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# Carnegie

## NEWSLETTER



SEPTEMBER 15, 1993.

401 Main St., Vancouver V6A 2T7 (604)665-2289

### SCANDALS BY THE BUSHEL

Anyone who believes Kim Campbell's bloated political bafflebabbled must be suffering the side effects of a short circuit in their metabolism.

Her record in private life is a big double screw-up, which hardly qualifies her for efficient management at the top post of an entire country.

In her running for the prized political plum, citizens see an apologetic presentation of her reversal in loyalty - an attempted denial of Mulroney's Conservative policies - overnight! That's pretty hard for even the most naive to swallow.

In the light that exposes - Meech Lake, the Constitutional Referendum, Senate-stuffing, helicopters, capital punishment, GST, millions in foreign aid going to military dictatorships, double-dipping, cross-border deterrent laws, excessive perks & sacrilegious amounts in perks, use of limousines galore, special privileges, RCMP top-level scandals, Tory MP scandals, housing crisis, day-care lies, tight-fisted postal regulations & closure of hundreds of postal stations, VIA Rail cutbacks, gutting UI, gov't control of the CBC, universality of social programs

**Inside: Campbell  
Poetry Housing  
Crab Park  
Special Section:  
Nicaragua**



# IDIOTS ARE RUNNING YOUR LIVES

IS THIS WHAT YOU WANT?

FOR sure THIS TIME:  
JUST SAY **NO** TO IDIOTS!!

sold out to privatisation & profit, the loss of over 500,000 jobs because of Free Trade, ramming NAFTA to its current state, killing the generic drug industry, and so on and so on etc. etc. - an overnight total reversal is just too much for any educated slob to comprehend.

The record of the Conservatives in government in this country spell the most disastrous era in our history, promising at best the end of Canada as a nation. NAFTA is nothing but. Where do we go? Constituent assemblies? The USA?

Wilf Barbeau CD



*"Have I ever bugged you, Elkins?"*

### Kim Campbell - Mulroney Clone

According to Murray Dobbin's excellent book, "The Politics of Kim Campbell" (James Lorimer & Co. 1993), Kim Campbell was out of place when she was on the student council at the University of B.C. in 1967. At that time many students in North America were trying to make democracy stronger. Campbell, however, was an elitist whose favourite political philosopher,

Edmund Burke, taught her that governments should be run by educated elites.

In 1960 black students began lunch-counter sit-ins in the U.S. In 1961 freedom rides began to test segregation on interstate bus routes in the South.

Inspired by the civil rights movement, students at universities began to breathe life into democracy, and that energy was picked up by universities in Canada.

In the fall of 1964 the Free Speech Movement began on the Berkeley Campus of the University of California, & when the Vietnam War was escalated the students opposed it as a symbol of everything that was wrong with North America.

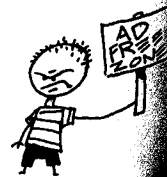
By 1967 the vision of democracy as government of the people, for the people & by the people was in full flower. Stan Persky, who was on the UBC student council at that time, experienced this wave of liberation, but when he regarded his fellow council member, Kim Campbell, he thought, "She looked like a straight right-winger...I thought, Oh God, here's the ancient regime." (The Politics of Kim Campbell, pg.3)

How was it possible for Kim Campbell to miss the hope & generosity of spirit of the 1960's? Instead of moving to Martin Luther King's call - "Free at last! Free at last! Thank God Almighty, we are free at last!" - she took as her mentor and first husband Nathan Divinsky, a UBC mathematics professor who was a reactionary and elitist right-winger. (Ibid, pg 3)

Now, through the power of the Tory Establishment, Campbell is Prime Minister. According to Dobbin's book, she would be a disastrous Prime Minister for Canada if elected (by the people).

The next article will show how closely Campbell is tied to Mulroney policies of free trade, the undermining of unemployment insurance & the GST.

By SANDY CAMERON



# Opportunities for rich kids funded by poor seniors?



The idea of a community bank will only be of real value if its investments are of-benefit, in the widest possible sense, to residents themselves.

Certainly, we should invest the interest generated by the small amount of transient funds that pass through our fingers every month in things that will better our situation, if that's really the name of the game...but Jim Green's banking project to fund youth housing, as I understand it, is far too narrowly defined & generally oriented to business & gov't preferences to fulfill our needs.

We are a diverse community...on the one hand we hear politicians praising that diversity, & on the other, we see them narrowing acceptability down to career-oriented, right-thinking, non-radical, well-behaved, potential "good citizens" who they say have just gotten a few bad breaks & are now willing to join our vision of "Century 21" (which many of us believe is just another euphemism for the end of the world).

If we are expected to invest our meagre funds, mostly generated by welfare, pension cheques & UI payments, in "community-oriented" projects, we better make damn sure they really are community oriented, in the widest sense, or these activities will just wind up as further extensions of power interests & personal image-buildings that have already divided & mostly conquered us. The farther it goes in that direction, the better a rag-tag, catch-as-catch-can existence on the streets looks, to those whose main desire is for personal freedom from exploitation.

When money is the major consideration, as it seems to be for almost everyone today, whether we like it or not, the money vultures are never far behind - in fact, they are usually several steps ahead of us, & we're going to have to close that gap or find ourselves victimized again.

To be eligible for "youth housing" in

Jim Green's terms, you will have to be between the ages of 18 & 25, declare yourself to be "drug-free", sign on for "re-training" (which means rejoining society on its own terms), have no "speedball needs" (ie. no disabilities, mental or physical) & on top of all this you will be expected to compete & win out over other applicants in job retraining projects. This is what Jim is asking us to invest our extremely limited assets in.

Personally, I feel that such an investment is totally unwarranted, & it suggests to me that Jim, who has contributed to the well-being of residents in the past, has now lost his perspective, & is seriously in danger of losing a good reputation. .... & now for some not-too-unrealistic rumour-mongering:

- some people I've talked to believe this project is not oriented to Downtown Eastside youth at all, but is actually designed to cater to the "needs" of Granville Street youth. They say the borders of our officially undefined "community" are being extended in some people's minds to include Vancouver Centre (ie. the Granville Mall) & that this "youth community" consists mostly of temporary drop-outs from rich & middle-class suburbs, who are being offered the benefit of our investment capital to fund a project that will relieve them of a poverty lifestyle & re-instate them in society, according to their parents' wishes.

To "get the kids off the street," in this sense does not mean that Downtown Eastside youth will gain any new opportunities. In fact it looks rather like a cynical diversion of Downtown Eastside capital into the pockets of privileged children who are looking for an easy way out of the street life they've fallen in to as a result of their short-lived desire to become teenage "radicals."

Meanwhile, youthful residents of the real Downtown Eastside, most of whom were born into poverty & accept drug use &

street life as an unavoidable condition of their existence, will not be housed by Jim Green's project...or maybe a specially selected one percent of them will, which will allow the public relations department to claim community involvement.

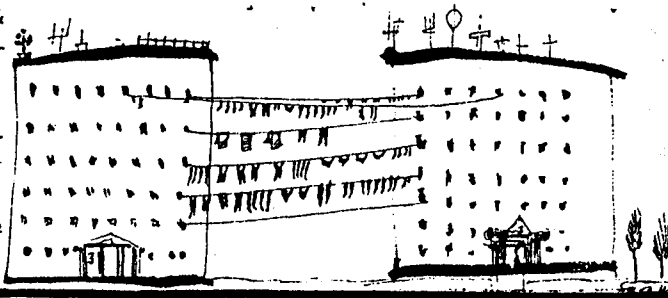
...why can't our money just be used in a direct & honest way to provide youth housing to those in need? - because so many other motivations have crept into our plans from other places. These limiting factors do not represent our real needs & desires. We're like a bunch of shipwrecked sailors trying to stay afloat while sharks chew away at the ropes that hold our little raft together - & when we finally hit the water it'll be every person for themselves. So let's beat those sharks down & hoist a sail that'll take us where we really want to go!

TORA

**LATE FLASH:** It looks like the provincial government may be starting to hear the concerns of the community.

The government is now saying that the youth housing part of the plan will be reconsidered, & that a new public process will be started.

The community needs full involvement if this process is to work. Stay tuned.



Dear Mr. Harcourt:

Re: PROPOSAL FOR YOUTH HOUSING AT MAIN & HASTINGS

The above proposal, which has been put forward by the Community Development Coordinator of the Ministries of Finance & Housing & is to be funded under the BC 21 Program, is not supported by the undersigned agencies & community groups. Our groups provide a comprehensive representation of the residents & agencies in the Downtown Eastside.

Housing & youth employment initiatives are always welcome & the concept of a community-based bank is a positive step. Such measures, however, require extensive and direct community support & involvement. A solid community process has been noticeably absent in this case.

There has been a top-down process in which the main determinants of the project were in place before the community was even informed. What has been called a consultation process has amounted to little more than brief meetings at which various groups have been told of the project's existence & how it will work. None of us want to be used as window-dressing in a sham of community process.

Most groups have, in fact, strongly rejected both the project & the process. We have been told that the location of the

project, the financing & the participants are not negotiable items. We were also told that money could be made available from the homeless initiative fund for '94. Few decisions for this project have been left open for the community. Rather than being a case of healthy community development, we have instead another developer-driven project.

We appreciate your government providing funding for more housing in our neighbourhood, but youth housing at Main & Hastings is inappropriate. The site is at the centre of the street drug trade, with the violence that accompanies it. The location which the Vancouver Sun recently called 'cocaine corner' is the wrong place for youth recovery programs.

It is imperative, however, that the funds committed to this project be retained for the use of our community. They must be allocated to projects that are decided upon by the community, after open consultation with residents, agencies & other involved groups.

The Downtown Eastside/Strathcona is in a perpetual state of housing crisis. The vast majority of residents are badly underhoused. As you are aware, the neighbourhood is also the poorest urban area in Canada. We require a long-term plan for neighbourhood development with a spe-

cific financial commitment from the Province & support from the City of Van.

Our community has gone through a long & difficult series of consultations & discussions with regard to the 8 units of youth housing being built by the Native Health Society & funded by BC Housing. Because this has been a true community-based process, we have managed to arrive at a consensus while avoiding the confrontation & divisiveness generated by top-down approaches. It is distressing to us to see this consensus & the experience of Downtown Eastside youth workers ignored.

As our MLA, you assured the Downtown Eastside/Strathcona Coalition that community ownership of community issues & projects would be a priority. In order to make community ownership a reality, it is necessary to ensure that all projects are developed through a real community process.

We invite you to respond to this letter and to attend a special meeting of the Downtown Eastside/Strathcona Coalition, the date to be arranged by mutual agreement, to explain the process behind the decision to fund this particular project and how we can avoid similar situations in the future.

Sincerely,

Muggs Sigurgeirson, President  
Carnegie Community Centre Association.

Nora Kelly, President  
Strathcona Residents Association

Barb Daniel, Organiser  
Downtown Eastside Residents Association

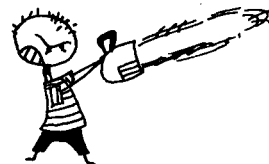
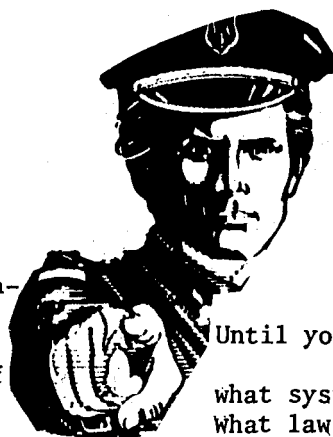
John Turvey, Executive Director  
Downtown Eastside Youth Activities Society

Deborah Mearns, President  
Vancouver Native Health Society

Lawrence Demoskoff, Co-ordinator  
Watari

Marie Davis, President  
Ray-Cam Community Centre

Ron Hansen, President  
Strathcona Community Centre Association



-5.

### We're Out Of Here

Until you have become  
not

what system wants  
what law demands  
what good & evil expect  
what father-mother makers  
think they need  
& wife or husband want...

Until you have become  
what you always knew  
or never imagined  
& dared not think  
that you might be...

Until you close your eyes  
to lose & find yourself  
you cannot see

Until you throw the social  
dream successful scheme away  
& wake up tight against  
the wire fence  
you will not know...

Until you lose your mind  
in something strange  
the ordinary unexplained  
is mystery enough

Until you serve your self  
& lose it all  
& get so empty  
Shafted through with light  
how dark, how dead  
how full of life you be!

Until all these & other  
wonders come to pass  
the world will only  
wind you up  
& measure space  
& mirror all the images  
It puts inside your face.

TORA

## A WELCOME SIGN

The Port of Vancouver claims it welcomes the public to the waterfront.

Then it builds a steep, 3-storey high overpass to Crab Park which is like a brick wall to the disabled & the elderly.

Now it has installed this sign on a lamppost at the foot of Main Street as more discouragement. The sign doesn't mean the public is actually barred - just that the Port accepts no legal liability if you get hurt.

This is the same Port that is planning to steamroller a chunk of the waterfront next to Crab Park for a fancy new cruise ship dock & hotel for tourists. That will play havoc with the park and its bird sanctuary.



What follows is 'creative journalism' - the letter from Geoff McMurchy came here without an idea of what it was written in response to. So, first a little guessing, which you, as the reader, can buy or flush down the john, then the letter itself...

"That goddam park is great for tourists, great for business, ideally located for a cruiseship a day, a backyard for our rich condo-owners & the decent people who'll move into our obscenely expensive rooms & highrises along the waterfront. We've managed to stall those skid row bums from getting proper access for 6 years but they are so damned persistent! Now they've come up with a pedestrian overpass but still insist it go at Columbia Street. Can you believe the gall of those bastards?!"

"We're the people who make money off this godforsaken downtown eastside & we demand the access bridge go where it will make us more money. It has to go in at Carrall, starting with the old alky's statue, whats-his-name..Gassy Jack?, & even put a gate!"

"We tried that, but the "community" rant-ed & raved."

"Community" hell! We're the ones who own stuff...We're the "community"!"

"We have to do something or they might go ahead at Columbia."

"I've got an idea. These saps will give anyone the benefit of the doubt. Call uh, whats-her-name, Lori Strange at Affordable Housing. She was at the last Merchants' meeting & sounded Right in the head. We can get her to say that her agency wants to build 'affordable housing' on our right-of-way when we pull out the tracks, or that more of her buildings are closer to Carrall...you figure out what she has to say to give Council an excuse to say it's sorry but the pedestrian overpass has to go at Carrall Street."

"HEY Boss! Slow down. Affordable Housing is out in New Westminster."

"That's why I'm the boss, you idiot. She won't know jackshit about this except for what we tell her. I don't care if she's from fucking Siberia! Campbell & the NPA fumbled this last time, so they need "com-

munity support"...or at least what can be made to pass for it, which is the same thing to them. They can make whatever promises they want, this being the year for the civic elections, but the minute they buy another win, I want Columbia Street as the site for the overpass dead .. dead!"

Lori Strange  
Affordable Housing Agency  
#211 - 800 McBride  
New Westminster, B.C. V3L 2B8

Dear Ms. Strange

I'm writing to you, a representative of the Affordable Housing Agency, to outline the BC Coalition of People with Disabilities (BCCPD)'s position regarding access to Portside Park. I hope also that you'll post this letter in the common area of each of your housing facilities for the benefit of all residents.

The BCCPD became involved with this access problem in 1986, when it became apparent that the Main Street overpass was very difficult for people with mobility impairments to negotiate.

We have been involved in demonstrations, much media coverage, a human rights complaint, and meetings with the Port Corporation, an independent architect, the Council Committee on Access to Portside Park & a large community meeting at the Carnegie Centre. We have considered, dissected and discarded several different options for creating access to the Park, including level grades at various locations, an underground tunnel and pedestrian overpasses of various types.

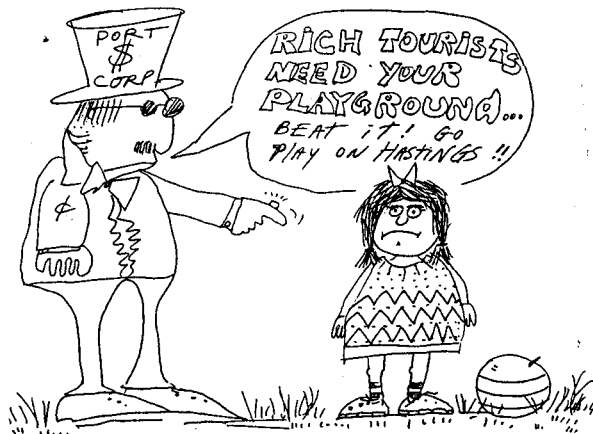
I want to impress on you and your residents that after years of consideration of the options available, and now on the brink of winning a hard-fought struggle, we fear that what the community arrived at as the best solution may be threatened at the eleventh hour.

Briefly, the reasons we feel that the proposed pedestrian bridge at Columbia Street is the best option are as follows:

A) the level grade access we originally advocated for is simply not an option as far as CP Rail is concerned, and a gently

## NEWS ITEM:

"PORT ENLISTS HELP OF HIGH-POWERED PR FIRM" - VANCOUVER Sep 5/83.



NOTE: HILL & KNOWLTON - ONE OF THE WORLD'S LARGEST PUBLIC RELATIONS COMPANIES, HIRED BY PORT OF VANCOUVER CORPORATION, ... TO SELLOUT LOCAL, LOW-INCOME KIDS SAFE-USE OF CRAB CENTRAL WATERFRONT PARK.

- Jim Leary 11/83

sloping pedestrian underpass is not feasible due to a maze of underground sewer pipes and other fixtures at Columbia and Alexander

B) we are very concerned about encouraging pedestrians, especially children, to use the relatively dangerous and uncontrolled Carrall Street intersection

C) a pedestrian overpass at Carrall would be longer and thus more expensive

D) Columbia Street is closer to the Downtown Eastside community, which as you well know has a relatively high concentration of residents with mobility impairments

E) the minimal loss of view for a small minority of local residents does not outweigh the benefits to the community, including many of your residents, of the Columbia location

F) we believe that both the open design & local daytime traffic will discourage loiterers around the elevator encasement & stairwell. We would advocate for an access barrier to be locked at the same time that

the Park closes.

I would be happy to talk with you or any of your residents if there are any questions about this matter. I can be reached any weekday, except Thursday, during office hours at 875-0188.

Thanks for your attention to this, and for posting this letter.

Yours sincerely,

GEOFF McMURCHY

Communications Officer



cc: Mayor Gordon Campbell  
Councillors Libby Davies, Pat Wilson  
and Gordon Price  
Don Larson, CRAB Society  
Barb Daniel, DERA  
Harry Dawson, Paul Taylor and Margaret  
Prevost, Access to CRAB Park Committee  
Joan Meister, Disabled Women's Network  
Walt Lawrence, Special Souncil Committee  
on Disability Issues  
Michael McCoy, local resident  
Patrick Reid, Vancouver Port Corp.  
Ray Saunders, Gastown Lions  
Brent MacGregor, City Engineering

### Prudes Are Not Perfect

The pious pontifications of radio dial-in prudes are, to me, a source of annoying aggravation, leading to the cut-off button in hopeless resignation.

Far too numerous holier-than-thou pretenders lack the clarity of sincerity in their elocutions of enacted sympathy... with carefully chosen rhetoric designed solely for audience approval.

No single case analysis should be interpreted as full measure with which to judge an entire community (for example the tired stereotypes of 'skid row' and 'welfare bum'), even if an odd few exceptions are apologetically excluded from the "tarring brush."

It is therefore my considered opinion that there is the ever-existing room for human error which obviously can detract from the truth of any assessment. So it's wise to remember that there is bad in the best of us & good in the worst of us.

The old saying of Native aboriginals - "Do not judge another until you have walked a ways on his path," still stands. Let us be good to one another.

Wilf Barbeau CD

Correction, August 15th article on Library

Marianne Cantillon, a librarian from the Central Sociology Division, who replaced Susan Everall while Susan was on holiday, organised the opening of our women's collection. Many thanks to Marianne for her efforts on behalf of the women in the Downtown Eastside.

Eleanor

### Volunteer Trips

The Volunteers went on so many interesting trips this summer. The memories will help us survive the long winter.

The trip to Chemanius was a real adventure because we dropped the Elders off at Duncan before proceeding to Chemanius to see the murals.

Atiba was very impressed with the unusual buildings and took many pictures. The murals were exceptionally beautiful & even garbage containers got a special paint job.

Most of us wished we had more time to spend in that peaceful spot. We had supper on the ferry and then it was back to the concrete jungle.

The next day the Volunteers went to Kilnarney Lake on Bowen Island. It was such a beautiful & peaceful spot and everyone noticed how unspoiled the area'd remained.

Dean and Wayne played guitar all day even on the trails. The musicians including Brad never stopped playing including when they went to the washroom on Bowen Island. The rest of us pretended we did not know them.

The next trip we went to Alouette Lake which is near Maple Ridge. Some of us went canoeing and the two experts did not get very far from shore before they tipped it over. One lost his wallet in the lake but it was washed to shore & he was notified.

It was wonderful eating outdoors and the trails were most enjoyable to walk along.

The most recent trip was to Camp Fircom, where we spent 5 days!

In closing I would like to say that we need more people to attend our Volunteer Committee meetings. There isn't any use in complaining to each other so please come & voice your opinion where it really counts.

By IRENE SCHMIDT



STREET MEET '93  
Poor Peoples' Conference

Back in April there was a gathering in Victoria. The report on it only covered a few hours in the morning, the writer having to leave before the 'solutions' part happened.

The number & variety of the problems was complex & fascinating. A small sampling:

- \* finding housing & trying to make the rent
- \* finding work...finding food
- \* access to proper health care
- \* personal safety & assaults
- \* lack of secure, affordable housing
- \* rent & rip-offs
- \* availability of nutritious food
- \* jobs & training
- \* Social Services improvements
- \* Is it Canadian-made?
- \* What is classism?
- \* respect & self-esteem
- \* What is a healthy community?



Housing

"I won't stay in a slum. I'll stay on the streets. My sleeping bag is my condo."

"A house where the roof doesn't leak, the toilet flushes & the lights work, & someone who cares. That's all I need."

Street Meet Solutions

- \* ~~create more community based low-income housing, not ghettos.~~
- \* an option where people could rent-to-own
- \* change some by-laws, such as rent control, residential tenancy laws, bylaws concerning health controls & inspections, stricter controls over landlords to repair suites. Controls over slum landlord
- \* bring back the Rentalsman
- \* the by-laws & inspectors need more power
- \* 10% of all multi-level new housing should go to families below the poverty line
- \* land reform for housing - people who need it should get land
- \* renovate existing housing
- \* lease crown land for subsidised housing
- \* develop vacant lots
- \* rent subsidies on welfare should reflect current average rent per unit
- \* build co-op housing where shares make it owned by members More non-economic networking
- \* municipal gov't should put upper-floor vacancies into affordable housing

Jobs, Education & Training

9.

"The street is part of learning. These skills can be used in the workplace."

"The 'pull-yourself-up-by-the-bootstraps' attitude of rich people bothers me."

"If you can't read or write how can you contribute to the community?"

Street Meet Solutions

- \* continuing education for everyone regardless of age, race, creed, colour, income.
- \* employment training programs geared to a realistic job market; realistic expectations
- \* employment training programs that are client-centred; to fill the needs of both the client & the employer
- \* create more jobs. Generate more makework ideas - recycling, environmental cleanup
- \* realistic incentives for participants so they can continue to go to training or a job, like money for lunch
- \* co-operation between businesses, unions & job-training projects & the unemployed
- \* more use of labour pools, with employers providing lunch, transportation
- \* self-employment; cottage industries
- \* more literacy programs
- \* flexible hours, allowing someone to go to a soup kitchen or share work
- \* looking after children; lessening child-care costs or providing child care.
- \* a phone registry, where people can use the phones, leave a number to be reached

Income

"Sometimes you can't afford an umbrella."

"The service system is supposed to serve you & it does not. It costs a lot of money and I am not consulted."

"It takes a quarter just to keep in contact with a worker. Sometimes that's all it is, but if you don't have a quarter it might as well be \$25."

Street Meet Solutions

- \* ~~raise welfare rates immediately~~
- \* rent subsidies on welfare should reflect current average rent per unit
- \* to have everyone get an income that at least reaches the poverty line
- \* the minimum wage needs to be realistic, so we don't work full time and live below the poverty line
- \* community service hours (20/week) for better assistance

- \* two extra clothing allowances, one in Spring & one in Fall
- \* more control over assistance money
- \* people want to work, not get charity

### Self-esteem & Classism

"What stops me from advancing is the label I get. My self-esteem goes down."

"Attitude plays a large part in unhappiness: If you're rich you're a winner, if you're poor you're a loser."

"Charity can make it worse. It makes me feel like a pitiful poor person. Charity defines you by your weakness."

"People expect the poor to live in a way they would never consider for themselves."

"I love street people. I'm proud to be one"

### Street Meet Solutions

- \* ~~take individual action~~ & responsibility
- \* don't blame yourself for poverty
- \* be respectful of others & ourselves
- \* encourage one another through peer and community support
- \* look for more peer & community support & counselling
- \* empathy, not sympathy is what is required
- \* support community minded, socially benevolent companies that care about us as people & about the community that support them
- \* educate the majority population about what it's like to be poor
- \* work together to end legislated poverty
- \* join up & work with the middle class
- \* poor people get together to do research

### Health care

"Sometimes, without a real home, it's difficult to get up in the morning."

### Street Meet Solutions

- \* ~~we need more institutions for~~ untreatable/untrainable homeless, with care provided by the trainable homeless, people with mental problems & the unemployed
- \* more drug detoxes & medical rehabs
- \* prescription drugs & vitamins should be paid for by welfare
- \* programs to send more former addicts in to the school system
- \* support for healthy low-cost physical activities, like bikepaths, wheelchairs
- \* programs for addicts still on the street ex-addicts helping addicts
- \* access to alternative medicines

### Food

"Sometimes I wouldn't give it to a dog."

### Street Meet Solutions

- \* ~~some vacant lots & rooftops~~ could become community gardens for low-income & street people to grow food. This would help self-esteem; also time & boredom issues
- \* teach nutrition, away from coffee & junk
- \* nutrition for low income children - you can't have a healthy mind without a healthy body
- \* increase the diet allowance; you can't eat properly
- \* food co-ops

### Government policies

"Demand & create ethical gov't & business"

### Street Meet Solutions

- \* ~~look at the spending priorities~~ of gov't & how they can be changed
- \* write to MPs to request input on spending priorities. Send them to people who are concerned with the deficit
- \* express the problems of poverty in large numbers, such as peaceful demonstrations, lobbies, coalitions
- \* elect street people to City Hall
- \* more collaboration between all agencies

"I want to be part of the solution."

### FEARS

- that there is no escape
- losing my apartment
- being cut off welfare before I get my act together
- being poorer
- being isolated
- that nothing changes..gets worse
- more & more kids raised in poverty
- that we don't find a way to go now

### HOPES

- not being poor
- that we move beyond thinking money is everything. Support each other.
- dignity, destroying the bad heart
- to find a solution that everybody can learn to live with

# NICARAGUA:

## The struggle goes on

To fight for national culture means in the first place to fight for the liberation of the nation, that material keystone which makes the building of a culture possible. There is no other fight for culture which can develop apart from the popular struggle.

*Franz Fanon, The wretched of the earth*



NICARAGUA - the land, the history, the people.

Heeding advice is unusual..."don't try to change the world at once, you've only been back about 12 hours"; "be easy on yourself for the first week or so..don't try to make drastic changes that result in a mess of your life"; "miracles are hard work". These were a few bits from a person who had been in the Third World a lot, had lived in Africa, Latin & South America, learned languages while working with people, shared their hopes, endured their suffering. The subject was re-entering life in Canada.

Eleven of us had just returned from Nicaragua, a delegation organised by Tools for Peace. The purpose, in general terms, was to meet with people in a variety of sectors & non-government organisations (NGOs) to talk, ask questions, get their perspective on the situation in Nicaragua.

The media couldn't be trusted to give an honest or accurate report, neither the Canadian nor American major sources. In the last issue I wrote a brief 'hello-I-am-back' kind of article, breaking the ice of telling about the experience. It contained a bit about Somoza, the brutal dictator. The father, the first Somoza, was a used-car salesman in Philadelphia when the US Marines invaded Nicaragua in 1926. He was offered the job of dictator by the President, Roosevelt, who later said, (after Somoza Sr. had engaged in a little mass murder, repression, theft of huge portions of both Nicaragua's land & businesses, etc.) "He's a son-of-a-bitch but he's our son-of-a-bitch."

He was finally assassinated.

Enter Son of Somoza, in the image of the father, a chip off the old block, a leak from the same sack of shit. Mass murder as a tool of statecraft, torture as a method of positive persuasion, making his bank account & the national treasury one & the same as the best plan for stabilizing the economy...methods as old as history but with new, trendy Madison Ave. words/to let it all seem quite normal in the New York Times. He met criticism with death, ques-

tions about the legality of his business dealings with death, outcries about the looting of Nicaragua with more death.

The National Guard was his personal army made up of people paid to keep the population subdued. This is the force used to slaughter peasants who demanded a right to be free of working year-round just to have everything go to Somoza.

(Note - Throughout this article there'll be names of people & places. Spanish isn't a familiar language, so please accept any errors in spelling or correct monickers.)

The story of the revolution in Nicaragua has already filled books. Years of struggle, battles fought, thousands dying, all deserve words but this needs to come to today, to give a proper report on Nicaragua in 1993. Somoza was ousted in 1979, and fled the country with much of its wealth. A small mistake in the last article - he was finally assassinated in Paraguay, not Miami. - but no mistake about the last line: "the US gov't, first under Ron Reagan then under George Bush, was frothing at the mouth".....

In the August 15 issue, Muggs Sigurgeirson gave a listing of US military actions. In recent memory we have the invasion of Panama - and the reporting by US media of how Noriega was a "drug-dealer". The facts are being obscured in a welter of images to downplay the ongoing activities of the CIA, their drug dealing, how the US military killed thousands of people & buried them in mass graves, installed a puppet government & proceeded with business-as-usual. The point about drugs - the new head of the gov't in Panama is also a CEO of the main bank, proven to be the main vehicle for laundering drug money in all of Central America. Talk about "dealers"!

What the Sandinista movement & revolution had begun to do was display how much more human & positive life could be without everyone always trying to grab everything he or she could & keep it for themselves. They launched a massive campaign to eliminate illiteracy, distributed land to the campesinos (peasants), giving them for their own what they had worked on to make money for the boss for years (some-

times for generations), made medical aid & health a national priority with access and benefits for all. This flies in the face of the United States' way of how things should be. Medical care is a private matter, the interests of business are what any gov't must adhere to, private enterprise is right and anything else is communism.

The really frightening thing for the US was that the Sandinistas had overthrown a capitalist, military dictator who had made sure that the interests of US corporations in Nicaragua came first; this kind of nice little arrangement was the mainstay of US foreign policy throughout Central & South America. (A reprint of the list...



'How little we really own, Tom, when you consider all there is to own.'

1823: Monroe Doctrine claims Latin America as US "protectorate."

1833: US troops invade Nicaragua.

1835: US troops invade Peru.

1854: US troops invade Nicaragua.

1855: US troops invade Uruguay.

1856: US troops invade Panama.

1858: US troops invade Uruguay.

1865: US troops invade Panama.

1868: US troops invade Uruguay.

1868: US troops invade Columbia.

1873: US troops invade Columbia.

1885: US troops invade Panama.

1888: US troops invade Haiti.

1891: US troops invade Chile.

1894: US troops invade Nicaragua.

1895: US troops invade Columbia.

1896: US troops invade Honduras.

1896: US troops invade Nicaragua.

1898: US starts Spanish-American War after battleship Marine sunk.

1898: US "liberates" Puerto Rico.

1899: US troops invade Nicaragua.

N3.

1901: US troops invade Columbia.

1902: US troops invade Columbia.

1903: US troops invade Dominican Republic.

1903: US troops invade Panama.

1904: US troops invade Dominican Republic.

1904: US troops invade Panama.

1907: US troops invade Honduras.

1910: US troops invade Nicaragua.

1911: US troops invade Honduras.

1912: US troops invade Cuba.

1913: US troops invade Mexico.

1914: US troops invade Haiti.

1915: US troops invade Haiti.

1919: US troops invade Honduras.

1920: US troops invade Guatemala.

1924: US troops invade Honduras.

1925: US troops invade Honduras.

1925: US troops invade Panama.

1926: US troops invade Nicaragua.

1928: 1000 striking banana-workers slaughtered in Columbia at United Fruit (US)

1932: 30,000 Salvadoran peasants killed in uprising, as US & Canadian war-ships stand by.

1954: CIA overthrows Arbenz government in Guatemala.

1961: Bay of Pigs invasion in Cuba.

1962: US blockade of Cuba.

1964: US troops kill student protestors in Panama Canal Zone.

1965: US troops invade Dominican Republic.

1973: CIA-sponsored coup in Chile.

1983: US troops invade Grenada.

1983: US mines Nicaragua's harbours.

1983-87: US finances & directs Contra war.

1988: US troops invade Panama.

History books are written by the victors. Starting about 1983, the CIA began to bring together ex-National Guardsmen in Honduras, the country immediately to the north of Nicaragua. They played on the isolation of people in the north by either recruiting them or killing them. They became known as "Contras". In the US media, they were touted as anti-communist rebels who were fighting to restore something that had been lost. Depending on who you asked it varied from democracy to freedom to human rights - all very emotional buttons that, with the right kinds

of pictures, stories, interviews, etc., (whether true or not), are guaranteed to have enough Americans rally round the flag and trust in God & country that the CIA & a bunch of mercenaries can kill a whole bunch of people & get away with it.

In 1984 the first democratic elections were held. The Sandinista gov't won easily. The US poured more money into funding the mercenaries. The US congress stopped that & Reagan & Oliver North started the little scam that became known as the "Iran-Contra" scandal. Bush was head of the CIA before he became Vice-President. After an honest election, US business & interests kept the war going, making the Sandinistas put more & more time, energy, people & money into defending peasants & land in the north from terrorists. In the US these same terrorists were known as "freedom-fighters".

All this was not working fast enough. The US controls the International Monetary Fund (IMF) & the World Bank. These aren't democratic organisations - votes are determined strictly by how much money respective countries put in. So the US, having the power, had the IMF require the Nicaraguan gov't to adopt new economic policies to get any more loans. These requirements weren't unique to Nicaragua; the whole scheme is called "Structural Adjustment Program" (SAP) & has been imposed on many Third World countries.

Principle - The victim pays.

In Nicaragua, it was Somoza & friends; in most other countries, there were the same sort of people - military generals, rich families with a lust for power, the proverbial "backroom boys" - all out to hang onto the half of their country's wealth that their 5% or less of the population has managed to "earn".

### The Sordid Story of Structural Adjustment

OPEC - In the early 70's the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries put the screws to the rest of the world by demanding the price of oil go up four-fold. International banks suddenly had so much money, deposited by Arabs, that they were soon going all over the world lending it to dictators & the rich families of course, but especially to people who could take out loans in the name of government! If these loans went to the elite as gifts (consultant fees, tax breaks, subsidy, in nice language), for arms, to corrupt nationalised industries, for prestige projects, or just directly into the bank accounts of whoever held the highest offices in the country, it didn't matter.

Results

To even begin to repay these loans, the

**"Freedom of the press belongs  
to those who own one."**

government would of course increase taxes & leave most people in poor conditions. People would react, crying out for elections, everyone wanting a say with this gaping difference between the haves & have-nots (sound familiar?). Uprisings, coups, civil wars were the order of the day. It was better to have a military dictatorship..keep people in line..stop people from interfering in the legitimate interests of business...

New military dictatorships meant new orders for new guns & new bombs & new tanks & new planes...& new loans. Things were going nicely for the international banks, which now started raising interest rates on all this loaned money, this debt.

Suddenly it didn't matter if the money had been borrowed for death (guns/bombs) or life (seeds/fertilizer/hospitals/roads/food) - without borrowing another cent, all debtor countries found themselves drowning in a sea of debt as interest rates went through the roof.

Countries had to increase the quantity of goods being exported, had to produce goods that could be exported, to earn US currency to make payments on their debts. At the same time & due to the same rising interest rates, the prices of imported goods, like tractors, seeds, etc. inflated beyond all expectations, meaning that there wasn't enough money to buy things that were now essential. Most Third World countries had the same crops/goods to export, like coffee, bananas, cotton, sugar, so the inevitable result was a flooded market with rock-bottom prices.

Simply put, each country had to sell more & more because what they had to bring in cost more & more & more & more! Also as simply, virtually none of these countries could add much value to their export (processing) without having the currency to buy the necessary machinery. If & when they could process the raw materials before exporting, they were hit with very high tariffs.

The debts grew. What to do?

Mexico started it - they announced one day that they were going to DEFAULT on their huge debt. The US banks freaked!!

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ENTER THE I.M.F. like a knight on a horse or a whore in a hearse telling Mexico (and all other Third World government people wanting to follow suit) that they would never be able to borrow another red cent if they defaulted. The IMF, bless its scaly tail, would loan more money to help the country in debt keep making the sacred payments...more loans, at even higher interest rates, to pay off the old loans. There were, however, a few strings attached. The country being so blessed by the IMF had to adopt a Structural Adjustment Program; had to

1. Devalue the national currency;
2. Privatize the public sector;
3. Cut wages & costs in what's left;
4. Remove fuel & food subsidies;
5. Increase exports; and
6. Open up markets to all comers.

In reality, the rich people in each country put their money in foreign banks, but foreign markets were not opened to the debtor countries. It was a vice that banks & corporations were only too happy to tighten. If any country refused, they got no new loans & people would starve or be killed by their own hungry soldiers.

In reality, devaluing currency makes all goods & services cost more. If 5 of your dollars were equal to one US dollar, the new rate might take 20 of yours to equal one US dollar.

In reality, privatising public industry causes massive lay-offs & a general reduction in the quality of work as health & safety & benefits are reduced.

In reality, cutting wages & costs makes countries compete with each other on who can go farthest in setting the stage for investment by transnational corporations. People have to leave their land & homes as they run out of money to survive & have to sell just to eat. Cities swell with shanty towns & slums of dispossessed & unemployed people. There are no jobs anywhere. People will take any work at any wage in any conditions. The only businesses that keep functioning are those that are exporting-

if you can sell carnations, you grow & export carnations, with the minor sideeffect that the land needed to grow food makes more money growing carnations so people will just have to buy imported food... like Vietnam having to buy imported rice..

In reality children can't afford to go to school, mothers have to prostitute themselves to get food, & sanitation diseases like cholera amid the open sewers that these slums become are the order of the day. ...like the maquiladora zone in Mexico...

#### ENTER THE TRANSNATIONAL CORPORATIONS

Having no scruples about where or how most products are made, the way to make the most profit is to have the lowest cost of production. These SAPPED countries are ideal. They each try to lure big business by providing: Infrastructure, sites, premises, services, suppliers, hospitality, tax breaks, bribes, dirt cheap labour... Well, most places try to unionise their workforce, so the US had the IMF demand that the last rule be applied - debtor countries finally have to risk civil war by removing all food & fuel subsidies.

The banks & the corporations were much happier when debtor countries reached this last stage. It no longer mattered who was in charge, but it got to be a pain to always have riots (like in France & Brazil).

"The debt crisis is over."

"What's the punchline?"

"We've given you more time to pay!"

...at ever-increasing interest rates...

"We've given you more government loans!"

...so we get further into debt paying off interest on the last lot of loans we got to pay off the interest on the last lot of

ONCE UPON A TIME  
THERE WAS TEA, SUGAR,  
FLOUR, RICE, POTATOES,  
MEAT, COFFEE....



"We've agreed better terms & concessions! ...so it takes 4 years instead of 6 years to pay off 1 year's interest..."

"We've relaxed trade restrictions!!"

NO. You've got more trade embargos, tariffs & quotas than Fort Knox has iron bars. Only you call them subsidies, arrangements & non-tariff barriers. This is what "free" trade means to US transnationals.

Also under this global competition, big business uses Third World to dump huge quantities of goods when they can't be sold in First World markets, making local goods more expensive than imports...especially food items. The honest idea, that all debts have to be paid, is held up to ridicule by those who see that the debts have already been paid, several times over. High interest rates have ensured that the original debts will never be repaid.

Even this is used by international banks to make money. When the US (and Canada) try to get taxes from these same banks the cry of "unpaid loans" goes out. Banks say they have billions loaned out that aren't coming back & get their taxes "deferred". Lo & behold, our governments announce that our deficit & debt is so bad that they have to cut social programs, privatize, deregulate, because making record-breaking profits at 5 major banks here is no reason for them to pay the few billion in taxes they owe...the ordinary taxpayer will just have to pay more...& more...& more.

Back to the SAPPED country - markets for expensive items, like cars, airplanes, big-ticket goods, get scarce as more & more people lose their incomes. Manufacturing in the US & Canada can't make money paying First World wages, so move to Third World facilities. We lose jobs, social programs paid for with taxes lost when the work is gone, & markets for these goods shrink here.

Back to the SAPPED country - drugs, production & sale, take the place of crops as a means to get an income. Cocaine is a prime example. Money laundering, a la Panama, is a new growth industry; peasants & their families are caught both ways, having to grow the plants to survive & losing children to addiction. First World qualms about drowning in drug abuse matches the Third World cynicism about debt abuse.



Back to the SAPPED country - civil wars are also common in economically wretched nations, producing refugees who desperately want to emigrate to a First World country. By some quirk, this sparks race riots as residents in the First blame refugees from the Third for causing all the problem in the First..or is it in the Third?

A refugee doesn't just wake up one morning and decide to travel eagerly to another country with little or nothing, not knowing the language, & so on, They go because of the unbearable poverty, famine, conflict & ecological collapse,,all fueled by 3rd World debt. Our concerns with ozone holes & global warming & deforestation can be almost buried by the extent of the rape of Third World ecosystems. As First World citizens force environmental controls, corporations start transplanting their dirtier aspects to countries that either don't have such controls or can't afford not to have a big business exploit its resources for the cash it is starved for. Hence we have fast food chains like McDonald's and Burger King being the driving force behind the clearcutting of tropical rainforest - eat a Gainseburger today or breathe tomorrow! Rainforests..forests in general... trees - are the lungs of the planet.



"Of course no one NEEDS it, Willoughby! That's where you people in advertising come in."



Okay, now we're at a life & death level. Let's go into Nicaragua, one meeting at a time. Nicaragua is under a SAP. In 1990 the Sandinistas lost the election as the US bluntly said that the only the war would stop would be if people voted for the US-backed UNO coalition. If they voted for the Sandinistas, they were risking death for themselves & their sons.

UNO was a coalition of everybody who sided with the US corporations & government..who didn't want the Sandinistas.

\* Included in UNO, officially funded by the US Gov't, is the Communist Party of Nicaragua.

Since Feb.'90, the harsh economic measures of Structural Adjustment have been applied with little regard for consequences. SAPs have just been sketched; what follows now are brief reports on the many meetings we had in Nicaragua.

#### ROBERT FOX - OXFAM

The banks are continuing to deny credit to anyone who is below a certain economic level & is not involved in exports. They are also working hand-in-hand with former landowners who took their vast wealth to Miami when the revolutionary will of the populace triumphed in 1979.

Over a hundred thousand people had been in a 'master/serf' relationship with the technical owners, for decades or generations. This was one mighty step up from slave labour, since each campesino family usually had a garden-size plot of scrub to grow food. When the 'owners' split, along with Somoza, the Sandinistas resolved to restore their vast holdings to those who had worked for years to make them productive. After Somoza & buddies had gotten most of these lands by theft, killing and other fun pursuits, it seemed pretty fair to put them back in the hands of decent people. An insignificant step, at the time, was put on hold as more crucial things - like terrorists killing people - needed attention; the step was to issue

little pieces of paper that officially made the peasants & co-operative members owners of the land they were on.

Robert Rox said that banks demand land as collateral for any loans; if you don't have a deed, you don't have any land. Looked at from the other end, you have to borrow money to buy seed & fertilizer to grow food to sell to pay back the loan. Hoped for profit can pay for necessities. No loan means no money means having to leave the land for a city/slum; getting a loan means putting up land as collateral, but partners/friends of the former land-owners & bankers then import huge quantities of the food being grown by the campesino or co-op, selling cheaper, making the person or co-op in debt unable to even break even, forcing them to default on their loan & lose their land...which the bank then takes or the campesino or co-op has to sell for a pittance to the former holder - and it's legal.

A similar scheme is being used on the fishers, except instead of land it's the boats, instead of being undercut by imported food grown by some agribusiness subsidiary it's huge quantities of seafood caught by corporate fleets.

Oxfam supports both the farmers & fishers. Fox talked about the deliberate plan in all these SAP measures to keep women unemployed, to relegate them to the invisible economy cooking, cleaning, tending the sick & aged, tending to children... all unpaid & unvalued work. Fewer jobs means that women are the first to be laid off & the last to get new jobs. Fox told us that if a woman had a job, she would likely be making no more than \$16 a month - a month - working 48 hrs/wk. The cost of living puts 'poverty' at \$200/month. Fox didn't give these numbers to wake us up into scoffing or saying "How could she survive then?" There was no humour; this was what he called modern slave labour, since the same SAP measures kept unemployment at 60% in the cities & 75% in the countryside.

There is no welfare. There is no unemployment insurance.

The small elite, who have lots of money, are showcased as beneficiaries of the good

life made possible by the IMF & World Bank. Maybe it's double vision, but they look a lot like the cronies of Somoza... The city of Managua, the capital, has over 500,000 people in it. There are 6 supermarkets a' la Safeway, which have full shelves & lots of American goods (& Canadian goods). The shelves are always full..because virtually no one can afford to buy anything...but it makes for great pictures & ads!

Oxfam has supported the farmers in their struggle to get a piece of industries being privatised - a new development known as Workers' Property. This is one of the greatest challenges, as business must have integral relationships with the community of people making it viable. At the same time large corporate owners/buyers acquire land & factories just to close them down.. to force peasants to accept lower wages & no benefits (no daycare, no sick leave, no maternity leave, no overtime, no pensions). They are already up against NAFTA-style practices, as non-Nicaraguan companies do work elsewhere then come to Nicaragua to sell cheaper, due to high production costs in the country. ...Irish butter costs less in Nicaragua than Nicaraguan butter...

Oxfam is also providing as much information as possible on non-traditional crops, which farming co-operatives may employ to at least break even while their struggles with the banks goes on. Fox cited several "addictions" that plague people - chemical fertilizers, herbicides & pesticides, the equipment & machinery to use them - since their crops have to grow. Here we exhort the dangers of a poison like DDT; there it is "use it or starve".

Robert Fox then began talking about the activities of the women. He'd been there for over 6 years, & was constantly amazed at the amount & quality of work the women do. He said that, while still doing a full day's work at a factory, and all the cooking, cleaning, childcare & homework, they also organise union meetings, classes on literacy & gender issues & violence against women, organise with other women into production co-ops to achieve some purchasing power, all part of becoming visible again despite the concerted efforts of the

SAP to keep them invisible. Fox said they seem to be energised by pressure..that the harder it gets the harder the women work. Fox noted that Nicaraguan society is very machisto - meaning that most women do four days work every day.

#### DOROTHEA WILSON - Atlantic Coast Support

Hurricane Brett had left over 50,000 people homeless about 3 days before we got to Nicaragua. Dorothea is a woman who is a member of one of the indigenous bands on the Atlantic coast. On maps the area is named "Autonomous Region."

For years the people in eastern Nicaragua were isolated from the rest of the country; mountains, few roads, no phones. The land had been exploited by American corporations who would mine or log with no regard for pollution or waste products. The Meskitos & Sumas peoples fought to retain the ecology of their lands for years but had as little in common with 'Spanish' Nicaraguans as with the foreign businesses. The language of some people was English, if they had come from some Caribbean Countries; for others it was native dialects.

When the Sandinistas came to power they funded schools & education in general in these autonomous regions, but that's all been cut since 1990 & UNO. All of the government-assisted health care has also been cut since UNO. Dorothea had nothing good to say about the current gov't, since they hadn't even responded to the emergency in the hardest-hit areas after the hurricane until 8 days after the storm had gone. They had tried to downplay the destruction with greatly reduced numbers of people affected, saying "maybe 20,000", then, as the real damage put the numbers over 50 thousand homeless & many needing medical attention, UNO had finally sent a letter to the UN asking for emergency relief.

Wilson was clear about the respect given to native people by transnational mining & forestry interests - none. She was also fairly certain that the taxes paid by the same interests were similar - none.

Virtually all non-exploitative interest in the people, the land & the ecology is from non-government organisations (NGOs). This includes medicine, education, & main-

taining the newly-created reserved lands.



#### JOSE ADAN RIVERA - Farm Workers

This man is the executive director of the ATC, which represents a large number of farm workers & their interests. He began by sketching the umbrella of unions in the country, the FNT. Under this umbrella, like the Canadian Labour Congress, are at least 8 sectors & main unions - farmers, builders, gov't workers, health workers, professionals/heroes/martyrs, news people & teachers

The continuing fight is to hold onto rights won over the years, while not letting big business undermine collective bargaining strength. Their biggest struggle has been to get a piece of many gov't and public industries that have been privatised. They marched in the streets, took over buildings, had strikes & finally won from 25% of some businesses to 100% of a few. These new holdings are known as Workers' Property. In terms of land, since Jose was speaking specifically for farmers, the issue of Workers' Property was crucial.

In Nicaragua, 10% of arable land is held by big business, 6% is Workers' Property, 19% is owned/managed by farming co-ops & the remaining 65% is owned in single family holdings..small & medium producers. It is virtually all of this 65% that the bank & rich want...to grab all the land that it's possible to get.

Jose told us the story of his father & how Jose had lent him the money to grow a 10 hectare crop of cabbages. His father was denied any credit at the bank. His father worked hard, got a good crop, & took it to the town nearest his farm. The merchant would only give him 1 cordoba (20¢) per cabbage. Jose's father called his son & together they rented a truck to bring the cabbages to Managua to sell for two cordobas (40¢). The day he arrived a big

shipment of cabbages from Guatemala also came to the main market. They were twice the size of Jose's father's, having been grown with some chemical added, but they were bigger & looked better, even though, according to Jose, they smelled like shit in a swamp & tasted worse. The transnational importing them was selling them for one cordoba; they were brought in just as many of the small farmers in the area harvested their own cabbages, with other crops getting similar treatment. Jose's father had to sell his cabbages for 1/2 a cordoba, making just enough to pay for the truck & the small repair it had needed on the way to Managua. This is "free" trade.

(\* Actually, Jose spoke of them as being basically dumped; since there is no other reason for bringing such a sellable crop all the way to Managua from Guatemala. We get the same thing here - great sales for chemically-enhanced produce that looks normal & tastes like sawdust.)



Jose finished our meeting with another story: He was part of an international symposium, meeting with unions from Canada & the US. A person from El Salvador had written a short book that contained a list of the 10 steps that transnationals take when eliminating unionised workforces. The book hadn't been translated into English, so he was reading from the book, called "Friendly Fascism," in Spanish. He had just finished point #6 & the translator was about halfway through when a Canadian telecommunications worker grabbed a mike, finished what the El Salvadoran had said, and went on to give the next 3 points in English. He & all the other non-Spanish-speaking people present realised at once that the workers in Central America had uncovered a 'set of rules' that American & Canadian corporations had been using for years; describing in detail how circumstances beyond control, or market forces, or competition - the main forces cited by management during bargaining - were about as coincidental as interest on a bank's loan.



As a final note, & struggling to say so, Jose expressed his amazement with the women who had become part of the workforce during the revolutionary period & who were now setting the pace for most of the men still having paid jobs (& those who had been fired since - for being Sandinistas.) He echoed Robert Fox of Oxfam, saying that most women do 3 days work every day.

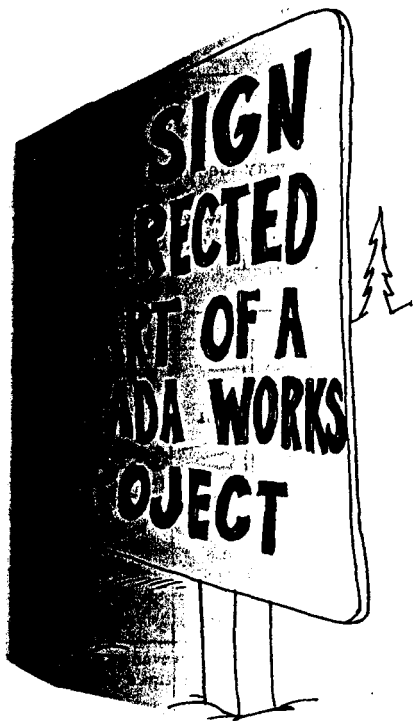
#### JOAN CAMPBELL - Sandino Foundation

Joan is the Tools for Peace staff person in Nicaragua, part-time, & a staff person with CUSO, part-time, making a double-time job. She had helped to arrange parts of our itinerary. We first met her at FACS, the Sandino Foundation.

A too-brief note on Sandino, whose name now heads the revolutionary spirit of Sandinismo. When the US Marines invaded Nicaragua in 1926, Sandino was a campesino who had become a junior officer in Nicaragua's army. Unlike virtually everyone in the country, he refused to bow to the superior might of the US - he fought back. In about 6 years he went from leading a band of about 30 people to forcing the marines to leave Nicaragua. Somoza Sr. had been installed as head of the US-puppet gov't by then. He invited Sandino to a huge banquet, supposedly to honour him for ridding Nicaragua of foreign military forces, and had him murdered there.

FACS is a NGO, working currently with the bane of all non-rich people in Nicaragua - seeking & providing alternatives to the banks' policy- (U.S., IMF, World Bank, SAP policy) of NO CREDIT. ... unless you happen to be rich/exporting/briable/able to kill while singing & never miss a note ... What FACS is doing is called "revolving credit" - where they will get money through an interest-fund set up by international NGOs, make as many small loans as possible, then make new loans available on the condition that the borrowers make regular payments on loans outstanding. As long as you are honest with FACS your credit is sound..can 'revolve'

We went to our first project, finally getting out of the single air-conditioned rooms that most NGOs seem to have, for visiting delegations from other countries.



'Project' is a label; in Nicaragua they use it for the English-speaking people who come & want to see specific examples... it is simply the easiest word for people to use. Where we went was to a small village which had a health clinic under construction & most of the land & crops under co-op

management. The president of the local farming co-op spoke to us, answering questions about how it worked, how many members were contributing, what they did when they couldn't get credit or were undercut at market by agribusiness. He seemed relieved that we understood some of the problems. We went to a farm that was about a mile out in the bush & talked awhile with the head of the family.

#### CEPRI Disabled Person's Centre

One member of the delegation is an occupational therapist at G.F.Strong here in Vancouver, working with people who have suffered spinal cord injuries. CEPRI is a NGO that focuses on disabled issues like access, training, education, discrimination, etc. After a spiel on what work they did, Hector was asked what was different for disabled people since the gov't changed in 1990. He said it was like night and day; even the ownership of the house they worked out of was in dispute since the new gov't came in. Now it was everybody for themselves, with a formerly trusted member now fighting them in court with a piece of paper that has that person's name as the "registered" owner of the property. According to Hector, the property came into the possession of CEPRI in the 1980s, with the person in question being some secretary. When the transfer papers came in and had to be registered by a deadline, he'd taken them in & signed his name as the "owner". When UNO took over he decided that the fiction of his being the owner was suddenly true. The issues of disabled people were irrelevant in the face of this greed.

A further visit by the therapist, near the end of our stay, had her report back that the methods of education used in Nicaragua about community involvement & self-help for people with disabilities are far better than the treatment models used here.

#### VALERIE ROSS - United Church of Canada

The main efforts of this church were directed toward providing school for street kids. Also evident was care for the aged.

Valerie teaches English as a second language to kids who've been through some pretty abusive situations, and the church/school provides a monthly sum to feed and

hold classes for them. She cited a strong influence on the current gov't by the Catholic Church as part of the reason for the thousands of kids having difficulty getting an education. The upper echelons of the Catholic hierarchy are solidly behind the right-wing economic policies of the UNO gov't, which have made parents pay to send their children to public school. It's \$1.60 a month; other costs include paper, pencils, exams, uniforms. If you have only 3 kids, make \$16/month, you would be spending almost 1/2 of your income to send your children to school...or you could try to feed them. Birth control as well as family planning are, of course, not supported.

Valerie also spoke at length about the work of the Moravian church on the east coast of Nicaragua, as well as in the northern part during the Sandinista/Contra war. The Sandinistas had dismantled & destroyed many villages when contras used & abused them. Many times both Contras & Sandinistas would sweep through areas & local men (boys) would pledge allegiance to whoever was asking about loyalty just to be left alone. The United & Moravian churches worked to keep as many people alive as possible regardless of which 'side' they were on, as well as fighting to expose the machinations of transnational capital gouging people & exploiting resources wholesale.

She spoke of the deliberateness of the TNCs, waiting for their stranglehold on credit to force thousands of small landowners, businesses & people with rights to natural resources to have to sell in order to get money to buy food. While this part carries on, they blackmail the gov't at the same time with a capital strike, forcing the sale of public property at fire-sale prices. Near the end of our meeting a man came in who Valerie introduced to us. His name escapes me but she said after he left that he'd been chaplain to a large contra unit for 4 years.



#### MIGUEL DeSCOTO - Community Organising

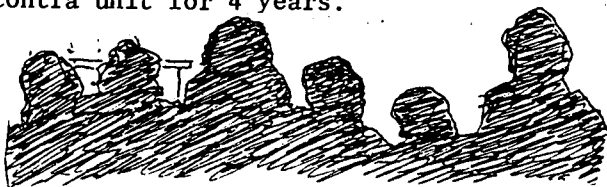
Miguel is a Jesuit priest. He's not permitted to say the Catholic mass or to hear confession. He got involved..he got "political" & his boss ranked him out,

He didn't talk about that; it was told to us before he came to the house we were staying at - he came over for breakfast.

What did he do that was so god-awful wrong...when the Catholic Cardinal backs the US/IMF/CIA/SAP/ABC/XYZ as publicly as possible if only it's anti-Sandinista?! Miguel took the US Government to the World Court in The Hague. He won. The World Ct. issued the most powerful, harshly-worded judgement in its history against US intervention & activities against Nicaragua. The US was ordered to pay the Sandinista Government \$17 BILLION in damages and to cease & desist with any further interference in the affairs of Nicaragua. Not bad! The Catholic church, at least the cardinal, tried to eliminate Miguel's influence by denying him a parish. Miguel turned to community organising on a massive scale.

In Managua there are hundreds of "barrios" or neighbourhoods. The toll of the ongoing war in the north with the mercenaries had gravely affected many social programs, then structural adjustment started dragging even basic necessities to ruin. In many barrios, since the gov't changed in 1990, there was no health facility, no activities for kids, no efforts or understanding of the need to maintain basic sanitation, no purchasing power...no organisation of any kind. Miguel & friendly supporters started by putting up signs in one barrio, saying there was going to be a community meeting. He said that of the 3000 people in that barrio about 40 came. Gradually an organisation - FUNDECI - grew.

\*Before the revolution, community organising was often equated with anti-government activity - you could be tortured & shot. After the revolution many people were part of something...after the loss of the gov't in 1990 & the sledgehammer of structural



adjustment, organising became ~~secondar~~ to survival.

FUNDECI is a Spanish acronym for the Nicaraguan Foundation for Community Development. It was originally set up as a community compliment to unions; the vast majority of unemployed people in the urban barrios have union experience.

There are basic principles of FUNDECI's work: Neighbourhood organising - democratic meetings, identifying needs, volunteer committees, legal advice. An example that bound many people together - the Mayor of Managua, an ardent UNO supporter, decided to bulldoze one of the poorest barrios because it was "not nice to look at." FUNDECI helped to organise the demonstrations & blockades that stopped this scam to simply grab the land. Health care in each barrio is essential to any development so FUNDECI has the basics, through each barrio's association, made available - free if possible. Education on preventive care, (water, sanitation, garbage, etc.) is part of each association's work.

Each community is looked at as a whole, with sports activities for the kids equal to getting them fed at least once a day at soup kitchens. Miguel spoke of a baseball team in one barrio getting to the finals with as much satisfaction as when he spoke



of feeding 7000 children a day. Miguel was not just 'sermonizing'. I've kept to the subject of community organising as much as possible, but Miguel's concept of "community" was grand. He went from (unfulfilled) agreements with the UNO gov't to keeping shit off the streets in barrios to killing in Esteli to leadership training to US aggression to permanent commissions on garbage removal to economic terrorism to baseball without missing a beat or leaving us floundering. It is all connected. There is much for us to learn from Nicaraguan organisers; Miguel said that FUNDECI is active in 52 barrios, all on a 'wing & a prayer'.

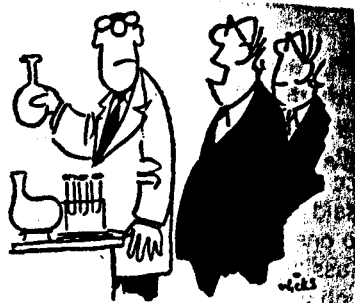
He finished by saying that if the US invades there would be an all-out war, then said he had a baseball practice to go to.

#### FERDINAND CARDENAL - INIEP

Ferdinand was the Minister of Education in the Sandinista government. His current work was with adults in the country, with the promotion of literacy amongst peasant communities. There is no gov't support or money for this; it's as though somebody wanted them kept ignorant! (The less you know the less you'll work for...?)

The goal is to train as many people as possible to be independent of the 'high-tech' people, those who bill themselves as consultants & want enormous fees for imparting what's usually non-essential information - unless you are addicted to the methods & equipment of US agribusiness, for example. Ferdinand & INIEP seek to reintegrate non-chemical agriculture & alternative medicine with reading & writing. At the same time they take what they find in terms of the labour code, human rights, health, education, etc. & pass the info on to other NGOs. He said it was a waste of time to talk to the UNO gov't.

"Health is not a priority." Education seems to have lost it's status as a right as well. Ferdinand was one of the more disillusioned people we met.



What we want is something new. If it does anything, so much the better.

#### MARY HARTMAN - Cantera

Cantera is Spanish for "cornerstone." It's a centre for popular education & community work with both urban & rural poor. They promote change that is possible - empowering people to do what they can for themselves. With some excitement, we ~~were~~ agreed to go to a project.

It was an area of Workers' Property near Managua where an old farmhouse had been changed into the local community centre. I couldn't help contrasting it with Carnegie Centre - There was a one-storey building, with a bee-keeping display in the front-room, with part of the comb set up between 2 sheets of glass & bees working away; cows & a pig or three in the pens & corral near the front yard, posters on violence against women workshops, another showing the current laws governing homosexuality in the different countries of Central America, 3 posters side-by-side on how to ensure that breast milk is safe, info on AIDS, what looked like an event schedule, & a table in the corner for what seemed to be changing diapers. The event happening that day was the official opening of the community's library. It was in the other room, about 1/2 the size of the big room. They had about 15 books, donated, & were planning to have local people compile a community book with herbal remedies, a growing edition of local history & stories, folk medicine, family histories, etc. The woman in the library was from Spain, married to either an ex-priest or an independent minister, who gave me their mailing address & asked for any donations of books in Spanish. They had a short ceremony with local musicians playing, singing...short speeches & warm soft drinks.

It was at the end of this talk with the librarian that I finally understood what Nicaraguan addresses were about. In Managua, most of the streets have no names. A typical address, when translated, would be "In Nicaraa Barrio, 8 blocks up from the entrance, white house on the south side, across the street from the Cafe." Another one might be "Three blocks off the road, beside where the big tree used to be" and someone would have to remember that a big tree stood somewhere before the earthquake in 1972!

On a return trip to Cantera, a few of us talked about community organising. What they do is get people from villages all over the country to come to Nicaragua, pay for the stay & materials with donated mon-

ey, & hold 2-3 day workshops on Women's issues, ecological farming, health education & nutrition, community sanitation & co-op management. We also talked about ways that we could support & trade with villages & co-ops directly without having to use some big business as middleman.

#### ALVARO ARGUELLO - UCA

The University of Central America is one of 8 institutions of post-secondary education. It was free, as guaranteed in the constitution, but the new reality is that the rich want to open their own & are drawing poor teachers away.

Alvaro spoke of the struggle that the entire education system went through in the previous summer. The gov't had tried to drastically it's financial assistance to higher education. It was guaranteed in the constitution that it would be funded at 6% of the country's gross income. The gov't tried to "redefine" what income was to change this.

There were strikes, marches, thousands of people from all walks of life in the streets, all putting massive pressure on the Supreme Court to uphold the 6%. The Court weaselled it's way out, saying that only the gov't could say what the gov't should do. Well, with the whole country watching they had to do what everybody demanded. (We should take note of that!)

After this ruling, the gov't simply did not pay the extra.

The World Bank sets it's structural adjustment to include no funding for post-secondary education. They want the poor to be in the labour force, not management. Alvaro spoke of a new college that is only for the wealthy - with all courses designed to provide management & executive degrees. Scholarships are virtually unknown; student loans are laughed at - "If they won't lend money to grow food, they won't lend it to send peasants to university".

Alvaro spoke as a Jesuit, saying that to continue with a Jesuit university, they must be able to give the highest quality education, only those who can pay should, and the doors must remain open to the poor. It was with these principles in mind that they fought to keep their funding.



Alvaro is a full professor. His pay for a month is \$800. Compare this to salaries of professors here - starting at \$5000/mo. It's a harsh line between principle & pocketbook. He also commented cynically on the underlying reason for the wealthy Nicaraguans, returning from the States, doing everything possible to privatise education. When the "6%" cry rang throughout the country, the organising power of students & teachers badly frightened the right-wing supporters of elite capitalism. In a matter of weeks tens of thousands of people from all sectors were holding marches, demonstrations, taking over buildings, confronting the Supreme Court & surrounding parliament. They saw a replay of 1979 & revolution!

#### RAPHAEL LOBO - ATC in Esteli

Esteli is a town about 2 hours north of Managua. It saw 45 people killed about a week before we left Canada, the worst single incident of violence in a few years. We met with Raphael, the head of the farmworkers in that province.

He gave a short explanation of why people had died. The bank refuses credit to small & medium-size producers, refuses credit to farmers who, while having made the land productive for over a decade, don't have a piece of paper testifying to ownership. The gov't has failed to live up to any of the negotiated agreements over land allocation & refuses to even the paltry pensions of \$8-\$16 a month to ex-soldiers. A number of young men, most between 18 & 25, listened to an ex-contra. He seemed to persuade them to take over the town & they would rob the bank, bringing national attention to the economic terrorism of the bank & gov't. The townspeople, for the most part, did not oppose them. 120 armed young people took the town, then communication between them & the 'leader' broke down. They held their positions while the leader & a few cronies did rob the bank. In the meantime, the army, which had been under intense criticism and pressure from the extreme right in the US, (specifically Jesse Helms, a rabid US Senator who worked with Reagan & North and who blocked aid to Nicaragua for years), took this incident as a way to "prove itself" &

entered Esteli that night. By the time it was over, 45 people were dead. The media focused on the fact of the bank being robbed to brand the entire thing as bandits being gunned down. The leader was just a criminal, with nothing being said about him being a mercenary.

Raphael spoke then about the real struggle in much of the country - the push by the bank & gov't to privatise everything. Workers demanded their fair share, having kept all of the industries involved productive. Again, it took strikes, demonstrations, marches, takeovers of buildings, offices & radio stations to get across to the greedy bastards that their demands were legitimate.

Negotiations ensued. "Workers' Property" was born. People won the right to ownership of 25% of the coffee industry, 33% of both cotton & cattle, and 75% of tobacco. It also meant control over large tracts of some of the best land.

The downside was that the workers had to earn enough profit to begin paying for the percentage they had rights to. Payment was to begin within 2 years from the date of agreements (end of '92). The bank, and the transnational corporations it fronts for, refuse to buy above a certain amount, if anything at all is purchased, from these specific concerns that are now partly workers' property. At the end of 2 years, they will then be able to acquire what was 'workers' property' for a pittance.

Raphael & the ATC are quite aware of the strategy, and have all been working for the absolute minimum needed for survival. The bank, in 'retaliation', has set it up so that the workers' biggest industry, tobacco, has to go through the bank to sell any of its product. The buyer has to pay the bank, not the company. The bank keeps 30%, then releases 70% of the selling price of whatever was sold to the company. This is below the break-even point, this 70%, hence the cutting by the workers of daycare, health care, training & even days off, just to be able to keep making it.

We were taken to see the tobacco farms and the inside of their cigar production. The majority of inside workers are women, so the loss of 'company' daycare has led

to getting friends & relatives to care for children while mom works. At the nursery near the farms we spoke to the woman in charge & noticed that a number of the kids had the bloated bellies equated with malnutrition.

Despite all the setbacks & the vicious scheming of the TNCs, the Workers' Areas and Workers' Property is solid. Seniority is the basis of being a shareholder, with about 1000 out of 4000 workers. There is an executive that is elected, and each part of the organisation reports to the workers as a whole at regular meetings. There are also broader general assemblies where shareholders & non-shareholders can meet to talk of industry-wide problems & site-specific matters. This, attested to by a smile from Raphael, really pisses off the bank & TNCs. Despite all these nasty tricks to destroy the collective strength of the workers, the workers just turn it into a challenge & keep fighting.

Raphael also spoke with what looked like newly-learned humility when he began talking about the women's contributions. Besides doing a full day's work, they also clean & cook & get kids to care or to school, then participate actively in all levels of the community, right up to the executive of the Property, and hold workshops & conferences on women's rights, gender parity, violence against women, health, maternity, sexually-transmitted diseases and maintaining childcare rooms.

In Esteli we saw evidence of everything Raphael & co-workers spoke of.

#### FSLN - The Sandinista Political Party

We met with the national president of the party. He came to the house we stayed at in Managua.

"Nicaragua is in a difficult period."(!) When UNO won the election in 1990, with massive pressure from the US, the FSLN decided to accept this. What was common in Central America was to attempt a coup - to overthrow such a regime by force. This was exactly what the US wanted - to give justification for invasion.

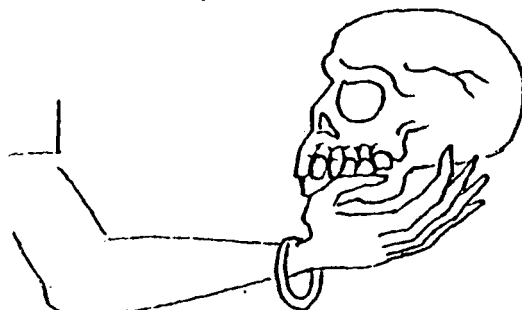
UNO had made many extravagant promises during the election & proceeded to break them all. (Hello Mulroney & the Tories!)

People began to take up arms again, having nothing left to lose. Two generations of Nicaraguans knew of no other way to change gov't than through violence. FSLN thinking had to change this or all would be lost.

The FSLN, having over 40% of the seats in parliament, entered into dialogue & negotiations with UNO, each lengthy & ending in official agreements. UNO, being a coalition of everyone except the Sandinistas, started having serious internal disagreements. The most extreme wanted parliament dissolved & all Sandinistas out. The reason was simple - they had been revealed as self-serving, greedy capitalists who had made vacant promises just to get people to vote other than Sandinista. Now it was the Sandinistas who were taking government seriously, being the "loyal" opposition & trying to maintain Nicaraguan sovereignty in the face of mounting takeovers & displacement of local/national initiative with foreign investment & cheap goods.

The president & head of UNO, Violetta Chamorro, was noticeably shaken by the maturity & intent of the Sandinistas & the FSLN. She began to modify as much of the harshness of the Structural Adjustment Program as she could, while still keeping to many transnational economic policies.

The FSLN continued with dialogue on the economy, the judicial & legal aspects of the gov't, the demilitarisation of northern areas & promoting their commitment to peace & stability. This infuriated the ex-



tremists in UNO, who, after seeing Chamorro waffling (she was actually going to go along with them on these stupid 'agreement things' she had signed !) declared themselves to be a separate chunk of UNO in official opposition to their own coalition!

Our guest went on to talk about the two sides of political life: the first is the romantic side, which keeps to the ideals with slogans, chants, & expectations of miraculous events; the other side is the pragmatic side, which he ascribed to, and the need for mass education, keeping the reality of daily life in the front of any political discourse to avoid it becoming rhetoric. He also spoke of the emerging consensus, fueled by growing numbers of FSLN supporters - it was time for the FSLN to stop working with the UNO gov't to make it appear stable. It was time to call UNO to account for its succession of broken promises & empty agreements. The FSLN has to announce that it has tried to make some changes in the economic policies of UNO but it's so tied to US interests that it's largely been a waste. Now the organising will be around "Change direction or Change government."

Other sources confirmed his analysis of UNO & its internal split. The extremists are little more than dribbles from the sack of shit that was Somoza & cronies. One of them is called the Supreme Council of Free Enterprise. It's almost as funny as "free" trade, or "Progressive" Conservative, or Chretien as Prime Minister.

#### Students & Communities - Nandaime

Nandaime was our next overnight trip, after Esteli. The first day we arrived at the local community centre, used mostly by young people. They practiced dance, had social events, celebrations, & worked on projects.

The focus for most was the trouble at school. There were 3 'shifts' for both elementary & high school, starting at 7 in the morning & ending at 9 at night.

The school, under UNO, had set up a student union that was basically the well off kids getting their first experience with a political forum, where they were expected (and told) to support the school. The group of teenagers who came to meet with us, about 15 of them, told us that they had started in 1990 to organise an underground union, a student union that spoke for the rights of students. It was



obvious to them then that there'd be radical changes in how schools were run with UNO in charge, and it wasn't long until it began.

The first step by UNO was to cut budget money across the board, telling school administrations to raise funds by charging students. At first it was supposed to be voluntary, meaning if you couldn't pay it wouldn't keep you out of school. Then the teachers' salaries were tied to how much their students voluntarily paid - so teachers centred out those who didn't & made a big show of who was paying/not paying. By 1993 the underground union had more members than the school-sanctioned one, but most members belonged to both. In this way, the candidates 'selected' by the administration to run for office in student elections were all members of the underground. In early 1993 the entire student council of Nandaime's school was made up of the organisers of the underground union! The shit hit the fan.

The administration announced that the "voluntary" fee was going up 2½ times what it had been. The student council was expected to promote this; instead, they shut the school down! They had a huge demonstration...a strike. The principal tried kicking everybody out. That didn't work. She then agreed to sit down with the student council. A deal was struck & school resumed, but within a week, every student who'd been involved in organising the strike was expelled. Every teacher who'd supported the students had been fired.

Every one of the teens talking to us had been expelled, so had filed charges against the school of discrimination on the basis of violating the constitution and charging them for schooling.

As their story unrolled, the prospects of victory seemed pretty bleak. Most of the teachers were in favour of fees, or at least in favour of well-off kids paying. Teachers often have to exist of a

salary which is less than a rich man would spend to feed his dog. It was the selective humiliation that so upset kids, much as the targetting of school lunches here in Vancouver to "needy" kids is cruel & destructive to their self-image.

In spite of the dim future, these kids were working on "projects" including a rabbit-breeding venture, tree-planting, the development of ecologically sound fertilizer, production of charcoal via wood/oil & pressure, computer skills & farming and more. They wouldn't be defeated, even with their backs against a wall.

The 2nd day in Nandaime took us out to a Workers' Area, or more exactly an area of land which had 3 interrelated groups of refugees & workers on co-op land. The story had a landowner taking off in 1979, campesinos staying & working the land, the owner selling some of his land (he only had about 8 farms, poor soul), then the new 'owner' coming back in 1992 & wanting everybody to get off his land. He wasn't going to work it - just let it sit there until he could find someone to buy it. The campesinos told

ALLOW ME TO  
PROPOSE A  
RESTRUCTURING OF  
OUR FINANCIAL  
PROFILES...



him to go take a flying fuck.

The original 'owner' then came in on the side of the campesinos. He had been paying taxes on the land since he sold it in 1983 even though it was no longer his, because the new 'owner' had never changed the deed (in 9 years; it must have always been one of those things that are "next" on a list)

We walked that day for miles, after our bus got stuck way back in the boonies, and got to the third group. These people were refugees from the north, who had been driven off their land. They came to this scrub way back in the bush & started working the land. Suddenly the gov't appeared & moved them to some land that wouldn't grow anything. They just picked up & came back. It

was a case of having nothing left to lose, and the head person said they would die before being moved anywhere. The land they were on was part of the new 'owner's' claim so they had a lot of friends in the fight.

On the long road that day, we came across two 'kitchens' where kids in the region go at least once a day to get a meal & a spoonful of dried algae, a powerful supplement supplied by a church group in the States & Norway.

On the way back we stopped at each of the co-ops & talked with the people about what was next. The new 'owner' & the old 'owner' had agreed to something, but the campesinos were being offered about 1/3 of what they claimed. It was unresolved, but they were going ahead with working all they claimed. Again, nothing left to lose.

### SAN FRANCISCO LIBRE

This was originally an event at which Daniel Ortega, ex-president of Nicaragua & head of the Sandinistas, was scheduled to speak. He couldn't make it, because he'd been involved in negotiations over the kidnapping of the gov't, about 80 people, for days on end & was unable to stay awake. (I wonder if he's ever tried using a typewriter as a pillow.)

The event was a holiday for the entire region surrounding San Francisco, with the cause of celebrating being the date on which, ideally, every adult in the area could read & write. They had had community classes for months, with volunteers going to outlying areas to hold classes every day. They also had ongoing workshops on farming, water, sanitation, organic fertilizer, tree planting & more.

San Francisco had had no rain for almost 7 years. They had been reduced to selling their trees to get money for food. Rather than despair, they set about to get ready for when the rains came again, & to replant all the trees.

On the trip up to San Francisco, Carlos, one of our drivers, talked about how the people were more united. In the face of drought & no credit & despair, they had come together as a true community to share resources & learning. We drove over the

worst road I'd ever been on, & finally arrived in time for a huge outdoor rally.

It rained 3 or 4 times while we stood in a stadium to hear speakers talk of solidarity & 'Viva la Revolution!' Exciting!!

Carlos pointed out how, once we got on that shitty road, every truck had people in back..no one walked while there was room for one more. Also he told us how campesinos from as far away as Mexico came to towns & villages throughout the region to share what they knew about farming, community organisation, women's issues & more..& campesinos from Nicaragua go too.



#### CERILLO ORTERA - M.A.N.

M.A.N. is a Spanish acronym for the Nicaraguan Foundation for the Ecology. Cerilo sympathised - we met outside under a tree, rather than in another freezing room with the air conditioner going full blast.

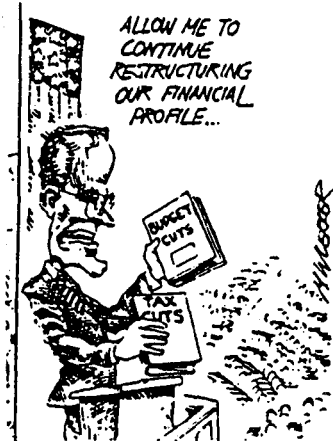
Northerners must whine a lot.

Structural Adjustment has so corrupted the ecological sense of many small & medium-size producers that it's difficult to talk of longterm consequences to the millions of pounds of chemicals used every year without having these same people say they have to have a crop "this year" to pay for seeds, or fertilizer, or just to eat. Despite the desperation, many people see the destruction of the agribusiness methods, as well as the pollution & erosion of industry & logging practices.

Celiro & other MAN people have many programs/projects, going to the worst-hit areas to offer real alternatives to farmers & workers. Some are organic agriculture (with funding from ecology groups in Denmark & Germany); urban ecology (funded by a group in Holland) networking health with sanitation & trees & bicycles & gardens; a model farm, with school kids coming to learn the interrelationships between plants/garbage/food/animals/ & so on.

On a broader scale, they are somewhat

limited by funding & the very structure of the gov't they have to convince to pass laws about the environment. Enter women! Cerilo was no exception; every man we'd met with was basically in awe of the energy & resourcefulness of women. They had felt left out of the drive to promote ecological awareness, as their families (husbands, fathers, brothers) played the traditional role of deciding what activities the women in their families could, or couldn't, get involved in. Lo & Behold, the women finally started saying "Up yours you machisto!" They organised a Central American conference, allowing men to help, on the environment. Crucial to its success was the result of a network of NGOs whose primary interest was environmentally friendly development & practices. This was especially important in the area of reforestation. Huge tracts of trees had been clear cut by transnational logging interests, some just to clear the land for cattle. (Big Macs & Whoppers on the hoof). Women tied this into workshops on health & the benefits of reducing meat consumption, along with introducing kids to animals while they were still alive. It's a long road, but ecology is a consequences study.



#### ENRICA PILARTI - Sandinista Youth

This meeting happened the day after we returned from San Francisco Libre events. The Sandinista Youth had had a large rally on the same day, August 23rd, as it was a special date for all Sandinistas.

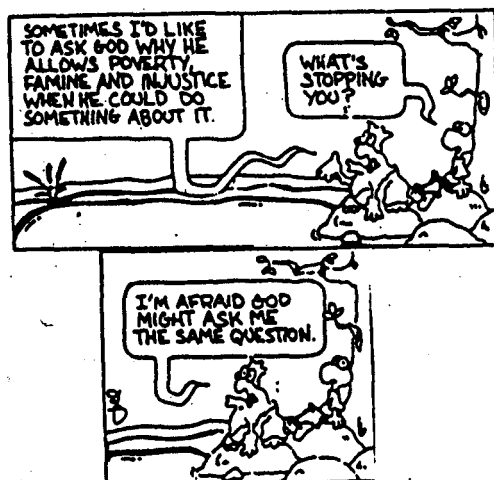
Enrica took us on a brief tour of the history of the Youth Movement, Starting

in 1980, the youth movement began with the massive literacy campaign. Many campesinos had worked with volunteers during the war to get crops in; these volunteers returned to get life going with sports, education & participation.

Throughout the early 80's the youth agitated for higher quality education, but the ongoing war with the mercenaries in the north (the good ol' boys with Ronnie & the CIA) kept dragging more & more energy away from the Sandinista gov't. They had to institute a military draft, for one thing, & the youth reacted against this. It was this that sparked a growing alarm among young people that they would be killed; it affected the loss of the gov't by the Sandinistas, as voting age is 16.

Current activities of the Sandinista Youth include confronting the ministers of various departments, education & health in front, with their failures to provide the basics. Enrica spoke candidly of mistakes made as he & friends learned how to organize & how to evoke real change. He also talked of the growing demands that young people are putting on political parties, especially the FSLN/Sandinistas, to stop what appears to be collusion with UNO to present a picture of stability to the world.

Enrica was the first person who referred to the "moral stance" of people wanting to be nominated or running for office. He's clear about that - someone's personal life & habits are part of any platform they may have when running, & immoral behaviour must be considered at all levels. He was speaking of the Sandinista Youth sending reps to a national party conference, but also implied that some of the elected people would have to clear themselves of muddy smears on their characters as well. He wasn't preaching; he was being honest. The connections of approved reps had to be current & strong, & people couldn't expect to continue as a rep if the last time they had anything to say was 5 years ago!



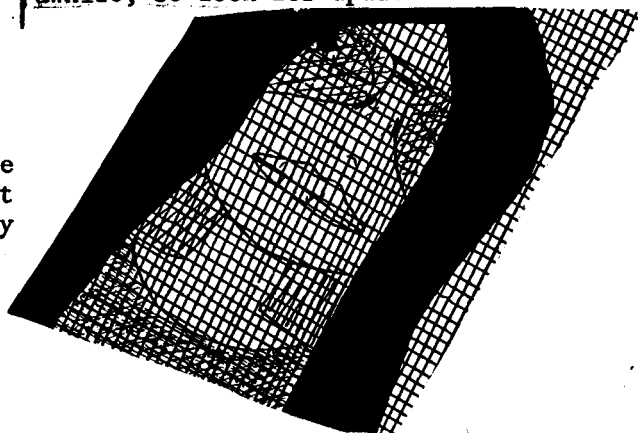
#### ROSA & CHESS - CEPAD

Rosa is Nicaraguan; Chess is American. Each of these women are with CEPAD, which is an ecumenical collective...an NGO made up of different churches. At first I was expecting an almost evangelical meeting with "Praise this" & "Bless that" but that was soon put to rest.

CEPAD puts out a regular report/newsletter on the basic issues affecting ordinary people. Like "Credit where credit is due" on the bank scam to get land cheap, and a whole series of interviews on housing job creation being attacked by transnationals.

They have a radio station & seem to keep whatever preaching they do to a few hours on that. We talked of the schisms between different sects & churches, especially on the activities of the Roman Catholic order whose hierarchy supports UNO.

CEPAD will be sending its paper here for awhile, so look for updates.



## ED CARSON - Street Kids

There are over 25,000 children of, or in, the streets of Managua, the capital city. Ed is a special education teacher from Edmonton who began working in Nicaragua 6-7 years ago & specifically with the street kids in 1991.

He explained the difference between "ninos de la kiyai", children of the street, and "ninos en la kiyai", children in the street. Thousands of kids appear everyday, especially at intersections, selling candy, gum, cigarettes, papers, lottery tickets, washing windshields, begging. They also thrive in the bigger markets, some unloading, some washing parked cars, hustling tourists, trying to be guides, porters... just as many will steal, rob, peddle drugs or their own bodies - anything to survive.

Children 'in' the street have a home to go to, a place to sleep, usually a meal. There is no money to pay for school fees or pencils or the required uniform. If a kid makes a dollar after 8-10 hours hustling, that's rare, but it'd be more than a



parent makes if she has a job.

Economic devastation also increases alcohol abuse, spouse abuse, child abuse. Kids may hustle all day just to have a parent beat them for not making enough for him to get drunk on. The child may get farther from home & end up too far away to get back that night, or fear that their 'take' will only earn them a beating. The next day, but they are still alive, didn't get beaten & still have whatever they made the day before. This scenario repeats itself thousands of times for thousands of kids, with variations, but the results are about the same. Kids eventually become 'of' the street. They have no home to go to, no one to look after them; they may be orphans or just too young to lock up, but they survive any way they can. Drugs, mostly glue sniffing, & prostitution plague their lives.

Ed works with INPRHU, an organisation of

street workers who play & talk with these kids to learn what can be done & if the individual kids want something different. We met him at an old warehouse that had been renovated into a ceramics workshop & had 14 kids there. All had been 'of' the street with long histories of abuse. They made pottery, shared in a kind of half-way house; they seemed happy just to have some one to look out for them.

The project was a pilot thing, running for 6 months. It was in its 5th month when we met with Ed. He had a meagre budget allowing for about a meal-and-a-half a day. He talked about working with kids where they were, having to know that they would try & fail & try & fail & try again. He also spoke of one market where some of the kids had come from, calling it the most disgusting place he'd ever seen. He wasn't being melodramatic at all - it just turned his stomach to see what kids did & were made to do just to stay stoned or eat... no child there, over 8 years old, was a virgin, & the pedophiles & perverts who came for sex often paid with a baggie of glue. The place was so bad that, in his own words, it'd take "an army of street workers & megabucks just to make a dent."

It's the hopelessness & desperation that drives so many kids to just give up & get into lives of abuse. As another Canadian there, Harvey, said: "I was amazed when the killing of 8 or 9 kids in Rio de Janeiro made international news. It happens every day. It happens all the time."

It's also the compassion & caring... Ed & Rosa & others who give many kids a reason to stay alive.





#### ROXANNE - Women

This was to be our very first meeting; it was one of the last that both Roxanne & 5 or 6 of the delegates made time for. It wasn't planned that way - there was this hurricane, you see, that closed the Managua airport for the scheduled flight, then closed it again while we were in the air so we had to land in San Salvador & sit there for a few hours.

Roxanne was directly involved with much of the women's struggle, the primary issue being to remove the umbrella or "one voice for all women" that had been speaking out of turn for years. The name was AMLAI; the official function was to speak for women during the years of the Sandinista gov't. During those years the real women's issues were almost always shunted aside, as other 'more important' matters were getting time & energy. "Daycare & gender parity & women being assaulted will be dealt with in time, but right now we have to continue defending the revolution."

When the election was lost, the women

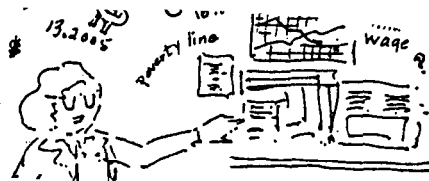
had made themselves strong in unions, in campesino co-ops & in networking with each other. There was a women's secretariat in the union organisation; maquilas, like in Mexico, were starting in Nicaragua; grass roots groupings wanted concerns addressed.

A national meeting was scheduled to begin dialogue amongst the diverging women's groupings. Each group, from AMLAI to professional women to campesinas to feminists to grassroots to unions & all the interweaving interests were at odds on the fair way to make the most progress in all issue & policy matters. No one had the right to speak for everyone. No one had the right to decide who was to be head of any conference...responsibilities had to be shared out so no one group became arrogant with its own self-importance.

Roxanne spoke with real empathy, feeling the needs of all the women, so long just told to shut up & clean or cook or stay home, many now as single heads of families & not being allowed to 'fail'. After so many centuries of having no voice, they wanted to be correct & fair from the start.

From the initial mistrust of each other & motives, from withdrawals on all sides from planned conferences & national meetings, each internal struggle has resulted in positive action. Roxanne was not talking for the sake of hearing herself - she spoke from direct experience with the healing that has continued to happen as women have made their concerns part of every fight in every sector. It was a ratification of what the people we'd met over the previous 14-15 days, mostly men, said & demonstrated - their awe at the energy & commitment of women who often did 3 days work every day.

Besides doing all the organising & work with women's issues, Roxanne herself is a full-time head of CUSO, has a family and works with the issues of the disabled as well. And she found Nicaraguan women remarkable!







### FLAVIO and CARMEN GALO

This would be sorely incomplete without some of the story of Flavio & Carmen. He was our facilitator & host in Nicaragua; we stayed at their house in Managua & both acted as our chauffeurs, cooks, nurses and advisors. Flavio spoke some English but he preferred Spanish; Carmen spoke only Spanish. They had come to B.C. last year in March, spending over a month travelling throughout the province.

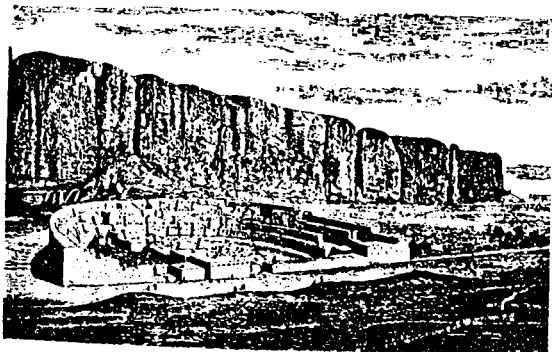
The Galo Family is known in Canada, Japan & parts of Europe. They form a troupe to spread the story of Nicaragua through music, singing & dance. It only takes a word to get Flavio talking about the revolution & the years leading up to the triumph, the routing of Somoza. As we drove to meetings Flavio would point & say "There's the prison they kept me in." "There's where many of my friends died in a battle with the National Guard." "There's one of the safe houses we used."

It began for Flavio back in 1968, when

he was about 9 years old. His mother & siblings were budding musicians & wanted the Catholic mass said in Spanish instead of Latin, so it would mean something to them. They also wanted to sing Nicaraguan songs that told the story of their lives & struggle. It was called the "popular mass" with most of the people in that parish in favor of using it. The Church forbade it; it had stories of massacres, torture & death inflicted by Somoza & his National Guard, it had stories of the people fighting to be free. The Galo's started to hold their own mass outside the church, with dozens of people coming. In the next few years they began to do the Masse Campesina, which was even more radical, more revolutionary than the "popular mass".



The Church began to get very nervous. It tried to punish any priest who allowed one or the other of these masses in their parishes. Finally, when that proved futile, they changed course & announced that the "popular mass" was okay but the Masse Campesina was a no-no. Flavio & family did the Masse Campesina every chance they got; the Galo house was constantly used as a safe house for the FSLN, & Flavio & friends were completely committed to achieving victory over Somoza.





Many of his friends were killed. Flavio walks with a limp resulting from injuries. He said, when pointing out the prison that day, that some of his friends were torture victims. I got the feeling he'd been tortured too. Flavio's younger brother, Federico, now a professor of chemical engineering at the university, drove us one day. He answered a question about how he chose his field by saying that he first learned to make bombs when he was 13 or so, making them out of kitchen cleaners & all kinds of stuff people usually keep in their closets & kitchens. Flavio was responsible for fundraising - he robbed banks. When the Sandinistas came to power in 1979 he was given the job of head of security for the National Bank.

Flavio & the Galo family were featured in San Francisco for the Aug. 23 event.

As a small clue to the spirit & character of Norma Galo, mother of the family... There was a double kidnapping when we were there. Mercenaries in the north had begun killing people so a group of elected offi-

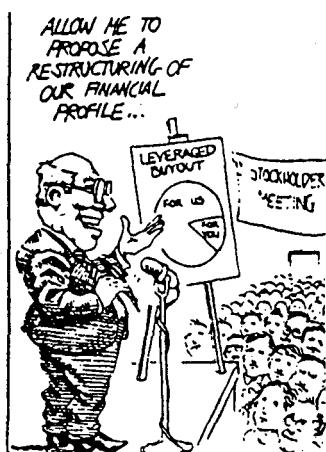
ials, made up of both Sandinistas & UNO went to the north to negotiate with them for peace. The mercenary commander kidnapped the whole peace delegation, demanding that both the General of the Army and the Minister of the Presidency be turned over to him - to be executed I guess. This was soon modified to be that they be fired. He was sick of all the interference they made for his criminal activities.

The extreme right of the UNO coalition in Managua supported this jackal.

A handful of ex-Sandinista officers took matters into their own hands a few days later - they kidnapped the extreme right of the UNO gov't still in Managua!

Standoff.

The kidnappees in Managua included the vice-president, who was as rabid as the Catholic Cardinal about the trouble caused by the Sandinistas. His kidnappers were a little sick of hearing this idiot foam at the mouth, so they had him appear on the balcony of the house they were all being kept in - in his underwear. This, of course, made national TV. The announcer was appalled that these "gunmen" would make the vice president of a country appear in public in his underwear. Norma Galo, a genuine heroine of the revolution, was watching this newscast with a member of our delegation who is fluent in Spanish. Norma said: "How could they leave that bastard in his underwear. They should have made him come out stark naked!"



Nicaragua is home to an incredible spirit; the right-wing faction of US gov't and transnational corporations are desperately trying to destroy this spirit through both economic & military terrorism. They have control of all the armies in Central America, but people keep fighting back. The cry is forever "Arise! Awake!"

By PAULR TAYLOR

# It's us and them

Granville Street can seem like a different world from Main & Hastings sometimes, but if you look more closely you will find we have many things in common.

Granville is going through changes. Like the Downtown Eastside it's got a lot of older, single people living in hotels and social housing - about 2000 in all - & a group of at-risk street kids.

And, again like the D.E., where expensive condos & megaprojects are crowding in from every side, the low-income residents of Granville are threatened by up-scale redevelopment - highrises of Downtown S.

The people who live on & around Granville have their own residents' group, the Downtown Granville Tenants' Association, and they will soon have their own Carnegie-like community centre.

DGTA spends a lot of time doing advocacy work, helping residents with their welfare & landlord problems, but it is also fighting to make sure that low-cost housing is preserved & more is built.

Right now there are several city-owned projects, including the New and Old Continental hotels & the Gresham hotel.

Larry Scafe is the DGTA's past president. He was the manager of the old Bon Accord Hotel until it burned down, and ever since he has dedicated himself to fighting for better conditions on Granville.

"We are worried about our low-income brothers & sisters being squeezed out," Larry says. "Our position is that they can't close down a hotel until they provide replacement housing."

DGTA was originally part of DERA, but they decided earlier this year to strike out on their own.

The new community centre - it's called the Gathering Place until a contest decides the permanent name - will start up next year on two floors of the New Continental at Helmcken and Seymour.

The person spearheading the planning is none other than Carnegie's own Diane MacKenzie. Diane scoots around Granville on a motorized go-cart, consulting with Larry & other folks on what they want in the new centre.



So far it looks like there will be a recreation room, arts & crafts space, dance & martial arts space, a library, learning centre, hot tubs, theatre, laundramat, showers & health clinic.

On Friday, Sept. 17, members of the Gathering Place steering committee will meet with the Carnegie Board for the first time to talk about the nuts & bolts of running a democratic organization.

The City Social Planning Department is sponsoring the workshop, with Counc. Libby Davies and Gordon Price attending. Carnegie & the Gathering Place are the only two community centres in Vancouver that are funded directly by City Hall, rather than by the Parks Board.

"Carnegie is very highly regarded at City Hall, and the Carnegie Board members can talk about what they have done to achieve that," says Diane. "The Carnegie Board has been in existence for a dozen years, so it has lots of stories to tell."

Nice to see inter-neighbourhood co-operation. That way, everybody benefits.

On second thought, maybe a little competition will have an invigorating effect. That's why Ladi Di is challenging Princess Margaret Prevost to their own Indy down the sidewalks of Granville and Hastings.

Okay sisters, start your engines!

# Seven myths about Canada's social programs

UBC Reports · August 12, 1993

by John A. Crane

John Crane is a Professor Emeritus in the School of Social Work. His study is funded by Health and Welfare Canada.

Will Rogers once said: "It's not the things we don't know that hurt us, but the things we know that aren't so."

Findings from my current project on the public's views of directions for social provision in Canada cast doubt on much of the conventional wisdom on this topic with which we are barraged by media.

My project is the first in a proposed series of regional studies in Canada, to be followed by a national study, on the public's views of directions for social welfare provision. It is a consultation, primarily by means of in-depth interviews, with samples of household heads randomly selected in Vancouver and Abbotsford and members of organizations involved with social programs, both for and against.

Two hundred and ten respondents took part in the study. Findings deal with the meaning of social services to the respondents, their support for the 'welfare state', and directions in which they want to take social welfare in Canada.

Based on my data, the following appear to be examples of things we know that aren't so:

1. *There are large savings to be had by "targeting" social programs for the poor, for whom the programs are intended.*

Data: 98 per cent of my sample, presented with a standard list of 32 social programs, reported using at least one of them during the previous 12 months. Half the sample reported using between two and six of the programs. Seventy-seven per cent of the sample rated the impact on their lives of one or more of these encounters as major. It is clear that the social programs play a major role in the lives of the whole population, not just the 'needy'. Targeting services to 'those who really need them' is an illusion.

2. *Canadians are angry at the government and want to cut back on its social policy commitments.*

Data: Strong majorities favour government continuing its commitment to such goals as

redistributing wealth, ensuring that the population is housed, and providing social services.

3. *There is a widespread anti-welfare backlash in the population.*

Data: Only six per cent of respondents said they are opposed to welfare, but there is evidence of serious concern about weak administration, from both friends and opponents of welfare.

4. *The baby boomer generation had better provide for its own retirement, as Canada Pension Plan will have gone broke before this generation reaches retirement age.*

Data: A small minority of baby boomers have ample retirement portfolios. However, the large majority have slim retirement packages and aren't in a financial position to upgrade. To advise these

people to provide for their own retirements is unrealistic.

5. *Public support for the comprehensive social programs put into place after the Second World War has seriously declined.*

Data: Strong majorities favour a comprehensive list of social programs. Only tax shelters for business investment are opposed.

6. *The public is unwilling to pay more taxes to support social programs.*

Data: A majority said they would be willing to pay more taxes to enable a number of programs to continue. (It has often been found that the public favours tax cuts in general, but is willing to pay more taxes for specific purposes they see as worthwhile.)

7. *On welfare issues people vote with their pocketbooks, supporting mainly those social programs from which they themselves directly benefit. Thus social programs are examples of the vulnerability of governments to special interest groups.*

Data: As found in this and many other studies, there is very little correlation of income, age, gender and other demographic variables with support for social programs. Support cuts across all such categories as other studies have indicated. The comments of most of the respondents implicitly defined 'self interest' in very broad terms; e.g. many respondents cited universal health care as a benefit of being Canadian.

## JUST WHEN WE NEED IT, SOCIAL SAFETY NET IS YANKED AWAY

There is something nuts about the world. Here we are, with more people out of work than at any time in history, with more people dependent on such social programs such as welfare. And what do the world's leaders do?

They want to cut it all back.

Last week in Tokyo, the leaders of seven of the world's largest industrial economies, including Prime Minister Kim Campbell, said they want to tackle unemployment.

Commentators were enthusiastic. And at one level it was gratifying that after 3 years of depression, the leaders of what is called the G-7 have finally noticed that a lot of people are without work.

But look at their prescription. In the bureaucratic jargon favoured by their kind, the world leaders said they want to fight joblessness by removing structural impediments to employment growth.

In simple English, that means they want to savage social programs such as unemployment insurance & welfare. These are the so-called structural impediments - programs that allow a person thrown out of work to get by for a little while on a little bit.

The world leaders don't like this. If someone who is out of work can scrape by, he won't be desperate; he won't fight and claw for every low-wage job that comes up.

The world leaders figure that the way to end the unemployment crisis is to make the jobless desperate. Then they won't be so picky. Then they'll work at Mexican-level wages and be thankful.

The world leaders think this will make their economies globally competitive.

The world leaders are nuts. They seem to understand that countries cannot get rich through trade wars. They comprehend that this type of competition makes every country poorer.

They seem to understand that competitive devaluation doesn't work - that if every country cuts the value of its currency to boost exports, none will be better off.



But they prefer to ignore the fact that competitive wage devaluation doesn't work either - that if Canada gets rid of its social programs to drive down wages to Tennessee levels, Tennessee will do the same to bring its wages to Mexican levels. And on and on.

The world leaders are not alone in their deliberate nuttiness. Look closer to home; look at Ontario.

Ontario has more than half a million out of work. Premier Bob Rae's gov't responds by cutting back money to municipalities, school boards & hospitals. That puts more out of work.

With 1.2 million dependent on welfare in the province, the gov't announces welfare reform. The gov't says its ideas are new and exciting.

In fact, they are not new. They are ideas that have been around since the MacDonald Commission on the Canadian economy of the mid-80s. Conrad Black likes them.

The key thrust is to push as many people as possible off the welfare rolls into the job market. This will be done by, in effect, penalizing those who refuse so-called retraining.

But there are no jobs. So the net effect of extra job seekers looking for fewer jobs will be to drive wages down.

The gov't then proposes to subsidize those who do get low-paid work through a baby bonus. This, too, will force wages down. For why should private employers pay a living wage if they know that the gov't will make sure their employees' children won't starve?

In effect, the gov't proposes to transform welfare for people into a kind of corporate subsidy.

Here Rae's gov't is falling into line with Campbell & the other G-7 leaders. Slash programs so as to slash wages; solve the unemployment crisis by penalizing the unemployed.

Ottawa loves the new Ontario welfare scheme. Federal Human Resources Minister Bernard Valcourt says that he & Rae are thinking along the same lines. Valcourt hopes to emulate the good work Rae has done by gutting whatever is left in the unemployment insurance system.

When this depression began, economists were optimistic for one reason. They pointed out that, unlike the 1930s, there is a social safety net. Unemployment insurance & welfare - by keeping some money flowing through the economy - cushion the effect of depression & ensure that the country is not devastated.

Now the world leaders, the federal government - and even, it seems, the NDP - want to get rid of the last battered remnants of this social safety net.

It's as if they don't think we're hurting enough.

By THOMAS WALKOM



Joan Smallwood, Minister of Social Service  
Dear Joan:

FLAW (FrontLine Advocacy Workers) is concerned about the landlord-fraud that often happens against welfare recipients.

There have been reports of landlords evicting people, then collecting multiple rents in a month, for the same hotel room. Some landlords will only rent to people who they believe they can evict within a few days. This fraud costs MSS a lot of money and makes life more difficult for renters who are on welfare.

We request that you consider the large amount of Ministry money that goes to fraudulent landlords:

1. Trace addresses, by computer, catching multiple cheques for rent or security deposit for the same suite. This will ID the fraudulent landlords.
2. Prosecute fraudulent landlords.
3. Re-assign 3 of your 6 fraud-investigators to address landlord-fraud.

Thanks you.

Joanne Shaw

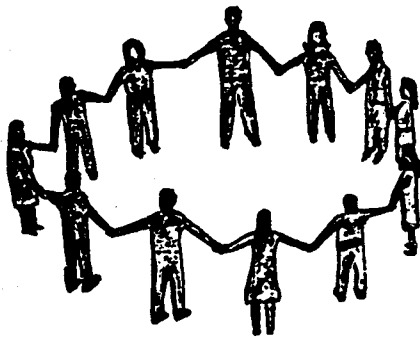


### The Prairie War

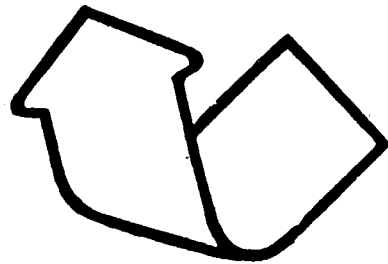
The people hoped for good weather;  
But the weather was not fair;  
the grasshoppers flew in the wind  
ate the crop that in the wind  
clanged like brass cumbals  
before them, but vainly,  
stuck as they were by farmers' tools.

It'S ALL LIFE NO?

NO CHANGE  
NO POPCANS  
NO LIGHTS  
NO SINGLES  
NO WASHROOMS  
NO CREDIT  
NO GST / NO PST  
NO KLINGONS  
NO SALES  
NO PEDDLING  
NO LOITERING  
NO SOLICITING  
NO CANVASSING  
NO PANHANDLING  
NO TRESPASSING  
NO FLYERS  
NO REFUNDS/NO EXCHANGES  
NO REFRESHMENTS TO LEAVE THE CROSSWALK  
NO CASH OR CIGARETTES LEFT OVERNIGHT  
NO FOOD, NO DRINK  
NO WATER  
NO SHOES, NO SHIRT, NO SERVICE  
NO DRESS CODES  
NO JOBS ON SITE  
NO ENTRY - PERSONNEL ONLY  
NO PARKING  
NO CYCLING  
NO ROLLERBLADING  
NO ROLLER SKATING  
NO PHONECALLS ALLOWED  
NO TALKING  
NO GAMBLING  
NO SWEARING  
NO SPITTING  
NO SPITTING  
NO KNIVES  
NO FIGHTING - NO KILL I  
NO ALCOHOL / NO DRUGS  
NO SMOKING, NO TOBACCO, NO PAPERS  
NO PETS, NO ANIMALS  
NO LITTERING  
NO INSURANCE  
NO SHIPPING OR RECEIVING FROM LOADING DOCK  
NO VACANCY, NO ROOMS  
NO VISITORS  
NO I.D., NO ADMITTANCE  
NO EXIT  
NO INS OR OUTS  
NO THRU ROAD  
NO STOPPING ON ROADWAY



NO PASSING  
NO CAMPING OVERNIGHT  
NO HITCH HIKING  
NO OUTLETS  
NO GAS CANS ALLOWED ON FERRY  
NO TRUCKS / NO CARS  
NO FIRES  
NO PUBLIC ACCESS  
NO LEFTS ON RED / NO RIGHT TURN  
NO LIQUOR PERMITTED IN DARK AREA  
NO DOGS TO RUN FREE IN DARK AREA  
NO RADIOS  
NO SWIMMING OR WADING  
NO BALL PLAYING  
NO INFLATABLE DEVICES  
NO LIFEGUARD ON DUTY  
NO RUNS, NO HITS, NO ERRORS  
NO BILLS POSTED - NO POSTERS  
NO DUMPING WITHOUT PERMISSION  
NO PEDESTRIAN CROSSING. USE UNDERPASS  
DANGER NO ADMITTANCE  
EVICTIONS NO WAY...  
WE'RE CLOSED  
NO WORDS  
NO NOISE  
NO SOUND  
NO WALLS  
NO TELLING  
NO WINDOWS  
NO BURPING  
NO COFFEE  
NO PAN CAKES  
NO PUBS  
NO LIFE, NOT ANYMORE  
NO SOCIAL SKILLS  
NO LANGUAGE  
NO SHOTLOGS  
NO VIDEO  
NO MOBILITY  
NO WOMAN WIFE  
NO SENIORS, NO KIDS  
NO STARS  
NO GUITARS  
NO RIGHTS  
NO JOKE  
NO INTEREST  
NOT SOCIAL ENOUGH 'FER SOCIETY  
NO GAMES  
NO BULLSHIT  
NO TAPEDECKS  
NO BIKE  
NO PLACE TO BE



# The philosopher's sandwich



If you can't turn your eyes around and examine your own state of mind, blindness leads; & though you may be passing through a hall of mirrors, you never really see yourself but only know an emptiness surrounded by images of who you might have been, who you wanted to be, who you didn't want to be, who you were yesterday, or who you think you must be now.

When your life is not connected to that constant knowing of itself, identity can only "think" itself into existence - like the philosopher who said, "I think, therefore I am" & thinking became his whole life because the minute he stopped thinking he believed he would die.

When the mind is doing nothing, emotion & intellect are at rest together in identity. Identity cannot be proven in or on the world, it can only be mind aware of itself without thoughts or emotions, looking at a sense of being. Emotion & intellect at perfect rest within the nest of now - this ongoing yet totally still present; in which you, we, they, can finally turn our eyes around & see, touch, taste, feel the subtle qualities of this personal state.

You might not like what you find in it. - but the more you react against it, the stronger its demand for recognition is.

To go deeper requires an acceptance of the unavoidable necessity of going deeper. The first thing we should be concerned with in our daily life is not money, politics, social power, personal credit, business, drugs, where we'll get our next meal or if we have cigarette papers... The first thing to be concerned with is the state of consciousness in which we find ourselves.

What kind of headspace am I in? (Is it peaceful, sensitive, stable, balanced, reflective, considerate, perceptive, centred, thoughtful, satisfied, etc...) - but don't hurt yourself by being too demanding & all that's necessary is to examine with interest your own state of existence, as it sits in the brain, heart & spinal column, as it effects every part

of you - the nature of its ways & means. Your self as it comes into being at every moment.

It's not as easy as it sounds. Trust is only generated by good states of consciousness interacting with other good states of consciousness so that they create enough solidarity to tolerate, understand & sympathize with bad states of consciousness, which are not "evil"...bad states of mind that can't turn into good states of mind are just stuck in one place. They have even come to accept, love & depend on their badness, & don't know how to give birth to themselves.

Sometimes souls get stuck for a good long time in certain states of mind we call "obsession" or "insanity", or even "possession" according to how bothered we are by it.

But what does this have to do with day-to-day material existence. How does it affect the stock market, the election, production & consumption, or world-class image building of all kinds that they say is so important?... Well, state of consciousness is everywhere: You've got one, I've got one, Kim Campbell has one, Chretien, MacLaughlin, Harcourt, Vanderzalm, Campbell, Jimmy Pattison & other lesser locals archons - they all have the state of mind arising miraculously out of the black hole of existence to create beingness at every moment.

...they have it, but they don't know it, because they spend most of their lives paying attention to other things. & what you pay attention to you get to know, & what you don't pay attention to disappears as if it didn't even exist.

If we're looking at a national identity that includes every anonymous individual among us, then state of mind is where it's at. You couldn't get a better idea of national, local or community identity than collective state of mind.

- Here the word "collective" can only mean "collected", by chance or design, inside an area extending roughly from the 49th parallel to the North Pole..."coll-



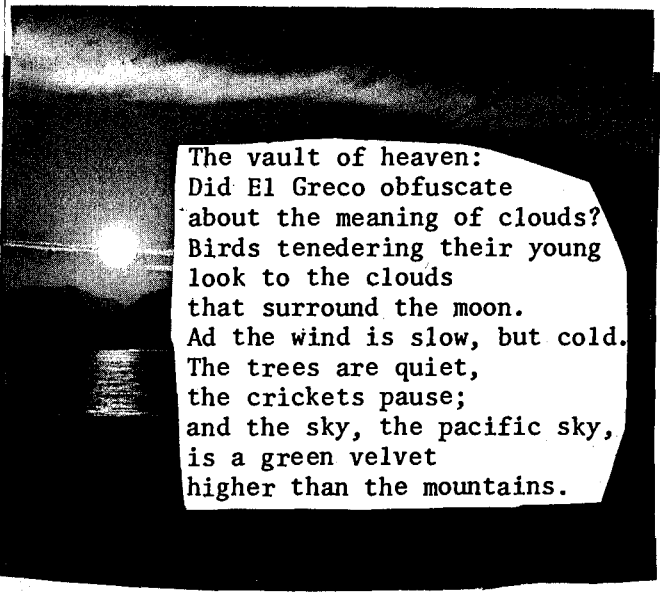
ected" states of mind (some might say trapped or caged) engaging one way or another in the game of being Canadian.

Of course "Canadian" means nothing really. It's just another substitute for "human" which still falls short of explaining anything to me.

People get bored lining up for the philosopher's sandwich, even on election day. They hate thinking about things like "state of consciousness" & "quality of experience". Television has taken our language patterns & twisted them & clipped their wings, & all we want to do is turn on the tube, order the beer & pizza, watch the ballgame & nobody blames us..we can't help ourselves. In fact, a lot of people are convinced this is what national identity is all about.

You can buy the products, have the job, make the salary, wave the flag, anytime.. but the very thing that makes it all go - the state of mind that runs the whole show - your own personal state of consciousness, which you should pay attention to every minute of every day of your life, is swept into the background. No wonder it develops sores lying there in the dark. No wonder the world, nation, province, city, neighbourhood, lacks enlightenment, inspiration, hope, trust & truthfulness. No wonder.

TORA



The vault of heaven:  
Did El Greco obfuscate  
about the meaning of clouds?  
Birds tending their young  
look to the clouds  
that surround the moon.  
Ad the wind is slow, but cold.  
The trees are quiet,  
the crickets pause;  
and the sky, the pacific sky,  
is a green velvet  
higher than the mountains.



### Half My Heart

A bottle of vodka in a trash can,  
A tin of Varsal by the road;  
Both of them empty  
Neither of them clean  
What happens to we lonely souls?

Travelling street to street safely  
Visiting people we meet  
The work is so tiring  
As we've gone a-striving  
That home we can't turn our feet.

And people have passed by park benches  
Sorrowing, touching the ground  
Hoping old friends from memories  
of old days would come around.

Those days have passed but the fighters  
will not forget  
When battle is here and mettle is needed  
upon the new foe  
Trust in an old soldier as a warm ember.

And love for your families is  
something we know.  
So trust an old soldier not far from home.

So see an old soldier to safety  
And his part will never he fail  
For time is a warm welcome brother  
And his parting words of the fold  
His last goodbye is wind in a sail  
It passes the lamps of the streets  
Like tales of journeys not worth remembering  
but his hearty hale old memories..and life..  
! God's love upon you !  
for rembering your wife

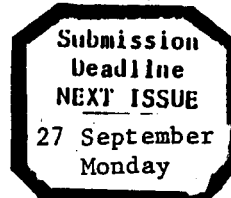
Though forests of words travel  
Some lonesome still in thee,  
still in thee,  
still in thee

DOWNTOWN STD Clinic - Monday through Friday, 9am - 5pm.  
 EASTSIDE FREE MEDICAL CLINIC - Mon, Wed, Friday, 5:30-7:30pm  
 YOUTH NEEDLE EXCHANGE - 221 Main; everyday, 9am-5pm.  
 ACTIVITIES Needle Exchange Van - on the street evenings, Mon-Sat  
 SOCIETY N.A. meets every Monday night at 223 Main St.

Out-to-Lunch Bunch meets daily at 59 Powell, 10am - 2:30.

**1993 DONATIONS**  
 Eleanor K.-\$25  
 Stuart M.-\$50 Adbusters -\$50  
 Kettle F.S.-\$16 Wayne H.-\$2.50  
 Bert T.-\$10 Legal Aid -\$50  
 Etienne S.-\$50 Mary C.-\$25  
 Lisa E.-\$10 Paula R.-\$20  
 Matt -\$20 Steve T.-\$15  
 Keith C.-\$20 Eric E.-\$10  
 Abby K.-\$10 Anonymous -\$70

Joy T.-\$20  
 Colleen E.-\$20



**Carnegie**  
 NEWSLETTER

THE NEWSLETTER IS A PUBLICATION OF THE  
 CARNEGIE COMMUNITY CENTRE ASSOCIATION.  
 Articles represent the views of individual  
 contributors and not of the Association

Help in the Downtown Eastside (funding)  
 Social Services -\$1000  
 Vancouver Health Dept. -\$11  
 Employment & Immigration -\$800  
 P.L.U.R.A. -\$1000

## NEED HELP ?

The Downtown Eastside Residents' Association  
 can help you with:



- \* any welfare problem
- \* information on legal rights
- \* disputes with landlords
- \* unsafe living conditions
- \* income tax
- \* UIC problems
- \* finding housing
- \* opening a bank account

Come into the DERA office at 9 East Hastings St  
 or phone us at 682-0931.

DERA HAS BEEN SERVING THE  
 DOWNTOWN EASTSIDE FOR 20 YEARS.



# FREE FOOD SERVICES

Location	Meal	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat.	Sun.
First United Church 320 E. Hastings St. 681-8365	Soup Sandwiches	8:30 am	8:30 am	8:30 am	8:30 am	8:30 am	8:30 am	8:30 am
Salvation Army 119 E. Cordova St.	Lunch	11:00 am	11:00 am	11:00 am	11:00 am	11:00 am		
Franciscan Sisters 385 E. Cordova 685-9987	Lunch	3:30 pm	3:30 pm		3:30 pm	3:30 pm		2:00 - 3:30 pm
Union Gospel Mission 616 E. Cordova St. 685-9987	Lunch Dinner	2:00 & 8:00 pm	2:00 & 8:00 pm	2:00 & 8:00 pm	2:00 & 8:00 pm	2:00 & 8:00 pm	8:00 pm	2:00 & 8:00 pm
Sunshine Mission 217 Dunlevy St.	Dinner		7:30 pm	7:30 pm	7:30 pm			7:30 pm
Food Lifeline Bus Lot between Vogue and Regal Hotel	Dinner			8:30 pm				
The Quest 1019 Broughton St. 522-1988	Dinner	4:00	4:00					
The Quest (St. James) 303 East Cordova	Breakfast & Dinner	4:00	4:00	9:30 am		9:30 am	12:00 & 4:00	
The Dugout 59 Powell Street 685-5239	Drop-in and Dinner	7:30 am 4:00	7:30 am 4:00	7:30 am	7:30 am	7:30 am	7:30 am Sandwiches 4:00	9:00 am
Teen Challenge 971 Granville St. 684-TEEN	Dinner	4:00	4:00	4:00	4:00	4:00		
Crabtree Corner Broadway Church 2640 E. Broadway	Sandwiches & Juice						am kids lunch	
Downtown Eastside Women's Centre 44 E. Cordova St.	Hot Meal	12:30 - 2:00	12:30 - 2:00	12:30 - 2:00	12:30 - 2:00	12:30 - 2:00		
Mission Possible 998 East 19th Ave	Drop-in snacks	7:30 - 9:30 pm		7:30 - 9:30 pm		7:30 - 9:30 pm		
Gay & Lesbian Centre 1170 Bute St	Food Bags					5 - 7 pm		

## SHEWAY

(A Coast Salish Word meaning "Growth")

Sheway is a community partnership with women and:

- \* Children's Hospital
- \* YWCA (Crabtree Corner)
- \* Vancouver Health Department
- \* Vancouver Native Health Society

The Sheway Project, newly opened at 455 E. Hastings, is a community outreach program for pregnant women & their families who live in or frequent the Downtown Eastside, Strathcona & Downtown South areas of Vancouver. Our aim is to support women struggling with various issues including alcohol & drug dependencies, poverty, alienation & the loss of previous children.

The phone number is 254-9951.

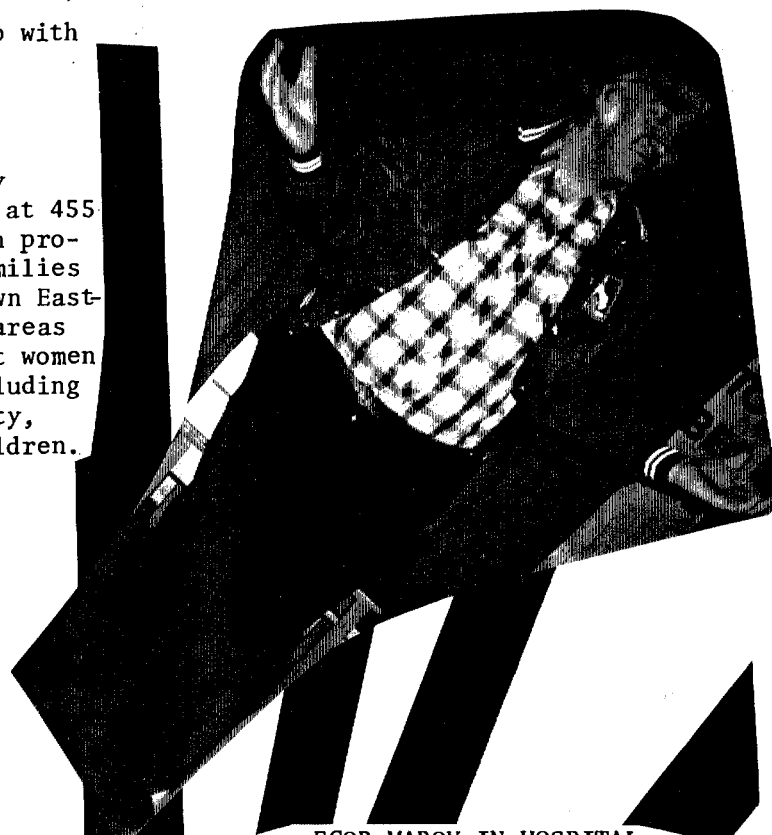


### WE NEED VOLUNTEERS

ARTROPLIS 93 is putting on a large visual art exhibition in the Woodward's building at 101 W. Hastings. We need volunteers & will require your skills and knowledge. We invite you to participate as a volunteer to fill one of the following positions. Our work atmosphere is fun, exciting and challenging.

- Loading Bay Monitor
- Experienced carpenters & helpers
- Experienced electricians & helpers
- Labourers; jacks of all trades/

You can reach the Volunteer Coordinator, Ruth, at the Artropolis Office, 689-5811.



### EGOR MAROV IN HOSPITAL

One of Carnegie's best-known & well-liked volunteers is in hospital after being seriously hurt in a hit-and-run accident.

Egor Marov was unconscious for a week, but is now starting to recover.

The accident took place Aug. 30 in the lane by the Columbia Hotel, where he lives. Police are looking for the driver of a blue Toyota Corolla. They tried to pull over the driver for an illegal left turn, but he took off the wrong way down Columbia & into the lane, hitting Egor.

The Toyota was found abandoned 2 hours later in the West End.

Egor is best known in Carnegie as the Godfather of Video, orchestrating the video shows, which are very popular, as well as helping set up the sound system & other arrangements for events in the theatre.

He will be in St. Paul's hospital for a while. The hospital staff encourages visitors for him, to help him recover.

Visiting hours are from noon to 8 p.m.