

CULTURAL DEMOCRACY

ISSN 0703 9503

ISSUE NUMBER 39
SPRING 1990

\$ 3.00



CULTURE IS THE CHILD WE PROTECT & NURTURE.
IT GAINS STRENGTH THROUGH OUR
SUPPORT & ENCOURAGEMENT
OF ONE ANOTHER.

WE ARE ALL THE MOTHER.
WE ARE ALL THE CHILD.

CAROL PETRUCCI

CULTURAL DEMOCRACY

CULTURAL DEMOCRACY means that culture is an essential human need and that each person and community has the right to a culture or cultures of their choice; that all communities should have equitable access to the material resources of the commonwealth for their cultural expression; that cultural values and policies should be decided in public debate with the guaranteed participation of all communities; that the government does not have the right to favor one culture over another.

THE ALLIANCE FOR CULTURAL DEMOCRACY supports community cultural participation. We believe in cultural pluralism, and understand the necessity to integrate the struggles for cultural, political, and economic democracy in the United States. The most important initiatives for cultural democracy take place on a grassroots level in communities, neighborhoods, and among activist artists and other progressive cultural workers.



Table of Contents

Girard/Sakolsky.....	3
Readus.....	5
WOMAD Panel.....	6
Kano.....	13
Fitz.....	14
Murray.....	17
Ruptash.....	18

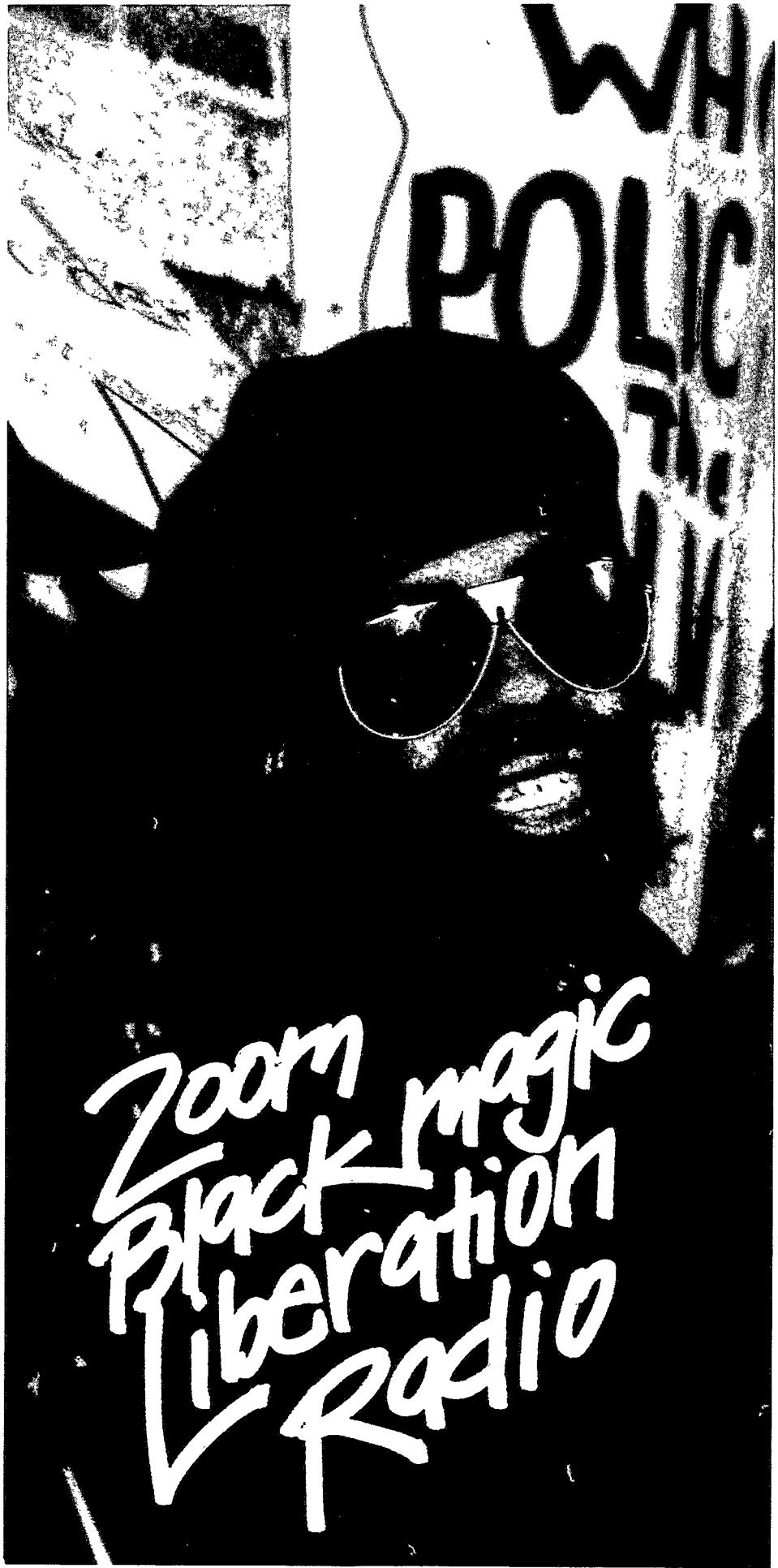


Photo by Bonnie Rubenstein

RADIO-ACTIVITY: COMMUNITY ANIMATION YOU CAN DANCE TO

Bruce Girard: Tell me the story of how WTRA got started and how you got into trouble.

Ron Sakolsky: Well, it got started out of the community organizing efforts of a group called the Tenants Rights Association, which is located in a low-income public housing project on the East Side of Springfield, Illinois. It is predominantly African-American, predominantly low-income. People who were involved with the Tenants Rights Association were looking for a way of reaching people other than the traditional door-to-door, mass-based organizing approach, and they were thinking of using radio as a vehicle for doing so and for training activists. That's a very important part of what we see ourselves doing; training young people.

BG: You mean training them to do radio or training them in organizing or what?

RS: Both. One of the things that happens is you have 9, 12, 15-year-olds doing their own live radio. So they're getting training in radio and communications as a tool for reaching people with ideas that are not in the mainstream. At the same time, the same people are being brought along and being radicalized in terms of seeing the politics of the way this radio station is treated and they are simultaneously brought into some of the other organizing efforts of the Tenants Rights Association. They were involved in a protest in relation to police brutality at the County Building, and then they went back and did interviews with people who were victims of police brutality on the East Side of Springfield. They put that on the air interspersed with

a format that's mostly music. Some of the music will be specifically addressing these kinds of political concerns as well. So it's a combination of those things. They weave themselves together rather than being separate. It's all part of what the Tenants Rights Association sees itself as doing.

BG: Okay, lets get around to the impact of all this a little bit later on. But first, maybe you could describe the radio station. I imagine there are big studios, plush carpeting, nice fireplaces and everything. No?

RS: Yeah, right. It's in the apartment of Dwayne Readus, who lives in the public housing project and has lived in the public housing project his entire life. The facilities are \$600 dollars worth of equipment. People do live radio in terms of tape. They don't even use reel-to-reel. It's high quality cassette tape. Though it's less than a watt, it still gets out to people and still has an impact. So it's very low-tech. It's very affordable radio.

The idea of doing one watt, as far as WTRA is concerned, is a model that could spread to other low-income communities where it seems like radio might be possible whereas they could not conceive of it previously because it would be too expensive to do a 100-watt or even a 10-watt station. A one-watt station is conceivable, and I think that's why some of the heat is coming down on it now from the Feds.

BG: You mean, because of its possibility as a model.

RS: Yeah. Part of it is the politics of what's happening in Springfield right now and the militancy of the radio station in relation to some of the issues that affect people in the Springfield community. Then part of it is because it's a model that they want to squelch.

BG: Isn't one watt about the same power as one of those automatic garage door opening devices. What does it do? How many people can he reach with that?

RS: Well, one of the things that makes

it possible to reach so many people is that Springfield is such a segregated community. So Readus can reach three-quarters of the African-American community in Springfield with that less than a watt of power. That means that he doesn't need a huge array of equipment to reach the constituency that he wants to reach—particularly in the housing project itself, and then surrounding the housing project in the East Side community in general.

So that's very threatening to not only the white power structure, but to the establishment black power structure—that doesn't want him to have access to the airwaves because he's often critical of what they're doing as well. Also the police have been very upset with some of the programming that he's done in relation to police brutality.

BG: So how have all these people who are upset at what he's doing reacted? What kinds of barriers have they put up to block his radio station from running?

RS: There have been various forms of harassment that have happened, which included initially in March a visit by an inspector from the FCC who came out at the request of the Springfield Police Chief (who has since been suspended for extortion in a sexual blackmail scheme). This was after a series of shows where people called in and talked about their own experiences with police brutality. Well, immediately after that, the police called in the FCC. The inspector came and said, "You're an unlicensed station, and you have to pay a \$750 fine, and cease and desist." After going off the air for a while, Dwayne decided in April to go back on the air as an act of civil disobedience, as a way of challenging this law in relation to licensing of micro stations like WTRA.

BG: We were talking a little bit before about the kind of impact the radio station has in the community. How about the programming—what's it like? Does he





do all the programming? Is it really his radio station? Or what?

RS: No. It comes out of his apartment, and he's a well known activist in the African-American community. That's why the FCC looks at him as the person that they want to use as the scapegoat, but he does not do all the programming himself. He's constantly there, but there are young people who have become involved with the station. He's been training young people in radio skills between the ages of 9 and 15. They are learning by doing live radio. There are local phone calls and phone calls that he'll do around the country. When the whole thing was happening in Chicago with the flag incident that caused such controversy at the Art Institute, he interviewed Dread Scott Tyler on the phone. He'll bring in ideas and voices from outside the community as well as having community people do their own programming.

He'll also read things over the air by playing tapes of books. It's mostly a music format, but some of the music is very politically pointed hip-hop or reg-

gae. What he's trying to do is to provide an alternative to what is on the air waves, but not simply in the sense of being alternative without questioning the assumptions of the mainstream. So it's not just alternative, it's also oppositional. It's also counter-hegemonic.

BG: What kind of support has the station been able to pull together for this?

RS: At this point, in terms of monetary support, the initial funding of \$600 for the equipment came from the Campaign for Human Development. But the Campaign for Human Development has seen fit to defund the radio station and to defund the TRA. The reason they have said they did this is that to them this isn't really community organizing in the sense of knocking on people's doors and getting people to join a mass-membership based organization.

Dewayne, on the other hand, thinks of what he's doing as reaching people in a different kind of way. His model's a different model. Even though he probably wouldn't use the term, you could look at what he does as community animation. It is geared toward gaining control of the

means of cultural production and distribution by giving community people a chance to have a vehicle for the direct expression of their ideas and needs. He is giving them access to the airwaves, and letting their unmediated voices be heard, breaking the silence that is a product of the media monopoly. Consequently, there's an attempt on the part of the power structure to dry up his funding sources, to diffuse his power and try to prevent him from using radio as a tool to talk about the kinds of issues that would not get coverage in the mainstream media.

Ron Sakolsky does an African-Caribbean show each week on Zoom Black Magic Liberation Radio (formerly known as WTRA.)

Bruce Girard of the World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (AMARC) recorded this interview at the Union for Democratic Communications Conference in the Fall of 1989 and it aired on CKUT in Montreal, Canada, November 6, 1989.

A.M.A.R.C. 4

From August 12-19, 1990, a huge gathering of the world's Community Broadcasters will be taking place in Dublin, Ireland. The occasion is the Fourth Worldwide Conference of Community Oriented Radio Broadcasters—AMARC 4—on the theme of "The Right to Communicate."

What is AMARC? The World Conference of Community Oriented Radio Broadcasters, is known by its French acronym "AMARC". It is an organisation for consultation, co-ordination, co-operation, exchange and promotion among and for Community Oriented Broadcasters. Its goal is to contribute to the development of the Community Radio movement Worldwide. AMARC defines Community Radio as non-profit Radio which, in accordance with AMARC's principles, offers a service to the Community in which it is located or to which it broadcasts, while promoting the expression and participation of the Community in the Radio.

Contact: AMARC 4, 32 Gardiner Place, Dublin 1, Ireland.
Telephone: 353-1-788733.



SEEING THE PATTERN

Their power is the word
We've learned it.
Their power is the image
We've seen it.
Their power is the mask
By which they call the shots.

But once we see
The Man Behind the Curtain
We cannot stay in Oz.

And that, too, is deconstruction.

From "Seeing the Pattern," a poem composed by Shaun Nethercott in reaction to ACD's 1989 Minnesota gathering.

RADIO ACTIVIST DEWAYNE READUS: IN HIS OWN WORDS



We're talking about censorship and freedom of speech, and we should talk about why the FCC exists. Why does the FCC tell us what to say and what not to say?

It's a fact that none of you in this room, or none of you know anyone, that controls the life in America. It's controlled by the major corporations that basically control the world. How do they do it? Does this country tell you the facts, the truth, and then allow you to make a rational decision based on the facts and the truth? Has it ever done that? It controls you by fear and misinformation. This is why our station is under attack. The very reason that the government has to control what you hear is so that you go along with what they're doing.

How hot is this issue in Springfield? When we first came on the air, we were a community-based organization known as the Tenants Rights Association. We basically were using the radio because the local media had distorted or left out our intents on different demonstrations or different positions that we had stated clearly. They would change it around, or just lie, or just ignore it. So we basically came on the air so that the views of the Association would be heard.

At first out of not knowing our rights, we went off the air for a couple of weeks. Then we came back on, and we've been on ever since. Now we've joined the Zoom Black Magic family. We call the FCC the *thought patrol*, and recommend to everyone when you leave

here tonight: go find a catalog, borrow yourself a transmitter, find yourself a blank space on the dial, and go to work. They can steal Black Rose's equipment, if he's by himself. They can steal our equipment, if we're by ourselves. But if they had to come into all these homes and take everybody's stuff, and then explain to the world how in this non-emergency situation, they've suspended the First Amendment, they couldn't. That's what we've got to make them do.

What is going on is, you have a few—what is it, one half of one percent—who control the majority of all this country's wealth. They just don't get people to go along with it because it's the right thing. They get people to go along with it because of the propaganda that says, *Don't give a damn about nobody. Get you a car. Get you a house. Get you a dog. Get you a swimming pool. And the hell with everybody else.* It's all about the message you give the people. If you give the same message of individualism, then they will not only leave you on the air, they'll give you a bigger transmitter! But if you start talking about people coming together to fight against the system that's oppressing all of humanity, all across the planet, then they will find you. There is nowhere you can hide.

Just look at events around the world. The Solidarity movement in Poland. Much of that was brought about by what they called clandestine radio broadcasts. Look at Romania. When the people decided to overthrow the government,

what did they go after and fight for the hardest—the tv and the radio stations. The government doesn't have to come to your house every day and make sure you're complying with their laws if they can feed you this false information on a daily basis where you think you have no other choice.

If a law is killing you—and we can go back to the Declaration of Independence here—it is not only your right, it is your duty to throw off those chains and provide a new guard for yourself. This is what we're saying. The FCC has no right to urinate on your head and tell you it's raining. You know better than that. That's why I say get you a transmitter. So when they turn that dial, they hear 15 commercial stations, and they hear 15 liberation stations.

Dewayne Readus is a radio activist with Zoom Black Magic Liberation Radio (formerly WTRA) of Springfield, Illinois. These remarks are excerpted from a forum entitled "Censorship On The Radio: What Next?" which was held at the Guild Complex in Chicago on Friday, January 19, 1990. Readus' talk was part of a panel discussion which included such other radio activists as Black Rose and Mr. Ebony of Zoom Black Magic, Fresno, CA; Tony Fitzpatrick of Chicago's WLUP, and Lee Ballinger, Associate Editor of Rock and Roll Confidential who put the panel together and is presently doing cultural organizing throughout the United States around the issue of music censorship.



RATTLING OF THE DRUMS

Rob Bowman: Hi. My name is Rob Bowman. I'm from CKLN, 88.1 FM, a community radio station in Toronto. Welcome to W.O.M.A.D.—a World Of Music, Arts and Dance. Those of you who have been down for the last three or four nights for the W.O.M.A.D. Festival have been very lucky to see just an incredible array of diverse talents from the various cultures all over the world. We've been very privileged to have this in our city. I think we're very, very lucky.

Hopefully this forum will also enrich all of our lives and we'll have a lot of fun with it. It's called "The Rattling of the Drums—Political Expression in World Music." Perhaps I should amend that title to "Political Expression in World Arts." W.O.M.A.D. is more than just music. Though music is certainly a focus, a number of our participants up here have done things in other arts as well as music. Toward that end, let me introduce the participants in the panel.

Allen Deleary is a Chippewa Indian who is based in Ottawa, originally from Detroit. He leads a group called Seventh Fire. His previous incarnation is in Thomas E. Hawke and The Pine Needles, and Art and Soul. Virtually everything he writes and all the material he performs is politically-based. His group is basically a "Who's Who" of cultures. They're from Nicaragua, and Ecuador. There's a Canadian in the ensemble. There's also a Mohawk Indian, as well as Allen. So it represents a diverse group of people.

Geoffrey Oryema is originally from Uganda. He's a refugee at the moment who's been living in Paris for the last 12 years. He plays guitar as well as lukeme (thumb piano), nanga (a seven-string harp-like instrument) and flute. Geoffrey writes a variety of different material, and much of it is political.

Billy Bragg is a gentleman hailing from Barking-Essex, a suburb of London. Billy came of age in the midst of the punk explosion, started a solo career in the early eighties, and much of that career has involved singing songs that addressed a number of political issues.

And last, but certainly in no way least, is **Louise Bennett-Coverly**. Louise has performed for over 50 years. She hails from Jamaica and has dominated much of the entertainment within that island—as a storyteller, prose writer, poet, musician, and collector of folklore. Two generations within that country have grown up with "Miss Lou" as part of their daily diet. That's amazing! With people I've spoken to that I know from Jamaica, as soon as I bring up her name, a friendly smile just envelops their face and they remember their childhood. They remember hearing her on the radio and reading things in the newspaper that she wrote. She has really affected a big, big part of what goes on in Jamaica. With her, as I understand it, politics has been connected to giving cultural validity to what she calls "JAMMA" language—Jamaican English, Jamaican dialect, Jamaican talk, call it what you want. Otherwise it would have died.

I've told you a little about the four participants. I think they should tell you a lot more about themselves—who and what they are, how they were politicized, and how they incorporate that in their art. So I'm going to start with a three-part question. At what point, for all of you, did political things start becoming important and at what point did you become politicized? What were the catalysts for that? What were the events that made you realize that there was something definite in life that you had to address? Within the context of your life and your art, what are the issues for you? Who wants to be first? All right, you're on, Billy!

Billy Bragg: Fair enough. Well, I came into politics relatively late. I didn't do anything political at all until I left school at the first opportunity when I was 16 in 1974. I didn't go for further education. I worked in a variety of dead end jobs. I have to say that the person who made me political, the inspiration for all my political thought, is Margaret Thatcher. That's the truth! By end of the late 70s, there wasn't really that much difference between the Labor and Conservative governments in Great Britain. They were both committed to at least keeping the welfare state—the welfare state was an integral part of consensus politics in Britain.

Then Thatcher came into power and she began to dismantle the welfare state, and this began to affect me in a number of ways. The things I'd grown up taking

for granted—free education, free health care—were threatened and the rattling of the British sabre came during the Falklands War in 1982. It was Thatcher's reelection in 1983 that first began to bring together the humanitarian thoughts I'd always had and bring them into a specific political focus. The great catalyst for all this, and I think the political catalyst for my generation in Britain, was the miner's strike in 1984 and the struggle to defend the Greater London Council, who were the left wing Labor City Council for London. The GLC was committed to spending money on art that reflected the cosmopolitan make-up of the city of London. So they would be bringing in a lot of the kinds of acts that W.O.M.A.D. has been putting on this week, and subsidizing it heavily.

So it was getting involved with them, and then getting involved in the political struggle in defense of the National Union of Mine Workers and their jobs, that made me really think out my stance. That was what brought me to the conclusion that I was, in a broad sense, a socialist. I continually scrutinize and evaluate and express the ideals of socialism in the broadest sense, not from a dogmatic ideological background, which puts so many people off, myself included. I mean, going to Labor Party meetings in Britain is really BORING—committee after committee after committee....

My politicization process came about through reading and conversation with people and listening to other people's ideas, both from within the left and outside the left—if we have to even call these ideas left-wing. I would call them humanitarian ideals about equality and understanding. To bring that together is to really find out what socialism means.

Socialism all over the world is being redefined. Obviously it's being redefined in the Soviet Union and places like that, but those of us in the European left also have to rethink the dogmas—the Leninism, the Marxism—that have left us unable to compete with a capitalism that always goes for the lowest common denominator, moves incredibly quickly and continues to come at us from all angles. Some people would say we're stuck with, I would say we cherish, the ideals of equality, so that when one of us moves forward, we all move forward together, but that sometimes does make socialism a bit of a monolith.

So what I would like to commit myself to doing, is to evaluate and to dis-

cuss, through my music, through discussions like this, and through writing articles, through any means of communication: what socialism is, what socialism means and what socialism can be for the next century.

Louise Bennett-Coverley: Me? I didn't even know I was being political at all. I tell you something. All of a sudden I realized that when I was a little girl, when I was a child, the thing that bothered me was that we didn't sing the Jamaican folk songs in school. When I was a child, I said, "Why can't we sing our songs?" In those days, everything that came from the Jamaican was discouraged, or it was bad. People were saying that, "You have bad hair." If it's curly like mine, it's bad. And they say, "Your color bad". "You talk bad." Now this was terrible. I say, "No, *everything* couldn't be so bad." No. These people that I knew and loved, the people that had always been kind and good to me, all had this 'bad hair' and this 'bad color'. I said, "No. This can't be right." So I didn't believe the part about the hair. I didn't believe the part about the color. So I said, "The part about the talking can't right either." It must be wrong too.

I used to go to bed every night with an Anansi story. I used to think of the Anansi stories and songs as my lullabies. All these stories had songs and they were telling about this tricky spiderman who could turn himself into anything he wanted. You could go to school, and all of us schoolchildren knew about the stories. We would talk them outside at recess time, but we couldn't go into school and talk them. "Anansi stories in school? What? Oh no! You hear about Cinderella?" I didn't know. I just thought, "Why should this be?"

Then I knew I wanted to write down things, and they said you had to write in the formal language—the standard language of the day. We were taught to read and write in it, and we *could* read and write in it, yes of course, but we had another language which was strong and full of life, and full of the things that were happening around us. I ran home and I wrote the first set of verses in the Jamaican language about market women on a tram car. So I went to school and I said this for the children in school. And they were the best people. They could tell you if it good or bad. They said, "Yes, Louise, write another one." So that is where it started. And I went from that. In my verses, I always just talked the

truth about what was happening, and if it turns out to be political, well, I don't take any responsibility for how this thing turns out.

Now, there are what people call the 'Young Dubbers', the 'dub poetry' movement which is going on in the Caribbean and especially in Jamaica. We have a lot of young dub poets. We have a lot of people now *writing* in the language. On stage, you'll find that in most of our songs and stories, most of our writers are now writing plays in the language. And that is a change, a great change.

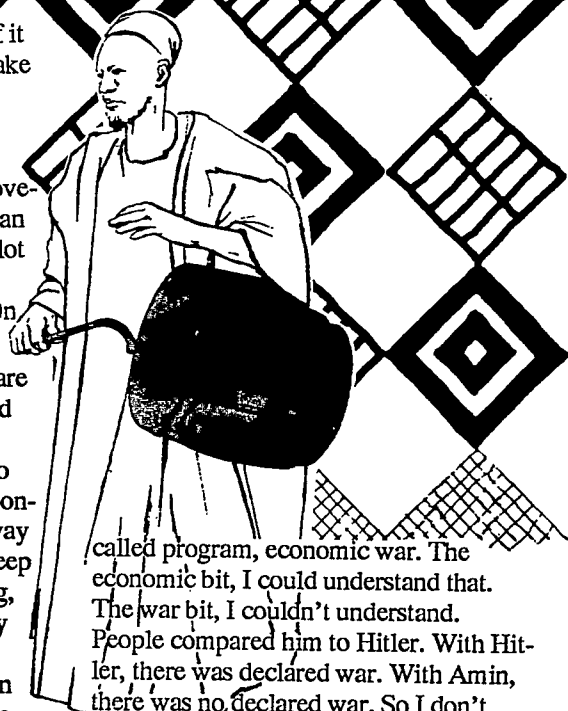
If you start something, you've got to have the courage to keep yourself responsible for that change. And the whole way of doing that is not to stop. You just keep on. If you believe in what you're doing, you keep on. And then, well, hopefully you see the fruits of your labor.

No, the drums have never stopped in the hills, but there were times when the drums weren't in town at all. The drums were sort of barred from town. Today, you have the folk songs, the traditional dances, and everything being recognized every year at the independence festival.... As to the role of women, we are not 'Adam's Rib' in these things. Women are the backbone.

Geoffrey Oryema: I became sensitively tuned to politics in 1971, January 25. What happened was something I never thought I could see in my life. My late Dad happened to be in government, and as a young boy, I never was involved in any politics as such, but my surrounding was full of that. Certain evenings, I could hear my Mom and my Dad and somebody else discussing some political issues. I told myself, "What's this party business? What's the Uganda People's Congress. What's the Democratic Party? What is the Conservative Party?"

In Uganda we have a problem, tribal differences. That is a major problem today, and that's what's hindering progress in many African countries. So to cut the long story short, 1971 came like bombshells, and I saw truckloads of human flesh. This is what I mention in one of my compositions. I almost passed out. Soldiers I've never seen before, mercenaries, they broke into the house and got my Dad. The bullet treated him like a little boy, just a toy. I saw that. Sometimes it still haunts me.

And then, Amin he shattered the economy. The economy went to zero. He had no ideology whatsoever. He talked of reconstructing the country with his so-



called program, economic war. The economic bit, I could understand that. The war bit, I couldn't understand. People compared him to Hitler. With Hitler, there was declared war. With Amin, there was no declared war. So I don't know who he was fighting. All my compositions then began to mold up on the politics of Uganda, people disappearing and abuse of human rights. That's how it all started, and I'm still at it. Governments have changed and we are still talking about democracy. My definition of democracy is this: "Would you like to take my seat?" "Yes." That, to me, is democracy.

So through my music, I'm trying to talk about that. Trying to put that message across with the hope someday, some change will take place. Musicians in Uganda have been slaughtered. With time we hope to change things in Uganda.

Allen Deleary: Well I guess to begin, I look at it and say, "Where did your political start come from," and I say, "Well, I was born with it. My parents were born with it. My grandparents were born with it. My great-grandparents were born with it." I am a Native person of this country—and I don't mean Canada, I mean North America—I have no boundaries. We live in a country that, for my people, has been under a state of siege, since good old Chris Columbus sailed the ocean blue. For that reason, I feel there's always been a constant pressure, a 24-hour state of siege. I have to look at it from that approach. I was born into a political situation. I grew up in Detroit. My father was an ironworker. A lot of Indian men used to do iron work in the big cities. And we were a part of that. People ask me what kind of Indian I am. Hey, I'm an *urban* Indian. Really, I'm a Chip-pewa.

I had to fill out these alien cards every year that say, "What are you? Negroid? Caucasian? Asian? Or Other?" I got "Other." Other. Indian other. Other Indian. So I think it comes from there. Growing up in an urban environment, you go, "What kind of hunting am I going to do here? Where's the feathers, beads and shiny objects here? What do I go hunting for? How do I maintain my lifestyle?" You have parents and extended family who say, "You are who you are. Your grandparents were Chippewa. Your parents before them were Chippewa." They've been under constant pressure. You realize that.

As a youth, I got into thievery, actually, growing up in the trade. But after a while, I got out of that, and I went into university. I like to write. I think the power of words is just fantastic, and I always liked to write poems and little things like that. I started out doing the 'feathers, beads and shiny objects' kind of poems. That's one element of it, and as a Native person you try to maintain that traditional element of it in your vision. I grew up in a city, but then I'd go to visit my grandparents. I'd go stay with them summers. I'd look at the living conditions for them as I was growing up and I'd say, "God, this is a state of squalor." I'm thankful I grew up in the nice golden suburbia in Detroit, but then I believe in the extended family, and I'd look at all my relatives and I'd say, "Wow. Things ain't right here."

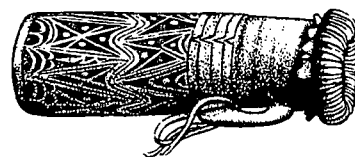
My good buddy who I met at university and am partners with musically now, allowed me the opportunity to start fitting conscious lyrics to the music. We took it from there, and we now play in a band called Seventh Fire. The name comes from our prophecies. The Seventh Fire is a time before the Eighth Fire. The Seventh Fire is the catalyst for the Eighth Fire. The Eighth Fire, can be either a good renewal or a bad renewal, contingent upon our collective consciousness. Within my generation I see people coming around and starting to get back into their traditions, and young people getting up and saying, "Yeah, I'm really sick of this. I ain't going to take it no more."

For me, yes I'm at that point, I'm sick of it and I ain't going to take it no more, but I don't want to do it with an approach that leaves out the majority cultures because that's not the society we live in today. I believe I live with everybody on this Turtle Island and,

musically, I think it's a conscious effort to make people aware that we are here *together*. There are certain people, not only mine—women, blacks, you name it, who are under a state of siege and suffer all kinds of oppression through sexist and racist systems that are set up to dictate how our life is to be. You go to my community, and you've got 80 percent unemployment. You've got people on welfare. My reserve is down river from Chemical Valley. We can't fish there. You can't hunt muskrat anymore. What do you do? Go on welfare and kill yourself or drink yourself to death.



A lot of the music we do, we do with violent overtones. It's not to condone it, but it's because there's internal violence in our communities which is directed at ourselves, and that's really counterproductive. Through music, if you can force people to think—youth especially—and direct their energies to other targets, that is really relevant. Make your own *external* targets. Don't do it to yourselves.



Rob Bowman: As you can see by the opening statements by all four of our participants, they come from very different contexts. I'm curious. Once all of you became politicized, and once you started becoming aware and active within your art, you started confronting ideas, systems, actions, activities that others obviously have extreme vested interests in protecting, whether it's Idi Amin, the Jamaican school system, Margaret Thatcher, or whether it's the American-Canadian government. Once you started actively expressing your beliefs through your art, what sorts of pressures were brought to bear on you to either (a) cease and desist, or (b) moderate what you were saying in one way or another.

Oryema: There is a certain amount of fear. Because once you're on the boat, on the train, you start being pressured. I'm talking particularly about family members. Because then, when you become the driving wheel, they'll start asking for your family members, be it a sister, or an uncle or a brother. These are some of the threats I have been receiving over the years. "If you don't shut up, we shall get one of them." It really scared me, scared the life out of me.

Bowman: Allen, Miss Lou or Billy? What sorts of pressures did you feel? Were pressures brought to bear at all to get you to moderate what you were saying and stop doing the kind of work you wanted to do?

Bragg: Not intensely, not like towards Geoffrey. Trying to deal with the multinational record corporations and media, there are incredibly subtle pressures used. They're very, very subtle. Quite honestly, if you're making music that is in any way political, if you're just playing it in some little corner to a group of people who agree with you; you're wasting your time. You've got to get out there and get your ideas across to people who disagree with you.

The music industry is very, very inviting. No matter what you're saying, they'll find a way of marketing it. If it's salable, they'll dress it up. Radical rock does sell. The Clash have proved it, and all the Woodstock stuff was marketed.





Girls are in this month. Who are we going to have this month? Oh, it's Tracy Chapman. It's just the industry pigeon-holing everybody. But at the same time, I think it's a very positive movement that a woman like Tracy Chapman can work within the racist, sexist music industry without going to the lowest common denominator which always, for women, has been the exploitation of their sexuality. So the subtle pressure is to not be taken over by what *their* vision is. You must come to some sort of—I hate to use this word—compromise between what you want to achieve and what they want to achieve.

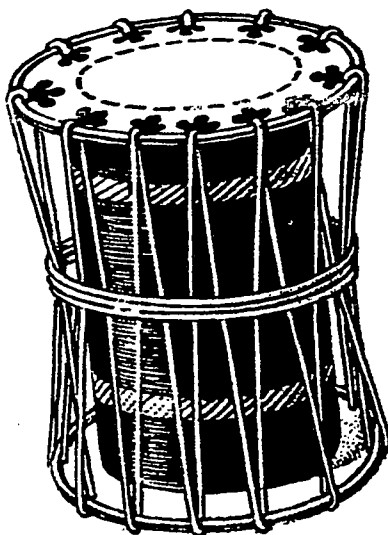
If this had been a political forum in Great Britain attended by any of the Left and I used the word compromise, they probably would have hissed me off stage for saying it. I happen to believe politics, and specifically democratic politics is based on compromise. Politics is another word for compromise in a democratic system—not the kind of compromise like the Labor Party compromise in England which upsets everybody—but a fair and equal compromise. If you're not doing that, you're forcing your ideas down on people.

I personally took part in "Red Wedge" in Britain, which was kind of like Pop Stars for Socialism or Artists United Against Thatcherism. We worked specifically with the Labor Party, not because we were Labor Party members, or even, in some cases, Labor Party supporters. That wasn't the criteria. The criteria was that we were against Thatcherism. For us in Britain, of all the things we want to address—anti-racism, economic freedom, our role in NATO, environmental issues—none of our goals are going to be achieved until we've gotten rid of Thatcherism. I must underline it's not personal because I don't believe in the personalization of her. She is merely the top of the pinnacle. We have to totally get rid of the whole idea of Thatcherism and monetarism in Great Britain. So in that aspect, Red Wedge's coming together did, at least in the music press, begin a debate about those issues. And now there's other specific initiatives around to bring the troops out of Northern Ireland and stuff like that. All of us working in isolation can achieve things, but working together, I do believe we can achieve bigger things, and it's good to have some interaction between artists

from different cultural, sexual and social backgrounds working together. I think it's a positive thing.

Bowman: Billy, you've been very lucky from what you and your manager were telling me from the beginning because of the contracts that you fortunately had the savvy to know how to sign.

Bragg: No, no, no. No one wanted to sign us to a long-term contract to start with. So we were lucky that the next time we came to do an album, we already had the strength of having proved ourselves.



With a little band that's just starting out, if a record company comes in and says, "We'll give you \$100,000. Sign this for the next 20 years;" it's incredibly tempting. You're on the dole and you just want to get going. You're frustrated and you know you can do something. So we were lucky in that it was the other way around. I was lucky to get in there with a one-album and short publishing deal. So when I went back with the next album, I was able to get rights back off the first, but that's not the usual way it goes....

Bowman: I think of Bob Dylan's first contract, which was a long-term contract. On his second album, with "Talking John Birch Society Blues," Columbia Records said forget it.

Bragg: Capitalism is not about choice. Capitalism wants monopoly, naturally it wants monopoly, and the record industry isn't some charitable institution where nice people rise to the top. It's the same as any other industry. What sells is the lowest common denominator and that's what they want you to be.

Bowman: Okay, Miss Lou and Allen, pressures brought to bear on either one of you with regard to moderating what you were doing?

Bennett-Coverley: When I started, a lot of people felt that the Jamaicans would never be able to talk again. They might as well close the schools. There were a lot of people who were very adamant about killing the dialect. "We have got to kill this thing," they said. I was fighting for the respect of our *language*. "I don't know how dem can seh Jamaican language is corruption, yet dem still seh English language is derivation, *derived from* the Norman, French and the Latin and Greek. When we derive from dem, it's corruption, but yuh see de unfairity."

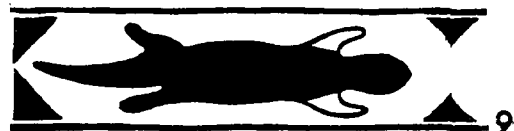
Bowman: Okay, Allen. Pressures that were brought to bear upon you.

Deleary: I think Canada's pretty open. I probably imagine the federal government's attitude about our band is, "It's a flash in the pan and hopefully it will die out."

Bowman: Wait till you get that CBS Records contract....

Deleary: But like Miss Lou says and Geoffrey says, sometimes pressure is brought to bear from within. That's from within my own people. I can't deal with that. I can't really care about that. It comes from people who have already elected their path and want to jump right into the system that exists for and that's set up for them. A lot of our organizations and our communities are spoon-fed money by the federal government. They signed those agreements with us; and they have to honor those commitments, but then you have people who say when I criticize the welfare state in my lyrics, "You shouldn't say that. You're biting the hand that feeds you." I can't overly concern myself with that.

Bragg: How do you feel about being part of a festival that's got corporate sponsorship from a company that's just closing down breweries all over Canada. Here's this month's copy of *Now*, which has a whole big splash on the festival on the front cover, and then you turn to about page 48 and there's a full-page ad from the Molson Brewery Union saying why people should be boycotting Molson brands of beer. So all of us are having to deal with those kinds of compromises. I support W.O.M.A.D. I want to be part of



Left to Right

Billy Bragg

Louise Bennett-Coverley

Rob Bowman

Geoffrey Oryema

Alan Delcary



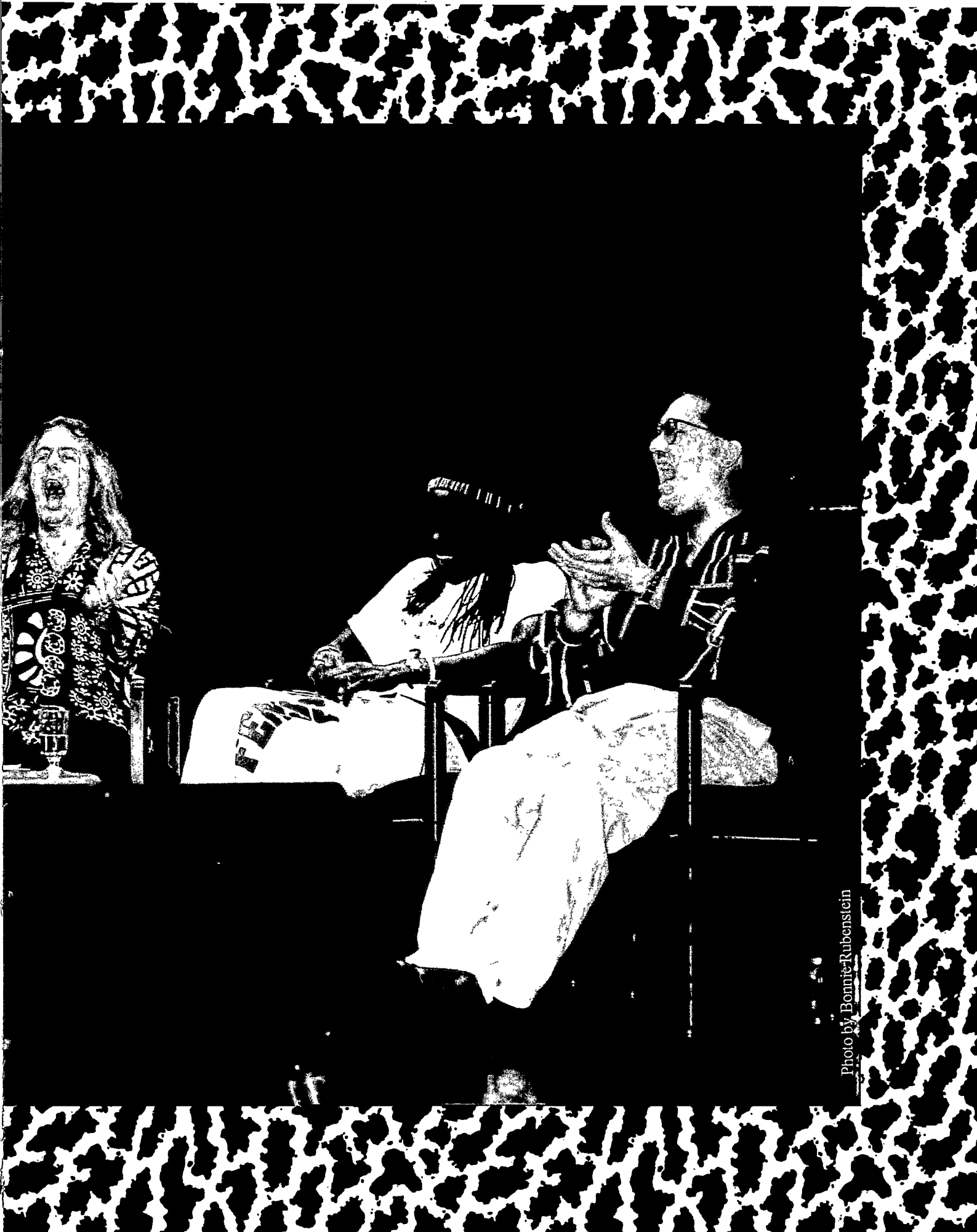


Photo by Bonnie Rubenstein

W.O.M.A.D. W.O.M.A.D. does whatever it feels it has to do to get its gigs on down here, but as artists what we have to do is make it clear that they may be sponsoring festivals like this, but they certainly don't buy our acquiescence. I make clear statements from the stage — and I've been doing it every night — about corporate sponsorship and trade union rights.

The first night we had a very interesting discussion. Well, it wasn't really a discussion, it was a one-off heckle. It was one of those inspirational one-off heckles that helps you to get across what you're saying. It's my feeling that the reason why Molson is having to go around and buy out breweries like Carling and O'Keefe is not because they just like buying places to play monopoly, but because they have to do this to compete with the American beer corporations now that the free trade deal has gone through. So I'm saying this one night and someone in the audience says, "Yeah, but American beer's cheap." So the choice seemed to be, for Canada, do you want trade union rights or cheap beer?

As artists, we can not be intimidated by the hand that is feeding us. We must make clear statements. In that way, we're not allowing a company like Molson to look cozy and good-time, and we still can be on the side of something that I personally feel is very, very important, which is this festival. We have to make sure that we clearly understand not only what Molson-W.O.M.A.D. implies, but what it means to us as artists when we interact with our audience.

Yet while I think we have the responsibility to try and do things, you can't follow the audience home and see what they do politically. You've only got so far to go. I don't think you should be going that far with them, but I think one of the most important things you can do is, not allow the audience to use *you* to take *their* responsibility away for changing the world. If the audience want to change the world, then it's your duty to focus that desire, but to reflect the responsibility for change back on them. You can't let them think, "Well, I've done my bit. I've bought my Billy Bragg LP—I've done my bit for democratic socialism in North America." So I think our role as politically engaged artists is to provoke questions in people's minds and to provoke debate. We must be part of the alternative media that's not giving the views reflected in the news page. Our press at home is exclusively right wing now. It's owned by a very, very few rich individuals, and it more or less parrots



what the government says on all but a very few issues. I think our role is to bring people together, to focus their anger, to focus their frustrations, but in the end, to reflect it back on them.

QUESTION FROM AUDIENCE:
"I WONDER HOW MUCH YOU ALL FEEL THAT YOU'RE PREACHING TO THE CONVERTED?"

Deleary: I think in a large circumstance, in some of the shows and the benefits we do, we're pretty well preaching to the converted, but there's also that little minority that comes in just because of curiosity. We can plant a seed and a concept in a person's head. If they come and they just *dance*, then maybe something will click a little while later on. That's one of the things I *can* do. Above and beyond that, hopefully the converted audience gets larger.

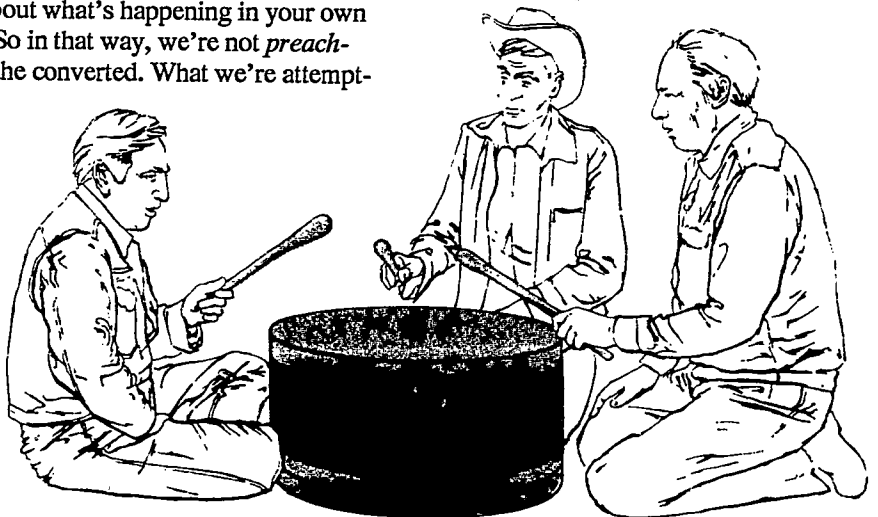
Bragg: That's what you're trying to do. You can't just stand at the door and say, "Do you agree with Bill's politics?" If you say "Yes", then alright, you're *not* coming in. In the end, for the people that do come, the people that do agree with you, you're hoping that if they come for one specific issue they feel strongly about, you can open their eyes to other issues. They see that you're not just a single-issue person which is particularly important, not so much in Canada, but in the U.S.A., where so much of the political activity is not around a Left socialist kind of broad labor movement, but on single-issue politics. Your duty as a performer is to tie together all the threads. You can't have strong feelings on racism or strong feelings on sexism, you can't feel strongly about what's happening in South Africa, without having strong feelings about what's happening in your own town. So in that way, we're not *preaching* to the converted. What we're attempt-

ing to do is make a *community* of the converted, to bring the converted together and show them what they have in common.

If you believe that revolutions begin, not in record shops, but through a raising of consciousness, then yes, popular culture can play an important part, not on its own, but with other catalysts in society, in eventually bringing about social change. So don't think we're preaching to the converted. We're trying to provoke and inspire and focus people who have similar feelings to our own to go out and think about broader issues. The amount of your political worth is not commensurate with the number of buns you put on seats. That's really important, because there's times when you obviously feel like you're peeing into the wind and nothing's changing and no one comes along.

But I'm sitting here next to Miss Lou, someone who's had a very, very long career, who said earlier that you just have to keep going and keep going and keep going. I'm sure there's been times when Miss Lou's popularity came to a plateau where she thought, "What direction am I going in?" But while she was doing this, in the middle of her career, there were people coming through directly influenced by her work, like Bob Marley, who were carrying on that whole expression of Jamaican culture in a global sense, and through listening to Bob Marley, I came to respect the culture of Afro-Caribbean people in Britain. Miss Lou has influenced people for generations rather than just on a short-term pop star basis. So through Miss Lou carrying on and carrying on with what she was doing, the ramifications are huge.

Excerpted from *The Rattling of the Drums: Political Expression in World Music—W.O.M.A.D. Forum*, Saturday, August 12, 1989, Toronto, Canada.



CULTURAL SURVIVAL FOR THE THIRD WORLD: THE HAVANA BIENNIAL



"Cultural invasion, which serves the ends of conquest and the preservation of oppression, always involves a parochial view of reality, a static perception of the world, and the imposition of one world view upon another."

- Paolo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*

"Capitalism is a bad deal for an artist. The everyday problems wear down your spirit." (Elso Padilla)

- Jimmie Durham interview with Elso Padilla, "Here at the Center of the World", *Third Text*, Winter 1989-90

World events have cast a shadow over fond memories of the Third Havana Biennial which took place in November and December, 1989. The U.S. has attacked Panama, maimed Nicaragua and esca-

lated the strangulation of Cuba. What was a celebration of the art of the developing nations of the Third World has become a faded dream. Yet, lest we forget, let me try to say what it was like.

The theme of the Biennial and the seminars was "Tradition and Contemporaneity in Third World Art", a persistent concern of colonized peoples' confrontation with Euro-American cultural hegemony. Among the numerous participants in the seminar were Pierre Restany (France), Mirko Lauer (Peru), Juan Acha (Peru-Mexico), Badi-Banga ne Mwine (Zaire) and Geeta Kapur (India). Kapur gave a compelling presentation in which she described Indian culture from the point of view of progress toward socialism. She spelled out problems of current cultural models and put forth the need "above all, that the two concepts, tradition and modernity, be disengaged from the abstracting ideology of capitalism - restoring to the one a [tradition-in-use] and to the other the utopian dimension."

There were outstanding solo shows,

especially the Biennial's knock-out Sebastiao Salgado "world in labor" photographs exhibited in the awesome Fuerza castle, with walls ten feet thick. Little-known in the United States, Salgado (a Brazilian living in Paris) is an internationally respected member of Magnum collective. One of his many memorable photographs was titled "Anti-racist Demonstration in Rhodesia."

In terms of Africa, the outstanding feature of this Biennial was the extensive showing of work from that continent. There were sculptures, paintings, prints and wire toys from Algeria, Angola, Zambia, and Zimbabwe, reflecting an impressive depth, variety and range of concerns. Steven Kappata (Zambia) paints beautiful tableaux of colonial repression with wit and clarity. A large and moving exhibit, "Messages from South Africa" showed works done often in adverse conditions and with humble materials. A large number of block prints were especially expressive.

Black artists from Great Britain, South Korean *min joong*, Asian American, African American, Afro-Canadian and Martiniquean artists met to show slides and discuss issues of Third World artists in the First World. For progressive visual artists, the Havana Biennial provided an important international communication from the perspective of the "have-nots" of the world. While speaking for the developing nations, Cuba itself is a "have-not" nation. While providing for inclusion in its programs, it too struggles for geo-political inclusion.

The next Biennial in 1992 will be on the Quincentennial of Columbus - a profoundly appropriate occasion to advance understanding among artists struggling to overcome colonialism.

Betty Kano is co-coordinator of the *Alliance for Cultural Democracy*, a commissioner on the *Alameda County Art Commission*, and a painter. She and Shifra Goldman organized a large delegation of arts professionals from California to attend the *Third Havana Biennial*.



"An Anti-Racist Demonstration in Rhodesia"

Sebastiao Salgado (Brazil)

XMAS IN PANAMA, N.C.

Dear folks,

As this holiday season draws to a close, it seems time to share with our family and friends the joys of our trip through Arkansas, Texas and Oklahoma. We will remember 1989 as the year that the Berlin Wall fell, the year that Eastern European countries broke from the chains of the past, and a year of bitter cold throughout the Midwest and South. But, most of all, 1989 will live in our minds as the year that President Bush sought to free our land from tobacco traffickers by sending 26,000 American troops to invade North Carolina.

The immediate trigger for military action had been the death of an officer assigned to help keep North Carolina safe for U.S. investments. Endorsing the United Nations peace-keeping resolution which requires countries to attack every time a citizen is killed, the President announced that he would put an end to the tin horn drug lord. Bush explained, "Tobacco causes more deaths than the combined effects of alcohol, heroin, crack, the demon-weed-marijuana, and coal and cotton dust. We can no longer sit by idly while self-serving drug barons profit from poisoning our young people." I felt an immediate rush of patriotic pride. Here was a man who cared not one whit about votes, political power, the tobacco lobby or business profits. Driven solely by his profound sense of morality, Our President dedicated himself to crushing those drugs which most seriously threaten our health and safety.

The next day we reached Huntsville (50 miles north of Houston) and spent a day with my parents. Houston newspapers told the true story of the invasion. Few people know how dreadfully close America came to losing a President in the first few hours of the assault. Sneering that the tobacco lord had lived too pampered a life to hide in the North Carolina jungles, he announced that if the drug fiend tried to flee, then, he, George Bush, would personally lead U.S. troops in pursuit of this international criminal. As the President pulled his ten gallon hat over one eye and fired both

six-guns in the air, his aides threw themselves to the ground, terrified of what this could bode for America's future. One aide hugged the President's knees as others implored him not to leave the country in the hands of Dan Quayle. It was only these cries of desperation which persuaded a kinder and gentler President to reholster his empire blasters and consent to direct the charge from Washington.



As U.S. troops landed, they quickly overwhelmed native forces and proceeded to the drug lord's private mansion. There, the \$10 million in cash found hidden in wall safes dramatized the luxurious wealth enjoyed by the tobacco baron at the expense of countless lives. Soldiers who initially stormed the drug fiend's stronghold alleged that, amid portraits of Adolf Hitler, Mother Theresa, and Moammar Ghadafi was a life-size painting of George Bush. Unfortunately, subsequent inventories of captured goods failed to turn up the Bush portrait.

The invading press corps took photos which reveal a bizarre lifestyle of drug violence mixed with the occult. In addition to over 50 pounds of recently harvested tobacco leaves, various processing and shipping equipment was uncovered, verifying that drug preparation was a daily activity. The drug cache

of uncovered weapons implicated a tobacco conspiracy extending well beyond the borders of North Carolina. Many weapons had been manufactured in Virginia and there are unconfirmed reports of some having been smuggled through Tennessee.

Shooting everything in sight, U.S. troops apparently stirred up so much wall plaster dust that they missed capturing several visitors to the drug dealer's

"witch house." The escapees were thought to have included four TV evangelists from Louisiana who performed daily protection rituals for the tobacco lord. A Duke University specialist in native culture identified the seized objects—20 plastic frogs, bleachblonde hair tint, and issues of the *Ladies' Home Journal*—as unmistakable paraphernalia of rituals performed by area voodoo cults.

Appearing on national TV, President Bush pointed with disdain to evidence of the tobacco baron's lavish spending and announced that proof of his administration's drug chastity was their modest income and meager lifestyle.

With the tobacco lord eluding capture, Bush put a \$1 million price tag on his head.

Local police predicted the bounty would have a positive effect. One commented "A lot of guys down here already know how to stick it to anyone holding back on giving his bossman a cut of the take." Unfortunately, many mistook the \$1 million offer as meaning "dead or alive." U.S. troopers paying \$150 for each surrendered gun were forced to explain that the bounty was only good if the tobacco king was killed before spilling the beans on the CIA's help in setting up his empire.

The entire scenario seemed unbelievable. I pondered it as we drove to see my relatives on the East Texas farm where my grandparents raised their family and on to Dallas where we marvelled at the downtown lights.

It was in Dallas that we discovered how citizens of North Carolina have

Illustration by Bob Waldmire

never been allowed free elections. The drug lords always threatened massive unemployment if there were legislation restricting the production or sale of tobacco. In a statesmanlike display of human compassion, President Bush announced that, since elections cannot be free as long as people are motivated by hunger and homelessness, he would suspend the production of all weapons until every person was housed and fed. Or maybe what he said was that he wouldn't feed any hungry person until all of his supporters were armed. Well, however his speech went, it was very compassionate and statesmanlike.

We soon learned that North Carolinians unanimously supported the invasion. We learned it over and over as the papers repeated how happy the little natives were that Americans came to shoot them. It's because they got to loot. I'll never forget the woman on TV who was carrying a brand new Atari game in one arm and her dead son in the other. When she saw the microwave, she ditched her son to pick it up as she turned to the cameras saying, "I love Americans."

It may not be easy to understand how the North Carolinians could be totally unanimous in welcoming an invasion that wrecked their economy and left hundreds murdered. Having studied psychology, I think I can provide some insight into this. It's because they say "you all." Native peoples who talk funny always like having their family killed. It's just the way their minds work.

When the attack began, they claimed it would only last three days. As it goes on, day after day, it seems wonderful that U.S. troops are willing to stay, just to convince the North Carolinians how happy they are to be invaded.

By the time we got to Barbara's family in Tulsa, it seemed to add up. That's because there's nothing to bring a family together like sitting in front of TV on Xmas and watching a nice body count. No sooner had we finished singing "Little Town of Bethlehem" than the TV let us know the number of GIs killed, GIs wounded and civilians killed. We waited to hear the numbers on the other side. I guess they weren't as important, because TV didn't mention them as much. But, the next news spot compared the number the U.S. claimed to have killed with body counts from the hospitals. The score was piling up faster than touchdowns in the Sugar Bowl. Cheered to

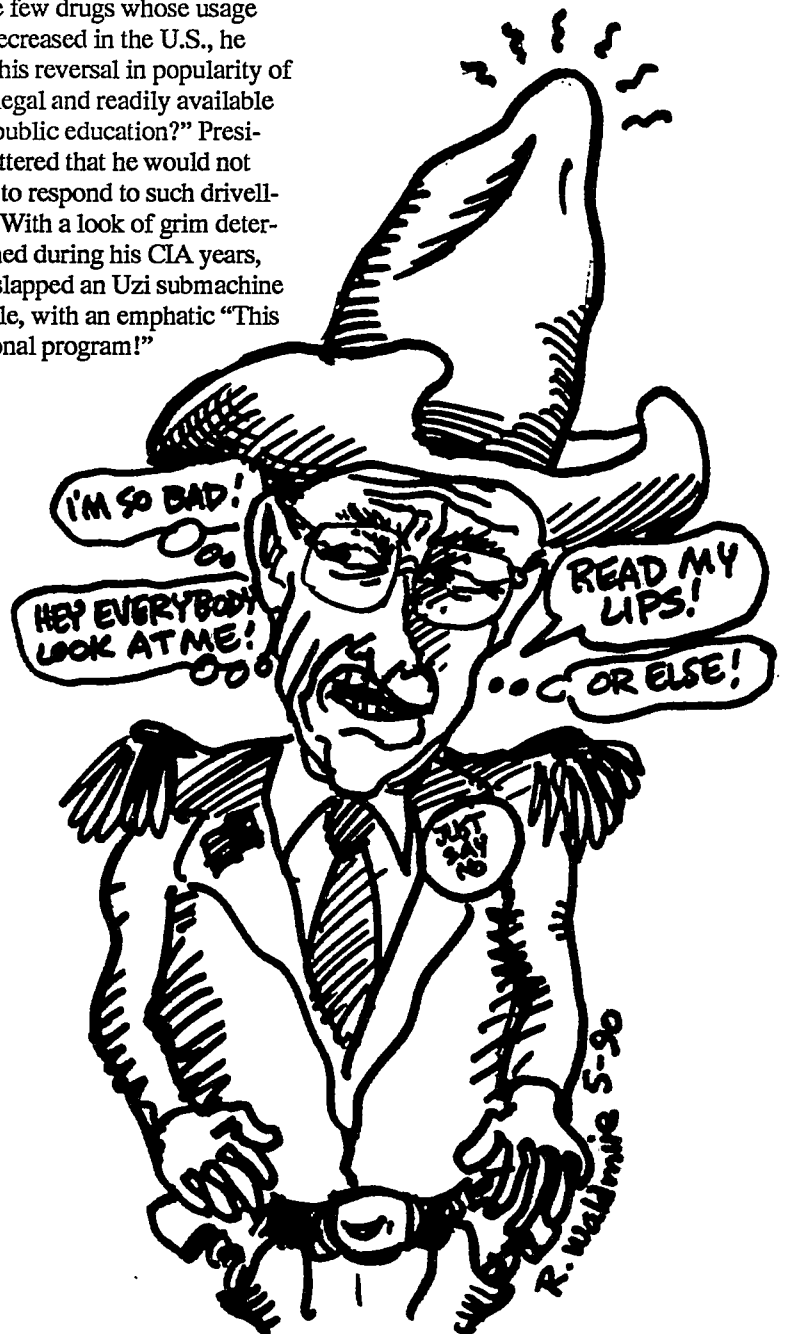
know that the U.S. Team was out in front by whichever numbers you used, we went back to singing "Oh, Holy Night."

Then came the stunning announcement that the next phase in the war on drugs would be the criminalization of tobacco. "But, can he actually do that?" reporters were heard to whisper at the surprise press conference. "No problem," responded a Presidential aide. "If Congress surrenders its power to wage war and is unable to offer so much as a whimper at the singlehanded dismemberment of a country, how could they stop the restructuring of the tobacco industry?"

One reporter queried whether the step was justified. Pointing out that tobacco was one of the few drugs whose usage has actually decreased in the U.S., he asked, "Isn't this reversal in popularity of a drug that is legal and readily available due solely to public education?" President Bush sputtered that he would not lower himself to respond to such drivelling nonsense. With a look of grim determination learned during his CIA years, the President slapped an Uzi submachine gun on the table, with an emphatic "This is my educational program!"

By the time I got back to St. Louis, the presidential decree had sent shock waves through the free world. On Wall Street, stock values shot through the ceiling as investors grasped that, once it was illegal, tobacco would sell for 10, 20 or even 100 times its current price. With an array of producers, processors, suppliers, and street peddlers getting their cut, profits from the tobacco industry could well soar into the trillions by the middle 1990's.

Tobacco companies immediately praised criminalization as the most prudent response to the current drug crisis. They have long been critical of what they call the "sissy wimp" restrictions on



tar and nicotine content of cigarettes. Emphasizing the importance of being able to make cigarettes "the way the consumer demands them," one tobacco company spokesman affirmed, "It may be true that criminalization leads to product impurities and health dangers in any drug, but we must not forget that there are always prices to pay for a vibrant, growing economy." Another spokesman added that the increased nicotine pleasure would "make a man out of any smoker."

Remembering the origins of his own family's enrichment, even Ted Kennedy suspended his usual harsh comments on the Bush administration to join the chorus of those lauding the President's move. Other endorsements poured in. The strongest praise came from owners of night clubs, restaurants and other busi-

nesses hoping to skim a little off the top of laundered tobacco money. Bankers jumped on the bandwagon as they realized that tobacco lords would need loans and the ability to hide money by moving it from account to account.

Of course, no one extolled the President's brilliance more than the weapons manufacturers. They had been facing bleak prospects from the lessening of hostilities in Europe. But their future once again looks profitable. Armament companies anticipate a big bang in the market for short range missiles by an America ever more conscious of the need for internal safety and security.

Yet, the biggest winner in the tobacco wars may well be the police. With battles for turf control expected on every city block, the police can expect to get the

beef-ups they request. One officer ecstatically told reporters, "The war on drugs may not have lowered usage, but at least it's taught people that a police state isn't so bad. People may become so thankful for protection that they don't care if we boost our salaries a little by selling some of the drugs we seize."

The sharpest businessmen also look to the drug wars to help ease competition. As one banker-grower explained, "It's sort of like safety equipment. Sure, it costs a little more, but the small timers can't afford it. So, it ends up helping us multinationals more than hurting." With few grower-processors able to raise the cash to buy off a judge or a State Department, the remaining tobacco kings can expect to have an even tighter grip on the world market.

It was these defenders of the American Way of Life that the President invited to his War-on-Drugs ball. As visions of profit margins danced in their heads, the tobacco moguls hugged George Bush, proclaiming, "Hell, what's one drug lord down. More business for the rest of us!" And just like the happy natives of North Carolina, they yelled, "His war on drugs brought us the best Xmas ever!!"

Peace through War on Drugs,

Don Fitz
December 30, 1989

Don Fitz is the editor of *Worker's Democracy* magazine, and, with Dave Roediger, he co-edited a recently published book entitled *Within the Shell of the Old: Essays in Workers Self-Organization*. He is presently designing a board game called "Drug Wars", and would like to hear from graphic artists interested in working on the project. His address is 720 Harvard, University City, Missouri, 63130.



Jessie Helms' Nightmare

Illustration by Bill Crook

Subscribe to Workers' Democracy

Recent Articles: Travelling Wobbly Art Show; Shop Floor Struggles; Labor Resistance in Eastern Europe; Sit-Down Strikes; Worker Self-Education & Worker Self-Organizing.

4 issues/year \$6 Ind. \$20 supporting
WD, PO Box 24115,
St. Louis, MO

How I Started

Mommy, it's Wednesday.

Mommy, I know it's Wednesday.

Mommy, you're wrong, it's Wednesday.

Mommy, you're lying! It's Wednesday.

Mommy, I had gym today, it's Wednesday.

Mommy, see, the paper says it's Wednesday,
it's Wednesday.

Mommy, on your own calendar,

you crossed off Tuesday yourself!

Mommy, admit it, today is Wednesday!

Tomorrow you'll say it's not Thursday!

— Jim Murray

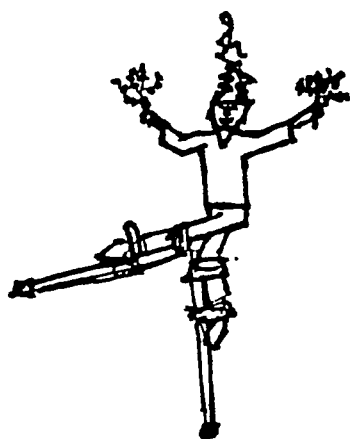
drawing: Seth Tobocman



DBAE: Discretely Biased Art Education



ART



not art

It's here! A new ploy for justifying and legitimizing elitism in art education. A model that responds to the neo-conservative cries for reform in education where excellence and discipline are the watchwords. A design that plays to fears aroused by William Bennett, Lynne Cheney, E.D. Hirsch, Allan Bloom and others who have decried the "deplorable" state of "cultural literacy" and humanistic education in the United States. It is Discipline-Based Art Education (DBAE), and it is taking the field by storm.

Proposed, advocated and funded by the Getty Center for Education in the Arts (a division of the Getty Trust), DBAE is based on the concept that four disciplines should make up the content of art instruction—aesthetics, art history, art criticism and art production. DBAE shifts the emphasis from solely *making* art to equal involvement in the four disciplines.

DBAE has a strong following. With its emphasis on rigor and its ability to be quantitatively assessed, DBAE is touted as giving art education credibility and substance. It is viewed by some as changing the perception of art from being a frill to being an academic subject. However, despite its following and all the fanfare, DBAE has critical flaws that call into question the soundness of the approach. Its preoccupation with making art a rigorous, measurable discipline has resulted in not only an elitist, but an overly simplified, standardized approach to art education. DBAE has shifted the emphasis from art as experience to art as product. It is democratization of high culture at work rather than cultural democracy.

DBAE is the epitome of the democratization of culture approach in that it seeks to bring fine art to the masses—to let all citizens experience high art. It seeks to provide all children with the skills and knowledge necessary to appreciate the high arts. DBAE adopts the approach of the cultural missionary. It takes a selected tradition (high art) and presents it as the only tradition valid and worthy of study. As a result the path to enlightenment is seen as only through the high arts.

DBAE stresses excellence in art education which is equated with the fine arts. However there is a problem with this argument for excellence. In examining excellence it is necessary to ascertain who is determining the standards of excellence and what they are based upon. In a society based on class distinctions, stand-

ards of excellence are determined by those in power to define them as such. The standards used to judge and legitimize art are class based. These standards perpetuate the values and privileges of the upper class. As a result popular art forms are seen as being aesthetically trivial or not "fine."

Traditionally, art educators have been critical of the rest of education which has stressed abstract thinking, mathematical reasoning and verbal abilities at the expense of nonverbal communication, perceptual skills and kinesthetic experiences. They have voiced opposition to adopting a "straight-jacket" educational approach that attempts to force students' unique learning styles into a uniform mold. Yet, if one examines DBAE closely, it is evident that art educators aren't practicing what they preach. Standardization in the curriculum of DBAE has resulted in conformity, convergent thinking, a stifling of creativity and a lack of critical thinking. In DBAE the emphasis is on learning formulaic art content, not on individual expression, originality or development. As a result similarities among students' art work are not viewed with alarm, rather they are seen as being a sign of success. DBAE is sending out the message that there is a "right" way of doing art.

Prior to DBAE, art education programs emphasized the process of creation. DBAE in its attempt to legitimize art as an academic subject moves away from the process to concentrating on the product. Its emphasis is not to have children experience satisfaction and insight from the process of creation. Rather the goal is to train children's minds in the analysis and understanding of the works of others: in effect to create informed and knowledgeable connoisseurs, appreciators and consumers of the arts.

Art education is at a crossroads. DBAE, the currently accepted paradigm guiding the direction of art education policy-makers, is leading art education on a perilous course. Instead, art education must embrace the values of cultural democracy.

Firstly, art education needs to incorporate the ideas of participation, culture as a process, and culture germinating from within individuals and communities. In DBAE children are being educated using a non-participatory model. Art classes are only engaging their minds rather than involving them in the creative process. It is important that in our haste to legitimize art as a subject we don't totally ignore the importance of

the creative process. It is imperative that we base art programs on the belief in the creative capacities of all students. Culture is not a ready-made commodity meant to be distributed to the masses. Art cannot be taught as a pre-packaged product. Like culture, it is evolving and must be treated as a dynamic process.

Secondly, art education must recognize a multi-cultural and multi-disciplinary perspective. It cannot impose on students the values of only a selected tradition. It must not extol the virtues of high art to the exclusion of all others. Art education must be responsive to pluralism and cultural diversity.

Art education must chart a new course. It must take the lead and decenter

“art” from its imperious position in the cultural hierarchy. Art is a part of everyone’s life and should not be estranged from individual experience. It is not reserved for an exclusive elite. It is time to stop perpetuating the notion of the artistic genius. This reinforces the idea that one must be specially talented or have a divinely inspired gift to be an artist. Every one of us is creative and imaginative. Every one of us is an artist. It is time for art education to act on this belief!

Deserrie Ruptash is a graduate student in the Community Arts Management Program at Sangamon State University, Springfield, Illinois.

WEAPONS OF CHOICE

Knife
vs. pen
and dark meh know better then to carry any weapons

cousins learned contempt for the contemporary
in prison
and one has AIDS but the family is happy
he is “involved” with a German girl

this blonde babe sister sweet one sex Virgin
will surely lead him to Heaven
and I can’t blame her or anyone else for this last dream

because look at me
I love words
I love how heavy words are
I love how words bury me deep into my own skin

Rane Arroyo is a Puerto Rican poet and playwright from Chicago currently earning his Ph.D. in Literature. This poem is from his manuscript, Forced to Rumba.

CULTURAL PLURALISM LIVES!

New Titles From WEST END PRESS

❖ Jim Sagel, *Otra Vez en la Movida (On the Make Again)*, poems, \$8.95

❖ Margaret Randall, *Coming Home: Peace without Complacency*, essays, \$5.95.

❖ Jimmie Durham, *Columbus Day*, poems, \$8.95. (Reprint: out in August).

Prepaid orders shipped free.

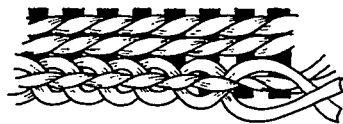
WEST END PRESS

PO Box 27334

Albuquerque, NM 87125



MACROCOSM U.S.A.: ENVIRONMENTAL, POLITICAL AND SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION FOR THE 90'S—S. L. Brockway, Editor, Box 969, Cambria, CA 93428, seeks articles and items about present-day progressive publications, organizations and activists for a manual of social solutions and resource directories to be utilized by teachers, community workers, public servants and committed individuals.



Cultural Organizers!

Seeking information on alternative visual, performing, musical, organizational, activist, and publishing groups and individuals to be included in

A Resource Guide for Grass

Roots Cultural Organizing

Send information and inquiries to:
Tinka Sack, RR 4 Box 88A, Boone, Iowa 50036



Red & Black on Cream Hwvt.
"No Columbus"

1-3	\$12.00	13-24	\$9
4-6	11.50	25-36	8
7-12	10.00	37 +	7

Order any combination. Specify size. Shipping: Add \$1.50 for 1st shirt, 0.25 ea. addtl.

T-SHIRTS

100% cotton
union made
union printed



Red & Black on White
"No Censorship"



Quincentennial?
Discover America:
In the Heart of the Beast
Puppet and Mask Theatre
1500 East Lake Street
Minneapolis MN 55407

RLM Graphics -1615 E. Lake Street-Minneapolis MN 55407

Call about our touring show: (612) 721-2535

Quincentennial Update:

Huracán, the quarterly newspaper of ACD's Quincentennial Project, will begin publication in July of 1990. It will contain articles, news and resources, relating to the 500th anniversary of the European invasion of the Americas. *Huracán* will be available free to ACD members or for \$15.00 for four issues for non-members. Write:

***Huracán*, c/o ACD, PO Box 7591, Minneapolis, MN 55407.**

Design and Production Coordinators

Josh Hedstrom
Tinka Sack

Layout and Design

Bill Crook
Frank Martin
Carol Petrucci
Bonnie Rubenstein
Deserrie Ruptash
Ron Sakolsky

Word Processing

Lula Lester

Typesetting

Jim Murray
of *Cultural Correspondence*

Printing

Inkworks 



ACD Board Members

Coordinators

Betty Kano
1340 Peralta Avenue
Berkeley, CA 94702

Ricardo Levins Morales
2311 E. 32nd Street
Minneapolis, MN 55406

Treasurer

Bill Fleming
521 Harold Avenue, NE
Atlanta, GA 30307

Corresponding Secretary

Sal Salerno
3204 10th Avenue, South
Minneapolis, MN 55407

Recording Secretary

Mat Schwartzman
611 Guerrero #19
San Francisco, CA 94110

Finance Coordinator

Lisa Maya Knauer
88 Second Avenue #6
New York, NY 10003

Publications Coordinator

Carol Petrucci
1208 1/2 S. Spring
Springfield, IL 62704

Projects Coordinator

Judy Branfman
327 Summer Street, Studio 3
Boston, MA 02210

Membership Coordinator

Genie Barringer
1839 N. Decatur Rd., N.E.
Atlanta, GA 30307

Editorial Coordinator

Ron Sakolsky
Fools Paradise
Pawnee, IL 62558

Natasha Bonilla

4816 McMahon, N.W.
Apt. I72
Albuquerque, NM 87114

Joe Lambert

317 Lexington
San Francisco, CA 94110

Bob Lamadafkie

59 Leisure Lane
Flagstaff, AZ 86004

Denise Mayotte

3204 10th Avenue
Minneapolis, MN 55407

Tripp Mikich

1326 Shotwell Street
San Francisco, CA 94110

Susan Perlstein

118 8th Avenue
Brooklyn, NY 11215

Bill Stroud

1020 Bush Street #2
San Francisco, CA 94109

Board Alternate

John Crawford
2535 Duranes Road
Albuquerque, NM 87104



JOIN THE ALLIANCE FOR CULTURAL DEMOCRACY AND SUBSCRIBE TO CULTURAL DEMOCRACY

ALLIANCE FOR CULTURAL DEMOCRACY: MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION
membership & donations are tax-deductible

Individual Membership \$ 25 \$ 40 Other \$ ____
Organizational Membership \$ 50 Contributions \$ ____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: (home) _____ (work) _____

Organizational Affiliation (if any): _____

Please send a check or money order payable to the **Alliance for Cultural Democracy**, to P. O. Box 7591, Minneapolis, MN 55407. For more information call (415) 346-8031

Is there someone else you think should hear about ACD? If you attach their name, address, and telephone number, we'll send them a copy of this brochure.

Printed on recycled paper

ACD
Alliance for Cultural Democracy
P.O. Box 7591
Minneapolis, MN 55407

The 1990 Alliance for Cultural Democracy National Gathering

will be held in Albuquerque, N.M. at the University of New Mexico on November 2-4. The conference will draw in cultural activists from around the country to weigh their responses to the Quincentennial Celebration in 1992. Other main topics will be cultural pluralism in America, networking of arts activists, and problems facing progressive artists in the Southwest. Cost of preregistration is \$25 for ACD members, \$35 for non-members; add \$10 after September 15. For more information, write ACD Conference, PO Box 81952, Albuquerque, NM 87198

