THE FULL EST WAY TO DEFINE culture is to say that a culture is the total activity of people imagining and creating their own reality, their own community identity in some particular time and place. So culture is an activity participated in by everyone both in everyday life and on special occasions of celebration and public meaning. It follows, then, that art is no more—and no less—than a thickening of that culture into specific expression.

These are the understandings that created the mandate at the national meeting of ACD in Atlanta last October that our next annual meeting should address the issue of cultural policy. Because if culture has such a comprehensive sweep of human meaning and behavior, then cultural policy is a political statement, which, when defining what is allowed and what is prohibited about people’s and community culture, is actually defining what is allowed and what is prohibited about what the people themselves might be in a society.

Cultural policy as defined and enforced by Washington arts and humanities budgets (or any of the states, localities—or philanthropists) is the

continued on page 9
ARTISTS CALL
Is Heard

by Lucy R. Lippard and Daniel Flores y Ascencio

ARTISTS CALL Against U.S. Intervention in Central America began when we and others found many artists eager to be part of the anti-intervention movement. It was not simply a momentary reaction to an untenable political situation, but part of a growing alliance around the issue of self-determination in Central America. It originated with the Institute for the Arts and Letters of El Salvador in Exile (INALSE) as part of a strategy to call attention to a number of ideological circumstances from which the arts cannot be separated. We were talking about the need to increase contact and understanding between Salvadoran artists in exile here and their North American colleagues, as a means of extending political comprehension of Central American issues through cultural channels. After an initial meeting in May 1983, the enthusiastic response from artists hitherto uninvolved with Central America showed the time was ripe for concerted action.

While the general goals of ARTISTS CALL are to raise consciousness, change public opinion (and, almost incidentally, to raise money) in order to support culture and self-determination in Central America, the combination of so many diverse sectors of the art world is one of its most significant aspects, along with international solidarity among artists. This situation, unfortunately, is rare in the art world and rarer still for Latin artists who suffer from New York's often patronizing and condescending attitudes towards unfamiliar cultures and races. North Americans fail to understand how vital such mutual respect is to those artists severed from their native contexts and forced to exist (if not coexist) in the wilds of the marketplace. The cooperation and potentially mutual enrichment of projects like ARTISTS CALL may well sow the seeds of new cultural and aesthetic principles and clarify what culture means in North America.

The very existence of ARTISTS CALL reflects changing historical conditions. The last time such expansive artists' actions took place was during the Vietnam war, but due to the distance (class and cultural as well as geographical) and the ultimate (racist) "foreignness" of Indochina, there was virtually no direct contact between North American and Vietnamese artists. The artists' support and protest were aimed straight (if naively) at the political situation, though not much of the art actually addressed it. Many Americans learned from their own experience the significance of Vietnam: intervention is bad. And they learned something about colonialism and its results.

Today the level of cross-cultural understanding and political sophistication is much higher than in the Vietnam era. To begin with, for all the misunderstandings, Central America is in every sense closer to us than Vietnam was. Political crisis, liberation movements and revolutions have drastically familiarized the U.S. with events and countries hitherto unconsidered. The wars in Central America are bringing more Latinos to the U.S. and the constantly growing Hispanic population is both a cause and a result of the increased interest in Latin culture. ARTISTS CALL works with the Puerto Rican community in New York as well as with exiles and expatriates.

After ARTISTS CALL began, during the summer of '83, the momentum significantly increased due to recent events: the intensification of the war against Nicaragua, with open admission of U.S./CIA involvement, exposure of continued human rights violations in El Salvador and Guatemala, rebel victories—moral and military—in El Salvador, U.S. military buildup in Hon...continued on page 4
Our Dream of a Progressive Culture Is a Coat of Many Colors

by Charles Frederick

This issue of Cultural Democracy swings on a pendulum between two kinds of concerns, and in that swing marks the time we are living in. The trip Katharine and Bill made through Montana, and the attempts to define cultural animation speak from one part of the heart of the movement ACD is trying to articulate—self-empowering cultural expression for and by the commonwealth of people.

And the articles on ARTISTS CALL, Art Against Apartheid, the piece by Deena on Nicaragua, speak from another part of the heart of our movement—solidarity with people impoverished, oppressed and disenfranchised—attacked with dollars, guns, bombs and napalm—by the overwhelming reality of our time: the international hegemony of U.S. power.

We are in a dark moment. All over the world, people are losing their livelihoods, their communities, their lives. Where is ACD in all of this?

When I get up each morning I reach out for the pieces of the day I am entering, I gather up the parts of my life, I shake them out, I check to see how wrinkled they might be and, after looking over the weather outside my window, I choose from them the clothes I will put on for comfort and protection. Sometimes I am right, sometimes I find I have too little, sometimes too much. I add a pin, or a hat, or a scarf, something that declares my personality regardless of the conditions of the weather.

I have learned that many of my clothes do not make conventional outfits and some kinds of clothes do not appear at all (there certainly are not very many three-piece pinstripes in my wardrobe). I have picked up my costumes from thrift shops, borrowed pieces from friends, once in a while I get a gift of something newly manufactured, something from a regular store. So I have to pay close attention to what the combination turns out to be each day. I have to make a decision on how the parts add up. Nothing clashes as long as I understand how everything works together. Usual distinctions do not much impress me. A "woman's" scarf goes best with a "man's" vest. Black is a powerful color—and rhymes with red. A Guatemalan cape thoroughly keeps off the rain. There is no required dress for riding the subway to work.

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Charles Frederick is a writer, theater artist and cultural organizer.

MOUNTAINS EAST MEET MOUNTAINS WEST: A REPORT FROM TWO ACD CULTURAL ANIMATEURS

by Bill Pratt

Recently, Katharine Pearson, President of Appalshop, Inc., the highly successful Appalachian regional cultural center in Whitesburg, Kentucky, had the opportunity to tour Montana for five days. Her visit was coordinated by the Cultural Alliance of Eastern Montana (CAEM) and co-sponsored by the Western Heritage Center (Billings), the Montana State University’s Departments of Theatre Arts and Television and Film (Bozeman) and the Associated Students of the University of Montana (Missoula). The Montana Arts Council provided partial grant and in-kind support. Bill Pratt, Community Arts Coordinator for the Council, traveled with her—serving as host, personal driver and guide to the “wilds” of Montana.

This whirlwind tour of a state which measures 800 miles “on the diagonal” provided Katharine with the opportunity to present information about the Appalshop program to Montanans and to work with a variety of rural and urban cultural groups. She showed a slide show about Appalshop and screened films and videos such as Coal Mining Women, Quitting Women, Waterground, a promo for Roadside Theatre and an example of a Headwaters Video program. With the Cultural Alliance for Eastern Montana, she discussed regional organizing and funding possibilities for their coalition of cultural groups which covers nineteen prairie counties. With the Vigilante Players, a recently formed theatre ensemble, Katharine stressed the importance of artistic vision and the dramatic possibilities of regional material. She showed a tape made back in Kentucky by Appalshop’s Roadside Theatre to a class of young Native American college students who were preparing to put on their first play—a dramatization of the Coyote Tales. With these students, Katharine then toured the Custer Battlefield. Later she also saw an example of western strip mining in the company town of Colstrip...she drove 500 miles across eastern Montana...did four TV and radio interviews...and finally got her chance to ski on the Montana/Idaho border at Lost Trail Pass.

At times during the tour we would look at each other and wonder silently or out loud, “Why are we doing this?” The trip was tiring; we both had just come from the February Alliance board meeting and had loads of work waiting for us. “Back home.” I guess we felt that the cross cultural exchange was important. We needed to swap information, to lend each other mutual support and understanding and to reaffirm our belief in the universality of shared rural values and concerns.

continued on page 5

Bill Pratt is the Community Arts Coordinator for the Montana Arts Council.
Growing numbers of people in cultural fields are visiting Nicaragua, and returning to communicate directly the validity of the revolution and its militant popular support.

Culture has played a major part in this new awareness. The wave of brilliant Latin literature and its distribution here has been important: the poetry of Pablo Neruda, Ernesto Cardenal and the heirs of José Martí, the fiction of Gabriel García Márquez; also the songs of Victor Jara and Violeta Parra, the Chilean murals, the Cuban posters, the nueva canción movement, the fact that almost every member of the Nicaraguan reconstruction government junta is a poet, writer or priest, the intellectual background provided by so many revolutionary leaders, from Che Guevara to Maurice Bishop. What is known about the "other Americas" is known here through the eyes and ears and imaginations of artists, whose task is to picture the present and envision a changed future.

Culture is both the soft and the strong spot of any liberation movement. ARTISTS CALL is concentrating on cultural support in Central America—for artists, workers, a university—because when a culture is destroyed, the soul of a people dies, along with its history. The January 21-22 focus of ARTISTS CALL marked the 52nd anniversary of the massacre of 30,000 supposedly "communist" peasants in El Salvador in 1932—the point at which Indians began to be afraid to continue their ancient local customs, to speak their language, to wear their costumes—in short, the beginning of the destruction of an indigenous culture which is today being repeated in Guatemala.

The organizers of ARTISTS CALL are constantly being told by the Central Americans with whom we work how important such cultural resistance is to them. In the European tradition, the arts are far more respected in these countries than they are in North America; and culture is much more broadly interpreted to include communication, education, etc. This can also be the basis of yet another misunderstanding, because the role of intellectuals as a political force is not accepted in the U.S. The significance of the cultural brigades of the ASTC (Sandinist Association of Cultural Workers), which work in the fields and perform, paint, read in the war zones of Nicaragua's northern provinces, is difficult for us to understand. Similarly, it may be difficult for us to understand why cultural workers are the focus of torture and repression in the unliberated Central American countries. Guatemalan feminist art critic Alaidé Foppa dissapeared two years ago; INALSE member Armando Martínez, a rock musician, was tortured and imprisoned for the growing political consciousness of his music; professors and writers are shot in the streets of El Salvador.

Because culture is integrally involved with the information, disinformation, misinformation and downright lies that are responsible for the lack of understanding of the Central American situation, it is our responsibility to speak out where we can. We know the mass media presents a distorted picture of Central America, resulting in public confusion about who is rebelling against whom. Liberals are caught in the contradictions surrounding the Central American crisis and due to not-so-subtle red-baiting tend to prefer the more "abstract" and "apolitical" issues of the anti-nuke movement. (There is, of course, no choice between the two; they are integrally connected.)

ARTISTS CALL itself has no "political line" except for its basic and decided political premise: No U.S. Intervention. The group is, in any case, an organizing committee and not an organization. Its organizing principle is all nations' right to self-determination, to decide for themselves what is the best political path to desperately needed social change. Our current goal is to continue to expand nationally and internationally and to bring the entire cultural community to participate in, or at least to consider, the events in Central America and their ramifications for the rest of the world.

The mutual respect and empowerment that arise from collective work are a primary part of ARTISTS CALL's organizing, both locally and nationally. The isolation and competition—or the alienation—that props up the art market and makes the arts in this country so easily controlled is an unrecognized form of cultural repression. ARTISTS CALL is trying to break down the divisive distinctions between what is and what is not "intellectual" or "cultural" or "political."

We are trying to "use" art to a different end than in previous protest movements here. We are not calling on artists' guilt but on their convictions. It's not a matter of just going along with the crowd, but of knowing the reasons for participation.

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*The People's Avenue of the Americas, West Broadway, January 21, 1984. Photo: Mel Rosenthal*

*Artists Call statement being signed by Alexander Taylor, poet and publisher. Photo: Mel Rosenthal*
How are all of the concerns articulated in this issue of CD developing ACD? And how is the development of our organization a response to the darkness of our time? In a way, I suppose, the answer is simple—we identify ourselves as part of this movement in whatever work we have undertaken. And that identification is with the principles of democracy, in all of the realms of human endeavor: economic, political, cultural. As we have identified that the primary function of our alliance is to network with one another.

Ah, that word, networking.

Different parts of the country, different communities networked in ACD have identified different needs and different emphases in cultural work. Some of us—particularly in the large metropolitan areas and university communities—work with new forms, but still in traditional progressive and issue-oriented work—identifying principled cultural creation as the work which refers to the general well-being of the world we live in. Others are digging deep into the lives of particular communities—either those of our birth or our adoption—where our artistic and cultural expression is in their animation. Yet another possibility is to have grown up with the new cultural communities arising out of the progressive movements of the sixties, finding new forms of expression in the new cultural politics.

Try this definition on for size: Networking is the communication of our discoveries to one another, a continuous swarm of teaching and learning.

So, there is a responsibility to this diversity. In all of the places where we work, we discover—while working—basic principles of the relationships of people, among themselves and with their economic universe. Governing principles and assumptions of production, community and culture. The New Left movements of the recent past bequeathed two important understandings: knowledge becomes concrete guidance for action only when flowing through flexible and democratic organizations, and that deep knowledge about people is best articulated in many forms—sensuous, rational, materialist, emotional.

We are at a point in our exchange of knowledge from different communities where we must now as well assert our authority in the forms of theoretical and critical discourse, stating what we are learning—replacing the hypocrisies and falsehoods of academic and reactionary ideologies with the articulations voiced by people in struggle for freedom, dignity and egalitarian prosperity. The animation of a community must also include the development of a new intellectuality, animating new minds.

Because there is a way in which these different projects represented in the other articles are joined. Whether we are talking about Montana cultural groups and lead to attempts to create regional cultural projects and awareness.

We found individual and community resourcefulness. Groups often depended upon themselves and their local resources to get things done—often without the use of formalized funding sources. The importance of rural social networks to cultural work was noted as was the rural rhythm—patterns of work and play—being determined to a large extent by the vast landscape. Especially in Eastern Montana, there was a more holistic view of culture than was evident in the state’s largest city and university towns. We encountered a great potential for regional cultural expression and the significance of a mineral (coal) tax in supporting cultural projects. The upcoming state Centennial was cited as a possible organizing opportunity.

We also found frustration about institutional unresponsiveness among a number of cultural workers, reliance of arts organizations upon recent migrants into their communities and omission of discussions about Native American affairs. Where there was some attention, it tended to be only in a historical context—and often with romantic overtones. There were lots of non-Indians involved in cultural activities.

Bill pointed out that Indians had their own cultural systems and there tended to be minimal overlap. In fact, the Montana Arts Council itself had only recently been able to get Native American representation.

We also found that cultural policies in Washington, D.C. seemed very far away and not very relevant to local cultural groups. While there is NEA funding of the state arts council and a number of major institutions, which is distributed through grants and services, there is very little direct funding by the NEA of neighborhood or community groups. While this maintains a certain independence of funding, it has the negative effect of not involving Montana rural groups in cultural policy discussion and decision making.

While we found rural and regional strength and pride, we all became aware of the dangers which can result from a regional emphasis alone. Without the self-critical aspect of regional cultural work, isolation, insulation and complacency can be intensified. Without awareness of larger networks, cultural groups risk limiting their effectiveness and influence. It seemed to us that regional cultural work could provide the opportunity to address the issue of tolerance for diverse forms and experiences. We noted an acceptance of the critical element of local life by a number of older Montanans we met. The dangers of historical romanticism could be counteracted by a common-sense approach which creates the future by resolving the problems of the past—through the creation of independent, interdependent, self-respecting communities. Our tour showed us that we can divert the mainstream into many channels. We do not have to bring all of us into the mainstream.

Mountains continued from page 3

STONE RIVER
Paradise Valley, Montana

Ray Atkinson
COLORADO: The Alliance for Cultural Democracy held its board meeting in Denver in February, which proved to be a wonderful opportunity for Colorado members and potential members to informally discuss a variety of issues with ACD board members. Though the Colorado membership is very small, we threw a party for the board on Saturday night; and this informal interaction was wonderful for us. We were informed as to what's happening in the area of cultural democracy/organizing throughout the country, which was inspirational for our own work. In addition, being able to sit in on the board meeting was of great value. Indeed, we used the board meeting as a membership tool, requesting that anyone interested in attending the meeting also join the Alliance. We got a couple of new and welcome members in this way. All of us were able to discuss projects we have in mind as well, and found in Alliance board members a whole new network of people to give us badly needed feedback. We'd welcome a return visit! - Maryo Ewell

MINNESOTA: The Minnesota chapter of ACD is taking form as a network for cultural activists, to provide a forum for information sharing, discussion of issues and development of strategies to influence local cultural policy. Minnesota already offers a healthy array of progressive cultural events and organizations. The Alliance sees its role as building links and bridges among and between these groups for support, strength and understanding. Monthly informal potluck dinners are being organized as a means of developing this network.

The Twin Cities Cultural Worker Newsletter provides the community with a quarterly source of information on local events and news of cultural struggles here and elsewhere in the Americas. The June issue will highlight Margaret Randall's visit to Minneapolis. Subscription rate is $4 for 4 issues. Write: TC Cultural Worker Newsletter, PO Box 8848, Minneapolis, MN 55408.

ILLINOIS: The first Illinois meeting was held as part of the Central Illinois Arts Consortium's March workshop and showcase at Illinois Central College in East Peoria. Though the meeting was scheduled from 1 to 5, we talked until 6:30 and continued the discussion over dinner afterwards. The meeting included a discussion of the history of ACD and the concept of cultural democracy, a slide show on the work of Chicago muralists and street art by Gudepounds (Jon Pounds and Olivia Gude), and a description of an exciting community animation project in motion by Jerrilee Tyson (of Two Rivers Arts Council, and an ACD Board alternate) in the small town of Bushnell.

In Bushnell, David Olson from Minnesota's Cherry Creek Theatre "infiltrated" the community unannounced this February, and talked for one week with the townspeople and coffee shops, community centers and schools-places where people gather-and shared stories about his work and stories of the people he talked with. He asked: Who are you? Who have you been? Where are you going? and how do you envision the future? Such excitement was generated that the community folks are busy deciding on a series of cultural projects about the town and the people's concerns to be taken up for a month in June when four people return: Olson, a filmmaker, story-teller and a video-maker. On July 4th Bushnell will have a big regional festival with the results of this animation and the seeds of what will be continued afterwards. You're all invited!

Others at the meeting discussed their work and their need for communication. It's not yet clear whether this was the beginning of an Illinois "chapter" of ACD, a part of a regional chapter or a meeting about strengthening the national organization by people who live near each other. The sense of the meeting was that it is important for us to meet and learn more about each other in a setting that offers the possibility for talking informally.

The next ACD meeting for Illinois and the Midwest Region will be held in late August or early September on a Saturday in the Pullman district of Chicago's Southside, at a local community center easily accessible from the major highways. The focus will be on community cultural organizing and animation. On the agenda will be: an introduction to ACD, a presentation about mural work and a follow-up to the Bushnell animation project, then an initial session on community organizing and a presentation about video work. Smaller group workshops on organizing will follow. For more information contact Jerrilee Cain Tyson, Western Illinois University, 204 Sallee Hall, Macomb, IL 61455; (319) 288-1618. — Bob Feldman

On May 11 The Victor Jara Memorial Fund and the Twin Cities Cultural Worker Newsletter sponsored a Pena del Pueblo (Progressive People's Cultural Gathering) to raise funds to send two representatives to the Third International New Song Movement Festival in Quito, Ecuador. The festival is a gathering of international musicians and cultural activists to share insights on the purpose and place of the New Song Movement.

At the Foot of the Mountain, the oldest feminist theater in the country, has produced a play about U.S. intervention in Central America. Las Gringas, conceived by Martha Boesen and created by the company, is about invasion and struggle for self-determination. Each of the women in the play finds some connection between her life and the continuing struggle of the Nicaraguan people to maintain liberation. Excerpts from Margaret Randall's book Sandino's Daughters are used in the script. — Catherine Jordan

GOT SOMETHING ON YOUR MIND?
We want to know what you think!
Argue with our articles
Add to our news
Contribute your views and experiences of cultural politics.

Announcing...

"WHAT IS & WHAT MIGHT BE:
ANIMATING CULTURAL POLITICS"

A 3-day conference and the 8th annual meeting of the Alliance for Cultural Democracy (formerly NAPNOC), to be held September 28, 29 and 30 in Washington DC, with a lobbying visit to Capitol Hill October 1.

Spread the news... and we'll see you there!
If we can simply witness the destruction of another culture, we are sacrificing our own right to make culture.

ATLANTA: The Atlanta ACD Local has identified several projects to focus our energies on this spring. We have joined with a coalition of groups in establishing a sister-city relationship with Bluefields, Nicaragua. Bluefields is a small, predominantly black, English-speaking city on the Caribbean coast, capital of the department of Zelaya. Our aim is to ensure that a cultural component be included in exchanges between our two cities. Mid-July is the time set for inaugural ceremonies and we hope to see a delegation of artists and performers travel to Bluefields and a group from there come to Atlanta to perform.

We worked during the winter to secure an abandoned school in the Grant Park area of the city as a neighborhood cultural center. ACD will be sharing an office/rehearsal/meeting space and phone with PAND by mid-May.

And just when you thought it was safe to get back into the culture, Art for the People's Sake, a performance festival featuring artists doing risky, popular and socially inspired work is back! Some funding for the second biannual of this controversial and enlivening week-long event has been granted from the city and the county. Local and national performers are being approached. Churches, union halls and non-traditional spaces will be the sites for performances. The inclusive dates are September 21-October 6. This festival will lead up to an event sponsored by Performers and Artists for Nuclear Disarmament/International at Atlanta's Civic Center on October 7, two weeks after a similar concert in Leningrad. It will feature artists from the USSR, western Europe and the US, united in support for nuclear disarmament and world peace.

A criticism workshop is being organized for the weekend of October 12-13. National and regional critics will gather at Emory University in a symposium designed to develop the critical facility. For more details contact Mike Perri c/o ART PAPERS, 972 Peachtree St., NE; (404) 885-1273. —Bill Fleming.

NEW ENGLAND: ACD activity here continues for the time to be centered around Artists Call Against US Intervention in Central America, which continues in the Boston area with slide shows at universities, plans for street theater on the subject of "comparative elections" (El Salvador, Nicaragua and the US), and a "crate-painting party" to send off Oxfam's Tools for Peace ship to Nicaragua, full of material aid in the form of medical and artists' supplies. "Arts for a New Nicaragua," a support group associated with Artists Call in Boston, is planning an Artists Brigade to travel and work in Nicaragua this August—ten visual artists and ten musicians will perform and teach in villages, responding to the needs laid out to them by the Ministry of Culture. The New Song Movement has set up its US office in the New England area, and will be sending representatives to the International New Song Festival in Ecuador this summer.

On another front, Performing Artists for Nuclear Disarmament held a meeting of organizers from Boston, New York, Baltimore, Atlanta and Quebec in April in Cambridge. The agenda was to make plans for a Fall cultural festival to be held simultaneously in Atlanta and Leningrad, and to evaluate PAND's current effectiveness in both the disarmament movement and in the movement for cultural democracy. ACD members in the New England region will also now begin gearing up for the next ACD board meeting, which is set to be held in Cambridge on Bastille Day weekend. There are plans to coordinate a small conference of active community cultural workers with the meeting. To offer ideas and to become part of the planning of such an event, contact ADC/NE Region, c/o Debra Wise, Underground Railway Theater, 21 Notre Dame Ave., Cambridge, MA 02140; (617) 497-6136. —Debra Wise.

NEW YORK: We have been trying to figure out how this chapter can become a network through which political artists can keep in touch and work together in slack periods between big events and campaigns. We also want the chapter to bring together community artists across class and ethnic lines (unprecedented in New York). We have drawn up a document that lays out possible ways to build networks, share resources and develop theoretical understanding. As our first activity, we will cooperate this summer in the production and distribution of a calendar of local community/cultural events.

Meanwhile, ACD members have been instrumental in starting a network here of emergency response committees of artists prepared to participate in planning demonstrations and joint political activities or short notice. In tandem with this, artists have been playing a big role in planning a demonstration here June 9 which will take the form of a public/participatory theater piece, putting the US on trial for crimes in Central America. Again, ACD members are among the organizers and thinkers behind the event. —Abigail Norman.

THE UNDERGROUND RAILWAY ROBBERY

The Underground Railway Theater, active in the Alliance for Cultural Democracy for the past year, recently had $20,000 worth of puppets, props, musical instruments and lighting equipment taken from its van. The theft was, of course, senseless—only closed cases were taken, and the value of the contents is not great to anyone but the theater, and a great blow to the company. Many artists and supporters have come to the theater's aid—helping to build sets and props, loaning equipment and some of the company's shows are back on the road. However, others have yet to be rebuilt, and the Underground Railway will be a long time regenerating itself.

If you are interested in helping, you could send the company the names of any potential sponsors for its touring shows. Or you could send the names of potential resources, such as emergency funding sources for problems such as this one. Sources of inexpensive theatrical equipment and instruments, et cetera.

The theater greatly appreciates the help, and the sooner they receive information the better. Send ideas to The Underground Railway Theater, 21 Notre Dame Ave., Cambridge, MA 02140, or call (617) 497-6136.

Indian Lands And Communities
Map courtesy of Southwest Museum.
Los Angeles, California
ART AGAINST APARTHEID is an artists-inspired initiative which will include the work of visual, literary and performing artists of diverse cultures and ethnic origins, with a special focus on the display of artworks in museums and community spaces, in the five boroughs of New York City. This festival of artists' solidarity is planned for the entire month of October, 1984. It is intended to encourage a national effort in communities across the country.

With the support of the United Nations Special Committee Against Apartheid, ART AGAINST APARTHEID proposes to alert the public to the racial and economic oppression South Africans face, to join others in the campaign to free Nelson Mandela and all political prisoners from apartheid jails, to support the national liberation movements of southern Africa and the struggle for an independent Namibia, and to extend the scope of the cultural boycott already in action.

Charlayne Haynes, one of the coordinators of ART AGAINST APARTHEID, gave the following speech in February to the UN Special Committee Against Apartheid.

I am an independent arts producer and media activist and a member of the Foundation for the Community of Artists, an organization which provides resources and support for artists. We are sponsoring ART AGAINST APARTHEID, a month-long dramatic surge in political organizing activity whichartisans this past winter amplified and vivified the political information made available through the Center for Constitutional Rights, Amnest/International, NA/CL, and the Central American solidarity groups. As Rudolph Baranik has said, "I do not think that art generally is the best carrier for the didactic political statement. But art can be a very powerful partner to the didactic statement, speaking in its own language." It is a hopeful sign of North American political maturity that more people now understand that no art is without ideology and that "using" our own art to communicate ideals of freedom inherent in the very process of artmaking is different from letting it be "used" by those who oppose such freedoms under the guise of pseudo-democracy.

Who then, is the audience for ARTISTS CALL? First, the participating artists themselves, especially those who made works specifically for these events, who are still thinking out their visual politics in their accustomed mediums. Artists contributing work not specifically linked to Central America also see their art in an unfamiliar context and may see it take on a new power to communicate simply by being in this context. Artists who have not contributed will also presumably learn something from seeing the various shows and thinking about the way art acts on art. Then we hope that the non-artmaking audience will consider the issues—esthetic as well as political—and contribute to the ongoing development of ideas about the relationship between art and where the artist stands in the world. For the general public, for all of us, we hope ARTISTS CALL suggests both ways to bridge and to respect cultural differences.

This article was excerpted and revised from the original published in Art and Artists, Jan. 1984.

Nicky Lindeman
Dream continued from page 5
about people in Salvador or Montana, Nic­
democracy is that the conditions of each
selves into whatever is their choice of hu­
community and each person in that com­
culture are concerns about the primary and
man definition.

The understanding inherent in cultural
democracy is that the conditions of each
particular place define how that is best to
be done. What is the most cogent imagina­
tive work in each place, uniquely defined,
that assists that great expressive project of
becoming ever more human—ever less op­
pressed, ever less deprived, with an ever in­
progress in these efforts.

The essence of the October campaign is
to extend the realm of influence beyond the
abuse of power, to include a response and action about the horrors of apartheid among everyday citizens that will have a lasting development long after October has passed. By presenting cultural events and mounting artwork displays in social settings where they are not typically found: churches, unions and recreational centers, the ART AGAINST APARTHEID organizers at­
tempt to escape the trap of gallery syn­
drome, substantiating the concept for a true public art by reaching people where they live and work. This action could lead to the establishment of citizens’ committees against apartheid, community-based and community-run, a desperately needed di­
mension in this war against cultural and economic domination.

We are working with museums, commu­
nity spaces and organizations that will ac­
ccept works of artistic statement against apartheid for public viewing. These show­
ings and events will inform the public of the lies of the “constructive engagement” poli­
cy adopted by the Reagan Administration as a disguise for its open alliance with apartheid. Our mass effort in October con­	ributes to the demand of the Congressional Black Caucus that apartheid be eliminated and that South Africa become a primary foreign policy issue in the 1984 presidential election.

The Reagan Administration is a destabi­
lizing and dangerous force which supports sub-minimum wages for the unemployed, many of them poor and people of color. The Reagan Administration claims people are hungry and homeless because they want to be, because it is expedient to deny that they exist. The Reagan Administration be­
lieves in racial superiority when it strikes down efforts for equal opportunity and civil rights, cuts our compensation for re­
dering workers into the violence of the Ku Klux Klan and other hate groups, and, with its own interpretation of law, values the lives
of white people over all others. More people in this country are becoming wage-poor, land-poor, hungry and divided. All these conditions are symptoms of a society that is belligerent in the face of polarization.

As artists who are intelligent individuals, we unite in ART AGAINST APARTHEID to reaffirm our right to an equal and con­
scious society here and to oppose a system far away that exploits a majority of its people, seeking to reduce them forever to •
servile occupancy. We are committed to the elimination of the racist South African government, its increased aggression against the front-line nations and its illegal occupa­
tion of Namibia. Artists page the Reagan Administration to demand that the Botha regime withdraw its troops from Angola and force South Africa to have free elec­
tions in its own country.

We urge all artists in cities across the country to join us with by actively partici­
pating in this ART AGAINST APART­
HEID effort to make the crime of South Africa’s apartheid a national public con­
cern and to pressure all Americans to politi­
cal action in this critical 1984 election.

Artists and others are invited to sponsor and participate in organizing and planning events and exhibits, and to contribute works on the theme of apartheid for display, performance or publication. Artists contribut­ing works can offer them for sale or just exhibit. Those places placed for sale will benefit both the artist and ART AGAINST APARTHEID in an arrangement to be worked out with each individual artist. Each artist who sells a work as part of this campaign will be asked to donate a portion of it to the committee. Contributions of funds are also needed to help meet budget costs. Funds raised and not used for cultur­
al events here will be sent to cultural institu­
tions in South Africa that challenge govern­
ment policies.

For more information on the campaign, contact ART AGAINST APARTHEID, 280 Broadway, Suite 412, New York, NY 10007; (212) 227-8473.

Whose Culture continued from page 1
practice of an elite making the judg­
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Politics of Participatory Dem­
time to assert ways that cul­
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and progressive cultural production.

It is time we begin to define what cultural policy should be for our communities. It is time to assert ways that cul­
tural policy will arise from a politics of the U.S. Art and prop­
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ment.
OUT OF FIRE AND MADNESS: Theater and Children in Nicaragua

by Deena Metzger

Deena has graciously allowed the editorial committee to prepare this excerpt version of a longer piece she has written reporting on some of her impressions of theater work in Nicaragua. Deena visited Nicaragua in December 1986. Several ACD Board Members were part of the same delegation.

In my return to the U.S. after three weeks in Nicaragua this December, attending the Fourth National Theatre Festival, poet Peter Levit reminded me of a young Nicaraguan who spoke at "Flores por Nicaragua," the 1980 KPFK poetry marathon. "When he said, "I'm going to tell you what we need," I thought uh oh now we're going to see what this new country is about; they're going to ask for money and for guns. But the boy said, "We're a poor country and what we need are shoes.""

In 1984, a very serious ten-year-old director of a folklorico dance company asked us for dance shoes, but no one asked for money or guns though it was clear they could use both to defend themselves against the U.S. supported contras who have been attacking from their Honduran bases. Alan Bolt, Festival Coordinator and Director of the National Theatre Workshop, asserted, "We never talk about death. We are trying to create our theatre of fire and madness and death, a theatre of joy, full of color. We try to take the bombs and make humor of them."

This was the contradiction that we encountered. Nicaragua is totally divided between the pull to new life and the obsession with the continuing war, where the life of the children they love so much may in fact depend on the children's ability to fight. Half the population of Nicaragua is under fifteen, 75% is under thirty. Reagan is making war on children.

Alan Bolt asserted, "The theatre begins from children's games because our people never had a childhood." The revolution, theatre and children are inseparable.

In Nicaragua, theatre is a social action.

Deena Metzger is a poet, writer and arts activist.

"I don't believe consciousness comes from seeing a performer put on in the process of making the performance." And if it is surprising that culture is so significant in a country virtually at war, it is no surprise that theatre is dominant. It is active, collective and manifest, allows thorough reflection and activity for the construction of self and easily accompanies the transition, now in progress, from oral tradition to written culture. The plays we saw are more diverse in content and style than I would have expected, though uniformly concerned with social and political issues. And if the characters are representative and archetypal rather than individual, that is fitting; the recovery of a historic or social self can be a prerequisite for the creation of a psyche.

The plays I saw in the festival addressed a variety of political questions and social issues, examined imperialism, colonialization, the history of women, machismo, political divisions in families, the trickery of bureaucrats and union officials, inertia and passivity, the identity of the contras, greed and looting, the division in the church, etc.

The festival was designed to allow the groups to present work to each other for critique and then to the various neighborhoods and barrios of Managua. Heated discussion and serious criticism followed each presentation. And though the youth of some of the participants required Bolt to remind them to take extensive notes, there was thoughtful, even harsh scrutiny of form, technique and content. There seemed to be agreement as to the procedure for creating theatre-research, organization, discussion—but much debate about other issues. The youthful director of the professional group, Miguel de Cervantes, while defending the complicated portrayal of the relationship between international fascism and national issues in their piece, exclaimed, "If you don't show something new—how will anyone learn?"

The theatre is founded on a once despised popular tradition, the satiric Indian spectacle, El Guenguense—featuring masks, music and dance. This theatre which warned the Indians against both the mestizo and the Spanish has been performed annually since the 1500s. "We played it against the Spaniards, against Somoza, and we'll play it against the Sandinistas if necessary."

I saw a group, Chaval, perform at night in what is the equivalent of a migrant farm labor camp, where the participants in the cotton harvesting included 1200 campesinos and 800 production brigadistas (youth volunteers). From the stage area where Chaval performed, you could see the Honduran border and the lights of a U.S. frigate in the bay. I had seen Chaval perform before, with tremendous success—for an audience of children. This time, it was adults who laughed, whistled and cheered before a powerful theatre created by the fifteen-year-old actors. I was reminded of the film made by Mecate, the cultural animation group, who work with the campesino unions, where even the littlest children of the village played alongside the adults in the musical band, took part in the theatre production. Everywhere in Nicaragua, if you see theatre, you see children dancing and actively engaged in serious work. Children have achieved some essential dignity and respect in Nicaragua and they carry it well.

Yet it is difficult to know how long this youthful Nicaraguan will last, whether all revolutions inevitably outgrow the intensity, spontaneity, optimism, innocence and dogmatism of youth. Every revolution maturing into adulthood can veer toward diversity or rigidity, hatred or paranoia. Perhaps Nicaragua appears so young because it is young, because some of those who run the country are virtually children, because having lost so much and started with so little there is a priority on new life. This being the case it is appropriate to apply child development theory as well as political and economic analysis to the current situation to determine what will be the inevitable effect of the U.S. alternation of psychological, military and economic aggression. An abused child ultimately becomes aggressive. A battered child batters as an adult.

The theatre brigades, travelling throughout the countryside, are performing a deeply thought-through work: organizing, educating, raising consciousness, "rescuing culture," asking questions. This work of culture is understood to share top priority in Nicaragua with national defense and material production. But, as Alan Bolt told us, "when we go to the war zones, we go with (both) the theatre and with a gun." The poet, Margaret Randall, who has been living in Nicaragua—and raising her daughter there—suggested that the threats of invasion alternating with seeming softening of American foreign policy were in fact part of a program of psychological warfare designed to inflict the maximum stress, cause the greatest harm.

Bolt also told us, "I never made a good guerrilla; I didn't like to kill—but sometimes we have to kill to defend what we have created." How then must they care for the children in Nicaragua? As long as U.S. foreign policy continues to be what it is, the answer will have to be—with a play and with a gun.
Cultural Animation Is Not Just Another Fashionable Word

As part of our preparation for the national conference in September, we thought it a good idea to begin a discussion of cultural animation. It has been the perception of several cultural workers—organizers and artists alike—that the practice of cultural/community animation runs the danger of becoming a new pet project of arts and cultural funding agencies. There is a great frustration in this. It certainly has been far from the character or policy in the majority of cases that institutionalized arts agencies have much interest in community-based arts. The reasons for these dragons to start snorting and coughing with signs of interest at the notion of cultural animation probably has more to do with the social indignations of the Reagan era than with a sudden generosity to share their treasure with community and populist cultural expression.

However, we should take the opportunity of these stirrings to try to define some of the terrain. After all, community and cultural animation has been a major work of the members of the Alliance for a long time. If we are to maintain the deep progressive ambition and accomplishment of this work, we have to assert an articulation of how and what cultural animation is and can be in the U.S. To help this effort along, the editors of CD questioned a few Alliance members about their understandings. We apologize for the sparse inquiry in this issue of CD.

In addition, however, the empowering possibilities reach much further. Consider again for a minute the quote that began this issue: "I've told you more about the union in two hours than I told my wife in 17 years of marriage.

Tony's discovery while working with cultural projects with union members is that the workers have no place in their lives to systematically tell the stories of the meaning and experience of their lives. No place where the possibility of meaning is a kind of play, free of danger. What happens—socially, personally, productively—while they work? The process Tony has used is to hold informal sessions of discussions (story-telling) with workers. The talk is put on tape and transcribed. Later, the union might create a book or a theater project or some other public form from what the union members had to say.

On the one hand, the greatest accomplishment of this work might seem to lie in the almost "therapeutic" effect of self-expression on the community of workers. In addition, however, the possibilities reach much further. Consider again for a minute the quote that began this section. Tony found that the workers had become frustrated that the political organization—"their union—was not a place where the most significant experiences and meanings of their lives could be expressed.' However, in the cultural location of the oral history workshops, the necessary work for the union to take on—how people might have greater pride and satisfaction in their lives—was laid out in greater detail. The point is that cultural animation has the potential of creating a program of political and economic self-empowerment.

Additionally, Tony found that there is a vast, deep and important history that simply will never be told unless it is asked of the people who are creating it. Such loss of knowledge creates insecurity and impotence.

Charles Frederick has worked with the Solidarity Movement over this year to organize the cultural expression of the political community. His understanding is that if there remains some distinction between political work and all the rest of people's lives, then there is no reason for people to continue political work, and there is little to attract people to political expression.

The arena which combines the public and the private, which satisfies both the unconscious and the conscious, the emotionally and the intellectually recognized—_the arena which creates community—is culture. So one thematic of cultural animation can be to find the diversity of cultural animation that can propel the expression of politics.

Politics lacks full comprehension of humanity if it is not an articulation growing out of and finding expression in culture—culture is the most comprehensive description of human existence while at the same time being the most specific, arising as a particular description of how human beings imagine and create their reality in a community in a place and at a moment of history.

Last, we include the definition Jerrilee Cain Tyson has sent us which informs work she does with the Two Rivers Arts Council in Macomb, Illinois:

Cultural Animation—The reactivation or revitalization of the culture of a community facilitated by an animateur(s) from outside the community. The process entails researching aspects of the community life and environment, past and present, in view of contemporary trends pointing to the future. The animateur(s) enables the community to develop an awareness of who and what it is and to ask hard questions about the directions it can choose to take in the future. The findings of the research and study are synthesized through an interaction with diverse arts media, and the resulting art works are presented to the community as a whole during a festival or celebration. A plan is developed with the community so that the animation process will expand and continue after an initial residency. Local animateurs are trained to work within this continuum.

Let's talk more in Washington.

—The Editors