is scheduled for Nov. 28-29 in Ann Arbor, MI.



To All Members:

What follows is the first draft of the Declaration of Cultural Human Rights. As you recall, this draft began with a questionnaire you were sent about 1½ years ago. From the replies to the questionnaires we compiled the contents of the Declaration, which you reviewed prior to our annual conference in Boston, and which many of you commented on by mail or in person at the meeting. What remained was putting the contents into prose. A small committee drafted it; an ACD board member edited it for style.

In other words, we have built this draft after 1½ years of intense conversations with you. We now want to test the draft in the arena of action. Can it be used?

We propose that you make copies of this Declaration, and give them to a few associates. Ask them whether they can find a way to make use of the document during the next several months. Ask them to provide you feedback during that time, but especially prior to our next festival-conference. Does it make sense? Is it written in language that speaks to people? Are some sections weak, some strong? What has worked best about it? What least? What suggestions would they make for its final draft. And--most important--how, exactly, have they used it?

Get your collective comments to an ACD board member prior to the festival. Your comments will be taken into account as we prepare to ~~tackle~~ the version for wide distribution next spring.

We need your help, and, in turn, we believe that even in its first-draft state, this may be valuable to you. We can think of 20 ways to try to use it, right now. What about you?

If you wish to send comments now, feel free to send them to Debbie Langerman, 310 W. Hill, #1-W, Champaign, IL 61820. Otherwise, we will look forward to hearing from you before our festival.

A DRAFT FOR
A DECLARATION OF CULTURAL HUMAN RIGHTS

PART I: THE FOUNDATIONS

In order to advance the struggle for those political and economic rights recognized by all people in pursuit of a democratic, just, and peaceful world;

In order to make that world manifest through the perpetuation and unfettered expression of creativity from all our peoples and cultures in a commonwealth of wisdom, vision, knowledge, and means;

In order to supplant enforced passivity with creative action, desecration with beauty, waste with husbandry, alienation with community, exploitation with cooperative harmony, and cultural chauvinism with appreciation and respect for human diversity;

In order to secure our very existence as we preserve and nurture the living planet that sustains us,

WE DECLARE AND NOW ACT TO GUARANTEE THE CULTURAL RIGHTS OF ALL PEOPLES.

Among these rights are

Participation

All people possess the right to participate in the creation of their own culture. All people must be guaranteed the right of access to their own and others' cultural heritages. "Culture" is used here in the broadest sense, as the entire fabric of life, which includes social traditions, religious beliefs and practices, values, ethics, ideologies, selections of material and technological possessions, written and oral histories--and all the arts. The creation of cultural expression should be a social process open to all. It must not be abridged socially, economically, or educationally by another or a dominant culture. The means of production, distribution, and communication cannot justly be monopolized by any elite.

Community and Place

A major part of a people's cultural expression is the traditional and the innovative interplay between people and their environment. An environment includes animals, plants, climate, surrounding land, and resources, as well as human technology, history, and other communities--local and/or national. A positive ecological culture consists of those creative acts that maintain a delicate balance between people and environment.

The suppression or destruction of cultural expression--like the violation of the natural, economic, social, or political rights of any community--upsets the balance between people and place and can push a culture toward extinction.

Therefore, everyone has a right to community and place. Forced removal from that place, loss of control over its resources, and the destruction, alteration, and pollution of place by the capricious, careless, or hostile actions of those who do not live there violate that right.

Language

A culture's visual and verbal language is its most profound and vital means of expression. It enables people to name and define the world they experience or create. It embodies the history, value, orientation, and traditions of a people and provides a critical means to express ideas and organize action in the face of present and future challenges.

Language evolves as people interact with each other, with their environment, and with other cultural groups. Language binds people together and, as such, is a crucial instrument of survival.

Cultural Exchange

Each culture discovers truths, gains perspectives, produces goods and technology, or creates universally powerful imagery simultaneously unique to that culture and potentially valuable to others.

The peaceful resolution of all conflict is facilitated by mutual understanding and communication. The growing technical and economic interdependence of the world's peoples and the need to bear mutual responsibility for ecological problems and to share ecological insights and solutions require continuous and complex exchanges of information.

Therefore all peoples are entitled to interaction with people like and unlike themselves, to the knowledge, beauty, and resources freely shared by cultures other than their own.

PART II: PREPARATION FOR ACTION

The precondition of a just and peaceful world is a climate in which each individual can assert with pride her or his own culture, and in which each individual actively respects the cultures of others. Below we identify five public arenas in which people can take steps toward this end.

Education

Universal public education for children is required by law in most nations. It is usually in the schools that children are first formally exposed to mass-cultural values. Early learning informs a child about the proper way to speak, dress, and behave in order to win broad social acceptance. Yet public education tends to reflect only those values of the European, male, Christian, heterosexual dominant culture, and children are easily bewildered about the value of their own personal, familial, or cultural identities, especially if they diverge from the so-called norm.

State and local school district policies must create a curriculum in which cultural pluralism is guaranteed. The climate of each local school must be conducive to each child's assertion of her or his cultural identity, and must encourage intercultural respect.

At present, through both curricula and climate, schools tend to reinforce a value system in which questioning and criticism of authority are discouraged; in which competition is fostered and cooperation is discouraged; in which single standards of excellence are accepted; in which the arts and other creative explorations are considered "leisure" or "entertainment" or are reserved for "gifted" students; in which passivity is learned behavior; and in which students are consumers of curricula rather than creative collaborators in the learning and teaching processes.

WE BELIEVE THAT BY WRITTEN AND UNWRITTEN POLICY, ALL STUDENTS MUST BE GRANTED THEIR RIGHTS TO AN EDUCATION SHAPED BY LOCAL CULTURES AND NEEDS; WHERE NUMBERS WARRANT, AN EDUCATION THAT IS BILINGUAL OR MULTILINGUAL; A CURRICULUM THAT ACTIVELY TEACHES AND VALUES THE STORIES AND IMAGES OF THE MANY CULTURES THAT EQUALLY HAVE SHAPED HUMAN HISTORY; A LEARNING CLIMATE IN WHICH CRITICAL THINKING IS ENCOURAGED ALONG WITH THE CREATIVE ASSERTION OF IDENTITY; AND A CURRICULUM THAT GUARANTEES, CELEBRATES, AND REINFORCES DIVERSITY AND RESPECT.

Public Communications

The information that people receive enables them to make decisions about what the world is like and what they themselves are like. The advent of sophisticated, centralized information-dissemination systems means that millions of people can be exposed simultaneously to a single piece of information. While this can potentially draw the people of the planet together, all too often it promulgates a single notion of "reality". If cultural democracy is to flourish, people must have access to multiple sources of information, and must be able to produce as well as to consume them.

In public communications, as well as in education, people should have voluntary access to short- and long-term information, to deep and to superficial information, and above all should be equipped to respect passion and subjectivity and personal experience, as well as objectivity.

Currently, centralized network media, like the educational system, promote a generally European, male, Christian, heterosexual culture, and offer either stereotypes or absence for all "others". News reporting suggests that questions, opinions, criticism, and dissent reflect disorder rather than the characteristics of a democracy at work. Information is homogenized. People have little choice in the organization of their perceptions. News is generic, and passively consumed by those who are told that they "don't have the facts" and must therefore take the word of those who say they do. Supposedly alternative sources of information, such as electronic bulletin boards, are generally inaccessible to people of low income or low technical skills.

WE BELIEVE THAT BY WRITTEN AND UNWRITTEN POLICY, ALL PEOPLE MUST BE GRANTED THEIR RIGHTS TO AN OPPORTUNITY TO SHARE IN THE OWNERSHIP, OPERATION, AND POLICY DEVELOPMENT OF LOCAL TELEVISION, CABLEVISION, RADIO, PRESS, AND ELECTRONIC INFORMATION NETWORKS; TO WIDE PUBLIC AWARENESS OF LOCAL ACCESS LAWS, ADEQUATE INFORMATION ON THE USE OF EQUIPMENT AND THE BROADCASTING PROCESS, AND ACCESS TO THE AIRWAVES AT TIMES WHEN BROADCAST AUDIENCES CAN BE REACHED; TO THE ABILITY TO NARROWCAST TO PEOPLE OF SHARED CULTURE OR INTEREST AS WELL AS TO BROADCAST TO A WIDE AUDIENCE; TO REGIONAL OR NATIONAL MEDIA IN WHICH MULTICULTURAL IMAGERY AND MULTIPLE VIEWPOINTS ARE VISIBLE SO THAT A WIDE RANGE OF OPTIONS IS AVAILABLE WITHOUT COST DIFFERENTIAL.

Arts

Through the arts individuals and groups can uniquely communicate experience, perceptions, beliefs, hope, outrage, despair, desire, problems, and solutions. No other expressive tool is so powerful. For cultural democracy to flourish, every cultural group, community, and individual must have the means, opportunity, and public arena to make and exhibit its arts, and to interact with its audiences. Participants, audiences, producers, and funding sources must acknowledge multiple standards of excellence and recognize the value of the creative process, which emerges directly from cultural tradition and is a powerful instrument for cultural change.

Currently, the arts are dissociated from culture for two prime reasons. First, they are considered commodities, generally marketed to and primarily accessible to college-educated, middle- or upper-class people. The arts tend to be housed in specialized arts centers, which isolates them from daily life and alienates them, through rarification, from most people's culture. Second, public funding agencies tend to support a single standard of so-called quality in the arts and rarely fund artists or arts organizations critical of the dominant culture and political status quo, or simply peripheral to them.

WE BELIEVE THAT BY WRITTEN AND UNWRITTEN POLICY, ALL PEOPLE MUST BE GUARANTEED THEIR RIGHT TO MAKE ART, REGARDLESS OF ECONOMIC OR CULTURAL SITUATION. THIS IMPLIES ACCESS TO OPPORTUNITY, INSTRUCTION, MATERIALS, TOOLS, SPACE, PUBLIC DISPLAY, AND BOTH CRITICAL AND UNSPECIALIZED FEEDBACK. IT INCLUDES THE RIGHTS TO TAKE FOR GRANTED THE RESPECT OF OTHER CULTURAL GROUPS AND OF FUNDING SOURCES FOR EXCELLENCE INTERNAL TO ANY WORKPLACE; TO MAKE AND PARTICIPATE IN THE ARTS, OR ANYWHERE PEOPLE GATHER, AS MUCH AS IN SPECIALIZED ART SPACES; TO COMPETE FOR PUBLIC FUNDING IN AN ARENA IN WHICH THE ART OF DISSENT OR OF VARIED CULTURES IS CONSIDERED A VALID AND VALUABLE FORM OF PUBLIC EXPRESSION.

Public Participation

The participation of every individual in setting policy for her or his society is theoretically guaranteed by many governments, but is often neither supported nor encouraged. The right to social participation and straightforward access to the process are hallmarks of cultural democracy, as are the subtler means of engendering the desire and power to participate.

Currently, people who choose to participate in the public process tend to be supporters of the dominant culture. They do not tend to be hungry, homeless, disabled, socially oppressed, illiterate, unemployed, or non-English-speaking. People without access to funds, attorneys, and the media are therefore indirectly barred from the participatory process. This situation is considered voluntary. There is a pervasive assumption that those who do voice dissent are troublemakers. Such people are dismissed rather than acknowledged as partners in a dialogue. There is no arena for resolving conflicts in which one culture is threatened by another.

WE BELIEVE THAT BY WRITTEN AND UNWRITTEN POLICY, ALL PEOPLE MUST BE GUARANTEED THEIR RIGHTS TO CHOOSE TO PARTICIPATE IN PUBLIC DEBATE, REGARDLESS OF GENDER, SEXUAL PREFERENCE, INCOME, CLASS, ETHNICITY, GEOGRAPHY, OR CULTURE; TO INFORMATION THAT ENCOURAGES PARTICIPATION AND CONDITIONS THAT ENABLE TO PARTICIPATE WITHOUT FEAR OF BEING EXCLUDED; TO PUBLICLY PROVIDED RESOURCES THAT ENABLE OTHERWISE DISENFRANCHISED PEOPLE TO PARTICIPATE EQUALLY IN THE PUBLIC PROCESS; TO THE EXPRESSION OF DISSENT IN AN ARENA IN WHICH DISSENT AND CHALLENGE ARE VALUED; TO ACCESS TO AN ARTICULATED LEGAL PROCESS OF RESOLVING CONFLICTS ARISING FROM CULTURAL DIFFERENCES IN AN ATMOSPHERE OF MUTUAL RESPECT; AND TO A FORMAL MEANS OF NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL REDRESS OF CULTURAL GRIEVANCES AND CONFLICTS.

Public Services and Funding

Publicly funded institutions have a direct responsibility to taxpayers and to the people whose lives they affect. Clients must play a role in shaping the policy of service organizations. Public funding agencies must develop guidelines providing genuinely equal opportunity for people of all cultures and viewpoints to compete for funding. Universities and other public institutions must articulate policies for interaction with the communities in which they are located.

Currently, clients of public service agencies consume services but rarely help define them according to need or to a challenge of the status quo. Public funding bodies tend to fund generic, "model" projects in preference to locally or culturally specific or experimental or radical solutions to problems. Universities and other institutions are de-emphasizing community service and local interaction. They increasingly ignore the communities to which they should be responsible.

WE BELIEVE THAT BY WRITTEN AND UNWRITTEN POLICY ALL PEOPLE MUST BE GRANTED THEIR RIGHTS TO PARTICIPATE IN SETTING POLICY FOR THOSE PUBLIC-SERVICE INSTITUTIONS THAT AFFECT THEIR LIVES; TO A DEMOCRATIC TAX STRUCTURE THAT EQUITABLY RETURNS TAX DOLLARS AND SERVICES TO COMMUNITIES; TO PUBLIC SUPPORT--THROUGH EITHER DIRECT FUNDING OR TAX INCENTIVES--FOR LOCAL INITIATIVE IN SOLVING PROBLEMS OF LOCAL CONCERN IN ALL ARENAS FROM EDUCATION TO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TO PUBLIC ART.

PART III: TRANSLATION OF THESE PRINCIPLES INTO PEOPLES' LIVES

This part isn't written yet. It will include anecdotes, exercises, and histories. Its tone will be not prescriptive, but questioning. It will, we hope, incite imaginative action after PART II has stimulated debate. Suggestions are welcomed!

CONCLUSION

A society in which a single culture or a single set of standards flourishes is a society both weak and impoverished. The potential collective strength of this country lies in our ability to recognize and be inspired by our diversity. We are people of different histories, languages, traditions, skills, values, ideologies, and tastes. Our social life must be constantly challenged and reinvented as a collective project. There is no preordained system that will produce adventure and joy. All people have a right to cultural as well as to political and economic democracy. The three are mutually reinforcing and all three are necessary to the survival of any one of them as well as to the survival of society itself.

WITHIN A STRUCTURE OF CULTURAL DEMOCRACY AND SELF-DETERMINATION, HOWEVER, EACH CULTURE MUST MAINTAIN THE RIGHT TO CHALLENGE RACISM, SEXISM, HOMOPHOBIA, AND CLASSISM INTERNALLY AND EXTERNALLY.

With the establishment of cultural democracy, we can truly contemplate the possibility of a world free from violence, contempt, and fear.



Texas Farmworkers, Carlos Cortez

A COMMUNITY CREATES ITS OWN ART - THE MIFFLIN COOPERATIVE MURAL PROJECT

A community mural, like a community co-op, is created by and for the people it serves. When it is completed, in August 1987, the Mifflin Co-op Community Mural will stand as an example of collective participation in the artistic process. What's better site for such a symbol than the wall of Mifflin, so historically rooted in its community.

This will not be the first mural to adorn the north wall of the Co-op. In the early 1970's, an advertising billboard on the side of the building was painted over with an image of a dancing bomb in support of Karl Armstrong. Shortly after this a new mural telling of the newly created "Crazy Horse Radio" was painted on the sign. Finally the billboard was removed, and the now familiar mural depicting food processing and distribution was painted over the entire wall.

Following the major renovation of the Co-op in 1985, staff and members began discussing the need for a refurbishing or replacement of the then nearly ten-year-old artwork. Over the next two and a half years various attempts were made to get a mural project going. Finally in January of 1987, working together with Survival Graphics (a Madison-based, non-profit artists' collective), Co-op staff members were able to locate two midwestern muralists to consult on the project. Jon Pounds and Olivia Gude were chosen because of their particular experience and skill in collective projects where community members generate not only ideas, as in most murals, but actual final images for the wall.

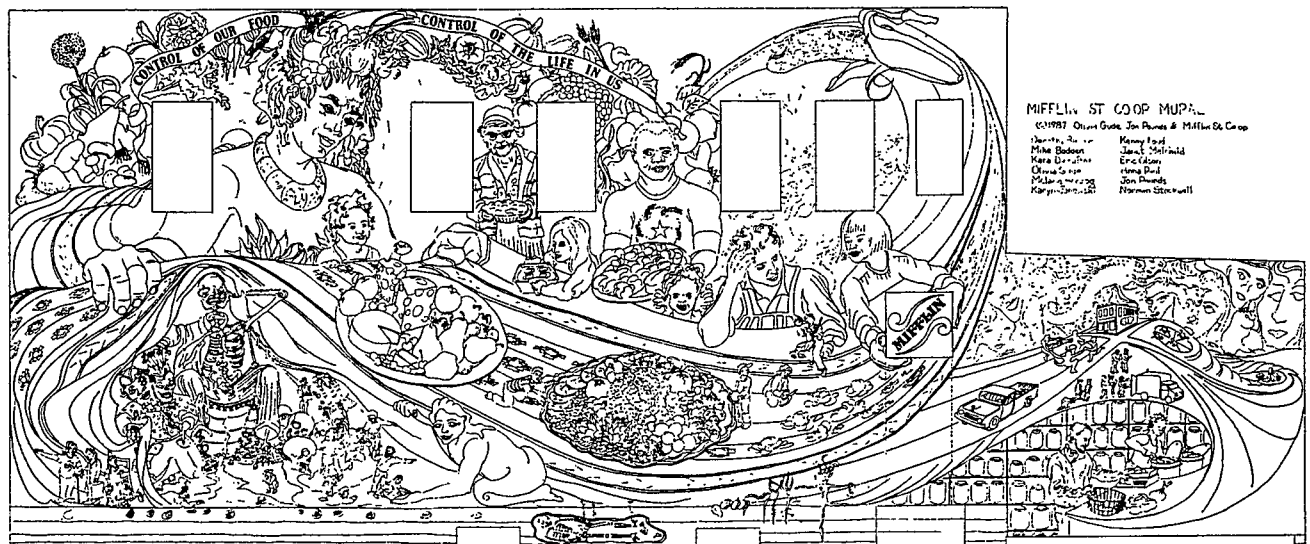
The process began shortly after winter-break with a community meeting open to anyone interested in the project. At this meeting, Gude and Pounds showed slides of their own work and that of other muralists around the country, in Central America and Europe. Then the group talked about a strategy for proceeding on the design and implementation of a mural for Mifflin. A series of weekends was scheduled over a twelve-week period during which the design would be created. These weekends would include a potluck, open to anyone interested, for the generation of ideas and images, and



an all-day artists' work session for the drawing of these designs. The final weekend would include an unveiling brunch at the Co-op. Plans were then laid out for the sandblasting, tuckpointing, and priming of the wall to provide for the best possible surface, thereby increasing the life of the new mural. A team was then designated to work on fundraising. It was decided that the Co-op would pay any costs incurred in the design process, and that outside monies would be sought for the implementation, which would cost about \$6,000. Grants were written to the Wisconsin Arts Board, the Dane County Cultural Affairs Commission, and the Madison Committee for the Arts. [To date we have secured funding from both the city and county and are awaiting word from the state. -ed.]

Over the course of the next twelve weeks, a great number of individuals participated in creating a design that included all of the elements suggested by co-op members. A final collage was assembled by the artists' group on March 28, and unveiled in the store the following morning. During the month of May, the wall will be prepared, and then in mid-July, the design will be transferred to the wall and the painting will begin. It should take four to five weeks to complete, and will depend heavily on the volunteer participation of any and all interested persons (no previous experience required). The end of August will feature a grand unveiling party to welcome this new artistic creation to its community.

It is expected that this new mural will stand for the next 10-20 years as a symbol to all who pass by of the cooperative spirit of the Mifflin community.



MIFFLIN ST COOP MURAL
 CONCEPT: Olivia Gude, Jon Pounds & Mifflin St. Coop
 DESIGNERS: Jon Pounds, Olivia Gude, Mike Bodeen, Kara Linnell, Olivia Gude, Mike Bodeen, Jon Pounds, Harvey Ford, Janet Melnick, Eric Lacey, Steve Paul, Jon Pounds, Harmon Streetwell

For Immediate Release:
Contact: Ed Pazzanese
625-4625

ASPC/West End Press
P.O. Box 27334
Albuquerque, NM 87125

CULTURAL VIEWS, A Multicultural Arts
Education Newsletter Begins!

The arts have been a major force around the globe as an organizing tool within diverse ethnic communities for centuries. There have been very few publications written and produced by grassroots community organizers and cultural arts leaders that share the vast knowledge of their efforts.

Cultural Views, a new and exciting multicultural arts education quarterly newsletter begins publishing this February and fills the void in the community arts field. This newsletter is for anyone interested in learning how the arts can enrich the lives of people within communities. "It's amazing articles and subscriptions just keep coming in from around the country," exclaims it's Editor Ed Pazzanese.

This newsletter provides the reader hard to find curriculum resources, profiles of successful programs, a calendar of workshops, conferences, and presentations and interviews with Community Artist Teachers. Contributors are from around the world providing you a wealth of experience and insight.

The themes of this year's issues are Community Folklore In Education, Ethnic Storytelling, International Children's Art Exchanges, and Multicultural Song Collecting. Subscriptions are \$15.00 a year (4 issues).

Ed Pazzanese, Editor

The Editor brings a long standing commitment to multicultural arts education. Pazzanese has worked as a Program Director, Organizer, Teacher, and Consultant for the past 10 years in community based organizations. He was the Director of the Exploratory Arts Programs at Cambridge Camping Association for seven years and created several crosscultural arts programs for children. In addition, he has consulted with the Cambridge Arts Council, Multicultural Project For Education and Communication and United South End Settlements Children's Art Center.

Recently, he co-edited and compiled Cultural Links, a multicultural education resource guide to be published in the spring of 1987.

For more information and to subscribe write:

Cultural Views
281 Huntington Avenue
Box 30
Boston, MA 02115

Please make checks payable to Cultural Views.

University of Illinois
at Urbana-Champaign

Institute of Labor and Industrial Relations
Chicago Labor Education Program
Rice Building - Suite 214 312 996-2623
815 West Van Buren
P.O. Box 4348
Chicago
Illinois 60680

acts acts acts route 73 - box 201-92 - lake ozark, ma 65049 (314) 365-4404 acts acts acts ac
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE CONTACT: CHARLOTTE PLOTSKY
(816) 753-0208
(314) 365-4404

March 9, 1987

MEMORANDUM

TO: Participants in the First Great Midwest Labor Song Exchange
FROM: Stanley Rosen, Chicago Labor Education Program
SUBJECT: Planning Meeting for a future Conference, January 30, 1987

The excitement generated by the Song Exchange has been long lasting. A spirited and well attended meeting to plan a future conference was held in Detroit, Michigan, on January 30, 1987, under the chairmanship of Elise Bryant, with Joe Glazer in attendance.

The next Great Midwest Labor Heritage and Song Exchange will be held on October 23, 24, 25, 1987, at the IBEW Hall in Detroit, Michigan. All Michigan university labor education programs are cooperating co-sponsors with the Detroit AFL-CIO, the Michigan AFL-CIO, the ACTUW, the UAW, and the Labor Heritage Foundation.

Valerie DePriest is putting together a tape of the Chicago conference and song fest. As soon as it is available for sale, we will let you know. Conference participants could help us by sending me a written set of lyrics for the original songs they sang at the exchange for inclusion with the tape.

If you have ideas and suggestions, send them to Elise Bryant.

The conference was exciting and energizing, the result of labor culture and good fellowship and sisterhood.

With best wishes.

No longer could we act as intellectuals, sitting comfortably within and above our own privileges, deigning in our goodness to deal also with the predicament of the exploited. We had to place ourselves entirely at the service of the exploited, become their minstrels.
--Franca Rame,
actress, co-worker and
partner of Dario Fo



ARTISTS'/WRITERS' COLONY GOES YEAR-ROUND

Kansas City, MO, January 9, 1987 -- A creative home-away-from home is now offered year-round to performing and visual artists, writers, and composers by the ACTS Institute, a nonprofit foundation headquartered here.

Located on Horseshoe Bend, Lake of the Ozarks, Missouri, the Institute's artists'/writers' colony, ACT 1 Creativity Center, offers independent residencies for one week to six months. The retreat for creative people expanded its waterfront facility, on-site staff, months of operation and length of residencies after three seasons of summer-only programs, partially supported by the Illinois Arts Council and Missouri Arts Council.

The typical admission charge for a one-week residency, including private room and workspace as well as all meals, is \$100. Some work-scholarships are available based on need. All applicants are screened by a peer review committee prior to being awarded a residency.

For further information, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to ACTS Institute, Inc., attention Ms. Thrush, P. O. Box 10153, Kansas City, MO 64111.

MISSOURI HEADQUARTERS LAKE OF THE OZARKS REGION ILLINOIS REGION
ACTS Institute, Inc. 4550 Warwick Blvd. #1201 P. O. Box 10153 Kansas City, MO 64111-0153 (816) 753-0208 - Norman
ACTS/ACT 1 Creativity Center Artists & Writers Colony Route 73, Box 201-92 Lake Ozark, MO 65049 (314) 365-4404 - Charlotta
ACTS Institute, Inc. Registered Agent 360 E. Randolph #2303 Chicago, IL 60601 (312) 856-9251-Melissa

During a session of the Voices of Dissent conference, people began to express their concern about the small number of people of color at the conference. This is an issue which has been a source of anxiety at some ACD gatherings and in other social change groups.

John O'Neil, a long-time civil rights activist, actor and storyteller, gave us some thoughts related to this issue in the form of the following two stories:

I heard this story from a brother in Atlanta, a puppeteer. I thought it was such a good story, I began to tell it a little bit myself. It has to do with this African politician who loses an election for the leader of his area. It's a close election, but he loses. The winner in a gesture of graciousness offers to have a celebration and invites our friend, the loser, to come for the binding of wounds and so forth.

The politician says to his wife, "No, wife, I'm not going to the celebration. He's just trying to rub salt in an old wound." The wife says, "Well, husband, if you don't go it will appear to all that you are a very small and mean person and that you can't stand to lose in an election so I think you should go." And he says, "Well if I must go, I must, but I won't bring any palm wine to the celebration." (The winner had declared that he was going to offer a big feast at the celebration but everyone else who was coming had to bring palm wine.)

So our friend goes to the celebration with his palm wine bottle, but he has no palm wine in it. Instead, he fills it up with water. He gets to the site of the feast and he pours his water into the big bowl that they are using for the palm wine. When it comes time for the wine to be taken as the beginning of the feast, he dips his cup into the bowl and raises it for the toast. The toast is given; he tastes from the cup and spits it out because there is nothing but water in his cup.

It turns out that everyone who came to the feast brought water instead of palm wine. So the moral of that story is: what you get from the feast is what you bring to the feast.

A fellow was walking down the street--in Chicago I think it was--and a very mean bully stood across the street and said, "I'm going to come over there and kick your ass." The fellow who was threatened says, "Okay you come on over here, but remember you got to bring ass to get ass."

It's another variety of getting what you bring--the victory involves the risk. You got to go what you know.

Sometimes it sounds to me as though in some of the things we have to deal with at ACD people want assurance of a positive outcome before they're willing to take the risk. We've just got to get out there and try and give it our best shot.



The Alliance for Cultural Democracy is the only nationwide, nonprofit organization for community-based arts programs and activist artists. The Alliance's members are visual artists, theater workers, musicians, writers, media artists, dancers, arts administrators, and others involved in community and cultural work in urban, suburban, and rural settings.

The Alliance's first task is to enable community arts people and other cultural workers to overcome their isolation, share their skills and knowledge and to work together on cultural policy. The second task is to create an effective and educated public voice to ensure that cultural contributions of our communities and our diverse peoples are given their due.



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