

## MUSIC INDUSTRY



Thumbs, a Kansas band, decided to avoid compromise by forming their own record company.

## Artistic control and records too

By Bruce Dancis

*They said we'd be artistically free  
When we signed that bit of paper  
They meant let's make a lotta mon-ee  
An worry about it later*  
(The Clash, "Complete Control")

The Clash were complaining about their record company, CBS, releasing a single without their permission. CBS, of course, also released "Complete Control," presumably with the Clash's permission. (I think there's a lesson here.) Horror stories about censorship, tampering and assorted other corporate crimes against music abound in a record industry dominated by a handful of giant multinational companies.

With the rise of the New Wave in the late '70s in both Great Britain and the U.S. new labels proliferated. The big companies generally adopted a wait-and-see attitude.

As usually occurs in such circumstances, some of the new record companies associated with New Wave, such as Virgin Records in England, became very successful and were soon largely indistinguishable from the majors. Other firms were simply absorbed, in part or in whole; Sire Records, for example, now has its products manufactured and marketed, and its publicity flacked by Warner Bros. Records. The new labels often performed what could be called research and development functions for the large companies.

Yet despite the allure of attractive advances and the obvious benefits in terms of distribution and promotion that accompany signing with a major label, many new groups are opting for the greater artistic and political freedom offered by

some of the independent labels. These are three such companies.

### Rough trade.

London-based Rough Trade is a model of an independent, co-operatively run record company. Started in 1976 as a record shop, Rough Trade decided to put out records themselves about two years ago. From the beginning, Rough Trade's Allan Sturdy told IN THESE TIMES, there was a shared political and musical perspective.

"The political objective was to provide an alternative to the music establishment so that a record could be available that otherwise wouldn't be. A lot of our records have sold up to 10-15,000 copies. The record companies weren't willing to gamble on these kind of groups." Rough Trade is a haven for off-beat bands occupying the avant-garde extremities of the New Wave.

Sturdy cites the case of Belfast's Stiff Little Fingers, a hard rocking, leftist band that most closely resembles the early Clash. The group was about to sign a contract with Island Records when the head of Island decided abruptly that he didn't want them on the label. "I don't think it was because they were too hot to handle, because Bob Marley [an Island artist] is pretty hot to handle," says Sturdy. "It was more that they weren't considered commercial." Stiff Little Fingers then came to Rough Trade, which brought out their first album, *Inflammable Material*.

Rough Trade does not use firm guidelines in deciding which bands to take on. But bands seek out Rough Trade because of its progressive reputation and because their desire for a control over their music extends to the artwork for record covers.

This usually works out to the mutual satisfaction of Rough Trade and the bands, but there have been problems. "One

### New do-it-yourself labels bloomed with rise of New Wave. Some of them are havens for the avant-garde.

group had a cover that some of the people in Rough Trade thought was sexist," Sturdy explains. "There was quite a big argument about it and eventually it was chopped off." Such sensitivity helps explain why Rough Trade has probably a higher proportion of all-women bands and groups in which women play leading roles than other record companies. (IN THESE TIMES, March 26, for a review of the Raincoats, a Rough Trade group.)

Their business practices further distinguish Rough Trade from the majors. The company is run cooperatively, with twice weekly meetings involving the entire staff, about 25 people currently. All Rough Trade staffers receive the same wages for the time they work.

Contracts with bands vary, but they all differ greatly from industry standards. Groups pay for their studio time (Rough Trade can help find a studio, and some Rough Trade people have become producers), then Rough Trade manufactures and distributes the record. Profits are split 50-50—there are no royalties—and Rough Trade puts any money it makes back into the company. There are also no long-term contracts. Groups can move on to larger contracts elsewhere if they want to, which, Sturdy told me with some disappointment, is what occurred with Stiff Little Fingers. (They later signed with Chrysalis Records.) Rough Trade also maintains lower record prices than the large corporations.

Sturdy is about to open Rough

Trade's first U.S. operation, in San Francisco. As in London, they will maintain a record shop as well. "That link with the public is vital," says Sturdy. One of their main reasons for coming to the U.S. is to reduce the cost of their record prices. Rough Trade may be able to charge \$6 or \$7 for albums currently available for imports for as much as \$9 or \$10. They also plan eventually to sign American bands.

### 415 records.

About a year after Rough Trade set up shop, Howie Klein and Chris Knab organized 415 Records. This San Francisco partnership—whose name stands for the police code for disturbing the peace, not the local area code—came about, Klein told IN THESE TIMES, because "we felt there was a real aliveness and vibrancy to what local bands were doing, and there was no chance for any of the [record] companies picking up on these bands."

Klein, who is also a well-known local rock journalist, FM dj and record spinner at a New Wave disco, considers himself a revolutionary, and his critique of the music industry goes beyond differences over taste. "The record companies are part of an anti-social movement in Western society, part of the industrial complex that enslaves people. I have a commitment not to be part of something like that. These big record companies are our enemies. They're run by accountants who are there to please the stockholders. It doesn't have anything to do with talent, with art, with culture."

Klein went on to say, with the all-too-common rhetorical adventurism of many New Wave "revolutionaries," that "those people are vicious. They should be lined up and shot, coolly and calmly. Every single higher-up in the record industry."

Infantile leftism aside, 415 does make a genuine break from conventional business practices. Bands provide their own tapes and, if they desire, their own artwork, while 415 takes care of pressing, mastering, distribution and promotion. In the past, profits were split 50-50. This has changed recently, according to Klein, since "we felt that wasn't fair to the artist. We decided that the artist should be guaranteed something, some amount of money." Under the new arrangement, the group is guaranteed a percentage of the gross sales. In this way, says Klein, "even if the record loses money, they still get paid something."

Problems with distribution, promotion and radio airplay are the main obstacles 415 has encountered. "The vast majority of [radio] stations won't consider independents," Klein believes. "They won't even listen if it's not on a major label." And even when 415 records are played—"Heart of Stone," a power pop single by SVT, has received considerable national airplay, with sales expected to reach 25,000—it doesn't do much good if listeners can't find the record. "Right now we've got SVT being played on the three biggest stations in Richmond, Va.," Klein said, but there have been "no record sales, 'cause there's no stores we can get a hold of to sell it."

As with Rough Trade, 415 doesn't require bands to be politically correct, but as Klein put it, "I wouldn't sign a band that was racist or sexist or fascist or anything like that. Mostly, the people that approach us know where we're at, and they're at the same place."

Members of a Lawrence, Kan-

### CULTURE SHOCK

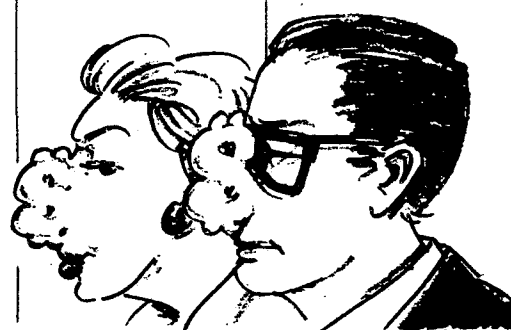
#### STRANGER THAN FICTION

It was only hours after the storming of the Iranian embassy in London that the producer of *The Wild Geese*, Euan Lloyd, registered the title S.A.S. (Special Air Service Regiment), with the Motion Picture Association of America, for a feature film based on the incident.

#### BUSINESS IS ONLY SKIN DEEP

Plastic surgery has become a deductible business expense,

reports *The Wall St. Journal*. Why? "In the tough world of business, explains the *Journal*, "every little advantage counts."



Tom Greenfield



sas-based band called Thumbs (vocalist Steve Wilson, guitarist Kevin Smith, bassist Karl Hoffmann, and keyboardist Marty Olson), plus their friend and compatriot Dan Swinney, did virtually all of the work that went into making their self-titled album, including the formation of their own label, Ramona Records, and publishing wing, Human Music. (Current drummer Dede Mosier joined after the album was completed.) They also handle their own management, bookings and publicity. The band chose to do it all their way because of what Wilson sees as the sort of "personal and financial obligation and compromises [often involved in] working for the major labels."

It helps, of course, that Thumbs' members possess a remarkable range of talents. Wilson, Smith and Olson write and arrange all their songs. Olson, a visual artist, does the band's posters and promotional materials, as well as their album cover art. Hoffmann is described by Wilson as "our one-person technical crew and electro-whiz-kid," while Swinney, in addition to heading Ramona, takes care of the sound and lights for live performances. The album was co-produced by Thumbs and Swinney, who took courses in recording engineering at a Kansas City studio.

National distribution remains a problem. JEM Records, the largest distributor of independent and New Wave records in the U.S. is handling Thumbs, but they lack the promotional resources—such as sending out review copies to the press, radio stations, and record stores—of the majors and even labels like Rough Trade.

One area that isn't a problem is Thumbs' musical ability. Rock archivists will probably be reminded of the early '70s British band Brinsley Schwarz and one of its more illustrious offspring, Graham Parker and the Rumour, largely because Olson's organ work evokes the lush sweetness of Bob Andrews. And Wilson's singing may bring back memories of a younger, pre-creon, pre-cross Bob Dylan. This kind of strong, yet melodic, rock'n'roll is making a comeback these days, and Thumbs is as good at it as any new band around.

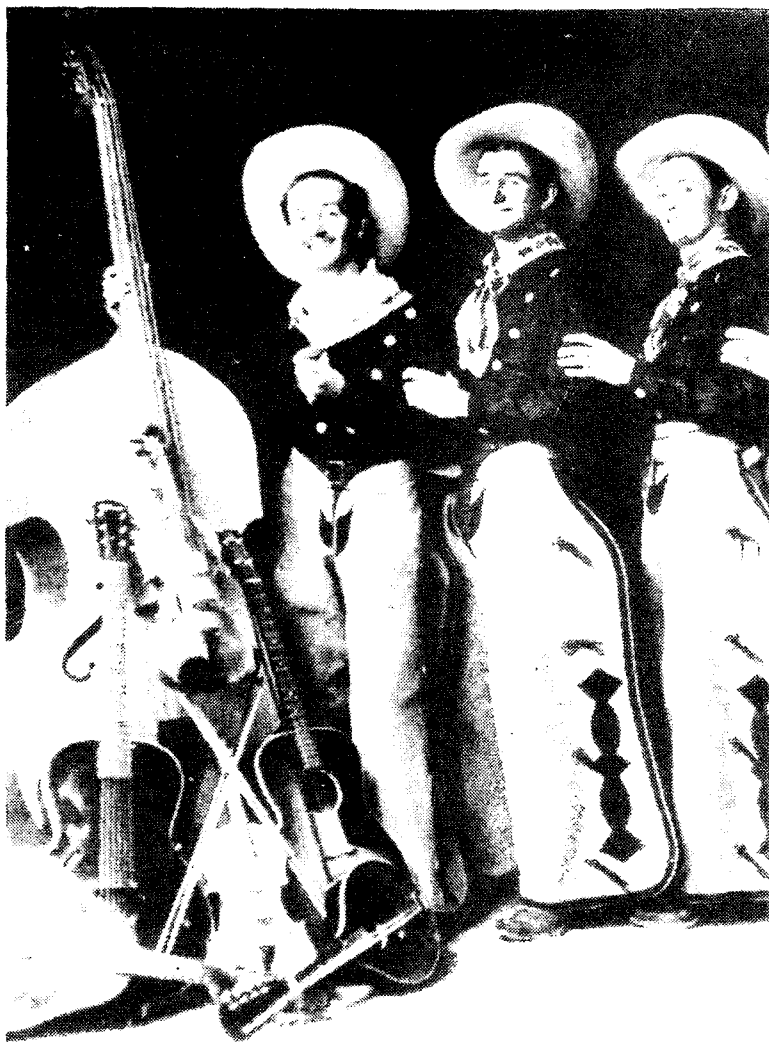
They're also thoughtful, and Wilson's description of their songs aptly describes what they are trying to do: "I'm interested in touching and arousing people about things other than beer-drinking, but I'm not interested in being dogmatic and unreflective and, therefore, patronizing and boring. Gimme the Clash, not the Red Shadow Band."

These independent record companies still remain the proverbial drop in the bucket. Yet as 1979's sales slump in the record industry continues into 1980, perhaps the little labels will benefit.

Thumbs' Steve Wilson probably captured the thoughts and aspirations of many when he said, "We're determined to do it ourselves and within the limits of our conscience and interests. Complete control? That's a yuk—a utopian yuk, but an inspiring one."

For a Rough Trade mail order catalogue, send a self-addressed stamped envelope to Rough Trade, 1412 Grant Ave., San Francisco, CA 94133; 415 Records can be contacted at 595 Castro St., San Francisco, CA 94114; Thumbs may be ordered for \$7.00 from Ramona Records, P.O. Box 701, Lawrence, KS 66044.

## Short Notice



Woody Guthrie (far left) in the early days.

### Woody Guthrie and Me

By Ed Robbins, Lancaster Press, 3165 Adeline St., Berkeley, CA 94703, \$6.95

Woodrow Wilson Guthrie, recently included in the Junior Chamber of Commerce's Clean Up America campaign, has become so much of a legend that accurate reflections of his career are hard to find. In this loosely-tied collection of reminiscences, ex-journalist Ed Robbin remembers the Dust Bowl Balladeer in the mid-'30s, when both worked on KFVD radio in L.A. and Woody first explored the Communist Party. Robbins' memories are gritty and vivid, but the book contains minor inaccuracies that limit its use as history to those situations where the author himself was present. **DKD**

### The Journal of Social Reconstruction

P.O. Box 143, Pine Plains, NY 12567, \$19.50 annual

This new quarterly (March, first issue) is edited by Marcus Raskin of the Institute for Policy Studies. The Journal will, say the publishers, "be international and multidisciplinary, and will attempt to demystify the actions and forces of colonization and to develop a consciousness of new modes and methods of the reconstruction of society." The first volume will contain articles by Raskin, John Berger, Christopher Jencks, Ralph Nader, Richard Barnett, Saul Landau, Robert Borosage and others. Tied to no school of thought, the journal will be "free-swinging and open-ended as it attempts to establish dialogue between practice and theory." **JW**

### In Focus: A Guide to Using Films

By Linda Blackaby, Dan Georgakas and Barbara Margolis, Cine Information, 419 Park Ave., S, NYC 10016, \$9.95

You don't need to know anything about using films before approaching this comprehensive step-by-step guide to using films in groups. As independent films

proliferate and distribution systems begin to become more sophisticated, a guide like this for film users is much needed. It tells how to plan a film program, how to publicize it, how to lead discussions—and what to do when the film breaks. Also highly valuable are the list of resources, including filmographies and periodicals, and also the Film Users' Network. The Network will send film users latest information on new films; you join by clipping a coupon from the book. **PA**

### GI Guinea Pigs: How the Pentagon Exposed Our Troops to Dangers More Deadly Than War

By Michael Uhl and Tod Ensign, Playboy Press, \$9.95

This book by the organizers of Citizen Soldier tells how GIs were subjected to radiation from atomic bomb tests and to dioxin poisoning during Agent Orange raids in Vietnam. The book demonstrates the tragic long-term hazards, describes bets: lawsuits

and other action, and documents evasive governmental response. An excerpt concerning dioxin victims appeared in *IN THESE TIMES* (Aug. 15, 1979). **PA**

"The Revolutionary Tradition in Islam," by Thomas Hodgkin, *Race and Class*, 21, Winter 1980

Hodgkin, a veteran British anti-colonial scholar and activist, reflects on the history and potential of Islamic radicalism. He discusses the original social impact of Islam and reviews several egalitarian social movements legitimated by the religion. Of most interest are the sections on Mahdism, a kind of Moslem millennialism, and Galiyevism, the Muslim Communist movement in the Soviet Union during the early years of the Bolshevik revolution. This timely article also includes invaluable commentary on the general question of the relationship between religion and socialism. **DR**

### Cinema and History: British Newsreels and the Spanish Civil War

by Anthony Aldgate

New York Zoetrope, 31 E. 12th St., NYC 10003, \$11.95

The author, a historian at the University of Edinburgh, notes that commercial modern cinema began as short films about novel inventions or regal ceremonies—newsreels or "topicals." At one point 35 English theaters showed nothing but newsreel films. The view they conveyed of the Spanish Civil War was studiously apolitical, Aldgate notes, liberally tinged with an honestly felt pacifism. Shots of bombed Madrid were featured without comment about the pilots or artillery experts responsible, while footage of returning British volunteers from the International Brigades was excised. From a sober analysis of almost three years' worth of clips Aldgate discovers, besides a tacit acceptance of Franco, an unwillingness to explain the causes of or background to the Spanish Civil War. **LR**

### On Sociology and the Black Community

By W.E.B. Du Bois, edited by Dan S. Green & Edwin D. Driver, University of Chicago Press, \$5.50

W.E.B. Du Bois (1868-1963) best known as a political activist and cultural critic in *The Souls of Black Folk*, was also a pioneering empirical sociologist at Atlanta University between 1896 and 1910. Among his distinctive innovations was the technique

of measuring social change through continuous re-surveys of social phenomena. This selection includes essays long difficult to obtain. The editors concentrate on Du Bois' studies of sociological method, black community life at the turn of the century, black creativity and culture, and race relations. An incisive biographical introduction argues the influence of the German scholar Gustav Schmoller in the formation of Du Bois' scientific method, and documents the unfair neglect of Du Bois' work by the white sociological establishment prior to 1970. **AW**



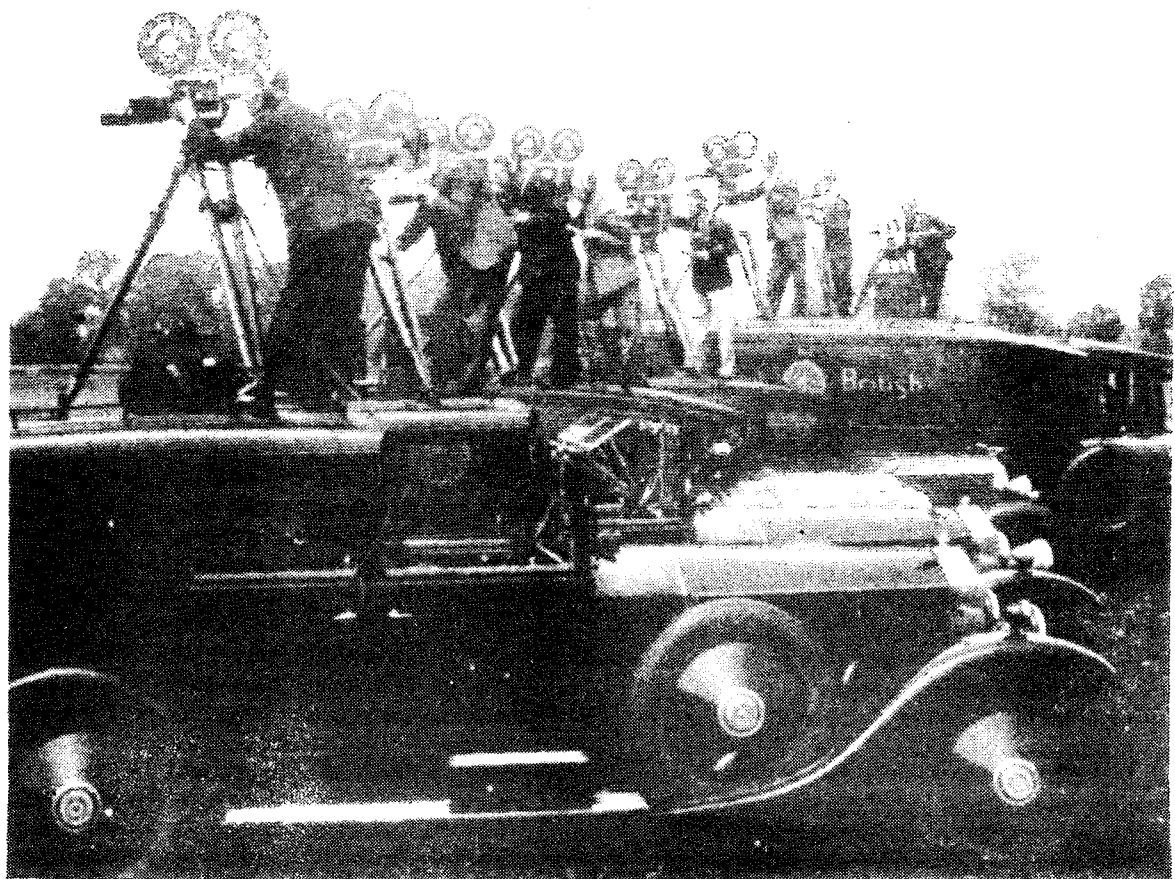
Three Mile Island.

### We Are the Guinea Pigs

Directed by Joan Harvey, Parallel Films, 314 W. 91 St., NYC 10024

This is the chilling story of the Three Mile Island nuclear accident told by the victims, explained by scientists and debated by public and private officials. Doctors Helen Caldicott and Ernest Sternglass testify, as does Machinists union president William Winpisinger. The director previously produced an anti-nuclear, anti-war drama, *Ride the Red Horse*, in New York. If you like this film, it's probably not for its filmic values. At 90 minutes, it is repetitive and contains sloppy editing, but it has a clear anti-nuclear message. **JM & MH**

Contributors: Pat Aufderheide, David King Dunaway, Josh Martin and Marge Harrison, David Roediger, Len Rubinstein, Alan Wald, Jim Weinstein.



Gaumont newsreel photographers.



# Games

Continued from page 13.

there's going to be a war. I'll stay in if something happens. You gotta figure that like 80 percent of the guys want some kind of conflict. I mean, people are looking for that kind of intense situation. People say we're not ready, but we feel like we're ready."

"You think a war's likely?" he asks the rest of the crew. They all nod their heads in agreement.

## 'Anytime, anywhere.'

As the tanks are about to move forward one of the evaluators with a white cloth band tied around his helmet announces a "live target." I turn in time to see a jeep-fired TOW flash like a small silver dagger across the desert. One thousand meters away a large pile of tires explodes into a shower of black rubber—a direct hit. The gunner and his crew are dancing around their jeep. It's the first time they've ever fired one of their missiles.

"The Marines are unique. We're the smallest of the services. There's only 190,000 of us, but when we make an amphibious assault, when we go onto a beachhead, we go with everything we need. We're a complete air-ground team." Major Michael Hire explains as he squats down on the ground chewing gum from his C-rats. He is a 12-year veteran of the Corp who served in Vietnam and now works as the executive officer for an infantry battalion. "Like a lot of younger Marines, I wasn't sure whether I'd stay with the service. There was a lot of bitterness after Vietnam. But I decided to stay because the Marines are the most professional outfit I've ever been associated with. The camaraderie, the Marine family is what made me stay," Hire says.

"You have to understand these young Marines today who tell you they want to go to war. It's like a high-school football team. You train them week after week after week and then after six or seven weeks the coach calls them together and says, 'All right, we're going to play a game tomorrow—are you ready?' Of course they're going to be up for it. But those of us who've been to war, I think

we know it's not all that romantic. I hope we don't have to go to war; but if we do, it's good to feel like we're ready. We've had the Israelis come in here to observe our exercises and they're impressed with the realism. They say the terrain, the situations are just like back where they come from."

A Huey (UH-1N) helicopter passes just above us. Its twin blades raise up a dust storm as it settles noisily on a flat piece of ground 50 yards off to our right. The pilot, co-pilot and regimental commander get off and walk away toward the newly established communications center. "Our mission right now is to act as a command and control observation deck," explains the bird's crew chief Lance Corporal Eric Huffman as he shows us around his pride and joy. "This here's a survival vest." He pulls a grey lifesaver-type vest from under one of the seats. "It costs over \$1,000. It's got a knife, floatation gear, a first-aid kit, pin flares that you can also aim at someone if you don't have a gun—it even has a rubber, in case you find some jungle pussy."

He pulls a helmet off the deck. "See, I can tune into a rock station and listen to music while we're up there. The pilot doesn't mind—he can just lower the mix on his headset so that it doesn't bother him. It doesn't interfere with regular communications. Of course overseas we'd have to rig it to use tape cassettes. We couldn't pick up any L.A. stations or nothing."

Huffman, like many of the young recruits we talked with, is from a small town—this one just outside of Houston. He wears a one-piece green flight suit and a black trucker's cap with his squadron's emblem: an ace of spades with the words 'Anytime, anyplace' stenciled around it.

"You know how in *Apocalypse Now* they go around putting aces of spades on the dead VC—well, that's where our squadron emblem comes from, from killing all those Viet Cong. See I double as door gunner when we rig for combat. I fire this .60 caliber gattling gun with six rotating barrels that can shoot off 4,000 rounds per minute. It's just like in the movie. I didn't like the last part of that film too much, but when they're flying into that village blowing all that shit away, I thought that was fantastic. I must have seen that movie about five times now."

What does he think of the possibility of war? "Everyone's looking forward to it. I'd like to kick ass in Iran." What if we end up fighting in Pakistan or Guatemala? "Anyplace is fine. I just want some action," he smiles with a sweet adolescent enthusiasm. "You see they try and keep us motivated that way. It's all part of the plan."

## The expeditionary airfield.

By late afternoon the air's temperature has warmed into the high 80s, still well short of the 120-135 degree temperatures reached in mid-summer. We decide to visit the expeditionary airfield.

Richard Rossi, the Expeditionary Airfield Officer, explains the set-up. This airfield uses AM-2 interlocking aluminum matting for its surface. It can and has landed aircraft as large as the C-5A transport. At \$12 a square foot you can figure the price of this airfield at about \$40 million. We have a number of airfields like this one packed up in green boxes ready for deployment anywhere in the world at any time. We could put together a 4,000-foot strip like this in 72 hours. The Seebies would come in with bulldozers, level out a piece of ground and then start laying surface over it. It's been done once already, a couple of years ago in Rota, Spain, I believe. It's very effective if you're looking for a quick build-up of ground-based air-support. We're putting these airfields on the market. We've already sold one to Israel."

## Night moves.

We take the truck back out to Delta Quarter at sunset to watch the 3rd Battalion, 7th Marines repulse a night attack.

We reach the flat top of the hill just as the sun drops behind the mountains off to our left. The hilltop is crowded with dozens of high-ranking marines and other observers including a couple of Canadian army officers, a young Ivy League type dressed in a corduroy bush jacket who doesn't want to talk with the press, and two congressmen—David Evans of Indiana and Charles Dougherty of Pennsylvania.

In the valley below, off to our sides, we can see lines of tanks stretched out toward the mountains. As the last light fades we begin to hear the drone of planes. Suddenly a yellow flare goes up. A series of parachute illumination flares

drop from above. The valley floor in front of us lights up in a ghostly pale white. Beams like motorcycle headlights flash on in different parts of the valley marking the positions of wooden pop-up tank targets. There are more flares and then the orange muzzle flash and bark of a dozen tank cannons as red illumination rounds blast across the valley floor like UFOs, bouncing off the plain and shooting up into the sky before blinking out of existence.

After ten minutes, three green flares go up and the guns fall silent. The parachute flares die out on the ground and the valley is suddenly thrown into quiet darkness. Smoke settles like smog across the valley floor.

Snatches of conversation drift through the dark: "...So the Syrians abandoned this T-62 on the Golan Heights. I climbed in and started it up. The Israelis jerked me right out of there. Boy, were they pissed..."

"You could aim one of those TOWs at a window in the Pentagon and that's the window it would go through..."

"We had these Warsaw Pact observers here—a Russian, a Pole and a Hungarian. Every time the Russian wanted to know something he'd call the Polish guy over into a huddle..."

"...Sure, I could kill the dog, but what would I do with my kids?"

Congressman Dougherty is a large, balding, overweight ex-Marine. A Republican from Philadelphia's fourth district, he sits on the House Armed Services Committee. "Obviously the most critical area in the world today is the Persian Gulf, a desert warfare environment," he says. "Before committing American troops to desert warfare, you have to find out whether or not they're ready to handle desert warfare. I'm very impressed with what I've seen here, particularly the caliber of the junior officers I've talked with. I think this is the best training you can get short of actual combat."

"You know, we've passed through the phase of detente. The Russians have made very clear that they're going to take what they want. You reach a point in time where if the other guy's going to play it tough you have a basic decision to make, either give it up or respond."

"I consider the 1980s a decade of conflict. By the mid-'80s the U.S. is going to be in a very, very, very difficult position because we're not going to have the resources to respond and the vital interests of this country may be at stake. The American people have to make a choice in 1980 and 1981. We need 5 percent real growth in the defense budget."

As our open truck heads back to main camp, I ask Major Hire what he thinks about the Congressman's prediction that the 1980s will be a decade of conflict. "Could be," he says. "It's not up to us where we're going to fight or when; that's up to the Commander in Chief." We talk about possible areas of conflict in the world, of how the U.S. and Russia avoid direct conflict by using Third World "surrogates" in places like Vietnam, Angola and Afghanistan. "What I learned in Vietnam is that you can't go in and supplant the population. If people want to change, it's going to happen. I hope the United States has learned that lesson and won't go in to support another bad cause or unpopular government." ■

David Helvar is a San Diego writer who frequently contributes to IN THESE TIMES.

## CALENDAR

Use the calendar to announce conferences, lectures, films, events, etc. The cost is \$20.00 for two insertions and \$10.00 for each additional insert, for copy of 40 words or less (additional words are 35¢ each). Payment must accompany your announcement, and should be sent to the attention of Bill Rehm.

### June 7/Philadelphia, PA

**The Caribbean: U.S. Policy and Self-Determination.** Workshops on Jamaica, Puerto Rico and Vieques, Haiti, Cuba and Grenada and U.S. military and economic strategy. A

public seminar co-sponsored by Friends Peace Committee and American Friends Service Committee. From 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. at Fourth and Arch Streets. Call (215) 241-7230.

### June 8/San Francisco, CA

Modern Times Bookstore sponsors a forum on "Politics and the Media" by authors Laurence Shoup and Todd Gitlin. They will speak on "The Establishment Media and the 1980 Elections: The Case of John B. Anderson" and "The Media and the Left." Sunday at New College, 777 Valencia St., 7:30 p.m. Admission free. Information: (415) 621-2675.

### June 11/Chicago, IL

**Economic Democracy.** A book party and reception for Derek Shearer, co-author of *Economic Democracy—The Challenge of the 1980s*, will be held from 5:30 to 8:00 p.m. at the Midwest Academy, 600 W. Fullerton, (Tel. 975-3670). Copies of the book will be available and the author will give a short talk. Co-hosted by the Midwest Academy and IN THESE TIMES.

### June 19-21/New York, NY

**Intellectual Labor and Class Struggle**, will be the theme of the Marxist Union Conference at New York University. The conference will have many speakers and workshops of interest to Marxists. Registration begins at 7:30 p.m. at Schimmel Auditorium in the Tisch Building, 40 W. 4th Street.

### June 20-22/Stephentown, N.Y.

**Berkshire Forum** presents: "The Yiddish Gift to America" with Rachel Erlich. For full schedule of weekend vacation workshops write or call Berkshire Forum, Stephenstown, NY 12168, (518) 733-5497.

### June 28/Anaheim, CA

**Rally and demonstration to protest National Right to Life Convention.** Program includes: Rhonda Copeland, Deidre English, Robin Tyler and the L.A. Women's Chorus. Rally at noon at Stoddard Park (Katella & 9th Streets). Sponsored by the June 28th Abortion Rights Coalition. For more information call (213) 254-2863 or (714) 972-2772.

## DIRECTORY

The Directory is published to facilitate contact with organizations frequently referred to in the pages of IN THESE TIMES. Each organization has paid a fee for its listing:

**CITIZENS ENERGY PROJECT**  
1110 6th Street, NW, #300  
Washington, DC 20001

**THE CITIZENS PARTY-NATIONAL OFFICE**  
525 13th Street, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20004

**THE CITIZENS PARTY OF ILLINOIS**  
743 N. Wabash Ave.

Chicago, IL 60611  
(312) 280-8623

**COALITION FOR A NEW FOREIGN AND MILITARY POLICY**  
120 Maryland Ave., N.E.  
Washington, DC 20002

**COIN-CONSUMERS OPPOSED TO INFLATION IN THE NECESSITIES**  
2000 P Street, N.W. Suite 413  
Washington, DC 20036

**DSOC-DEMOCRATIC SOCIALIST ORGANIZING COMMITTEE**  
853 Broadway, Suite 801  
New York, NY 10003

**MIDWEST ACADEMY**  
600 West Fullerton Ave.  
Chicago, IL 60614

**NATIONAL CENTER FOR ECONOMIC ALTERNATIVES**  
2000 P Street, N.W. Suite 200  
Washington, DC 20036

**NAM-NEW AMERICAN MOVEMENT**  
3244 N. Clark St.  
Chicago, IL 60657

**NEW PATRIOT ALLIANCE**  
343 S. Dearborn, Room 305  
Chicago, IL 60604

**SOCIALIST PARTY, U.S.A.**  
Suite 325  
135 W. Wells Street  
Milwaukee, WI 53203

**WORKING WOMEN**  
1258 Euclid Avenue  
Cleveland, OH 44111

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Chicago, IL 60605  
312/663-9076



Midwest's widest selection of Marxist literature on Black & Labor History, Women, The Socialist World, Africa, Philosophy, Economics, Literature, etc. In English, Spanish & Persian.

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# Students

Continued from page 11.

ment going, a stab was made at a national action in the capital. Dreams of May '68. But when students from Grenoble and several other provincial towns arrived in Paris May 9 and converged on the Jussieu campus—a sinister group of unwashed glass rectangles on stilts on a barren plaza—they counted themselves and found only a few hundred. Paris was far behind the provinces.

At Jussieu, a handful of idealistic students were enjoying a hunger strike and occupation of the top floor of the main tower in total isolation, ignored by students and faculty. The disappointed provincials realized it would be absurd to go ahead with their planned demonstration, and decided instead to take part in a big march on behalf of immigrant workers organized for the next day.

But the unkept promise of excitement had attracted to Jussieu a certain number of autonomes who, rather than waste their day, chased students out of their classes with fire extinguishers and threw some chairs into heaps intended to represent barricades. Thus began a cops-and-autonomes street spectacle that of course attracted much more attention than Grenoble's well-behaved student movement.

May 13 was a fine sunny day in Paris. Some 100,000 people marched down the Boulevard Voltaire at the call of the CGT labor confederation to protest against government plans to weaken the social security national health coverage. It was the biggest demonstration in 14 months, a sign that deep-running discontent could still bring masses into the streets, despite divisions and discouragement on the left.

The autonomes meanwhile were hanging around Jussieu, looking for trouble or trying to make it. In the late afternoon, they took a city bus away from its

driver and passengers, set it across a street and set it afire. About half an hour later, police stormed the Jussieu campus with tear gas and clubs. Youths fled in panic. One of them, Alain Begrand, jumped from the plaza onto the corrugated tin roof of a small shed several feet above ground. The flimsy roof gave way. The shed turned out to cover a deep service shaft. Alain Begrand fell to instant death.

He had never had much luck. His biography, dug from total obscurity by the newspapers, is the case history of an outcast. Poor unwed mother slaving in menial jobs to support turbulent son who never learns a trade. Short stretch in the Spanish foreign legion. When his mother drowned herself in the Saone river, neighbors blamed Alain. He came to Paris, became a vagrant, a familiar client of the soup kitchens and flop houses run by charitable groups. His only known activity in recent years was to hasten to any political demonstration where he could express his feelings by throwing rocks at cops or smashing a few store windows.

## The last shall be first.

There are a few intellectual autonomes who have latched onto a watered-down version of the ideas of Italian *autonomia* theorists like Toni Negri. Some of them are peaceful students who rail against political organizations without resorting to violence. Others have taken the gospel to the *loubards*, the lumpen youth of the dormitory suburbs, informing them that the last shall be the first, that blessed are those who directly express their needs by ripping off and their desires by smashing cops for they shall spontaneously make the revolution. Ruling authorities are apparently untroubled enough by the probability of this apocalyptic result to give a disturbingly wide leeway to autonome self-expression, which tends to drown out that of any other protesting group in the vicinity.

The death of Begrand aroused a massive protest at the police invasion of the

Jussieu campus. Some 15,000 students and teachers turned out for a protest march through the Latin Quarter that many found terrifying. The well-disciplined security guard of Alain Krivine's LCR, which protected the student movement throughout May '68 and in the years following, seems to have given up trying to put itself between autonomes and the police, only to get beaten up by both. The May 14 demonstration had no *service d'ordre*, contrary to French custom. Autonomes, their faces covered with kerchiefs and carrying rocks and iron bars, mingled with frightened students—who found them as strange as Martians—before violently attacking police who remained oddly passive until the end, when that other contingent of Martians, the CRS riot police, responded by attacking the students.

Thus a visible student revolt was created in Paris, but without any clear aims. Demonstrators took up the demand of the foreign student defense movement to rescind the Imbert decree, but with little conviction that the government will give in. Relative student apathy does not seem to reflect more conservative opinions so much as skepticism over the effectiveness of political action. At Jussieu, the most heartfelt and unanimous demand was to get both the police and the autonomes out of the university. For many, autonomes and cops come to the same thing.

The autonome phenomenon calls attention to a real social problem, the growing number of young people with no stake in a society that has no use for them. They show they are not resigned to being "good losers" and that is a sort of political expression. But many observers are convinced that they are being manipulated.

Everyone has noticed fishy things going on. *Le Monde* reported that one particularly vociferous autonome, who led an attack on newspaper photographers, was later seen strolling from the scene of his havoc in the friendly company of two plainclothes policemen, evidently his

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colleagues. The area around Jussieu has reportedly been blocked off by police, as if to make it a playground for autonomes to do what they like.

On one of these occasions, kids turned over a couple of cars in classic barricade alignment and set a small bonfire going alongside. A few minutes later, firemen arrived on the scene. But, oddly enough, they did not move to extinguish the fires which surprisingly had not yet reached the cars. They waited a full ten minutes until, as the gas tanks sent up impressive clouds of smoke and flames devoured the vehicles, they moved in with hoses to do their heroic fireman act as photographers filmed and students looked on skeptically. Many express puzzlement over what the government is trying to do.

After the Jussieu incidents, the CGT blamed "the behavior of the government and the interior minister who, with the cooperation of ranking police authorities and the Jussieu administration, has deliberately turned that university into the headquarters of autonome groups tele-guided by the government against the student action, but also against workers' action."

For a couple of years now, the same pattern has emerged at almost every major demonstration. After a curiously unimpeded round of autonome trashing has enraged local shopkeepers and provided the right-wing press with its scare headlines and photos for the next day's front pages, riot police move in to gas and club demonstrators or bystanders who had nothing to do with the trashing. This sequence obviously serves to confuse the passive media public, make a number of people think twice before venturing near a demonstration and prevents a current of sympathy from passing between demonstrators and the surrounding population. It also advertises aimless "violence" as the privileged form of protest, a message that easily gets across to the growing number of young people excluded both from the working world and from school. ■

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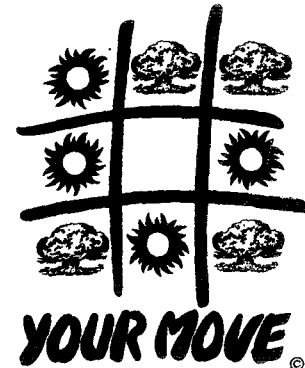
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BY JEAN FRANCO

ALEJO CARPENTIER, WHO died recently in Paris, was Cuban Ambassador to France and a major novelist. He was also one of the few remaining survivors of a generation of Cuban intellectuals whose political consciousness was formed during the turbulent years of the '20s.

A journalist, poet and something of a musician, he was imprisoned in 1927 during an anti-communist roundup for signing a manifesto against the dictatorship of Machado and reportedly his first novel, *Ecue-yamba-o*, was written in jail.

Between 1928 and 1959 he spent many years out of Cuba, driven away like so many other Caribbean writers by political repression, corruption and the lack of any intellectual stimulus. For 11 years he lived in Paris, and in the '50s he was a radio station manager in Venezuela.

Carpentier's early novels were greeted by a resounding silence in Cuba, which was a society not so much hostile to writers as totally indifferent. In the pre-revolutionary years, at least 23 percent of the population was illiterate. Even for the literate middle class, print culture was of little importance. Popular music, night club entertainment, radio, film and later TV supplied their myths and heroes. Writers worked in



# MEMOIRS OF UNDERDEVELOPMENT

*Cuban novelist Alejo Carpentier captured the rich cultural & ethnic diversity of Latin America.*

isolation and wrote for one another. But they were also channels of communication, antennae of a cultural world outside Cuba—which helps explain why restrictions on travel have been so painful to those writers who stayed in Cuba after the Revolution.

This isolation and this consciousness of being a cultural missionary accounts for the idiosyncrasy of Carpentier's style, with its conspicuous erudition and good taste. His novels are combination essay, allegory and chronicle. It is as if they had to take on functions that in other countries would have been performed by academic or literary journals. Carpentier's reputation in Latin America came as a result of two novels—*The Kingdom of This World* (1945) and *The Lost Steps* (1953). The first was written after his visit to Haiti with the actor Louis Jouvet, and the second after a journey to the interior of Venezuela.

In both novels his characteristic concerns have already surfaced—the ambition to recreate in one vast panoramic glance the entire history of the West's encounters with the Americas, an obsession with the disastrous homogenizing drive of the metropolitan nations, a grasp of the special importance of the Caribbean.

Nearly all Carpentier's novels are historical. Nearly all take in vast expanses of time. This is even true of *The Lost Steps*, in which the narrator's journey across Venezuela takes him to communities living in the colonial period, to tribal communities and to the genesis of society itself. This retrospective journey, which in Europe

would need a time-machine, can in Venezuela be made merely by travelling to the interior.

What in another writer would be a nostalgic prayer for the return of a lost golden age, in Carpentier becomes sheer celebration of the fact that in Latin America different stages of historical development do not simply sink into a black hole of printed records but are living communities juxtaposed in the present. The uneven development of Latin America has been disastrous politically and economically but has given it a cultural diversity that has no parallel in Europe.

The conviction that gives coherence to all of Carpentier's writing is that the history of the Caribbean is more than the history of exploitation. As he depicts it (in *The Road to Santiago*, for instance) the confrontation of Europe, Africa and America in the 16th century can never be grasped merely in terms of greed. From Europe, a mad torrent of religious vision, medieval festival and Renaissance idealism confronted but never completely homogenized the culture of the African slaves and the Indians.

Carpentier's novels are like monitoring eyes in the middle of this torrent. Again and again the gratuitous proliferation of objects, both cultural and natural attracts his observers—whether the infinite variety of architectural convolutions in Havana in *The City of Columns*, the multiplicity of trees or sea shells catalogued in *Explosion in a Cathedral*, or the storms of butterflies in *The Lost Steps* and the lists of musical instruments in *Concierto barroco*.



*Explosion in a Cathedral*, written just before the Cuban Revolution and published in 1962 is undoubtedly his major work and probably the first novel by any writer to attempt to envision the entire Caribbean as a unity. Carpentier's choice of historical period for the novel seems to be based on a conviction (shared by other thinkers such as Foucault) that the end of the 18th century was a crucial turning-point, when the state assumed more and more direct control over the population both in the metropolis and in the colonies.

The central figure in *Explosion in a Cathedral* is Victor Hugues, a revolutionary who paradoxically brings the new repressive order to the Caribbean in the name of the liberation. The novel requires much more than the human life span of the characters in order to tell its story. The process by which the inventiveness and cultural variety of the area has been subdued, catalogued and made manageable for

the advanced industrial nations was still only beginning at the period in which the novel is set. Carpentier's themes are so vast that they seem to require much greater cycles of time for their completion.

The Cuban revolution profoundly altered the conditions under which writers of Carpentier's generation worked and created for the first time the possibility of a public. Unfortunately the blockade of Cuba by North America and the other Latin American states affected cultural resources, especially the supply of books from abroad.

AS THE BLOCKADE TIGHTENED, the richness and variety of city life was diminished. Night clubs closed, life became more austere, many newspapers stopped publication. Literary patronage passed from the private to the public sector. Energies were diverted from the casual bohemian life of the city into labor in the countryside and the sugar harvest.

Carpentier was among a group of older established writers who stayed in Cuba to work for the revolution. He became director of the National Publishing House and has served since the late '60s as Cuban ambassador to Paris.

Many people expected him to write the great historical novel of the revolution, but this was to underestimate the difficulties of adjusting a global vision to the day-to-day problems of a new social order. His last three novels be-

long, in reality, to the same cycle as *Explosion in a Cathedral*. *Concierto barroco* (1974) is a fantasy about the impact of the new world on the old, set in 17th-century Venice and with Vivaldi and Scarlatti as characters. *Reason of State* (1974) and *The Rite of Spring* (1978) explore themes that had concerned him since *The Lost Steps*—the disassociation from the Enlightenment onwards of elite culture from any ethical vision. The Nazi camp commander can enjoy Beethoven.

In *Reason of State*, a Central American dictator combines savage repression with a discriminating taste for the best music, painting and literature. In *The Rite of Spring*, the only one of his novels to deal with the events of 1959, the main character is a Russian emigre dancer. Through her Carpentier chronicles the relation of culture and politics over the last 50 years. The novel is a final acknowledgement that the good taste and discrimination that had once stood clearly in opposition to the materialism of bourgeois society had now become anachronistic.

There is perhaps more of the autobiographical in this than is at first apparent. Carpentier certainly must have been aware that his novels bring a whole epoch of cultural preferences to an end. They do not give us and cannot give us any idea of what is to come or whether the project for democratization of culture, abandoned by the avant-garde in the 19th century, will ever be resumed.

Jean Franco is the author of *The Modern Culture of Latin America: Society and the Artist*.