

Solidarity Times



Art Kube

**B.C. Fed
convention:
(p. 3, 4,
5, 8)**

'HUMMA-HUMMA TONIGHT'

Inside the Oakalla riot

By Debbie Wilson

The word went along the tiers of the west wing: "Humma-humma tonight." It came back in agreement: "Humma-humma tonight at eight." And there was humma-humma — a prison smash-up — that night of Nov. 22.

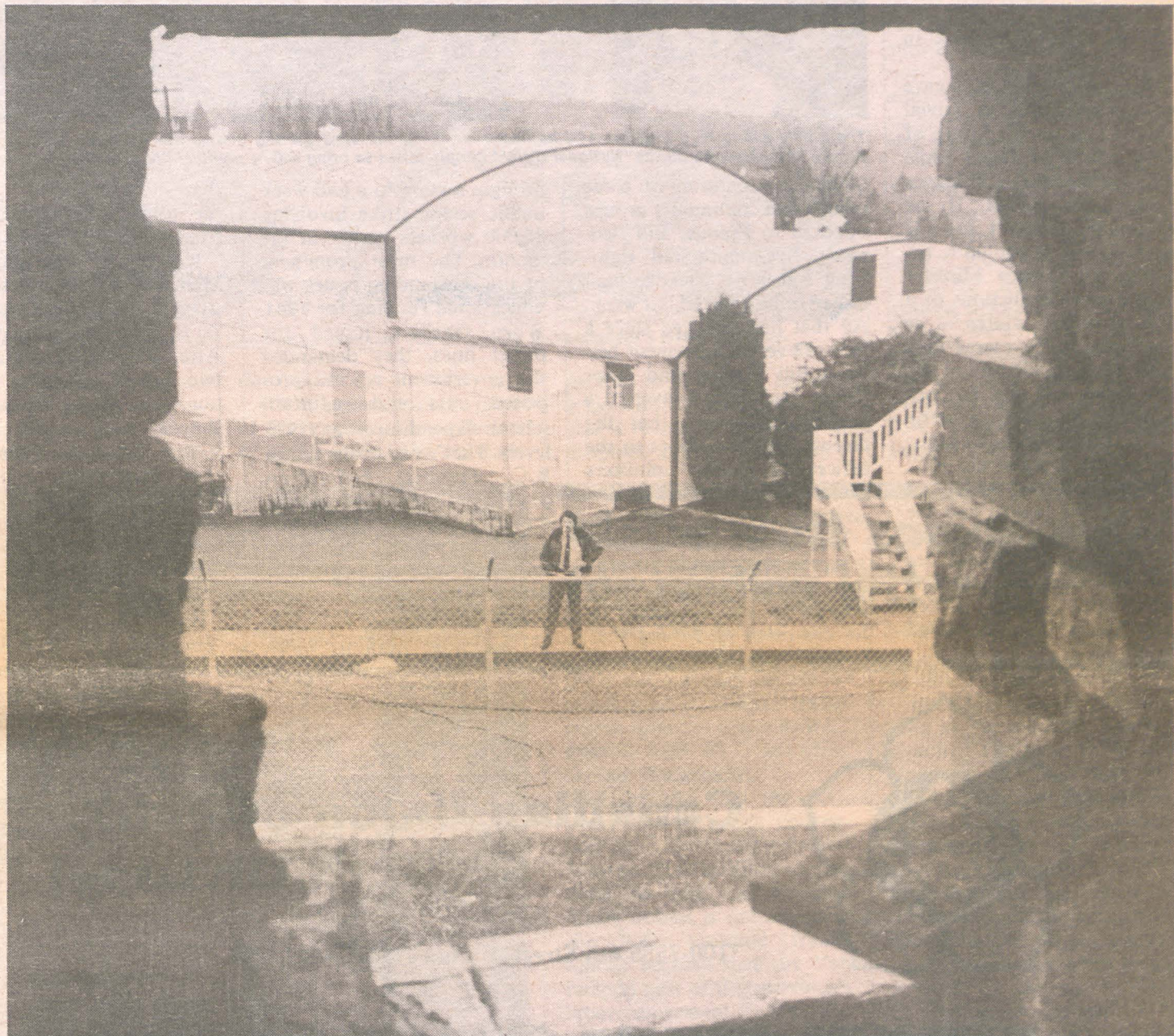
In the hours that followed, cells, windows, furniture, plumbing and a wall were smashed at Burnaby's Oakalla prison.

Early news reports noted antagonism between the younger and older, more experienced inmates. Prisoners from the east and south wings reportedly resented their transfer into the west wing while fire safety renovations were done. Sources for the stories were all prison and B.C. corrections branch officials.

Prisoners in the west wing at the time of the smash-up have quite a different story. One prisoner's eyewitness account — obtained by the Times — says "harassment" by guards was responsible for the riot. It includes charges of beatings and abuse inflicted by guards following the prisoners' surrender. Other prisoners tell the same story.

They charge that they were forced to walk barefoot through broken glass and porcelain after surrendering. Handcuffs and, for prisoners attending court the next day, leg shackles, cut and rubbed skin raw.

Some say they saw prisoners beaten. Others say they clearly heard beatings



The view from the hole broken through the west wing wall in last week's Oakalla prison smash-up.

NICK DIDICK/UIC PHOTO

See page 15: DIRECTOR

Garbage eaters

By Debbie Wilson

Every day of the week, people hunker down to another fine feast at one of the only eating establishments around town that caters exclusively to the poor. There, that which the moneyed will no longer pay for, the quick and the quiet and the cash-strapped will pull from the big bright bins behind supermarkets and restaurants.

It's one more way of living on a welfare budget: the Smithrite lunch.

Smithrite is the name of the largest of the companies that

dots the downtown with giant bins — they discreetly call them "containers" — to hold garbage from an assortment of businesses. The ranks of those who scavenge the bins for food and furniture mainly go nameless.

Their orientation to the city is a world away from the average. It means working alleyways to find favored locations. It demands a slight unsqueamishness. It is one of the more resourceful ways to

See page 6: GOBBLING



A cornucopia of the finest fruits and vegetables — free.

LAURA LAMB PHOTO

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This Week

Grey Cup hoopla masks school mess

By Stan Persky

It was Grey Cup week in B.C.

That meant politicians gave way to pigskin pundits. Trivial pursuits such as the future of public education faded while fans pondered the significance of the point spread. If the government couldn't provide bread — and it couldn't, according to Finance Minister Hugh Curtis' predictions of a bleak economic winter — at least it could offer a week-long circus as the gladiators of the B.C. Lions and the Toronto Argonauts prepared to settle the Canadian Football League championship under the B.C. Place dome.

Despite the hoopla and the pom-poms, however, political life in the province did not grind to a complete halt. The contentious issues which spawned an unprecedented



The Maple Ridge Mad Pigs are still boiling after the Lions blew the big one to the Arrrr-gos. Unfortunately for Premier Bill Bennett, all the 'National Drunk' hoopla failed to bring B.C.'s political life to a halt.

Solidarity Coalition of trade unions and community groups opposed to Premier Bill Bennett's five-month old right-wing legislative package continued to be debated last week. All that had changed since a Nov. 13 verbal agreement between Bill Bennett and labor leader Jack Munro averted a general strike was that the dispute moved indoors to the offices of cabinet ministers while football fanatics were given the streets.

Through the week, Solidarity representatives and government officials ploddingly attempted to give substance to the unwritten agreement that

brought an end to a two-week public sector strike involving 85,000 workers earlier in the month. The most prominent of the outstanding issues was educational funding for 1984. When teachers joined the picket lines, they demanded the government rescind proposed cuts and maintain school expenditures at 1983 levels. That's one of the things B.C. Teachers Federation president Larry Kuehn thought striking teachers had gained. But in the week following the return to work, Bennett insisted that teachers "make up" school days lost during the strike and denied

that money "saved" during the stoppage would be applied to next year's budget.

Kuehn met with Education Minister Jack Heinrich Nov. 21 in a bid to spell out solutions to the educational mess. After a two-hour confab, the two agreed only that money not spent during the walkout should "stay in the school system," but the meaning of that expression remained frustratingly vague.

The next day, Nov. 22, Heinrich was closeted for three hours with B.C. School Trustees president Joy Leach. Leach had gone into the meeting arguing that in-

dividual school boards should be left to decide what to do about lost days and saved money. "It will be very difficult" if Heinrich tried to impose a province-wide resolution, she warned. Nor was Leach happy about the state of school board autonomy, another of the controversial legislative issues. "We're disturbed that the employer role of school boards seems to be forgotten in all this. There seems to be a less than full regard for the fact that school boards are the employers of teachers," she noted, and added pointedly, "the minister of education is not."

When the meeting with Leach ended, despite the reminders, Heinrich would say no more than he expected to have a cabinet decision by week's end. "I think all matters are going to be considered," said the minister.

While Heinrich and the trustees were meeting in the minister's office, Bennett, Labor Minister Bob McClelland and Operation Solidarity's Munro were meeting in another part of the legislature. Munro left the meeting with a government proposal to establish a five-member advisory committee on human rights and an agreement to create a similar committee to advise on coming changes to the provincial labor code. "I think there's a difference between someone wandering in and having a discussion with the minister, and having a mechanism

See page 14: HOLSTEINS



Canadian Union of Public Employees (B.C. Division)

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Telephone: 520-6301

THE FIRST VICTORY!

However, The Crisis Continues

We must continue to work with Operation Solidarity to make sure Sacred madness is kept in check.

And we must continue to remain on alert in case we are called upon to mobilize again.

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Secretary-Treasurer: Bernice Kirk

LABOR CONVENTION '83

Fed to Bennett: No backing out

By Keith Baldrey

Trade union leaders have sent a clear warning to the provincial government that widespread job action could result if the government reneges on its deal with Operation Solidarity.

Delegates to the B.C. Federation of Labor's annual convention rejected a proposed "program of action" Nov. 29 because its strategy wasn't strong enough to deal with the government if it goes back on the agreement.

At press time, delegates had not yet adopted a revised plan of action, but they had voted to support teachers by pressuring the government to "live up to the negotiated agreement." Federation president Art Kube said that pressure could include job action.

B.C. Government Employees' Union spokesperson Cliff Andstein said his members could walk off the job again, if Operation Solidarity's demands are not satisfied.

"We'll give the commitment to work with our members to take whatever steps should be taken," said Andstein. "We called that strike off because we (Operation Solidarity) had an agreement. If (the government) reneges on that agreement, we're going to make them pay for it and make them live up to it."

Delegates also accused the government of taking reprisals against teachers. The education ministry is threatening to extend the teaching year three days and cancel teaching professional days, thereby reneging on the agreement with Solidarity.

"The government wants to punish us for making a strong statement," said B.C. Teachers Federation president Larry Kuehn. "The government is now taking action against all public school employees."

He said the government was more interested in spending money on materials in schools, instead of keeping people employed to teach children.

The rejected program of action, apparently drawn up by the B.C. Federation of Labor and Operation Solidarity, listed 12 proposals.

The plan included the Federation endorsing the Solidarity Coalition and committing its members to Operation Solidarity for three more years. It also proposed a \$1 annual fee per member to help fund Operation Solidarity, and called for an "effective liaison with the NDP."

But delegates said the program did not have enough "concrete" proposals for fighting the government's legislation.

"All this program seems to do is tell me I've got to educate myself for the next three years. I'm disappointed," said Barry Dean of the Canadian Union



B.C. Federation of Labor's week-long convention attracted 750 delegates to Vancouver's Hyatt Regency.

of Public Employees. "We've gone through four or five months of education. What we need is some education with

our feet."

No delegate spoke in favor of the program. Harry Greene of CUPE said: "I'm not hap-

py with it. It doesn't come to grips with the problems." He said a revised plan should be proposed at the convention.



Teachers Federation president Larry Kuehn says provincial government "wants to punish us for making a strong statement."

George Hewison of the United Fishermen and Allied Workers Union said the program merely "put Operation Solidarity on hold for three years. We have to be prepared to fight." He outlined his own five-point plan which included "the full mobilization of trade union members" and the development of an economic plan.

Although the delegates considered the program's proposals too weak, Kube said two of the program's points allowed for possible job action. Those two points would allow the Federation executive to decide if and when job action would take place.

"I wanted to have as much flexibility as possible, without signalling to the opposition what form our action would take," Kube told reporters. "But the feeling was there (among delegates) for stronger action. We've never had programs detailing job action, just ones that called for 'appropriate action'. I think it (the program) was tough enough," he said.

McDermott apologizes for raiding letter

By Keith Baldrey

The Canadian Labor Congress' call for raids on the international building trades unions does not apply to B.C. unions, says CLC president Dennis McDermott.

McDermott told the B.C. Federation of Labor convention Nov. 29 his controversial letter to CLC affiliates urging them to raid the building trades unions is not aimed at the B.C. building trades unions because they are "an integral part of this province's labor movement." He also apologized to the convention for the letter.

"If (the letter) is offensive to you," he told 750 delegates, "then I apologize."

McDermott's remarks came after convention delegates had heavily criticized his Nov. 16 letter, which states the leadership of the international building trades, having disaffiliated itself from the CLC and having helped set up the rival Canadian Federation of Labor, was "actively involved in raiding campaigns" against CLC members.

"For McDermott to declare war on the building trades while we're fighting for unity is insane," said Jack Nichol, of the United Fishermen and Allied Workers Union, on the convention's opening day. "There's no bloody way we'll be part of that. We won't get into it."

Monty Alton, of the United Steelworkers of America, also criticized the CLC's plan. "We've only come through the first battle of a long war. We need unity as never

before," he said. "In B.C. we aren't going to tolerate raids against the building trades."

But McDermott defused most of the criticism with his speech. "The letter is not applicable to B.C.," he said. "If they had the same kind of unity across the country as they have here, there wouldn't be a need for any call for unity."

He admitted the timing of the letter was "bloody awful," adding he had written the letter a month ago after being directed to do so by the CLC's executive council.

He said he did not know the letter had been sent to CLC affiliates until he read about it in a Canadian newspaper while flying home from a conference in India. Perhaps "media mischief" was to blame for the timing, he added.

McDermott also congratulated Operation Solidarity for its fight against the provincial government's legislation package, but warned "the war is far from over."

"What we have is not an armistice, but a temporary truce," he said.

McDermott said any victory for the labor movement against the government would have to be won at election time.

"The problem's might be economic and social, but the solution is political," he said. "The people in B.C. made a bad judgement at the ballot box."

He also promised the CLC would support any Solidarity plan of action. "We will be behind you with all the material that we can muster."

LABOR CONVENTION '83

By Bryan Palmer

B.C.'s labor movement is known as the most militant in Canada. It has a history of radical leadership stretching back to the turn of the century. When moderates aspire to positions of authority within the province's trade unions they quickly learn to speak the language of class war and mount campaigns where tough talk is translated into action.

Out of this militance has come debate and argument. As common as conflict at the workplace has been disagreement within the workers' movement over the direction of labor politics. Strikes and political fights are the historical foundation upon which B.C.'s "House of Labor" has come to stand.

The First Fed

The B.C. Federation of Labor (BCFL) was established in the pre-First World War years. Socialism was the accepted politics of the province's workers. Emerging unions battled constantly with anti-labor employers, who received their share of support from federal and provincial governments.

To combat these common foes, unions on the West Coast founded a provincial Federation of Labor in 1910. They endorsed the eight-hour day and urged workers to elect labor candidates to office. "The future," they proclaimed, "belongs to the only useful people in human society — the working class."

Led by members of the Socialist Party of Canada, this early federation consolidated through the difficult years of pre-war depression and wartime mobilization. Between 1910-14, the Federation expanded beyond its original restricted Lower Mainland base to encompass 14,000 members affiliated with 120 unions. Two-thirds of the province's organized workers were inside the BCFL at this time.

Many, such as the miners, had joined the Fed to counter attacks launched against their organizations by employers and the provincial government. When mass arrests and militia violence threatened to snuff out a miners' revolt in 1913, the B.C. Fed joined with other labor bodies to form the Miners' Liberation League. A general strike in support of the miners was discussed.

The miners were eventually defeated, although not before the League and the Fed secured the release and pardon of many of those arrested and jailed. But the unions were on the retreat. Gains were made, including a Workmen's Compensation Act, but by 1916 the fortunes of the Fed appeared to be fading fast.

The state drove labor back into action, reviving the radical workers' movement. In 1917 the Dominion government instituted conscription for the war effort. Labor's opposition mounted. A special constable shot and killed a leading socialist militant, union organizer, past vice-president of the BCFL, and draft resister, Albert "Ginger" Goodwin.

The pages of the increasingly radical *B.C. Federationist* bristled with indignation at both the timidity of the eastern labor movement and the actions of the Dominion government. The federal state responded by throwing a censorship blanket over the *Federationist*.

As Goodwin lay dead near Cumberland, a bullet in his neck, labor leaders across the province met to discuss how this workers' advocate, once classified as unfit for military service, had been reclassified and drafted

during an organizing drive and strike at the Trail smelters. "Conscript wealth," they screamed, "not people." State power, they claimed, was being used to drive organizers from the industrial field into the trenches of Europe. On Goodwin's funeral day the province's workers organized a show of opposition to this "plan." They "downed tools" in a general strike.

Across Canada labor militancy peaked in 1919, the year of the Winnipeg General Strike. In B.C., unions affiliated with the Fed launched sympathy strikes, the most notable being in Victoria, Prince Rupert, and Vancouver. Miners and loggers left their work on the Island and in the interior.

Many West Coast unions began to affiliate with the new centre of labor radicalism, the One Big Union (OBU).

the 1920 convention, the radicals returned the 1919 favor of the TLC. Now established, the OBU saw its parent, the B.C. Fed, as unnecessary. It disbanded the Federation, urging all to join the OBU.

Unfortunately for the radicals, the OBU was about to suffer serious defeats. By the end of the year it was in a state of collapse. The B.C. labor movement was left rudderless, and had to steer its course through the difficult years of the 1920s and 1930s without the aid of a central federation.

The Second Fed

Labor of course continued to struggle throughout these years. Political campaigns were waged, new unions were organized, and bloody battles on the waterfront and in the province's mills were indications that conflict had

After revitalizing a host of trades councils in Victoria and Vancouver, these communists convened a 1944 meeting of CCL unions. There they established the B.C. Federation of Labor, reporting a membership of almost 26,000. Leading figures in this second Fed were its vice-president, Harvey Murphy of the Mine, Mill, and Smelter Workers' Union, and its secretary-treasurer, IWA head Harold Pritchett. Both were active communists associated with the Labor Progressive Party.

Literally created by the communists, the second B.C. Fed would soon become a battleground in which a more moderate wing of the labor movement, centred in the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (CCF), wrestled with the communists for control of the unions. By 1948 the communist leader-



B.C. Tel workers assembling phones in the early days.

Almost 20,000 B.C. workers joined this body, organized into 29 locals, the bulk of which were allied with the B.C. Federation of Labor. As employer hostility and government hysteria soared, police ransacked the *Federationist* offices and seized the records of the BCFL.

In this climate of repression, rifts in labor's ranks emerged. OBU advocates and former Socialist Party members were pitted against more moderate elements in the Federation, often affiliated with the craft unions associated with Sam Gompers' American Federation of Labor. At the March, 1920, Victoria convention of the BCFL this split erupted.

The OBU had the support of two important labor councils, Vancouver and Prince Rupert, as well as the unambiguous loyalty of the province's miners and loggers. As early as 1919 this had sealed the fate of moderate leadership within the Federation, and a Trades and Labor Congress of Canada credentials committee had refused to seat B.C.'s radical executive.

The Fed withdrew from the TLC in protest. With OBU delegates outnumbering craft union supporters at

not diminished. The agitation of the unemployed and relief camp workers between 1933-38 reminded all of the human costs of economic collapse.

But perhaps the most significant development, in terms of the revival of the B.C. Federation of Labor, was the resurgence of militant industrially-organized unions associated with the Congress of Industrial Organizations. These unions, centred in the mass-production industries where craft organization was largely irrelevant, formed a new central labor body in opposition to the Trades and Labor Congress of Canada. Quick to affiliate to this rising Canadian Congress of Labor (CCL) were B.C. shipyard workers, miners, smelter workers, and the powerful International Woodworkers of America.

Just as the first Fed was led by radicals, so too would the second Fed be the product of the left wing. By 1940, however, the old Socialist Party was dead. Radicals of the new epoch cast their lot with the Communist Party, and communists played a central role in organizing workers in the mills, woods, yards, and factories during the 1930s and early 1940s.

ship of the Fed had been vanquished. Murphy was suspended by national leaders of the CCL; Pritchett was defeated in his bid for re-election to an executive post at the September convention; and, in 1949, the communist-led component of the IWA seceded from the international and the CCL to form the Wood Workers' Industrial Union. Within two years it would return to the fold, badly beaten. This crushing of the left wing took its toll: between 1946 and 1949 the B.C. Fed lost 3,000 members.

The Third Fed

With the defeat of the communists the way was prepared for a reunification of B.C. labor. Industrial unions affiliated with the CCL and craft unions associated with the TLC now differed only in form. In 1956 the two labor bodies merged nationally and provincially. About 80,000 B.C. workers came together to form the united B.C. Federation of Labor, linked directly to the new Canadian Labor Congress that represented the national merger of the TLC and the CCL.

By this date, B.C. was the most unionized province in Canada, with 46

per cent of workers organized. Inroads were being made into new sectors such as teachers and government employees. Labor had won important concessions from management with real wages rising about 1.5 per cent a year. Collective bargaining rights had been won, in law, through a wave of war and postwar strikes, of which the six-week IWA strike involving 38,000 workers in 1946 was the largest. Working conditions were improving, but the fight was far from over.

Militancy in the 1960s and 1970s

As the B.C. Fed entered the 1960s it faced the relentless impact of technological change. Attempts to negotiate "automation clauses" drew management's fire. Indicative of the lines being drawn in B.C. was the 1965 strike of the Oil, Chemical, and Atomic Workers' Union, in which the

"enough injunctions to paper three walls."

Between 1969 and 1975, the B.C. Fed affiliates re-established their reputation as the most militant unionists in North America. Strikes and lockouts raged. Affected were meatpacking, longshoring, oil refining, plumbing, building, smelting, civic workers, pulp mills, and hosts of other workers and industries. In 1972 more than two million worker days were lost to strikes in B.C. Three years later, in the midst of strikes at the Insurance Corporation of B.C., pulp and lumber mills, B.C. Rail, and supermarket chains, an NDP government invoked Bill 146. This back-to-work order enraged Fed leaders Len Guy and George Johnson, men who came to be known for their "rough and tumble" style of labor militancy. It insured that the BCFL kept a discrete distance from

Fed along with 12 other building trades unions.

But what was perhaps most noteworthy event in Kinnaird's presidency was his apparent transformation from a moderate to a militant. Championed as a moderate by the press and those union leaders who felt Kinnaird was the man to patch up the labor movement's strained relations with the NDP, Kinnaird was thrown into events that, given the polarization of B.C. society and its history of radical labor action, necessitated a militant stand.

In 1981 a wave of industrial disputes culminated in the B.C. Telephone strike and workplace occupations. Kinnaird led the Fed toward an all-out war with employers, and threatened a general strike. At a February rally at the Agrodome, Kinnaird spoke with the tough words B.C. labor has historically heard: "Tonight I'm telling

the government and the employers of this province to go to hell . . . You wanted a fight and you've got one."

It was more of the same in 1982. The Fed geared up for battle with the Social Credit government, denouncing the Labor Relations Board as an "ally" of the reactionary government. Government employees received Fed backing as they prepared to strike over Bennett's wage "guidelines." "The rhetoric is over," said Kinnaird. "We're geared for battle."

In February this year Kinnaird died of a heart attack. His 1982 32-member executive council slate had been elected by acclamation for the first time in the history of the B.C. Federation of Labor. The man of moderation, given to militancy when it was necessary, was praised as an architect of unity.

His replacement was Art Kube. Formerly the CLC regional education director, Kube had helped to orchestrate Kinnaird's slates at Federation conventions. He, too, was hailed as a moderate, and could trace some of his steps in the climb up the Fed ladder to attempts in the late 1970s to replace Len Guy with a more subdued labor leadership. Kube's first act as head of the Fed was to consult with Premier Bill Bennett. To politicians and the press he was the man of the hour, destined to lead B.C. labor out of the wilderness of confrontation.

And yet, less than 10 months later, Kube would be overtaken by events. Moderation in B.C., where politics are polarized and labor has historically opted for radicalism, proved a difficult stance to retain. The July Socred budget, threatening human and labor rights, necessitated a massive mobilization of resistance. With the formation of the Fed's Operation Solidarity and its ties to community groups in the Solidarity Coalition, an extra-parliamentary opposition was born. A general strike was called, only to be nipped in the bud at the eleventh hour. Kube, once in Bennett's good books, is now villified by the premier as an advocate of anarchy, attacked as a labor leader who urged defiance of the law against a program of "restraint."

B.C. is thus a province where moderates can catch their breath for only so long. In the history of the B.C. Federation of Labor, even moderates must gasp for their second wind and speak as militants.

Bryan Palmer teaches working class history at Simon Fraser University.

Building the House of Labor

The B.C. Federation of Labor holds its annual convention this week. Bryan Palmer fills us in on its turbulent history.

union demanded notice of technological change and protection against job loss, demotions, and pay cuts.

The oil companies secured injunctions against picketing and ran the plants with managerial staff. The Fed called for a 48-hour general strike, and scheduled job actions for Nov. 25, 1965. With negotiations stalled, the provincial Socred government forced a settlement that met worker demands.

But not all Socred actions functioned in labor's interests. Since W.A.C. Bennett's 1954 Labor Relations Act gutted union rights, provincial workers were aware of how the government could curb labor actions. A 1966 strike at the Lenkurt Electric plant in Burnaby brought this message home once more: 22 pickets were given major fines and jailed, while four labor leaders served sentences of from 90 days to six months. One of those jailed, future secretary of the Vancouver and District Labor Council, Paddy Neale, claimed that at the time of the Lenkurt strike he and B.C. Fed secretary-treasurer Pat O'Neil had

the governing party, be that party of the Socred right or the social democratic left.

B.C. Fed: Where Moderates Must Speak as Militants

By 1977 the brief period of NDP rule was over, and a wave of Socred anti-labor legislation forced the Federation to reconsider its political "independence." In the next two years the Fed moved closer to the NDP, denounced the deterioration of human rights, and launched protests against rising inflation and soaring unemployment.

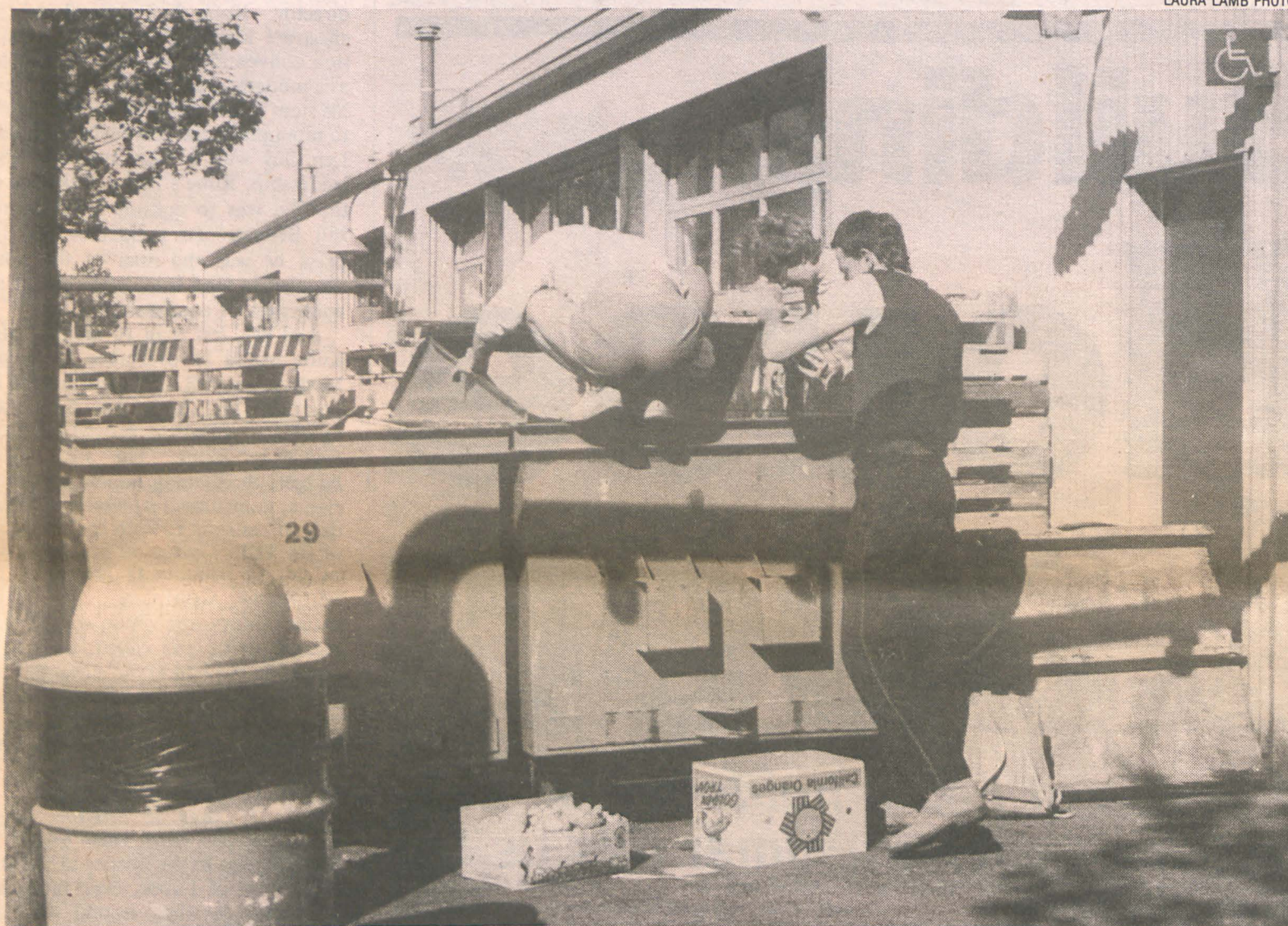
Leading the B.C. Fed was Jim Kinnaird, elected as president in 1978. He headed a body with 240,000 workers and spoke for 500 unions. Over the course of the next five years the Fed would be thrown into the usual internal fights that had long distinguished B.C. labor history. Raids by nationalist unions associated with the Confederation of Canadian Unions worried Fed leaders, as did the exit of Kinnaird's own union, the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, which seceded from the CLC and the



B.C. Tel operators at the main exchange in Vancouver at the turn of the century.

Gobbling down Granville Island

**Only in Vancouver do people lock
their dumpster**



LAURA LAMB PHOTO

Market every Sunday evening.

Their numbers have dwindled since the summer. Recently only 10 turned out for the weekly food-toss. Box after box of produce and assorted trash is wheeled out of the building. There's a tumble of praise for the food found, and always surprise at the quality of some of it. Anything in quantity is divided in rough shares among the pickers.

Granville Island is one of the few spots which tolerates scavengers. "Anything that's put out is freebies as far as we're concerned," says Johanna Earthrowl, a market administrator. "The one requirement is that you don't make a mess."

"What happened over the summer when we had a fair

The Garbage Eaters have their own reasons for staking out the garbage bins instead of the breadlines and food banks and supper-and-a-sermon spots around town. For one thing there's no waiting in line. Supplies don't run short.

Adrian, another regular, hates to see food wasted. And what food! It is stacked, by the end of the hour-long expedition, in boxes and boxes around the bins: a cornucopia. There are exotic foods; mangoes and papayas and pineapples and avocados. The finest fruits and vegetables of the season, when they turn a tad soft or bruise on one side, end up out here.

"People come by our house and say, 'Where did you get those?'" says Adrian. She, with friends Marian and Sheila, are making their regular run to the Granville Island garbage.

"I've lived in co-op houses where there was a lot of tension around because people didn't have much money," says Marian. They still don't have much money, but the haul from a couple of established garbage gold mines feeds their large household and the two rock bands which practice there without strain.

"It's one situation where it's good to take too much," says Adrian. They cook fabulous big meals for friends and encourage others to take away some of their pickings.

They pay only for items like milk and eggs, but even those appear — by the damaged crateful — behind Safeway stores. They are quickly turned into quiches and yogurt to keep from spoiling.

Their scavenging has another edge to it too. They speak scornfully of the wasteful affluence which allows good food to be tossed, of a better society which would put this food aside for people instead of going to lengths to chase off or lock out scavengers, of the social status affixed to the place of purchase and the money paid for possessions. They load the boxes of fresh produce in their weathered old car and drive away.

The Garbage Eaters get by very well without the blessing of the businesses they search behind.

Mark, big, blond and bearded with a gap in his grin, says the weekly pickings from the market go into a big stew pot at home. The six people sharing his house also enjoy a smorgasbord of junk food. Every night at midnight Kentucky Fried Chicken puts out its finger lickin' refuse near their home. The bin behind a donut shop nearby is also raided regularly. He tells me its name. His housemate Jay interrupts agitatedly: "You shouldn't publish that 'cause then they'll know we're doing it and they'll put a padlock on it."

"Only in Vancouver," muses Mark. "Only in Vancouver do people lock their dumpster."

From page 1

stretch a monthly budget which dangles below \$375 — most of the Garbage Eaters, after all, are on welfare.

On the bleak blocks around Gastown and the Downtown Eastside many men and women, older and alone and limited by the airless 8 by 10 bed-sitting rooms which are the rooming house specialty, take their meals straight from the bins. They are offered no privacy. Under the adolescent gaze of busboys at restaurant back doors, they gulp handfuls of noodles and French loaf ends until they are filled or chased away. Theirs is a can to mouth existence.

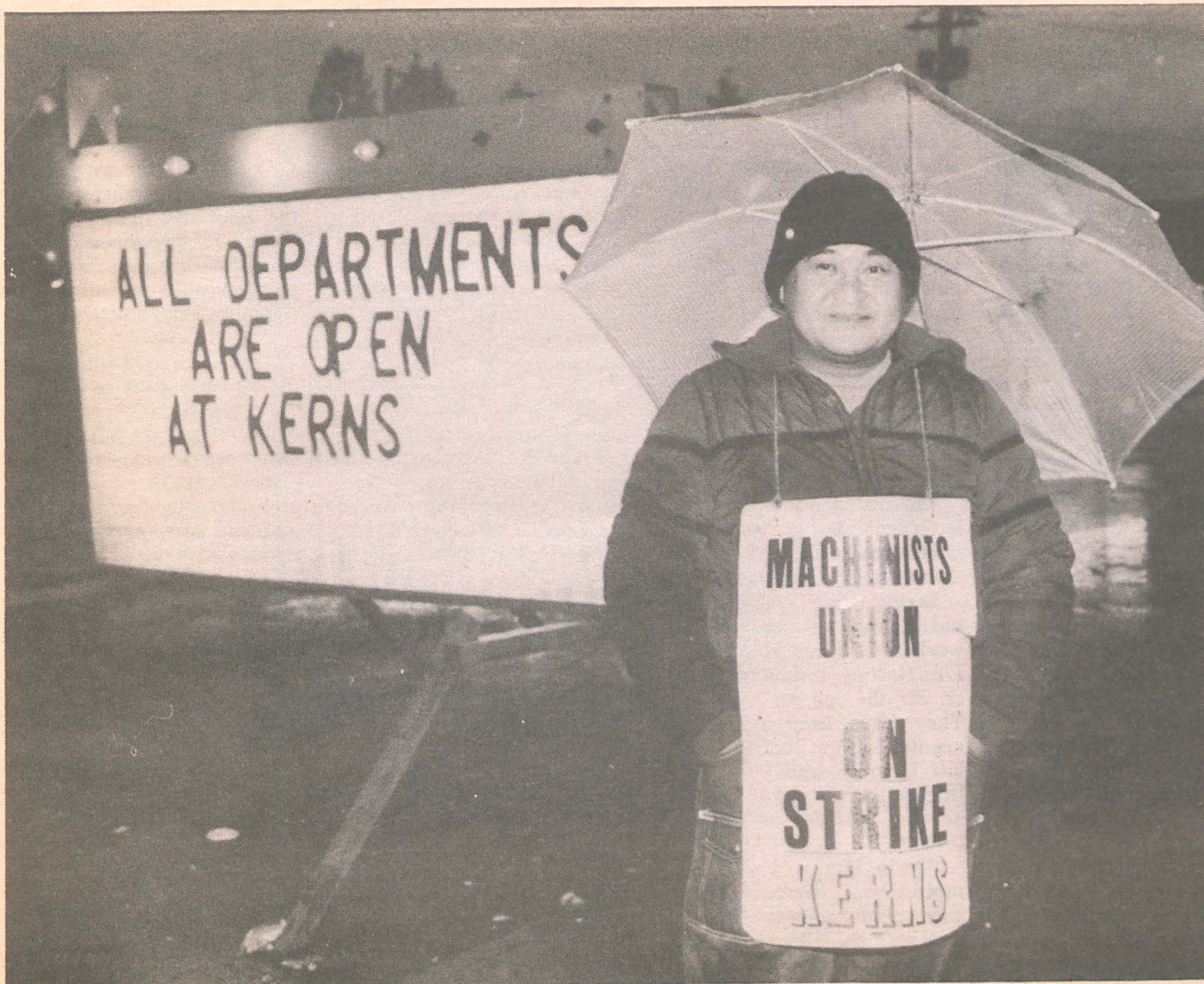
For the fridge-and-stove set, often younger and living in big communal houses, "garbaging" is a full-fledged grocery expedition, handled with planning, canning, stewing and baking the take. They are the Garbage Eaters who gather behind cheery Granville

number of scavengers is there was almost a trade-off. The scavengers would flatten the boxes the merchants brought out, almost in exchange for the food. It was a perfect sort of self-serving arrangement."

Inside the market, fresh prawns are spilled provocatively over a bed of crushed ice. There are bagels and thick slices of soft fudge. Last week at the back, Mark, a regular, found a couple of plastic bags of fresh salmon fillets. I once saw someone harvest two perfect packages of sushi from the garbage.

Phuc Le, manager of Chez Maurice, one of the largest produce stands at the market, says his operation tosses out about two boxes full of food every Sunday. It's worth little to him if it isn't selling, he says.

Many of the buying crowd curl their lips in florid disgust at the bizarre band snapping up the grub they passed over at seasonal prices just 40 minutes earlier.



Walking the line on a rainy Port Coquitlam night.

BEV DAVIES PHOTO

Would you buy a 'hot' car from a scab dealer?

An old fashioned type of strike

By Keith Baldrey

Everyday at the huge Kern Chevrolet dealership in Port Coquitlam, a man stands by the main entrance and waves prospective customers onto the property. Near him looms a large flashing sign, proclaiming that "all departments are open at Kern's."

Just a few yards away from him huddle a group of men, bundled up against the cold and stamping their feet to keep warm. They've been there more than three months now, and they're used to the fellow waving in the cars. The men greet the customers too, but instead of handing them a leaflet advertising the current sale in progress at the car lot, they wave picket signs and ask them not to cross their picket line.

There are only about 25 of them, and they've been on strike since late August. It's an old-fashioned type of strike — not over wages or working conditions, but about the right to form a union and being able to negotiate a contract with the boss. It's turning into a bitter showdown between the workers and the owner, Douglas Kern, who hired strike-breakers the day the strike started and has fought the strike and strikers any way he's been able.

Three of the workers sit in the tiny, cramped trailer they have parked near the picket line. Their picket signs are frayed around the edges and there are big holes torn in a few of them. The lettering is starting to fade, but they try

their best to keep their spirit from doing the same.

Walter Rumohr and Cliff Mogenson were mechanics for Kern before the strike started. Phil Delory, the youngest, was a clean-up and maintenance person. They still put in 40-hour weeks — on the picket line.

"We've been out here a long time," Mogenson says wearily. "As far as Kern is concerned, we can stand here until we rot." Delory laughs, and adds, "I think we'll be here almost that long."

They say their strike was prompted by Kern's stubborn refusal to let his employees' union (Machinists local 1857) negotiate their first contract, and the indiscriminate firings of employees with seniority.

"Kern was basically laying people off, which we could understand because of the economy and everything, but quite a few of them had worked here for a long time," says Mogenson. "We had a few negotiations but we never got anywhere at all. Kern has never even been at the negotiating sessions."

Delory says Kern made the union one contract offer, and laughs when he mentions it. "He offered us a contract that said no union, no seniority and, to top it all off, a wage cut. Some contract, eh?"

Now, says Rumohr, the only time Kern and the striking workers have any contact with each other is when the owner comes out to berate the picketers.

The three agree that morale among strikers is low, mostly due to Kern's harassment of the picketers and his hiring of scabs. "A couple of our own guys even crossed the line and got work," sighs Delory. But apparently Kern isn't being too kind to them either. "He's fired a few of the scabs," says Mogenson. "Those people come and talk to us and say, 'Now we know what kind of asshole you're working for.'" They all laugh.

Rumohr almost bangs the table with his fist when he talks about Kern's treatment of the picketers. "They try to intimidate us by taking pictures of us all the time, people running around with cameras and pointing them at you. And there were guys with guard dogs standing next to us for the first month," he says.

Some of the scabs, says Delory, shout obscenities at the picketers. "They've laughed at us, swore at us. We've been told we'll be run over. They've even turned the video cameras around, so instead of filming the premises they film us instead. We're under 24-hour surveillance."

But occasionally something happens that lifts everyone's spirits. "This one time," Delory says, as everyone starts laughing, "Kern's wife drove through our line, we smiled at her, and she gets out and just screams at us. 'I hope you're all still smiling when you're freezing to death in the winter!' Isn't she sweet?" Everyone breaks up laughing.

They say their picket line is almost

ineffective, partly because Kern has stationed at least one employee at the entrance to encourage customers to cross the line. "He's hired people to wave cars through the picket line. That's what defeating our line," says Mogenson. "As soon as a car gets here, it's waved in. That's more effective than six of us."

Outside the trailer, on one end of the picket line, is a young man clutching leaflets. He's ready to give them to anyone who crosses the line, whether they want to buy a car at the dealership, or some gasoline, or a quart of milk at Kern's Jiffy Market. He waves them all in.

"My job is to flag people in," he shrugs. "I think it's a really useless job because they're going to go in anyway, right?" He nods towards the strikers. "Whatever I do hurts them minimally. I'd say about 80 per cent of the people are unaware of what I'm doing. I'll convince maybe two or three people a day to come in."

Why is he doing it? "I need a job. I understand those guys' position, but I need work and that's why I'm here." He gets along fine with the picketers, he says, because they just ignore him.

The leaflet he gives to the people who drive through the picket line this wet November day tells all about the fall clearance sale at Kern's, a sale that's already expired according to the small print.

"He must be bored out of his mind," says Delory of the fellow waving in cars. "Some of them, if they're caught talking to us, are fired."

A bigger problem than that fellow — and more damaging to morale, says Mogenson — is the union members who cross the picket line. "We're getting little support from other unions. Lots of union members just cross without thinking twice," he says.

"Yeah, a couple of government workers, during their strike, drove through our line," says a picketer. "They said, 'Don't tell us about strikes. We've been out for a week.' A week! Jeezus!"

"A week! Hoo-boy!" shouts another picketer.

"Some people cross the line and say, 'I'm just going to get a quart of milk,' and we say, 'You just crossed a picket line, you jerk. Why don't you stop and find out what it's about?' I don't believe it some times," says Delory.

But while union members sometimes cross their line, the B.C. Federation of Labor has come to the strikers' aid. They recently declared all products and services of Kern "hot" including Jiffy Markets, Kern Gas Stations, and Kern's Auto Leasing and Motor Town in North Vancouver.

A hot declaration might not be enough to win the strike, says Delory. "We'll never settle this thing unless we can stop his business. We've got to stop the flow of goods into Jiffy Markets, the flow of gas into Kern's gas stations, and the flow of cars into the showroom. That's how we'll win."

A key factor affecting the strike will soon be decided at the Labor Relations Board. The union is trying to get the board to rule that Canadian Auto Carriers (CAC) is an "ally" of Kern Chevrolet, and therefore within the union's picketing jurisdiction. The carriers transport cars from back east to Kern.

If the labor board rules in the union's favor, the flow of cars to Kern will effectively be shut off by pickets going up around the CAC's premises. "Our only hope is if we can stop the CAC from giving Kern the cars," says Rumohr. "If we don't win the CAC thing . . ." His voice trails off, and he looks towards the big showroom across the lot. "I guess we'll all go in there and resign."

Barrett blasts bankers

The provincial government, Canada's banking system and the arms race were the main targets of provincial NDP leader Dave Barrett's farewell speech to the B.C. Federation of Labor at its annual convention.

Barrett, who will step down as NDP leader at the party convention next spring, also called for the complete recall of Bill 3, the Public Sector Restraint Act, and blasted the Fraser Institute and the Progressive Conservative party for their support of involvement with the Social Credit party.

Barrett said the Solidarity movement had won its fight with the provincial government over its legislation package. "You defeated a government, regardless of what the editorialists said and what the newspapers said," he told convention delegates.

"Bill 3 has been defeated," he said, but added the bill should be repealed. "There is absolutely no need to set up bureaucracy to deal with a bill that is and was unworkable."



Dave Barrett

Concerning his expulsion from the legislature, Barrett said: "It's true I was unceremoniously dragged from the chamber, but as my wife said, I've been kicked out of worse places."

Barrett blasted the Fraser Institute for having a direct hand in the making of Social Credit economic policies. And he said a vote for the federal Progressive Conservative party was the same as a vote for the Social Credit party. Waving a copy of the day's Sun, he pointed to a story about three Socred cabinet ministers who attended Conservative leader Brian Mulroney's fundraising dinner in Vancouver Nov. 28.

The opposition leader also called for a new Bank Act to ensure banks do not make un-

fair profits. He also demanded an end to the arms race, calling war the "greatest child abuser of all time."

Barrett ended his speech, which was enthusiastically received by the convention delegates, by asking the labor movement and community groups to become more involved in the NDP.

Pizza Hut struck

By Trish Webb

Unionizing restaurant staff is difficult, but getting a first contract is harder, say staff at the Hastings Street Pizza Hut.

Saying their employer is bargaining in bad faith, workers at Pizza Hut's 4775 East Hastings restaurant walked off the job on Nov. 23. They have been trying to negotiate a first contract since last October when they certified with the Food and Allied Service Workers of Canada (FASWOC).

"Pizza Hut is a very unsophisticated company. They hate unions and they admit it," says shop steward Kelly Rumball.

Management rejected the union's first contract proposal calling for seniority protection and job security, and countered with one lacking seniority or benefits provisions.

A three-year-old contract with Pizza Hut in Surrey is also apparently unpalatable to the restaurateurs today. When the union suggested the agreement be used for the East Hastings store, management called for 58 changes.

Some of those included different medical, vacation and meals provisions. For those now earning \$3.75 an hour, a dime more than the adult minimum wage, the company offered future wage hikes to \$4.95. Workers now getting \$5 an hour would get no increase.

FASWOC has filed 30 unfair labor practices charges against the company with the B.C. Labor Relations Board. An anti-union protest at the

Hastings Street restaurant was supported with Pizza Hut delivery trucks, and the company provided pizza boxes for use as signs, says Rumball. Company vice-president Henry Crny applied to have the union decertified, but the labor board rejected that, citing his obvious involvement in the drive to have employees sign out of the union.

"We work hard and are the most poorly paid workers in the labor force," says Rumball. "We might have lost a few people who are friends of management or management oriented, but we're still a union and we're still fighting."

Alberta unionists protest bills

Alberta trade unionists took the first steps towards an Operation Solidarity of their own.

More than 4,000 workers, mostly construction tradesmen, gathered on the steps of the provincial legislature in Edmonton Nov. 28 to protest a controversial anti-labor bill. The bill allows unionized construction firms to set up non-union subsidiaries, a move that legalizes and encourages building bosses to contract out work.

Braving a light snowfall and bearing picket signs with slogans blasting Premier Peter Lougheed's Conservative government, the unionists staged one of the biggest political protests in Alberta history. The protesters shouted down labor minister Les Young and cheered Alberta Federation of Labor speakers who called for a "B.C.-style" Operation Solidarity movement in the oil-patch province.

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A Food Bank volunteer gets set to load 'em up.

BEV DAVIES PHOTO

YOUR NUMBER, PLEASE

"I heard last week a guy got one of those canned hams." She almost licks her lips.

"I wish we got that lucky..."

By David S. West

It's a quarter to one on a Wednesday afternoon, cloudy with hints of rain. I have brought my umbrella, old, tattered, but serviceable. This is my first visit to the Vancouver Food Bank.

Some 200 people stand outside Wilson Heights United Church fifteen minutes before the doors are to open. Today more than 300 victims of the economy will receive bags of groceries here.

A small man with a big voice hands out numbered ticket stubs and shouts "Keep off the Grass!" The Loud Man hands me a ticket from the roll and I line up to register.

Two women are barricaded behind boxes of index cards on the registration table. They seem tired but patient. They send me to the end of the line, out of sight around the corner.

The Loud Man is shouting again, herding the people into some semblance of a lineup. "Zero Four Two!" he screams. "Forty-three, where's forty-three? Over here! Forty-four!"

I walk to the end of the line and stand in the gravel alley. There is no shade and a hot day would not be pleasant. A rainy day would be worse.

"At least here we can stand in the open and go in the front door," someone grouses. "I went downtown to Christ Church and they make you line up in a stinking back alley and go in and out the back door."

The people are of all types. Some arrive by bus, others walk. Some drive wrecks of cars and trucks carrying

several adults, and everywhere there are women with children.

The children run and play, darting in and out of the line, but the grownups don't talk much — so what they say stands out.

Everyone asks every one else "What's your number?" as they sort themselves out. One woman shouts "Don't ask! I'm sick of people asking 'What's your number?' Just don't ask."

No one looks prosperous, but no one is starving either. They are not the lowest of derelicts, but middle-class and working people. Near me is a man in a sports coat. Another looks like a salesman. Maybe they got the clothes at the Sally Ann. You can't tell.

The eyes are hollow and sometimes haunted, like looking into a cave or down a well. It's one of the masks of poverty. It's the anonymous face of degradation.

Others are workers. Men in pants too baggy with the belt notched tight, their faces lined and tanned from a life outdoors. Their hands and eyes show their desperation. Their large hands are gaunt and calloused, like Henry Fonda as Tom Joad in the *Grapes of Wrath*, only more so.

There are natives and seniors. The seniors stand in pairs, friends seeing each other through the physical rigors of standing in line. The natives are patient and speak softly to each other.

The Loud Man has worked his way down the line and I move to where he points before he can shove me or shout "Keep off the Grass!" He passes

along, jostling the people, a sheepdog worrying his flock.

He returns to the front of the building. Rumor passes up the line. The doors are about to open. It must be one o'clock.

From behind the corner, the Loud Man calls the numbers of the first lucky few. We stand unmoving, eager with hungry anticipation.

Behind me a red-faced man in a brown coat gulps at a mickey of Captain Morgan's. For a moment I am angry. If he can afford to drink, he can afford to eat. Or would he just drink anyway and not have anything to eat? Probably. Or maybe this was the only way he could force himself to stand here — by drinking. I notice a wine bottle lying empty and glinting green in the grass and realize Brown Coat is not alone.

He passes the bottle to his companion, a bald man with a scarred face. He swallows and hands the bottle back.

"Here's another couple of drinks in here," says Brown Coat to Bald Head. He looks surprised when he lowers the bottle empty. The bottle flies across the lawn of the church. Bald Head grunts without anger and turns away.

At last the line moves — five feet. "Thirty-Eight, Zero Three Eight!" yells the Loud Man, and one soldier comments to another, "He's not half loud enough to make sergeant." They laugh.

Down the line comes a woman in a white smock. She wears a tag: "Food Bank Nutritionist."

Few will meet her eyes as she speaks. They either know the futility of making nutritious meals solely from Food Bank handouts, or are unwilling to admit ignorance. "If you have any questions about nutrition I'm here every week. Do you know what to do with the broken soy chips in some of the bags?"

The Nutritionist adds: "Did you know you can pick berries and apples for free in the city parks?" And so on, gamely trying to interest the reluctant.

A tattooed young man and his bleached-blond girlfriend are tough and sure of themselves.

He has cut fingers on the right hand and a bandaged knuckle. "I hit this guy," he says to me. He is aggressive but not menacing. "You mean he ran into your fist," I tell him. "Yeah," he laughs. "But I think I broke my hand."

She speaks. "I hope we get something good this week. We can't cook where we stay, so we just use the canned stuff."

"That's rough."

She has a thin feral face. There is hunger on her lips. "I heard last week a guy got one of those canned hams." She almost licks her lips. "I wish we got that lucky." And they retreat to their private world.

The youngest are toward the tail of the line. They wear khaki pants and T-shirts, heads close cropped. Pierced ears and pins. The punks. This is their choice, their lifestyle. They set themselves apart, and here they are, along with the rest of us, the unemployed, the drunks, the welfare needy.

Ten rows ahead, a tall, thick-lipped native is swigging from a bottle of wine. He is intent on what he is doing, like a baby at suck. The only living part of his face is the eyes. They burn with an intensity of despair and self-destruction.

Beside me is a native family. The man is muscular, long hair braided, a small tattoo amid the protruding veins of his arm. The woman is fat-bellied from beer and starchy food; she holds a small child asleep at her breast. Another child screeches beside them as the man tries to calm him.

The woman talks in a rambling way, but one phrase is highlighted by a sudden note of hopefulness: "Maybe we'll get some spaghetti in the bag and we can make spaghetti tonight." She might be speaking of the greatest of luxuries, so reverent is her tone.

They are still giving out groceries. People enter the hall 10 at a time, as others emerge holding bags half full, topped with a plastic bread wrapper that waves like a jaunty banner.

Inside the church hall I hand my card to a smiling woman and accept the bag she pushes toward me from among those on the table. Through the paper I feel the reassuring shapes of tin cans.

At the next table a man places a double handful of potatoes in the bag, followed by the biggest carrot I ever saw. He picks up two huge onions and adds them to my loot.

At the door a woman stuffs a whole-wheat loaf into the bag. There is a selection of hot dog and hamburger buns left on the table.

The groceries cost maybe \$9. A loaf of bread, can of plums, peas, corn plus two onions, five potatoes, one jumbo carrot, a package of health-food cookies, two small packs of noodles, one meagre but welcome tin of tuna, and a handful of teabags tied in a baggie. Groceries for a week.

People wait for the bus across the street. Some already gnaw at their bread.

EDITORIAL

Trade unions' future shaping up

"The trouble with trade unions is ..."

How often have you heard that phrase?

As the B.C. Federation of Labor gathers in convention, you can expect to hear it several more times from helpful commentators. Of course, it takes various forms: "Big Labor is too powerful." Or: "Trade unions are greedy, narrow, and self-

interested bodies, undermining productivity and pricing us out of world markets."

Those are just the polite versions. During periods of "labor chaos," such as the recent (and continuing) Solidarity-government dispute, trade unionists are "goons," "terrorists," "morons," and "blackmailing street brawlers" (Sun, Nov. 9).

But the current favorite line about

"the trouble with trade unions" goes like this: in the bad old days, trade unions were good things as they went about protecting workers from tycoons, shortening the 12-hour work day, obtaining pensions, etc.

But now, in the good new days, trade unions have outlived their usefulness. In short, trade unions have no future. Sound familiar?

Of course, all of the above is so much b.s.

What the kindly commentators of the business media have failed to notice, even though it's happening under their noses, is that trade unions in B.C. are already significantly changing.

Emerging from the last five months in B.C. is an outline of the shape of things to come. Here are some of the signs:

The trade unions' role in the Solidarity Coalition has produced a degree of joint organization and communication between unions and community groups unprecedented in the province's history. Unsurprisingly, the coalition concept has generated debate and criticism. No doubt there will be more, and that's as it should be. For a movement accused of hostility to change, the unions have remained surprisingly undaunted by the prospect, a fact confirmed by

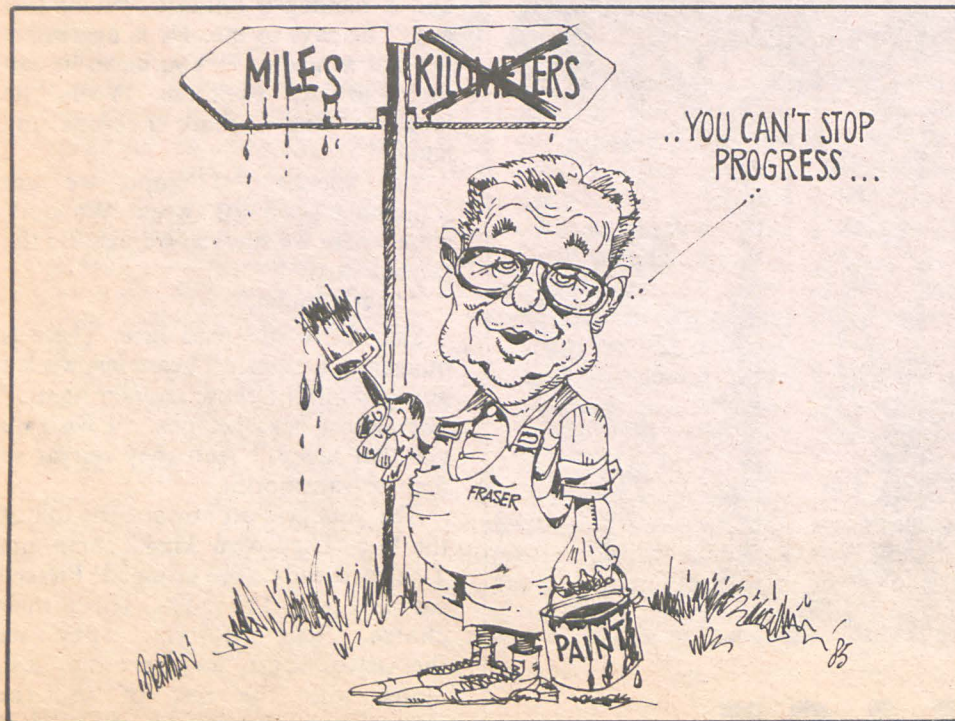
Operation Solidarity's recent decision to continue coalition funding.

Second, the unions are obviously rethinking their relation to the battle over ideas. At last accepting the old adage that a free press belongs to those who own one, the unions have taken a flyer on the pro-union Solidarity Times.

Third, in the midst of a major capitalist recession, B.C. unions are increasingly speaking to, and on behalf of, a majority of the people, and not simply their own members, rumors about union "selfishness" notwithstanding.

While none of the above is totally new, taken together it adds up to a direction for unions unreported in the business dailies. Instead, we're told that Solidarity is replacing the NDP as the official political opposition. It doesn't take much looking to see that such a charge is simply meant to be divisive and to discourage the trade union movement from developing a program that all political parties, friends and foes, will have to respond to.

As for doubts about who the political opposition is, all Bill Bennett has to do is call an election to promptly find out. In the meantime, the trade union movement is shaping itself for the 1980s world of high-tech and higher unemployment. No doubt it's a world that would run much more smoothly for the profit-takers if trade unions indeed had no future.



COMMON SENSE

How to make parliamentary democracy work

By John W. Warnock

With two-thirds of Canadians reporting near-total indifference to the doings of parliament, and with Bill Bennett's legislative "zoo" an unworkable laughing stock, are there any things that can be done to make our formal decision-making systems more democratic and more relevant?

Admittedly, the British parliamentary system of government has very little to do with democracy. Nor, in fact, was it ever intended to be democratic. The system emerged in the good old days when the right to vote and hold office was determined by private property qualifications (capital and land), and the great majority of citizens were excluded.

The parliamentary system today is characterized by cabinet control of the legislature, and control of the cabinet by the prime minister. The role of the government backbencher is simply to sustain executive authority; they must vote for the government at all times, on all issues. The system operates this

way, apart from once-in-a-blue-moon "free" votes, regardless of whether labor parties or right-wing parties are in office. It is simply the nature of the system.

Since it is highly unlikely that the parliamentary system will be replaced in Canada in the foreseeable future, we're probably limited to considering reforms. Are there any available?

1. Representation in the legislature can be made proportionate to the popular vote. This proportionate representation system is the most common in various western democratic countries, and it has even been tried in Winnipeg, Calgary and Edmonton.

Proportional representation often results in coalition governments. It almost always results in a wider range of political opinion in the legislature. Voters, as a consequence, are given a much wider choice of political platforms and policies. Coalition governments tend to be more attentive to public opinion, and cabinet dictatorship is undermined.

This system has worked well in

various countries. If it had been in place in Britain, there would have been major changes after the 1983 election. While the vote for Britain's Conservative Party fell from 44 per cent to 42 per cent, their share of seats rose to 61 per cent, and they claimed a "landslide" and a "mandate" for more repressive restraint. But with proportional representation, Tories would have been in opposition, and Britain would have been governed by a Labor-Social Democrat coalition. Although it may produce more frequent elections, what's wrong with that? As long as there are strict controls on election spending, they bring public policy closer to the people's will.

2. Direct popular control over government can be gained through the use of initiative, referendum and recall, all of which use a formal petition system. The Progressive Party experimented with such devices in Canada in the 1920s. Today, referendums are widely used in western countries as popular sanctions for controversial legislation, and initiatives are

used by citizens to force a legislature to deal with topics it has decided to ignore.

Advocates of democracy have long argued for the right of recall of elected officials through special elections. In fact, the Social Credit government of Alberta passed such legislation in 1936. However, it was repealed in 1937 when a recall petition began to be widely circulated in the constituency of Premier William Aberhart.

3. Finally, petitions can also be used to force general elections. In seven cantons (provinces) of Switzerland, citizens can petition for an election referendum. If the referendum passes, the government must resign and go to the polls once again.

Undoubtedly, many of us wish we had that option in B.C. today. Under the parliamentary system, however, an elected government which has lost the confidence of the people can continue in office for many years. That's the problem we now have in Ottawa. And in Victoria. In either case, it's hardly democratic government.

Solidarity Times

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Solidarity Times is a politically independent weekly newspaper that supports the aspirations of Solidarity Coalition, trade unions, workers, women, ethnic minorities, native people, the handicapped, pensioners, social service recipients, gays and lesbians, tenants, defenders of human rights, environmental and peace activists, consumers, students, artists, and religious people seeking a socially relevant church. It is published by a non-profit society and is not the spokesperson or official organ of any organization.

Solidarity Times is published at 545 West Tenth Avenue, Vancouver, B.C., V5Z 1K9.

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Printed at College Printers

Next issue will hit the streets on Dec. 7. Deadline for letters, advertising, and Get Happy! notices is, as always, the Friday before publication.

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GCU

PUT IT IN WRITING

Reviewer reviewed

Vancouver's low standard of art criticism didn't get any boost from Scott Watson's comments on the Sexuality and Seeing show at the Unit Pitt Gallery (Times, Nov. 16).

First, a dozen artists are represented, mostly women, a few men. It's not enough for a critic to dismiss all but two as "kindergarten" or "someone's friend"; the former is a slur on some excellent five-year-old artists and the latter is simply personal attack. We need some reasons.

Second, a critic should describe an exhibit in overall and reasonably objective terms, so potential viewers have a basis for deciding if they'd rather stay home and polish their Norman Rockwells. Like this: "The show makes a strong statement about the immense power of sexuality in our lives, in spite of the constraints and distortions imposed on it by the culture we live in. The show includes works in a wide variety of media — sculpture,



Unladylike Behavior.

oil painting, photographs, fabrics, woodcuts — and although not all the pieces are successful, some are very much so."

Third, critics should be damned careful about letting their personal biases stand between them and the art they look at. Male critics attempting to assess explicitly feminist art should be especially careful, because otherwise they evidently don't see what's there. Watson does not observe the heroic quality of Persimmon Blackbridge's

women, for example, and I would have thought it inescapable to any open pair of eyes.

Fourth, critics should avoid boxing themselves and us into Catch-22 places. On the one hand Watson thinks Blackbridge's work is too harsh and painful and lacks compassion; on the other, Jeannie Kamins' is too pretty and wholesome and lacks complexity. Does he want everybody to be in the middle?

Fifth, I agree fully with Watson's comments on the physical state of the Unit Pitt Gallery, which is a slovenly mess and an insult to every artist represented in it. I wish his assessment of Sexuality and Seeing had been as accurate.

Cynthia Flood
Vancouver

Pass it on

I'm on pension now, but I have to work part-time because my rent, Hydro and phone eat up so much of my income. And I dread 1984 because Hydro and phone will both go up again, and without the rentalsman, God knows what my landlord will do to

me on rent. And Bill Bennett calls this restraint.

Pushing more people on UIC and welfare — is this restraint?

Prices of food and clothing keep going up. I don't see anyone restraining them.

I hope your newspaper is very successful, and I'm looking forward to my subscription. I shall take it to work and pass it around.

H. Toni Basil
Vancouver

On mass

The Solidarity movement is an important new development in Canadian social and political life. No matter what the commercial media may try to do in downplaying the significance of Solidarity, the message is quite clear for all to think about. When large masses of the population believe that their social, economic, and political freedoms are being threatened by reactionary governments, people will come together in the common struggle for justice, equality and human rights.

Hopefully a solidarity

movement will soon grow all across Canada. Only when millions of Canadians join together in solidarity will the vital issues of peace, jobs and equality be solved for the benefit of all.

Arnet Tuffs
Smithers

Great stuff

Great staff! Great struggle!

Only voice of West Coast sanity in Globe and Mail kingdom. Don't let the Socreds divide and befuddle. Be resolute!

Ron Labonte
Toronto

Write in

We want to hear from you.

Solidarity Times welcomes letters, criticisms, comments about articles we've published, and brief analyses of social and political developments. Put It In Writing is a forum for Times' readers and we urge you to use it.

Here's how to Put It In Writing: write to Letters, Solidarity Times, 545 W. 10th Ave., Vancouver, B.C., V5Z 1K9.

SOAPBOX

What's wrong with the little pinheads now?

By Lanny Beckman

It's hard to figure out kids today.

Take the teachers' strike. Before the radiators had time to cool, bands of angry students prowled the streets searching out reporters to complain about "being deprived of an education." They get a few days off school and they're kicking down the doors to get back in.

In my day, early in the reign of King Bennett the Elder, such a thing would have been unthinkable. We counted ourselves lucky if one out of every few winters supplied enough snow to shut the schools for a day. Then, just like all the real Canadian kids in all the other real Canadian provinces, we'd shovel off the neighborhood pond and play hockey 'til the light had disappeared. It was wonderful and we never beefed to anyone about being deprived of an education by snow.

Overnight the rains would come and the next morning we were back on the bus, thankful for the act of God that had sprung us loose for a day. The thought of a more powerful act — that of teachers striking — didn't enter our heads.

Back then, of course, it didn't enter teachers' heads either. They didn't have a union, and their professional association seemed convinced that things like decent salaries were reserved for other professions. It was as common to hear that teachers were underpaid as it was generally accepted. A popular myth cast teachers as a cross between saints and volunteers, people whose work was too valuable to be tarnished by adequate pay. Like the Red Cross or mothers.

Students didn't subscribe to that myth. The whole society was on the lookout for enemies, and teachers seemed perfectly qualified to be ours. An extreme example was the Grade 11

social studies teacher, Jim Carter, a tall, powerful man who would paddle us in front of the class. (Today he's the Socreds' deputy minister of education). At the other end of the bell curve was our Grade 12 English teacher, an unmarried woman in her late 50s who actually invited us over to her place toward the end of the year. Aside from how unique the social arrangement was, I most remember that her apartment was small and quite modest. Between the two poles were scores of forgotten men and women who dispensed neither violence nor kindness. Nor much learning.

The students on the tube who were squawking about their education going the way of the Squamish highway (when it was merely being exposed to an invigorating little drizzle) were certainly conservative but hardly typical. Some might have been egged on by right-wing parents, but more likely, they were the victims of seduction by the media. Lured from the schoolyard with flattery and promises of fame, a handful of students succumbed, yielding up their naked, empty minds to the prurient gaze of supper-eaters across the province.

Meanwhile, the other 98 per cent searched for frozen ponds or wholesome intimacy and, probably finding neither, spent their strike-bound freedom bombarding themselves with the relatively incomprehensible noise of the Talking Heads and Adam and the Ants. (Truly incomprehensible noise existed in the early '50s when big hits like "How Much Is That Doggie in the Window?" transformed a whole society into a collection of four year olds.)

One thing that rings hollow about the locked-out students' lament is that the education they were pining for offers no real promise of security. We, on the other hand, knew that a high

1956

CAREERS WITHOUT COLLEGE

TRAIN AT HOME

1983

COLLEGE WITHOUT CAREERS

TRAIN AT HOME

school diploma would lead to a good working-class job, and a college degree to a soft middle-class career. Remember those old matchbooks that said "Success Without College"? If you sent in a few bucks you could train at home to become an aircraft mechanic. Today the matchbooks say "College Without Success" and offer in-home courses on stretching your welfare dollar.

Rough political parallels between the '50s and the '80s are by now obvious enough: Eisenhower/Reagan, Bennett I/Bennett II, Diefenbaker/Mulroney (might as well get used to it). Conservatism adapts and mutates like all

germs, but there's little doubt the infection plaguing North America today comes from the same family of bugs that flourished in the era of Cold War I. Aside from stylistic differences, students then and now are pretty similar.

The political docility of both groups stands out clearly compared to the commitment of many of those who came between, and against the activism of students in other parts of the world today. Recent TV images of students in the streets of Chile and the Philippines bring home the negligible voice of North American students in progressive movements.

What has changed in the school system in 30 years is teachers. They have fought and organized and transformed their once-weak association into one of the most progressive bodies in the province. In the bargain, they have scrapped their saintly image and acquired just-decent incomes, for which they are under regular attack by politicians and editorialists who earn three times what teachers do. In the recent run at a general strike, teachers risked more than any other group. Bill Bennett and his Socred cronies, who have shown their attitude to the educational system by fleeing it at an early age, were not amused. Confronted with the new breed of militant teacher, they hardly know how to react.

Although the teachers' agenda is very full at the moment, a place should be found on it for the political education of their students. An enlightened student body would show up on the right side of the issue on the 6 o'clock news. In the long run, they would supply some insurance against the continuation of Socred rule into the 21st century.

Lanny Beckman is the publisher of New Star Books in Vancouver.

FUNNY BONE

God led with a left, a right, a left...

By Stan Persky

Now, I don't want to knock God.

But sometimes I wonder about the company He (or She) keeps.

Take last Friday night at the Caesar's Palace Sports pavilion in Las Vegas. Fighting on the undercard of the Larry Holmes-Marvis Frazier heavyweight title bout, Ray (Boom Boom) Mancini took 2:58 to put away Johnny Torres. After the carting away of the fallen opponent and the obligatory commercial for Ram-tough trucks, Dr. Ferdie (The Fight Doctor) Pacheco (he's the NBC color commentator) climbs between the strands to ask lightweight champ Boom Boom what he hit'm with.

Boom Boom says, "First, I want to thank my Lord Saviour Jesus Christ who..." Dr. Ferdie stands there with a patient, pained expression as Boom Boom puts in a plug for God before explaining he took the mismatched Torres out with a left (or maybe it was a right; for-

tunately, the choices are limited).

What is it with jocks and God, though? I mean, I'm willing to put up with born-again pinch hitters thanking Jesus for that bingle to right in the bottom of the eighth, or some third-string quarterback announcing on national TV that his prayers were answered when his wide-receiver (fingers covered in stickum just in case God didn't come through) held onto his Hail Mary pass in the final quarter. But boxers?

Then there's Marvis Frazier, son of former champ Joe Frazier. In a classic episode of Father Doesn't Know Best, young Marvis was sent into the small canvas square to entertain Larry Holmes, the hero of Easton, Pennsylvania. He lasted 2:57.

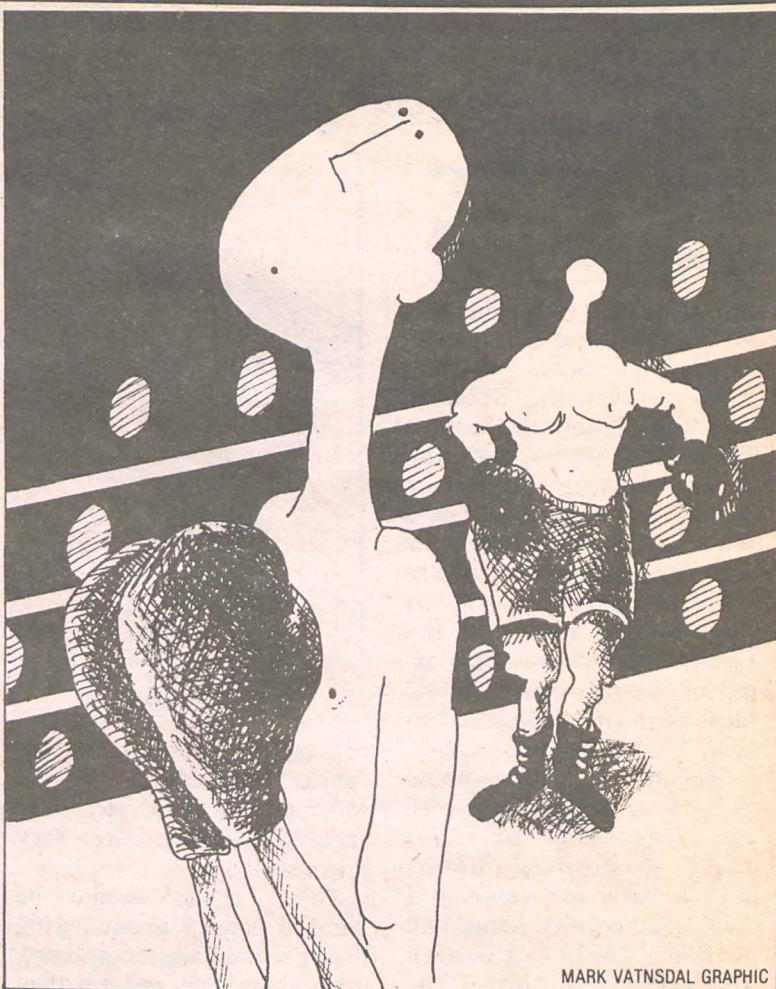
But when Ferdie the Fight Doctor squeezed into the dressing room to ask Marvis what happened, instead of announcing, "I forgot to duck," young Marvis launches into a homily: "I give thanks to Jesus Christ..." etc. etc. Marvis does allow, however,

that despite his belief, it just wasn't God's will that he land so much as a glove on Larry Holmes.

Dr. Ferdie, of course, has heard all this a zillion times before, and has learned to put up with it. After the religious speeches are over, he doggedly pursues the mysterious matter of whether it was a left or a right. Usually, there are two or three TV replays of the fatal final shots as an audio/visual aid to the interviewed pugilist's possibly fading memory.

Actually, if this is the way post-fight interviews are destined to go, maybe Dr. Ferdie should be replaced with Roy Bonisteel, the host of CBC's religious program, Man Alive. After all, the Fight Doctor is no match for these Bible-spouting brawling believers.

After the now-standard declaration of faith, Bonisteel could lightly jab back, "What makes you think God gives a damn whether or not you beat the bejeezus out of the other guy?" And while the redeemed boxer dropped his guard



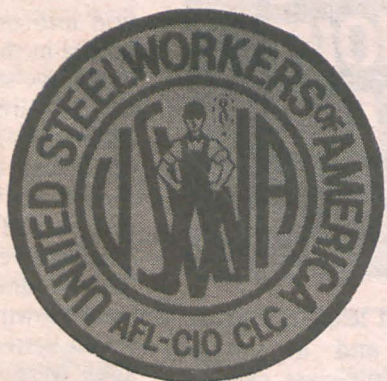
MARK VATNSDAL GRAPHIC

and lower jaw, the amiable Bonisteel could thoughtfully clobber him with, "In fact, do you suppose the Lord condones these mafia-run exhibitions of gore and mayhem?"

There'd still be room for Dr. Ferdie to jump in and separate the interviewer and interviewee. After all, if we demand fairly-matched fights (though we seldom get them), doesn't it make sense to provide a little competition in the post-brawl interrogation?

As for champion Holmes, to his credit, when asked after it was all over, how and why he did it, he simply explained how much fun it is for a formerly-impooverished young man to demonstrate his physical prowess for a cool \$2.5 million in the course of an abbreviated evening. At least he had the decency not to drag any supernatural entities into what is probably no more sordid a business than most others.

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ON THE JOB

BETWEEN
THE COVERS

**Booksellers
may have had
a lot of jobs,
but not for
very long.
They can't
actually do a
great deal
else.**

Antiquarian bookseller Terry Rutherford speaks with Tom Hawthorn.

I was 17 or 18 when I got my first book store job. It was in Saskatoon, and my boyfriend worked there too.

It was a general paperback exchange, so we were buying and selling Harlequins and best-seller paperbacks and we sold a lot of men's magazines, all of which had to be put into plastic bags and taped shut so that nobody could look at them in the store. No one could steal the centrefolds that way.

Before packing them, we had to check every centrefold to see if it was there, so we got quite expert at flipping open magazines in the middle. A few years later Playboy did that review of all their centrefolds. They had a huge fold-out that had all these little pictures of the centrefolds. Myself, my boyfriend and a friend who had also worked at the bookstore had this contest of remembering what month and what year these centrefolds were from. We did well; we had seen so many thousands of them.

On a busy day it was a book store where you would process, say, a thousand paperbacks. So you'd be writing "40c" again and again. It gave one a taste not of the book business, but of hard work.

We bought a collection and came to Vancouver to open a book store. What else do you do with an entire van-load of science fiction books? The collection was from a prairie science fiction collector who was just like sci-fi collectors everywhere: A 50-year-old unmarried man who'd only left his small town of Morse, Sask., which is 30 miles outside of Regina, to go to university for three years, and then had gone back to his town. Lived with his mother his entire life.

He had obviously only bought books through the mail because Morse, Sask., may have a paperback selection

practical knowledge in what people might want.

If they've never had to have made a living, or had to sell books to eat, they're not likely to have learned a great deal.

It's a very attractive lifestyle if one can get past the day-to-day of getting the rent together — and that being the major worry. We have a problem here in Vancouver in that houses are so expensive normal people can't afford



Terry Rutherford: books are her business.

BEV DAVIES PHOTO

in the drugstore, but that would be about all.

Everything came together all at once. We had made an offer on that library and were turned down. Weeks later, we returned from a trip and found a letter saying we could buy those books. At that point we didn't have real plans for opening a book store; we just had the books.

We came to Vancouver to open a book store with absolutely no experience at all.

It doesn't do you a great deal of good to learn about books if you don't have anyone to sell them to. You may have the world's most exciting book, but if you don't have someone to sell it to, it doesn't matter.

So first you learn the things that people will buy. You're not going to fill your book store with any sort of old, rotten books.

As you learn more about the book trade you know that just because somebody doesn't buy something it doesn't mean it's no good. You can't draw that conclusion. You can't go from one extreme to the other.

The best way is to buy the books to open a store, which is what we did, rather than people who accumulate stacks of stock over 10 or 15 years and say, "Someday we're going to open a book store." They're going to have no

them, so then neither can normal booksellers.

You might discover by talking to the sellers that they may have had a lot of jobs, but probably not for very long. And by the time they've been a bookseller for awhile, they're probably not actually qualified to do a great deal else.

If this recession is anything like the '30s, then people will sell books. I had a young man in last week who needed \$5. So he brought some books in and wanted to sell them. They were the books out of his collection he liked the least. He wanted them back. I simply lent him the \$5, which he returned to me the next week. It can be like a pawnshop. Obviously you don't do that with every customer.

I can't think of a Great Find story. Great Finds tend to be reasonable. Great Finds tend to be buying \$200 books for a dollar, rather than finding \$15,000 books for \$1,000, because \$15,000 books look like \$15,000 books.

Nobody would bring you their Gutenberg bible knowing that it isn't worth something because it's just such an obvious book. It doesn't look like your 1890s grandmother's bible, right. It has a gold clasp or whatever.

There are rummage sale stories where you *rush* up to the table and you

look: "Aha! There's the book!" I was going through the science section at a West Vancouver rummage sale when I looked down and said: "Hmmm, 'Out of Space and Time.' " I thought: "That's sort of an odd title." There was something wrong with me. I wasn't working fast enough. It's science fiction. In its dust jacket it's a \$250 to \$350 book. It didn't have a dust jacket. I sat down and sort of looked at it for 30 seconds — if I would've been at a big book sale anywhere else the book would have disappeared — I was so surprised to see it there that I didn't react. I did in fact get it: no one of course would have known the book.

A good day is when you come in and there are orders in the mail, requests or want lists, or catalogues, or something to occupy time and work and make money.

One might on the way stop at two or three junk stores, or a garage sale, or an auction preview. Then I'd come to the store and work on the mail, which on a good day would take a number of hours, even if it's only reading catalogues. Then you look for the Great Find. You might call New York or San Francisco.

On bad days one waits for people to come in to spend money, or be curious, or talk.

A bookseller can control what they do for a day. You can come in and not do any work, or you can straighten all the shelves. If you're going to be ambitious and make money, you write 10 letters every day, which is a goal I was taught.

You spend a lot of your time talking to people on the phone telling them their books aren't worth anything. In a normal day you're likely to get anywhere from three to 25 phone calls from people who want various things. Those phone calls always happen more after things like a Gutenberg bible is auctioned.

There are things that always need to be researched. Most trade paperbacks, or books that you've had before, you know what you sold them for and what you can get for them.

Otherwise it's a question of reading catalogues, or remembering that you saw a copy of that book for quite a bit so you have to go through catalogues to look it up.

I'm not suggesting you'd price it at the same price, but you may find something else about the book something about its state, some bibliographical point about the book, or some publishing point, or you may in fact be looking for a range of prices. That *can* take a very long time. So if you've been out buying, you can spend weeks pricing books.

The most boring thing booksellers do is to alphabetize.

You know, there's always something to learn, even little bits about things, or enough so you can recognize books from different centuries, or books from certain publishers, or enough authors to be able to do something with, or, in the case of people who don't deal in literature, enough history to know who did what when. Or that a book can't have been signed by Louis Riel after 1890.

Those are the things you need to know instantly, 'cause that way if somebody phones you up and tells you that they have a signed Louis Riel book from 1890, you can tell them to forget it!

Holsteins laid off

From page 2

where they can prepare and present formal briefs," Munro told reporters. Meanwhile, at his ministry's Vancouver offices, Consumer and Corporate Affairs Minister Jim Hewitt was consulting with the B.C. Tenants' Rights Coalition on possible changes to the government's proposed Bill 5, the Residential Tenancy Act that would eliminate the rentalsman's office. "I can't say we are leaving satisfied with Hewitt's response," said tenants' spokesman Jim Quail.

Finally, in a sub-basement of the consultation-crowded legislature, finance minister Curtis took the time to tell British Columbians to "work harder" as he presented a gloomy second quarter financial statement. Spokesmen for industry and labor were quick to reply that the problem of the failing recovery had little to do with hard work.

Council of Forest Industries president Don Lanskill said the problem was overseas markets and that the second half of the year had turned out to be "a real disappointment." Ralph Heunemann of the Mining Association of

B.C. blamed low world metal prices rather than lack of hard work for "a not very promising" future. B.C. Federation of Labor economist David Rice predicted slow consumer spending and noted the so-called recovery had so far created few jobs. "I don't see a lot positive coming for the winter," he said.

By mid-week, the government appeared exhausted by consultative contact with the public. A meeting between human resources minister Grace McCarthy and the Association of Social Workers netted no more than a ministerial promise to look at the reinstatement of the scuttled \$50-a-month Community Involvement Program when preparing the 1984 budget. Another meeting, between consumer affairs' Hewitt and the Consumers' Association of Canada, produced a verdict by the consumers that the ministry was "falling apart." And an appearance by Agriculture Minister Harvey Schroeder at a sell-off of the government-owned Colony Farm's Holstein herd drew heckles from a save-the-farm protest demonstration.

Instead of more consultation, the government decided to join in the pre-Grey Cup game silliness as revellers arrived from Edmonton, Moose Jaw and points east. Highways Minister Alex Fraser developed a sudden enthusiasm for a discovery by



The fans cheered, the government "consulted," but not even Swervin' Mervin could save the day.

Nova Scotia premier John Buchanan, announced earlier in the week, that the metric system was a socialist plot. Nova Scotia said it was planning to add measure-by-mile to some metric road signs. "We should look at it and maybe have dual signs," said Fraser. In another proposed minor expenditure, Hewitt told a meeting of the B.C. Hotels Association he was hiring a

consultant to study how to modernize the liquor laws. But hotel spokesman Don Bellamy wondered why Hewitt didn't save himself time and trouble by simply reading the \$10,000 study recently completed by his group.

In the midst of the merriment, the Sun published an interesting public opinion poll on the government's restraint program. The poll found that

43.5 per cent of respondents preferred a reduction of services to keep taxes at present levels, but that a surprising 41 per cent would support increased taxes to maintain social services rather than have cutbacks. Although the Sun headlined the results "Slim majority favors cutbacks," the poll's most significant finding, according to pollster Bruce Campbell, was the number of people ready to pay increased taxes to avoid social service cutbacks. "It's very unusual to see such a large proportion of a population support the idea of increasing taxes, especially in difficult economic times," Campbell said.

By week's end, front pages and boob tubes were fully devoted to pre, present, and post-game minutiae. No detail was too trivial for sustained examination. As for Heinrich's failure to deliver his promised announcement on education funding, it went unnoticed, despite possibly being an omen of a cabinet split on the matter. Nor did preparations by the B.C. Federation of Labor for its annual convention the following week attract much attention either. But what could one expect in a soggy rain forest whose inhabitants were being encouraged to pray for the well-being of a B.C. Lions receiver named "Swervin' Mervyn Fernandez?"

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Here is the first eyewitness account of the Nov. 22 riot and its aftermath, written by an Oakalla inmate:

Discontent had been brewing for a month because of screw (guard) harassment and disrespect. Wings of different security classification had been combined, and guards who power-tripped on young kids were trying their same games with experienced cons.

Earlier in the day one prisoner who was sentenced and leaving for Kent the next day asked to speak with an officer-in-charge, but the guards responded by telling him to f--- off and get in his cell, and they grabbed him by his hair to drag him into the cell. The prisoner started fighting back, along with another prisoner. They hospitalized the hair-puller, and then chased two other guards off the tier with metal bunk legs, a piece of angle iron.

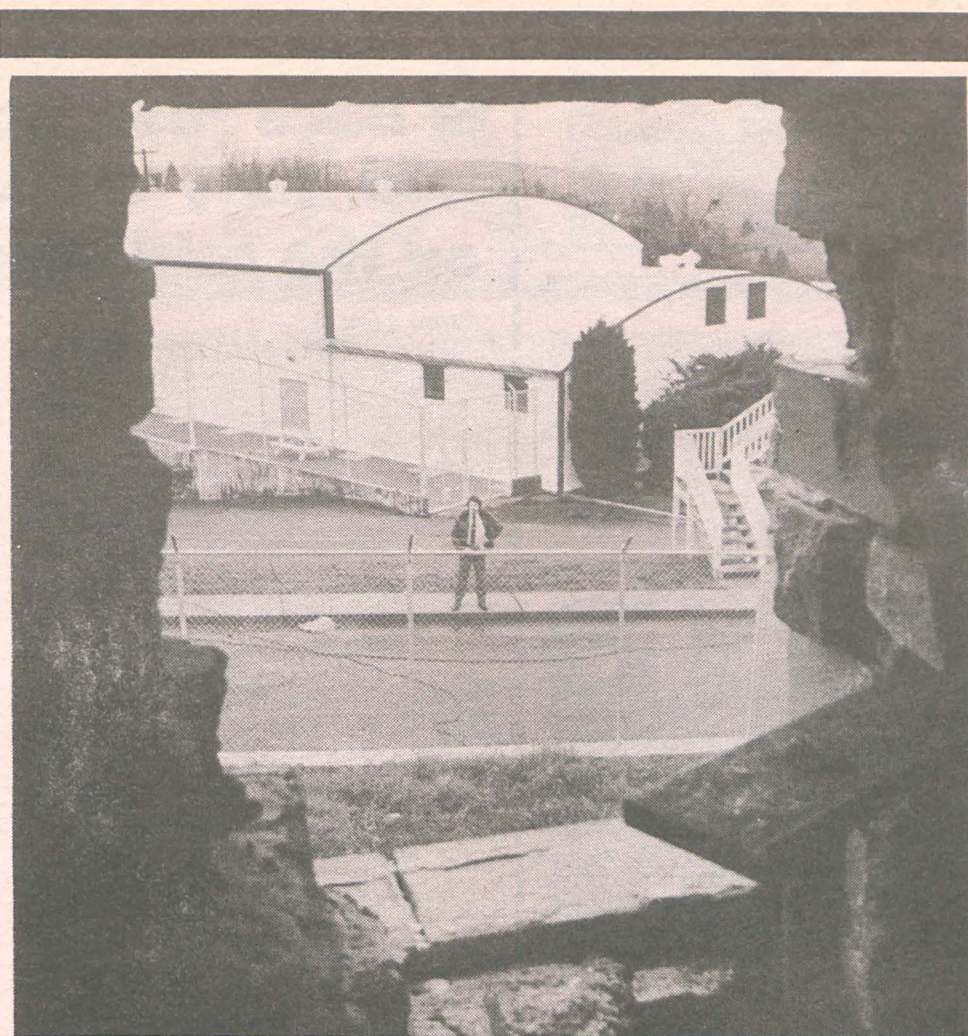
Basically this was the final straw and people decided to smash-up that evening. After dinner people yelled up and down, there was a general consensus, people started smashing their bunks to get the legs off, the fire was lit, and the smash-up began.

When it first starts, it's sort of uncertain what is gonna happen, so I was sort of cautious. In other words, letting those who were right into making it happen start things, but once it has started, the guards start freaking out, and then at that point it is possible to join in the developing chain and go with the flow.

One smashed bed brings two steel bed legs, which can then pry down a fence, pry more bars loose, and as these small victories begin accumulating, more and more people start contributing.

The bed frame was used as a battering ram by about six guys to smash out solid steel doors at the end of the tier by battering away at the hinges. Then the frame of the door was smashed out by attacking the concrete around it with the bed frame. After the door went, then there was movement in a utility corridor up or down stairs, or across on the other side. None of the lights were smashed out there because it was an area not usable to the guards, and because people wanted to work at finding a way out.

People began smashing water pipes, ripping out electrical circuits, and then using pipes to begin pounding away at the inside of the external brick wall. Maybe five guys took turns bashing



NICK DIDLOCK/UPC PHOTO

Eyewitness to prison smash-up

'Discontent brewed for a month'

away with lead pipes, with many others watching and making jokes. Other people were ripping down the chain link fence and bars on the tier in order to get across the catwalk.

Once a hole was opened, people stepped across the opening from the tier to the catwalk, risking a 10 to 20 foot drop. Once on the catwalk, using pipes, people smashed out the emergency lights and regular lights. Everyone was whooping it up as the lights were smashed. Meanwhile, the bed frames, the steel doors which had been knocked down, desks, pipes, bricks and hunks of concrete were being used to build barricades on the tiers

down by the end where the pigs could enter. Once the barricades were built they were manned by trench warfare types who threw bricks, etc. at the barred gates whenever a group of guards gathered around it looking in.

One fire was started right at the beginning when things were first starting to be smashed and this turned out to be quite a good decoy as the guards came on the tier to put it out, and this allowed things to get out of control on other tiers. By the time the fire was out there was no stopping things, and when the guards backed off that tier quickly made up for lost time.

Whenever the rocks were thrown at

the pigs they retreated and a fire hose was sprayed at the barricade for about five minutes.

By this time people started smashing things more seriously, since the whole thing was secure and we had free access to all parts. People went on the catwalks and smashed out the windows, and took out whole removable winter panes and dropped them five stories. Then people started chanting "TVs off" and the TVs were thrown over, smashing with a loud boom far below. Desks were thrown off the tiers.

The entire inside of every cell was about three inches deep in water, as hoses were being sprayed by the guards at the ends of the tiers and catwalks. As well there were hoses being sprayed in the outside windows.

Some people were just watching it all go down; some were laughing and encouraging others; some were working very hard, always thinking up new ways to wreck the building. People covered their faces with torn sheets and covered their heads with sheet caps in order not to be recognized by guards at the end of the tiers and in case of the possibility that night vision cameras were being used to photograph through the outside windows.

The sinks and toilets were smashed in most every cell unless people were sitting in their cells, not really participating very much. The locking lugs on doors were bashed off to prevent the doors being locked. The lugs were heavy steel about an inch square, and were seen to be choice implements to throw, especially through the hole in the wall at the guards and the riot squad outside the prison.

Most every light bulb from cells and elsewhere were destroyed, but luckily some were saved which could be used when someone was injured, especially cut. It was important to ensure there was some dry material, like sheets, to be used as bandages. The light was kept on just long enough to do the medical work and then turned off so there was no light and so the guards wouldn't know what cells were occupied.

Once everything was smashed, people began calming down and started talking, anticipating the end and how it would happen. The top catwalk was entered by the goon squad, with helmets, face shields, hockey shin and knee pads, and they gave a warning over the loudspeaker that we had 30

See page 16: In bare

Director says 'no excessive violence'

From page 1

take place near the cells in the "cow barns" (the disused isolation unit where they were held after the riot), saw bleeding and shaking prisoners led away, or knew of prisoners hospitalized afterwards. They charged they were forced to walk a gauntlet — a line of club-swinging guards — and had bruises to show for it.

Those charges, says regional corrections director Ted Harrison, are "just straight bullshit."

Harrison said there were no beatings. He said the only reports of injury he heard concerned prisoners who cut hands throwing pieces of broken porcelain from smashed toilets and sinks. He said he witnessed the surrender of inmates at the end of the riot and their frisking before they were sent to the "cow barns."

"Look, I don't know how many times I can say to you I saw no excessive use of force or violence," he said. "I saw only calm, well-trained staff dealing with a very tense situation without harming prisoners."

Prisoners attributed the riot to "guard disrespect." Guards accustomed to treating younger inmates in what some called an "overbearing" way tried the same thing on older inmates from other prison wings, "who aren't used to it and know they don't have to take it," says one. That attitude is claimed to be the reason for an incident earlier Nov. 22, when a guard was chased off a tier after allegedly pulling a prisoner to his cell by his hair.

Still, prisoners say they were surprised at the extent of the uprising and the "minimal" punishment they say they received for it. They were also surprised prison authorities didn't act sooner to quash the beginnings of the riot.

Meanwhile, daily newspaper readers were denied the inside story.

Journalists say senior Sun reporter Robert Sarti has obtained accounts from prisoners and other sources. But Sarti was told articles quoting unnamed sources would not be run in the paper without further confirmation from sources outside prison. Other, still unnamed sources were obtained.

The story was ready for print, but Sun senior editors Gordon Fisher and Bruce Larsen balked.

They insisted on personally knowing the names of Sarti's sources, a shift from previous Sun policy on prison stories, and one which would make prison reporting virtually impossible, said reporters. They would not pledge to go to jail rather than reveal those sources. (Journalists' ethical commitment to protect the identity of sources sometimes places them in contempt of court.)

So the Sun sat on the story.

Sarti will not comment on the matter, nor will Sun city editor Ian Haysom.

"Why I'm a little loath to get into it is we're still looking into it. It's still a story from my point of view," Haysom said.

One prison activist added her voice to complaints about the "cow barns" where prisoners were held after the riot.

Geri Ferguson of Women Against Prisons had a first-hand look at the

facility as a prisoner after the 1980 New Year's Eve riot by women at Oakalla. She calls it "brutal."

The isolation unit, named for the cow barns beneath which they were built, were ordered abandoned by former attorney general Alex MacDonald in 1975. Since then they have been used in emergencies.

"When we were there in 1980 for the riot it was like walking into a morgue," Ferguson says. "There was no heat on and it has I don't know how many years of blood and shit caked on it. Graffiti about death. Bugs. I caught this bug and put it in an envelope for the director. I never heard back from him about what kind it was, though."

The quiet cells in the unit "can drive you insane," she says.

They were allowed nothing but a bible in their cells. No phone calls or tobacco was permitted. During the day, she said, mattresses and blankets were taken from the cells, and prisoners had to sit on bare concrete.

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Nobody is looking forward to 1984, but we think this handsome item ought to make it a little easier to get through...

Each month brings you another beautiful 8½ by 11 black and white image from festivals over the years — Katari Taiko, Holly Near and Ronnie Gilbert, Grupo Aymara and more.

So don't spend another year looking at that same picture of Peggy's Cove from the fish store, or the cute little kid with it's arms around the puppy.

This year, treat yourself to a really beautiful calendar — and do a friend a favour — they make great Christmas gifts.

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AN INJURY TO ONE IS STILL AN INJURY TO ALL

Children
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Labour
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Ethnic Minorities
Local Gov'ts
Consumers
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Tenants
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Students
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**Bill Bennett opened this wound
— Band-aids won't close it.**



**Vancouver Municipal and
Regional Employees' Union
SUPPORTS
The Solidarity Coalition**

In bare feet, no shirt, freezing cold, they were made to stand on the cold concrete

From page 15

minutes to go to 3 left tier or tear gas would be used.

The entire wing was soaked, people were tired, there was nowhere we were going and there were lots of guards visible both at the end of the tiers and outside, so most people felt like surrendering. We'd done what we wanted, and it seemed pointless to let them gas us since there was no reason to continue anyhow. People lined up one behind another, and went forward one at a time through the gate at the end of the tier. The landing was full of 30 to 40 guards — the goon squad — and lots of others.

We were told to put our hands on our heads and told to throw down everything we had and take off all of our clothes — shoes, socks, shirts and jackets — and leave only our pants on. Then we were roughly frisked and handcuffed behind our backs, turned over to one guard who began pushing us past a line of about 10 guards who swung clubs at the front or back of our kneecaps. We were forced to walk barefoot over garbage with much glass and sharp porcelain from sinks and toilets, downstairs, and into the centre hall where there were many more guards and lots of RCMP.

We were told to lean our heads on a post and were questioned by an RCMP about our name, our tier and cell, what we did, were people hurt, were people holding out to fight. From there we were led outside the front door and into a police van. The handcuffs had been placed on most people very tightly; by this time people's hands were numb and the handcuffs had actually cut right into the skin, drawing blood.

We were driven in the van to the infamous "cow barns." We were prodded inside — a group of six was in each police van — with snarly guards with their clubs pushed in our backs, pushing, sticking, swinging up between our legs from behind.

The "cow barns" is a concrete bunker, a concrete vault totally self-contained underneath an old cow barn. Inside the vault there are 14 silent cells and approximately 14 open cells. The cells are about five by eight feet and have no lights, no beds, no toilets and sinks. At first approximately seven or eight people were put in each of the open cells.

In bare feet, no shirt, freezing cold, they were made to stand on the cold concrete for about an hour and a half. Blankets were given out and finally, after about another hour, people were moved to the closed cells so that every cell had four people in it. Then mattresses were passed out and people began resting. It was very cold and very crowded with four people in each cell.

Some people who were brought to the barn, who the guards thought were ring leaders, were immediately put in the quiet cells. These cells are even smaller than the open ones and they are

a cage within a larger one with a solid door. These people were beaten in Oakalla and were beaten again just around the corner from the open cells. The beating could be heard, the cracks on the head sounding clearly as well as blows to the body.

They were bleeding afterwards as they were led to the quiet cells, i.e., total isolation. Several guards went into those cells with them. Later, the next morning, they were taken to the hospital, shaking violently and barely able to stand. These were all strong men, with nothing physically wrong with them before they surrendered.

The guards in the isolation unit, or cow barns, were from all the wings. The guards there were all very heavy; several in particular were very hyper and obnoxious. Members from the goon squad were still wearing their helmets and carrying their clubs, which were approximately two and one half feet long, maybe three, and three inches in diameter.

Occasionally these particular screws would approach a cell with seven guys in it and point out an individual, saying to the officer in charge, "I want that guy for myself." He would be taken out of the cell and taken to a quiet cell, a cell that people couldn't see into or hear what was happening inside.

There are two bright light bulbs outside the cage in the quiet cells. There is never any change of light in them, or anywhere else in the entire unit. There are no windows; just one door at each end. It is totally and completely locked from the outside.

The next day some of the older men were taken to the regular isolation area, "the hole," which is part of the Westgate B section. They were moved because of the cold and problems with arthritis and rheumatism.

The cells were full with four people, some had three, all the next day and night. Some of the people on the second night did not even have mattresses and were forced to lie on the cold concrete. This was a full 24 hours after the conclusion of the riot. People were just given one light blanket. There was a plastic bucket placed inside each cell for people to piss in. It would take a whole lot of time to get a guard to let someone out to the toilet for a shit. This toilet was in plain view of nearly all the open cells.

People were fed three meals a day, no tobacco; shirts were provided, but not shoes or socks. No showers or even water was available to wash. There was no movement at all, except for the few let out to take a shit. The cells were too crowded to move around in, so most people spent the day huddled inside their blanket.

On the second night, guards would pound on some of the doors of the quiet cells in order to prevent people from sleeping, which was extremely difficult because of the cold and crowdedness to begin with.

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ENTERTAINMENT

INSIDE THE IDIOT BOX

By John Mackie

I have seen the future of rock and roll, and it's stupid.

They keep telling us over and over and over again that video is the new Kingmaker for music in North America, primarily through Music Television (MTV) in the States, a 24-hour rock video cable system founded by Warner Communications. CBC has jumped in, natch, with a couple of copy-cat shows that air after the hockey game on Saturday nights, **Fame Game** and **Good Rockin' Tonight**. CKVU has their own rock show Friday nights at 8 p.m. and also airs a U.S. made "in-concert" style show, **Rock N' Roll Tonite**, Saturday at 11 p.m.

They all stink.

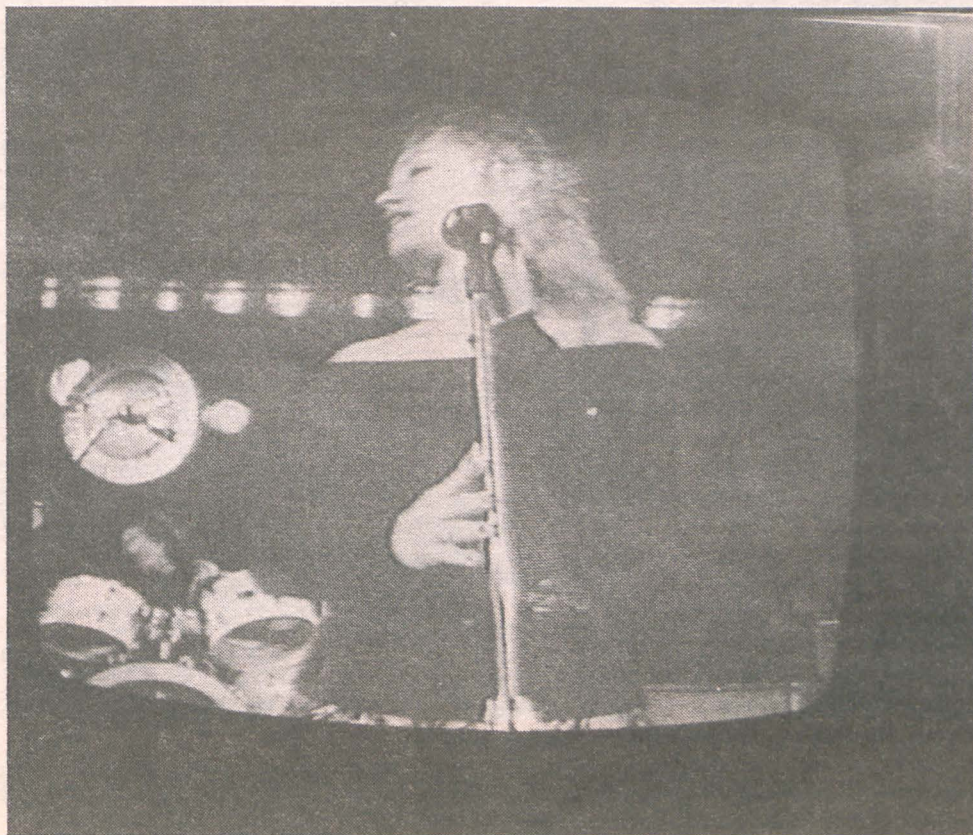
Fame Game differs from the other three in that it features non-famous Canadian acts. Theoretically, it's supposed to be a showcase for up-and-coming homegrown talent. If that's true, we're in trouble. **Fame Game** is actually the most watchable of the four programs, but it's watchable for the wrong reason: the show is so bad, it's hilarious.

In the cultural wasteland of TV, it has come to pass that most funny shows aren't funny, and serious shows can only be taken seriously if you've got the brain of a turnip. The best shows are the ones that either don't take themselves too seriously, like **Dallas** or **Dynasty**, or are so stupid, they can be laughed at, not with, like **A-team** or **Knight Rider**. High Camp used to be the maxim for the tragically hip: now it's High Stupidity.

Fame Game fits into this scenario. Each week, four or five bands play one tune that is judged by three judges according to three categories: choice of material, stage presence and TV potential. The bands range from the bad to the pathetic. If there's such a thing as an original idea in Canada's rock music community, it's not on display here. Everything is a bad copy of something that's been made famous elsewhere. Having seen the odd good Canadian band in my time, of numerous artistic stripes, whoever decides who goes on the program should be congratulated for sifting them out and instead focusing on complete dreck that we can chortle at.

As bad as the bands are, the *real* dummies are the judges. They are fools. Cliche follows cliche as they make comments about acts: "good, hard rocker!", "I liked the dry ice!", "They seem to go over well in the bars around town!", etc., etc. Chilliwack's Bill Henderson should be bronzed for his comment that a song by the Beverly Sisters, one of only three or four watchable bands that have aired, was too "one-dimensional" because it was funny. Bill Henderson of Chilliwack, that multi-dimensional, cosmic, *meaningful* rockin' troupe, calling *somebody else* "one-dimensional"? Now *that's* funny. Somebody should shoot him and put him out of our misery.

The best (worst) groups are the heavy metal acts, who really put on a



'Yeeeeeeeee-aaaaaaahhhhhhh!!!'

BEV DAVIES PHOTO

Fame Game, Family Feud or Gong Show?

Why does the CBC do these horrible things with our money?

show trying to outdo each other with special effects, insipid lyrics and rock star poses. When there's no heavy metal band, the show often slips into mere tediousness.

This was the case last week, when Calgary got it's shot (each week we get a glimpse of how bad bands are from different cities across the frozen north, culminating in a national championship). Believe it or not, there's actually a bar in Cowtown called Lucifer's where they shot this episode. I don't know about you, but I would never even set foot in a bar called 'Lucifer's'. That's tempting fate a little too much, don't you think? Besides, a name like that is an open invitation for lowest-common-denominator loons to boogie till they puke. Good times! Smoke a couple 'a doobers, tilt back a few heinies, then go talk to Ralph on the big white telephone. Hoot!

Anyhoo, our host was Humble Howard, a deejay. Howard was notable for his thick, Leonid Brezhnev eyebrows and his obnoxious extroverted manner. The loudmouthed jerk in high school grown up to be a radioa goof. Our judges were Pat Blandford (the first half of his name

tells all) of CBC radio, Jamie Wohl of KIK-FM (presumably Calgary's CFOX), and Graham Hicks of the Edmonton Sun. All three were sedater than usual, which took away half the show's entertainment value. Instead of making idiots of themselves, they were simply boring. Thankfully, Howard stuck pie on his face by attempting some bad jokes that were flatter than the top of his square head.

The bands were Metrobeat, Police/Men At Work clones; Club 21 Lincolns, oldish greasers in leather; Eclipse, a thud-thud-thud amalgam of a bad female bar band singer with third-generation ripped-off heavy poop, er, pop; and the Cold Boys, a Flock Of Haircuts new wave lounge act with a sound like a giant marshmallow. Club 21 Lincolns won with their "originality," according to our judges, which is funny cause the bozos didn't clue in that the Lincolns were doing a cover version of a Fabulous Thunderbirds song, "Tear It Up." D-U-M-B, everyone's accusing me.

Good Rockin' Tonight is kind of off-and-on good and bad. Host Terry David Mulligan reminds us who he is about every 10 seconds, but he's kind

of funny to watch cause of his fluffy eyebrows and ants-in-his-pants yip-yip-yap-yap demeanour. The real problem with **Good Rockin'** is one that plagues all rock-video shows: namely, that most videos are out-and-out garbage. Music is music and film is film and rare the twain shall meet.

Even videos that critics tell us are masterpieces, like Michael Jackson's *Billie Jean*, are disjointed and hard to follow. Jackson walks down the street, and every step he takes, the sidewalk lights up like pinball machine. Hoo-lee! Neat-O! Imagine that! Garsh! The video does have about two seconds of Jackson dancing, which is just amazing, cause the guy is made of rubber and pulls off some unearthly moves. Unfortunately, the rest is blah.

Visions of scantily-clad women constantly float in and out of various videos attempting to titillate us, as do various special effects and fancy edits, surreal and sexist. Others are edited so quickly they rush by in a confusing blur of images. All in all, they're a pretty sad lot, especially when you line them up against the original European videos of a few years ago that triggered the whole genre. A bank like XTC made videos that had verve, humor and actually enhanced one's perceptions of what the song was about. Nowadays, we get wimpy hunks like Spandau Ballet whining while they tilt their eyebrows heavenward to show how sad they are.

CKVU's Friday night show is just a B-version of **Good Rockin'**, mainly because host Dean Hill has the on-camera presence of a sack of potatoes. Dull is too weak a word for the hapless commentator, and the show plods where **Good Rockin'** zips. There's a female co-host, but all she does is giggle hysterically at Hill's bad jokes, so I didn't catch her name.

Rock N' Roll Tonite, the Saturday "live" show, suffers from the malady that did in ABC's *In Concert* and it's imitators a few years back — it's just not visually exciting and the mix of the songs make them sound like they were recorded for a tissue commercial. Simulcast in stereo on CFOX, they still sound flat. At least cheaply-recorded bootlegs have a live feel to them; this show wouldn't even be worth bootlegging, unless somebody extraordinary was on and you just *have* to have everything they've ever done, no matter how bad.

Video doesn't have to be bad. The local show that first broadcast videos, **Nite Dreems**, was great, thanks to a discerning choice of clips (**Good Rockin'** is stuck in a hits format, whether they're good videos or not). **Nite Dreems** co-hosts JB Shayne and John Tanner also injected an offbeat sense of humor and originality into the show that Mulligan lacks. (Fans of Mr. Shayne will be pleased to know he's back on CBC-FM with a show called **Schitzophonic**, which precedes and succeeds the hour **Good Rockin'** is broadcast Saturday night.)

Doug Bennett of Doug and the Slugs made a good point in the Sun last week when he said that videos will last, and might even get good, because there's no outlet for new directors to make shorts these days and videos could well fit the bill. Let's hope he's right, cause as things stand right now, rock video, it sink like borscht.

Mary Tyler Dubois goes to Houston



MARK VATNSDAL GRAPHIC

By Russell Stevens

Terms Of Endearment
Capitol 6

At the centre of *Terms of Endearment* is the affection, albeit rough and weathered, that the widow Aurora Greenway (Shirley MacLaine) and her daughter Emma (Debra Winger) have for each other.

A headstrong cross between Blanche Dubois and Mary Tyler Moore, Aurora is from Boston. She is attractive, intelligent, and has both a Renoir, and, as one would-be lover puts it, "a bug up her ass." Dogged by her crass, crackling middle-aged suitors, Aurora has developed over the years into a frightful witch, cutting herself emotionally from everyone except her child.

On the other hand, Emma, raised in Houston, is the type of woman who would fall passionately into the arms of the first man to call her "his dumb-ass country girl." Emma is her mother's opposite, unpretentious,



Shirley MacLaine giving Debra Winger motherly advice.

uninhibited, and what's more, easy to please. She derives happiness from the simple things of life — watching her children grow up, buying a tie for her husband, driving to the Burger King with her lover. Emma is a particularly American child of nature — innocent, naive and common.

Over the warnings and objections of her mother Emma marries Flap, a would-be English professor of the blandest and most superficial academic coloring. Following a few years of Texas matrimony the couple, now parents, are exiled in Iowa, the only place where young Flap can find a job. The central crisis of the film is provoked: how will this mother and daughter fare alone in the harsh world of human relationships now that their own affection has been relegated to the long distance call?

Upset by her daughter's departure, lonely and turning a fraudulent 50, Aurora strikes up an affair with her ex-astronaut neighbor Jack Breedlove (Jack Nicholson), who five years before had asked her to a White House lunch, then, upon her acceptance asked her to bed. Breedlove is a Corvette whirling, teenager chasing, drunken anti-prince, who, to quote Miss Aurora, "has realized his life's ambition (to fly in space) and is now a permanently spoiled brat." Surviving their first torrid ride through the Gulf

of Mexico surf the couple quickly become lovers.

For her part, Emma's marriage is collapsing, and she strikes up a relationship with a Des Moines banker who offers to lend her \$3 at a Super Valu check out line. Brilliantly typecast, the banker (John Lithgow) possesses the tact, will, and wit of a rather oversized Joe Clark. The two draw close until Emma, discovering Flap's adultery, is forced to flee with her children back to Houston.

Against Emma's wishes, after a minor reconciliation, Flap moves the family to Nebraska in order to take a new teaching position at a local university. By accident Emma discovers that Flap has moved the family not to further his career, but to follow the young woman he is still having an affair with. Flap is proven to be a liar, a cheat, and is discredited as a pure jerk. Yet strangely Emma does not leave him.

The film ends with one of the characters contracting a fatal disease which forces all concerned to re-evaluate and sort out their strained and misunderstood feelings for one another. But while this cancerous ending begs comparison with the pop/romantic *Love Story*, rather than simply signify the difficulty of loss, *Terms of Endearment* is clearly about the complexity of survival.

Writer-director James Brooks adapted *Terms of Endearment* from a Larry McMurtry novel. Adding the Breedlove character and subplot, Brooks, the creator of *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*, *Lou Grant* and *Taxi*, has fashioned a film which, while extremely sentimental and at times very vacant (lots of cute shots of kids), does manage to temper its liberal rhetoric and rise above its own impoverishment with an acutely disciplined self-consciousness. Unlike the somnambulates of *Ordinary People* we don't need a psychologist to help us find our way through the paradoxical forces which organize and disorganize the people's lives in this movie. The patterns of paradox and incongruity and hide and seek which flood over their lives is seen as liberating and is celebrated.

In a phone call to her mother Emma, near tears, asks Aurora if she can't borrow some money. "Now don't get mad," says Emma, "I think I'm pregnant again." Aurora screams, "You're what? Why don't you think about getting an abortion?" Emma turns to her side and reveals herself to be about five months into her term. In another scene, arriving at an appointed meeting place simultaneously, Emma's dimwitted banker plucks the keys from his ignition and says with excitement, "we both arrived here at the same time."

Here is the irony pushing out from the screen, in brief and fleeting flashes we are allowed to glimpse the inadequacy of romance.

In general, the actors in this movie have been over-praised. Debra Winger is uneven, and at times slips into the flat, country hickness of her "Sissy" Urban Cowboy role. Shirley MacLaine is passable, as long as she's not descending into one of her nauseating slapstick screwball tantrums. Jack Nicholson is fantastic, unless of course you've just seen him in any of his other movies. Then you realize that Jack is just tedious.

The real strength of *Terms of Endearment*, for all its blandness, lies with the script. Brooks spent four years writing the screenplay. Formally the material is polished to a Mr. T. Whole scenes and characterizations spin on single words. For example, when we first meet the drunken Breedlove the pivotal word is hero. When we meet Flap's stuffy academic girl friend we turn on the word validate. It's a shame, however, that after four years Brooks couldn't have come up with something a little more biting than a sitcom.

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By David Hauka

The Dead Zone
Denman PlaceMaria Chapdelaine
The Park

O h! No! Not another horror film! Arrgghh! I hate being scared! Well, that's not strictly true. I dislike being placed in a position where I think I'm going to die is more like it. To be honest, I sat through *Alien* three times. I don't know why, I just did. There is something about horror films . . . something that grabs hold of the inner parts of your brain and gives them a squeeze. Whether it has to do with the realization of socially taboo activities or a grim representation of our society, horror films fascinate a large percentage of the movie population.

Say the name "David Cronenberg" and most gentle folk will have visions of gory violence and lots of it. In fact, this has been the case in most of his films, along with what seems to be a fanatical obsession with the darker side of the scientist in society. Films like *Rabid*, *Scanners*, *Shivers* and *The Brood* have a style particular to Cronenberg (no surprise there, he wrote or co-authored the screenplays), and not everybody likes it. His films poke holes into the "comfortable" genre we call horror.

Stephen King is another name that has visions of splashing blood or rotted psyches boiling to the front of one's mind. His novels are well crafted excursions into the macabre. As well, King has seen several of his books translated to the screen. *Carrie* and *The Shining* have been particularly successful; however, I think we can safely say that *Cujo* was a dog.

As for Cronenberg's version of King's *The Dead Zone*, it has to be the best horror films I've seen this year. Something of a surprise, *The Dead Zone* seems to be a departure for Cronenberg from his usual motifs of physical alteration or psychic pyrotechnics. The film relies instead on powerful character identification. Christopher Walken (*The Deer Hunter*) as Johnny Smith grabs our sympathy from the first moment he appears on screen and doesn't let go. He's a grade school teacher reading Poe's "*The Raven*" to his class. We are quickly introduced to him and his future prospects. And you just know it's all going to go wrong! Johnny is catapulted through a series of traumatic events which sever him from everything he has grown to love or hope for. What he "gains" is the power, not to see into the future, but to see into the lives and souls of the people he touches.

Now, all this comes as a bit of a shock to poor Johnny. So he does what every young American who loses his dream does. He shuts himself off from society. Society, as we all know, is never too keen on things like that.

It is witnessing the "Man Alone" that really traps us in *The Dead Zone*. Walken is alone in the crowd, the ultimate outsider whose freakish affliction is sucking the life out of him.

Brooke Adams as Johnny's much-loved fiancée, Shara, delivers an understated and effective performance. She represents Johnny's lost future, and, by extension, ours. Shara is at ease in this film, belonging to the social system that produced her. We fear for her, not because of anything tangible . . . rather, it is her association with Johnny and the fact this is, after all, a horror film.

There is an instance of "I'm gonna die if I watch this part!" in the film. Oddly enough, especially when we consider the body of Cronenberg's work,



Christopher Walken scaring himself.

Enter King Cronenberg

In Toronto, no one can hear you scream

it is understated. It is precisely this understatement that cuts into us. We expect to see the worst (I'm sure down deep we really want to, why else are we here?). And we do see an indication of it. But the real horror is yet to come.

Martin Sheen plays what seems at first to be an almost incidental character, a John F. Kennedy-type politician who appeals to the rich, the poor and everyone in between. Sheen's performance is, in a word, bizarre. He manages to give us a character that has two sides . . . two sides so closely related that it forces us to rethink our preconceptions of good and evil. Sheen becomes, with the most subtle altering of character I've witnessed in the horror genre, the flip side of the State. His eyes have that born again look, and he draws the masses to him like flies to something rotten. If you get the impression that *The Dead Zone* has something more to say than "boo", you're on the right track.

So, this is what's special about *The Dead Zone*! Characters! Characters that are rendered fully, an attribute missing from most films of this type. Perhaps this is where Cronenberg has been heading all along. His films have always utilized strong central characters, but it's difficult to identify with someone who can make your head melt (we may all want to do that to someone . . .)

This film is a must see; you can keep your eyes shut in the scary bits if you want to. Cronenberg is on his way to being Canada's most important anglophone director (yikes, what have I said?).

At the beginning of the twentieth century thousands of Quebecois left their harsh homeland and migrated to the New England states to work in factories and a gentle climate. They left behind their language and heritage for assimilation into the rapidly expanding American cities.

During this period of movement and uncertainty a young Frenchman came to Quebec to seek his fortune. His name was Louis Hémon. He worked for a year and a half clearing land in the wild back country. He also wrote what was to become a Quebecois literary classic, *Maria Chapdelaine*.

The story is about a young woman, Maria, who must make a choice from three men who seek her hand: Francois Paradis, a wild and exciting trapper; Lorenzo, from the U.S.A.; and Gagnon, a local farmer who is nice, but not terribly exciting. But whether Maria loses Paradis, runs off to the big city or stays to marry the boy next door is secondary to the book's statement on Quebec's cultural strengths: Language, Church and Land.

This is the message of *Maria Chapdelaine*. She is offered three options on the future: an exciting, but rootless existence with the trapper, city life, but assimilation with the American, or a continuation of her mother and father's harsh life on a back woods farm. It should be clear at this point how fine a line the book treads between a maple sugar romance and a re-affirmation of a society's social and religious beliefs.

The film of *Maria Chapdelaine* has a severe case of hyperglycemia. Not that director Gilles Carle doesn't try. The theme of Quebec's cultural and political identity is stated and restated so often that it is hard to miss. Maria's mother is a particularly potent figure, a woman who has been uprooted just as life was getting "easy", not once, but three times. Moving deeper into the back woods, farther from the comforts of the village and the church, she is a triumphant rendering of Quebec's cultural identity. On the steps of her cabin she defines her view of the world: "This is Canada, not out west or to the south! This is and always will be

Canada." And for that moment in the film that set of stairs is Canada.

There are many sequences which explore the relation of the Church to Quebecois society, how it is inseparable from everyday life. The mystical and supernatural elements of the society are referred to again and again, finding their expression in disobedience ("the Demon of Lying made me do it"), or in the local native people ("the hurricanes and storms are caused by the savages!"). These statements are never trite, they are thoughtful and loving — the amusement we feel when Telespore's moose in the cow pen turns out to be real (and no one believes him) is caused by the Demon of Lying's overuse.

The cinematography has moments of elegance and beauty which relate the people to their Church and Land, creating a sensibility that lies somewhere between realism and theatricality. But it is from here on in that things start to go wrong.

Carole Laure as Maria is silent and ineffective throughout the film. She speaks at length only voice-over letters to her beloved Paradis, and these sequences are shown with a scene which belongs on the cover of a cheap romance novel. There she sits, tragic Maria, in front of a misty waterfall which runs unabated like the tears of her soul . . . even in the dead of winter or the middle of a devastating draught! Unlike her mother, Maria is not strong or self-willed. She is a retrograde figure, a woman shown in romantic films of 50 years ago. When Maria makes her choice, it is not a heroic gesture — it seems to be a capitulation to her Church and her society.

Exploration of the film's supporting characters, in particular Lorenzo, is sketchy. Why did he and other Quebecois leave their Language, Land and Church for the U.S.? Why does he return? Certainly the reasons run deeper than an attraction to Maria, or the selling of his father's farm. We come close to understanding what Lorenzo has lost in one moment of the film, where Maria gives him her answer. They are in Church at a funeral. Maria leans over her father's shoulder and mouths her words at Lorenzo. He understands her all too well, and begins to cry. The moment is spoiled by cutting the shot short. We need to see Lorenzo's grief, and we are denied it by an editing style reminiscent of an NBC mini-series.

And the music! Written by Lewis Furey, it belongs on an episode of *All My Children*, not a feature film. This score puts the melos back into melodrama, with a vengeance. Various themes surface, rendered saccharine-sweet by piano and harp. If Maria turns dewey-eyed to the camera, clutching her breast because she's just seen Paradis' boots, a monstrous dose of sentimental goop cascades into your ears! But the topper is the theme assigned to Paradis. One more overly expressive harp and piano passage would have caused a screaming stampede from the theatre.

Still, *Maria Chapdelaine* has a lot going for it. It is a film that uses language in the manner that music should have been. The words of the characters ebb and flow, building to climaxes that no anglophone ear can fully appreciate. The figures of Maria's mother and father are fully realized and intelligent. The screenplay is a fine adaptation of the original text (the novel is different on many counts), cutting through the work's almost condescending style and introducing new elements that make the story fresh and full of potential. It is unfortunate that this potential is eclipsed by the feeling one is trapped in a 90-minute soap opera.

1984

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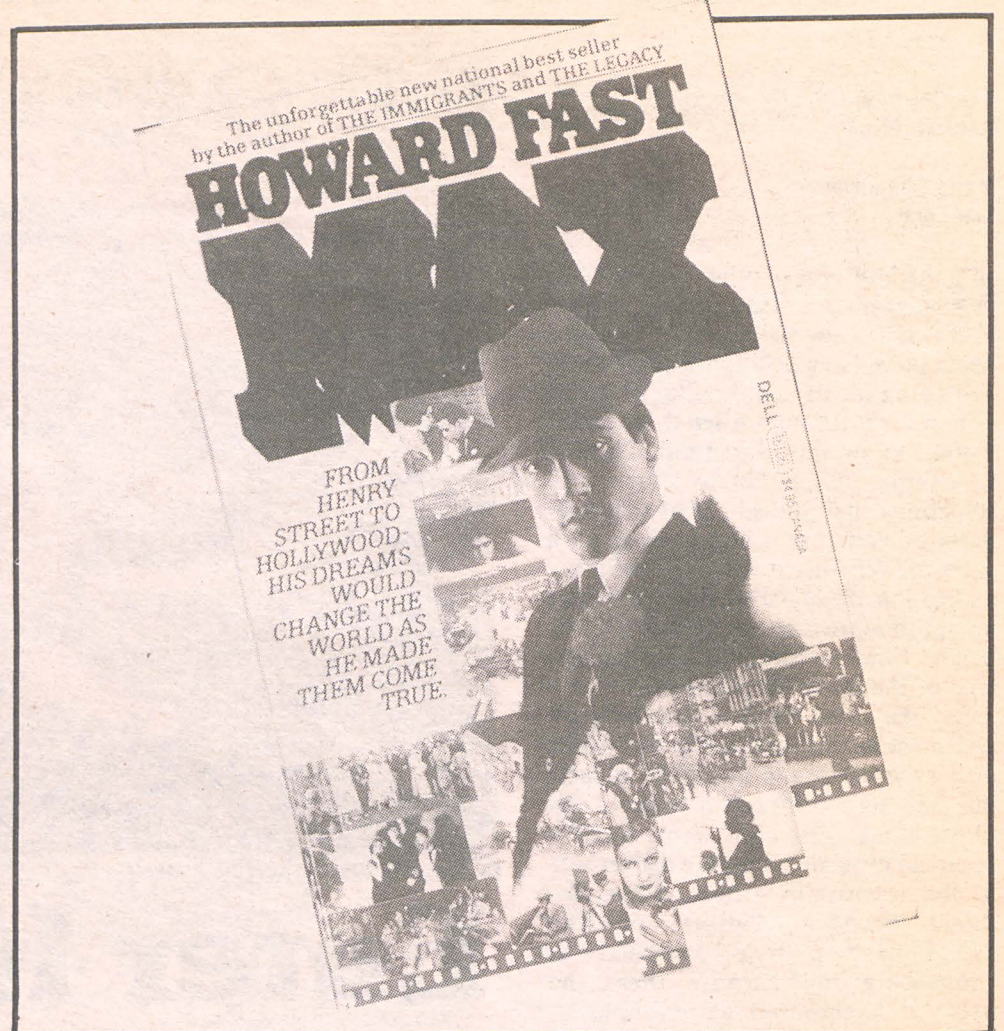
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Howard Fast's Max: a left-wing cheeseburger?

Max a choice snack

PULP ON PAPER

By **Ralph Maurer**

Max, by **Howard Fast**. Dell, 395
pages, \$4.95.

"There is a school of thinking which holds that individuals influence history and the course of what we call civilization," writes Howard Fast in *Max*, "and another school which denies this and hews to a theory of implacable forces."

This debate, which has been raging at least since Karl Marx started wondering why the poor always seem to be with us, is not exactly endemic to best-seller novels. North American popular culture is almost completely dominated by the Great Man theory of history, and modern historical novels usually tell the story of a Great Man who single-handedly changed the world forever.

Everything about *Max*, from the title to the cover illustration to the cover blurb ("his dreams would change the world as he made them come true"), suggests that this is another one of those books. It isn't.

Author Fast, a leftist, wants this serious novel to be read, and so it conforms, superficially, at least, to the conventions of the pop novel. Its conservative disguise — a masquerade as a romantic piece of escapism — conceals a view of the world that stands in direct contradiction to the very society that created pop novels, and that dictates *Max*'s format.

The hero, *Max*, is a product of the New York ghetto. As a young man needing a living, he opens up a small theatre to show primitive motion pictures, then just invented. His venture is successful beyond his wildest dreams, and some 300 pages later he has been transformed into the most powerful mogul in moviedom.

The story Fast tells, though, is of a man grimly hanging on to a rampaging, bullish new industry as it grows into a massive wealth-generating machine. *Max* is the beneficiary of a

period of explosive economic growth and technical innovation; he does not create Hollywood, but rather embodies the infancy of the movie biz.

Although he is intelligent and forceful, *Max* does get a lot of help on his road to Great Man-ness. His girlfriend Sally, whose \$1,000 loan allows *Max* to open his first theatre, is the source of many of the important innovations that fuel his rise. It is she who suggests music to accompany the silent films and that movies ought to have story-lines and scripts.

There's *Max*'s first employee, Sam Snyder — "from the beginning, the link between Thomas Edison as a source and the driving energy of *Max* Britsky." There's the technology that makes it all possible. *Max* couldn't have timed his birthday better to take advantage of Tom Edison's new machine.

And finally, there's that old implacable force capitalism, which makes it all necessary.

It's significant that *Max* loses the dramatic boardroom battle that is the climax of the story, and it's significant that life, and the movie industry, not only go on without him, but don't even notice he's gone.

Fast's depiction of where art (and movies are, after all, an art form) fits into all this is interesting. Directors quickly discover that stage actors make lousy screen actors, and that the best film actors are not "actors" in the accepted sense at all, because movies are not, after all, plays. Even the architecture of theatres are determined by the needs of capitalism and its sidekick technology, and not the needs of the art form.

Lest you think that *Max* is an earnest lecture on capitalism and the politics of culture, remember that this book can be found on the same drugstore best-seller racks as those Judith Krantz and Stephen King cheeseburgers. That a 'progressive' should write a novel embodying his view of the world is not surprising, but that he should do so within the fundamentally conservative structures of the pop-novel form is remarkable. Howard Fast demonstrates that the Left need not live in a cultural ghetto.

Hughes a prodigious talent

BUT IS IT ART?

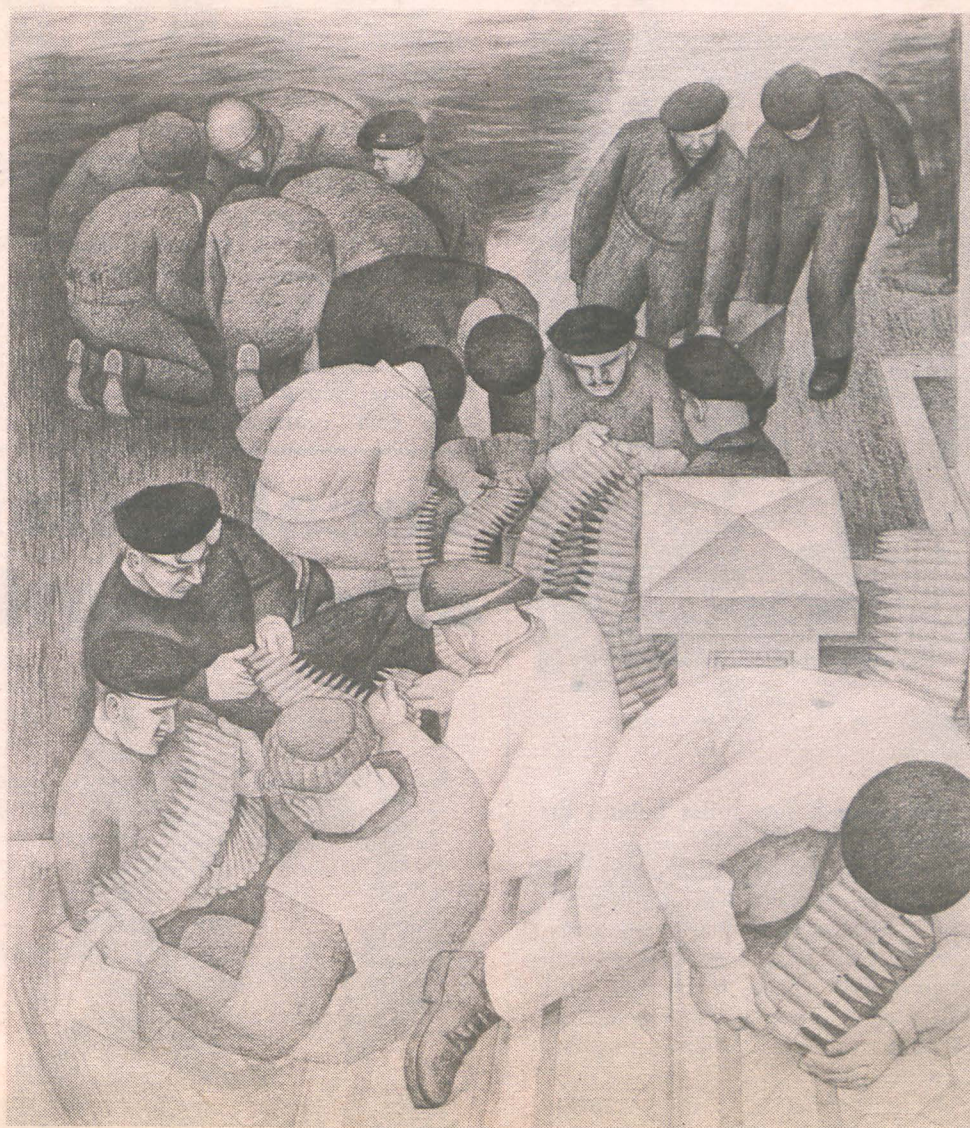
By Scott Watson

E. J. Hughes: A Retrospective
The Surrey Art Gallery
Nov. 18-Dec. 11

E. J. Hughes (born in 1913) is widely regarded as one of the most important artists British Columbia has produced. He is known for his landscapes of the Gulf Islands and southern Vancouver Island. This retrospective, which includes more than eighty drawings, watercolours and paintings, broadens the picture of Hughes and his achievement. It affirms his place in Canadian art history, a place which will, no doubt, be given to him grudgingly, for Hughes embodied a conservative, even anti-modern outlook that Canada's intellectual avant-garde thought they buried long ago.

Hughes sees himself as a "primitive." That is, he doesn't use the renaissance techniques of linear and aerial perspective. Instead, he creates scenes which are a proliferation of clear detail from foreground to background. This gives his paintings their appearance of innocence, for children like to draw the outlines of things. Awkward transitions of scale, such as figures in the middleground as large as those in the background add to the impression that this work derives its charm from a lack of self-consciousness. For we are used to seeing the organizing perspective system of renaissance art as the very sign of the mercantile ego.

That this naive charm is a superficial impression is proved by the many drawings and studies in the exhibition. As a draughtsman Hughes has a pro-



E. J. Hughes' 'Loading Ammunition Belts', on display at the Surrey Art Gallery.

digious talent. His skill at drawing knows few equals in Canadian art and the drawings reek with mechanical genius. One way of looking at the paintings, which subvert drawing to some extent, is to see them as a deliberate containment of this power. For there is not a single work in which the imagination surpasses or even equals the skill or execution. As a result, a certain agitation is always pre-

sent, but only as the muffled trace of something successfully suppressed. Nor is the coldness of Hughes' work the result of a loftly intellectual concern. Instead the works reveal an unassuming, even passive temperament.

In canvas after canvas one is faced with the austere, distanced vision of the gentleman painter. In relatively early works from the late forties the landscape is menacing and forbidding.

Mountains are oppressive, the sky dark, buildings deserted and crumbling. But from the fifties on the vision is more idyllic and gives a picture of man and nature in harmony. For this reason these are somewhat religious works in the classical sense. Harmony and order, in this world view, signify the presense of God. The plea for order in Hughes' work admits disturbance. There are plenty of dark skies, but the disturbance is contained by the finished, even surfaces of the paintings. Unlike Emily Carr, whose work stands for untrammelled and heroic individuality, Hughes' work argues for social order, responsibility and rationality. And, while Carr intends to offer her viewers spiritual nourishment Hughes offers a reserved politeness.

This sober vision is not as antipathetic as it sounds. Hughes' paintings are honest and convincing. One believes that they really are the result of a search for the essential in his subject, British Columbia's recreation coastal waters. They organize and summarize a topography that non-Indian Canadians have found inhospitable and gloomy. For this reason they are an act of civilization. And they certainly seem to mollify the entrepreneurial class who collect them.

Work for the exhibition has been well selected to give a picture of Hughes' development and working method. The catalogue is lavishly illustrated and contains a definitive essay by curator, Jane Young. Of special interest is the attention given to Hughes' mural work in the thirties and his career as a war artist. These sections reveal a gift for subdued social realism.

That the Surrey Art Gallery has mounted this important exhibition, which will tour Canada from coast to coast and be shown at the National Gallery in Ottawa, shows that this sprawling suburb is not entirely given over to shopping malls, venal fundamentalist cults and mass murderers.

Fresh Off The Boat fresh off the mark

By Don Larventz

F.O.B. (Fresh Off the Boat)
Firehall Theatre

It was not until 1947 that Canadians of Chinese descent were granted the right to vote in Canada. In the United States the franchise was not denied, but the exclusions from mainstream life were just as severe. But for all the disabilities, the west coast — from California to B.C. — has attracted a continuing stream of immigrants from Hong Kong. Those fresh off the boat find themselves in a still partially ghettoized community where those who arrived earlier, sometimes by only a decade, deal with their insecurities by being more American-than-thou.

F.O.B. (Fresh Off The Boat) is David Henry Hwang's funny and tender look at affection, dating and Chinese food in an evening in the lives of Dale, an American of Chinese descent, second generation, Grace, his cousin, in the country for a decade, and Steve, fresh off the boat. With a lot of sharp one-liners keeping the play bubbling you still wouldn't mistake this for a situation comedy. The intelligence and occasional bitterness fueling the play are a long way from **All in the Family**. For the three characters the sense of family, of longing for family and the possibilities of

betraying the family in order to remain just an American form the boundaries of the action. All the talk of who owns a Porsche (someone Dale knows) or which is the trendiest restaurant to eat at doesn't rescue any of them from confronting their relationship to their Chinese past.

American born playwright David Hwang has an ingenious way of making mythic Chinese history rise up in the middle of this hot sauce. Periodically Steve acts out the role of Gwan Gung, the adopted god of early Chinese Americans, first as a playful way to talk to Grace and later with increasing seriousness as Grace herself takes on the functions of Fa Mu Lan, the girl who takes her father's place in battle. At first disconcerting and intrusive, the formalized acting in these little scenes draws in even Dale, the most westernized. Finally, reflecting on how, as Gwan Gung, he has been here in America many times before, Steve knows he is still the unwanted man, even though now he has money.

This was David Hwang's first play, and it went on to win an Obie as best play of the 1981 New York season. He is still going strong with two new plays currently playing off-Broadway. Crossroads Theatre and the director Kathleen Weiss have managed a tight production. Keeman Wong as the



Angela Siu (on the left) and Raymond Dang in Fresh Off the Boat.

Americanized Dale is convincing as the man who can still recognize the coming betrayals that Steve will have to make if he is to be as successfully American.

Angela Siu as Grace and Raymond Dang as Steve are strong performers as well. The play continues at the Firehall Theatre until December 11.

Nicaraguan film intrigues



The face of war from Nicaragua: Report From the front.

By Trish Webb

Nicaragua: Report from the Front does not merely remind you that Nicaragua is facing an American-backed force of saboteurs who sneak across the Honduran border and kill peasants and their livestock. It shows you the faces of those right-wing terrorists, their arms — M-16s, hand grenade launchers and rounds and rounds of ammunition — and their tactics. Pamela Yates and Tom Sigel score a journalistic victory when they are admitted to a Nicaraguan Democratic Force camp in Honduras and film training exercises and arms stores. For two weeks they participate in a contras operation, hiking through the mountains, spying on peasants and returning

to the camp a few miles behind the Honduran frontier.

In contrast to the well-armed group of former Somozan National Guardsmen, we meet the Nicaraguan army. By their own admission they are not dangerous, but, in the words of a soldier, they "have something that can not be manufactured — revolutionary consciousness."

The determination of the peasants to resist invasion is illustrated by the father of a soldier killed in a skirmish with the contras: his grief is not bitter because he believes his son has died for the future of other young people.

Through interviews with U.S. congressman Robert Torrecelli, a loose-lipped former National Guardsman

and Jeanne Kirkpatrick, the U.S. ambassador to the U.N., the film makes a strong case against U.S. foreign policy in Nicaragua. While Ronald Reagan postulates on Cuban military support to Nicaragua and the threat of spreading insurgency in Latin America, Torrecelli reminds us that the Boland amendment makes the use of American funds in the overthrow of the Nicaraguan government illegal.

The documentary is clear and non-dogmatic. Blood and gore is, for the most part, understated, as the pro-

ducers concentrate on the possibility of reinstatement of a repressive regime backed by the Americans. Peasants fear the return of Somozan National Guardsmen and are willing to take up arms against them, even if those arms are only single shot rifles.

Nicaragua: Report from the Front was produced and directed by Deborah Shaffer, Pamela Yates and Tom Sigel for Skylight Pictures, New York. The film will premier at the Science of Mind Hall, 2915 Commercial Drive, Dec. 2, 7:30 p.m.

Local activist dies after lengthy illness



Juils Comeault

Juils Comeault died after a lengthy illness on Nov. 11. He was 39.

Most people knew Juils through Octopus Books and Sunday Fun dances at the Oddfellows Hall, but as well he had a long involvement in cultural and political activity.

Immigrating to Canada as a war resister in the '60's, Juils was a founder of the infamous Vancouver Youth International Party (YIPPIES) and helped develop the popular Yippie Benefit Dances. Never one for fads,

Juils maintained his anti-authoritarian activism after the Yippies broke up in 1971. He worked with Spartacus Books and walked the picket lines during the postal workers and Muckamuck strikes and countless other struggles.

Juils was not only a high profile public activist but an intellectual who followed in the tradition of worker-intellectuals such as Boehme, Blake and Dietzgen, all of whom he admired. More than anyone, Juils realized the need for clear insight into the system he was trying to change. For years he delved deeply into political economy, cultural and critical social theory, the knowledge of which he shared through his wonderful and stimulating conversation. All this, handsome and humble too.

He was crazy for music and dancing, "freeing the chaos of his passions".

Dances organized and promoted by Juils at the Oddfellows Hall were famous for exposing new bands and talent in an uninhibited atmosphere. He also made sure that the bands, performers and workers, left with some bucks in their pockets.

His personal taste in music ranged far and wide and he took great pleasure in exposing his own latest disc discoveries to those fortunate enough to be around. He invented some mean dance steps and illuminated the soul force of music to many, a great party d.j.

During his long illness Juils exemplified the power of the will. High on morphine, listening to Roland Kirk or Sunny Ade, reading Alfred Doblin or Hegel, Juils was a master juggler, constantly active and squeezing what he could from the life he loved until his last moments.

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WEDNESDAY, NOV. 30 VANCOUVER

- Women in transition workshop on Unwanted patterns, 7 to 9 p.m., at 577 East 8th. To register call Shirley Buchan at 669-5288.
- Volunteers from the Vancouver Unemployment Action Centre present a mock Unemployment Insurance appeal hearing, 7:30 to 9:30 p.m., Kitsilano Neighborhood House, 2305 West 7th. Sponsored by the People's Law School. To register call 734-1126. Free.

NEW WESTMINSTER

- Labor lecture on "Workers in B.C. in the 20th Century," 7:30 p.m., Carpenter's Hall, 726 12th Street. For more info call 291-3521.

THURSDAY, DEC. 1 VANCOUVER

- Women Against the Budget meeting, 7:30 p.m., First United Church, 320 East Hastings.

FRIDAY, DEC. 2

FORTY-NINTH PARALLEL

- Unite against the cruise during Canada/U.S. Solidarity days, today and tomorrow at the Peace Arch on Highway 99. For info call 875-1098 or 731-6349.

VANCOUVER

- Local premiere of "Nicaragua: Report from the Front," 7:30 p.m., Science of Mind Centre, 2915 Commercial Drive. Tickets \$5, \$3 for the unemployed. Afterwards, Darwin Juarez, of the Federation of Central American Teachers Union, will speak on the threat of a U.S. invasion in Central America.

SUNDAY, DEC. 4 VANCOUVER

- Nonviolence training workshop. For time and place call Larry Anderson at 734-4708.
- Michael Manley, former Jamaican prime minister, speaks on the invasion of Grenada and other Caribbean affairs, 7:30 p.m., Student Union Building ballroom, University of B.C. Tickets \$6. Call 228-5336 to see if there is a change because of the snap election call in Jamaica.

TUESDAY, DEC. 6 RICHMOND

- Workshop on kids and the law, 7:30 p.m., Family Place, 6560 Gilbert Road. For more info call Penny Goldsmith at 270-7710.

GET HAPPY

WEDNESDAY, NOV. 30 VANCOUVER

- Saskatchewan poet Lorna Crozier (formerly Uher) will read from her new book *The Weather*, 7:30 p.m., Britannia Library, 1661 Napier St. Free.
- Roberto Rossellini's film "Voyage to Italy", 7:30 and 9:30 p.m., at Pacific Cinematheque, 1155 West Georgia. For more info call 732-6119.
- "Die Mutter" (The Mother) by Bertolt Brecht is performed at Theatre Space, 310 Water St. Tickets \$5, \$3 for members. For reservations call 681-0818 or 875-6884. Until Dec. 4.

Don't start the revolution without us. This is the place to publicize your meeting, demonstration, club, semi-secret cabal, party, poetry reading, concert, wake, petition, art show, campaign to save B.C. or other places from the excesses of those who have money and power to spare. We're interested in short announcements carrying the basics: who, what, where, when and why. If you think your group or conspiracy is worth more than an announcement, send us a short article of 100 words or less. Make it to the point, lively and informative.

Agit-Prop is a bulletin board for people and groups who, shut out of existing media, have had to use clandestine and extra-legal means to spread the word about their gatherings and campaigns. But keep on gluing up those posters. We all need something to assault our senses as we trudge to our workplaces, be they real or imagined.

Send your messages, preferably typed (so if there is a screw-up, you can blame us), to Agit Prop, Solidarity Times, 545 West 10th Ave., Vancouver, B.C. V5Z 1K9. Deadline is Monday, 10 a.m., before the issue you want to see your announcement in. We reserve the right to edit for space.

THURSDAY, DEC. 1

- "The Grand Illusions," the early years of French film production featuring interviews with and excerpts from the films of Marc and Yves Allegret, Rene Clair, Henri-Georges Clouzot, Henri Jeanson, Marcel Carne, Jean Renoir, and others, 7:30 and 9:30 p.m., Pacific Cinematheque, 1155 West Georgia. For info call 732-6119.

FRIDAY, DEC. 2 VANCOUVER

- Bluegrass concert with Skyline, 8:30 p.m., Oddfellows Hall, 1720 Gravely at Commercial. Tickets \$9, \$8 for Pacific Bluegrass and Heritage Society members.
- Vancouver Playhouse presents "Godspell", 8 p.m., Queen Elizabeth Playhouse. For info call 872-6622. Until Dec. 31.

SATURDAY, DEC. 3 VANCOUVER

- Vancouver Status of Women fund raising dance, 8 p.m., Oddfellows Hall, 1720 Gravely at Commercial. Music by Persisters. Tickets \$6, \$4 for the unemployed. Off-site child care provided with pre-registration by calling 873-1427.

SUNDAY, DEC. 4 VANCOUVER

- Fifth annual labor bazaar, 12:30 to 5 p.m., Ukrainian Hall, 805 East Pender.

TUESDAY, DEC. 6 VANCOUVER

- "Working," a musical from the books of Studs Terkel, 8 p.m., Studio 58, Langara Campus, 100 West 49th Ave. Tickets from \$3.50 to \$5.50. For reservations or more info call 324-5227. Until Dec. 17.

WEDNESDAY, DEC. 7 VANCOUVER

- Two films, "Stormy Weather" and "Ain't Misbehavin'", at Pacific Cinematheque, 1155 West Georgia. For info call 732-6119.

FRIDAY, DEC. 9 VANCOUVER

- Benefit for Solidarity Coalition, with folk, ethnic and rock music, 7:30 p.m., Ukrainian Hall, 805 East Pender. Tickets \$5, \$3 for the unemployed.



BEV DAVIES PHOTO

Braineater Jim Cummins parades his visions of the big bad city at the Unit Pitt gallery on West Pender for the next couple of weeks. He also has a new album, *I Here, Where You!* in the stores. Another Langley product makes good. Be prepared for an in-depth interview next week in the Times.

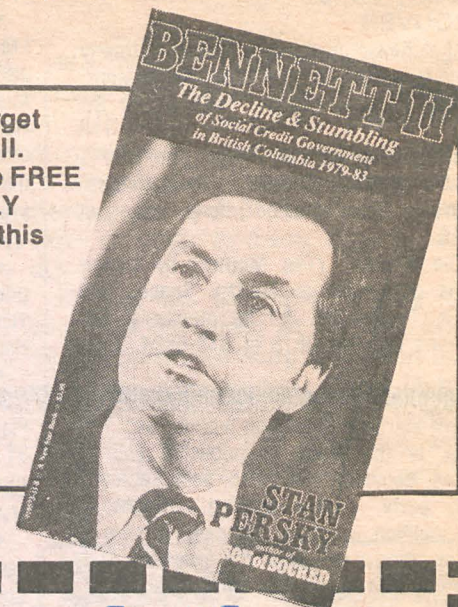
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