

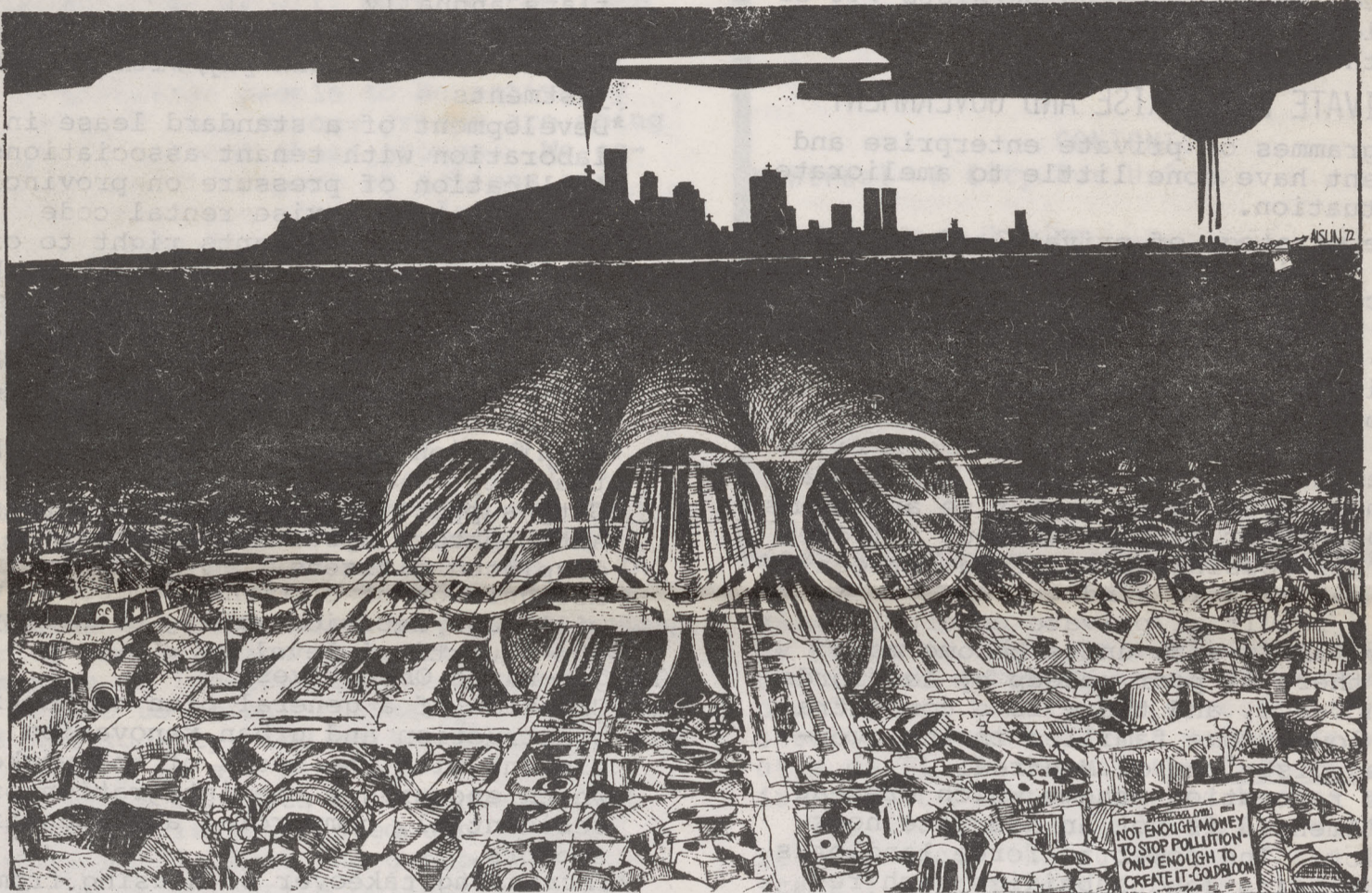
UP TO THE NECK

# ACTION

VOLUME I NUMBER I

MAY 1974

## MONTREAL—A CITY FOR US?



Aislin: The Gazette.

"UNE VILLE POUR NOUS" is the guideline for action of the Comite Regionale Intersyndicale de Montreal. CRIM is one of several groups which have joined together to oppose Drapeau and the Civic Party in the November elections. We have paraphrased the section dealing with housing and present it here because we believe it to be an explicit statement of housing and land-use problems in Montreal, and of positive measures to combat these problems.

### EIGHTY PERCENT OF THE RESIDENTS OF MONTREAL ARE TENANTS

Workers have always had to fight landlords and government to extract decent living conditions. They have struggled against the plans of promoters and government to demolish or ruin residential areas (eg. Milton-Parc, Little Burgandy). Usually this resistance is unsuccessful. Workers know that this situation will not change while it is possible for a minority to profit from the exploitation of this basic need.

### FOUR PROBLEM AREAS FACING TENANTS:

1. Repairs and Maintenance  
Will the landlord be responsible for repairs and maintenance? Will the city do anything to see that these responsibilities do not fall on the tenant?
2. Housing Conditions  
An estimated 20% of Montreal flats are sub-standard, many without bath or showers, about 2000 without toilets. Approximately 9% of flats are over-populated (perhaps 2 to 3 times this proportion in under-privileged districts).
3. Shortage of Family Housing  
Each year an increasing number of the flats suitable for families are being demolished and replaced with offices, bachelor units, or small apartments. Usually this takes place in areas of low income and a high proportion of persons dependent on social aid. The numbers of family dwellings constructed is decreasing each year.  
The City permitted the demolition of 16,000 flats between 1960 and 1970. Of these 12,800 were in good condition. Since 1970 approximately 4,300 flats have been

demolished to accommodate various major projects (Place Desjardins, Concordia, etc.) The number of flats demolished for the Trans Canada alone almost equalled the total number constructed since 1960. The Drapeau regime did not even manage to construct 2000 of the 5000 flats it had promised by the end of 1971. Clearly, the family housing situation is deteriorating.

#### 4. Increase in the Cost of Housing

The cost of housing increased an average of 9% in urban areas such as Montreal between 1967-70. In that time average income increased only 5% (2-3% for persons earning less than \$4000). The cost of housing, as a proportion of income, obviously increased. If this trend persists 74% of householders will have to spend more than 25% of their incomes on housing.

### PRIVATE ENTERPRISE AND GOVERNMENT

The programmes of private enterprise and government have done little to ameliorate this situation.

The strategy of private enterprise is simple. Easily rentable flats are acquired and since it is not profitable to repair the old buildings in the city-centre, no repairs are done. Moreover, trust companies, which control one third of Montreal flats, buy properties en bloc, principally for the land value. When the time is right these tenements are demolished and replaced by more profitable high-rise apartments for bachelors or couples without children (81% of all housing constructed between 1961-71 was of this kind).

As a result of private enterprise's strategy family-size units become more scarce, there is poor upkeep by landlords, rents increase, and there is a concentration of low-income families in the overpopulated districts of Montreal.

The renovation scheme which Drapeau has implemented is not an adequate housing policy. The power to force landlords to make repairs (and subsidize such repairs) has not been thoroughly or effectively implemented. The programmes of demolition, reconstruction and clean up have been expensive and inefficient.

Municipal, provincial and federal governments give private enterprise all the support it needs to further increase profits. Through increases in interest rates the federal government permits institutions to realize large profits from people who must go into debt to find suitable lodgings. Up until 1970 the policies of the Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation were directed toward the construction of apartment blocks and non-family housing.

Acting under a never-changing social policy the City of Montreal authorized the construction of the east-west Autoroute despite reservations. Furthermore, it is often only because of municipal intervention that private enterprise is able to undertake many of its projects.

In certain cases (eg. Place Desjardins) the City itself expropriates the land in behalf of the promoters. The City issues demolition permits for buildings to be replaced, by bachelor apartments for example. The City sometimes changes zoning laws to permit high rise construction. The City

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even takes it upon itself to make advances to other governments in behalf of private enterprise. These tactics are typified in the Concordia case.

### CRIM'S HOUSING PROPOSALS

#### General Objectives

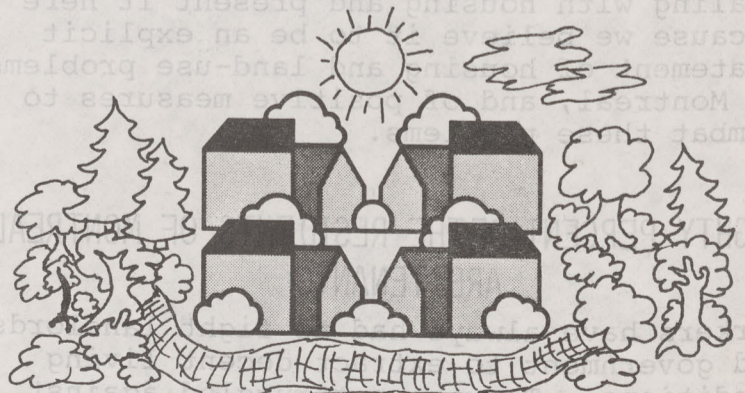
1. To put into effect a policy aiming at the total elimination of slums and unsanitary housing in Montreal.
2. To assure workers of each ward control over urban renovation in their ward.
3. To eliminate housing speculation and exploitation.

#### Short-term Concrete Measures

- \*Construction and restoration of 10,000 flats annually
- \*Elaboration of a scheme of rents, based on what workers can pay, with annual adjustments
- \*Development of a standard lease in collaboration with tenant associations
- \*Application of pressure on provincial government to revise rental code
- \*Legalization of tenants right to organize and negotiate collectively with landlords as well as the right to strike
- \*Acquisition and restoration (by the City) of buildings in poor condition. The City will rent these buildings after restoration
- \*Prohibition of sale of land owned by the City
- \*City support for cooperative housing
- \*Anticipatory systems of relocation for displaced citizens
- \*Recognition of citizens' committees (which will have decision-making authority at the 'quartier' level

#### Longer-Range Objectives

- \*Creation of a general plan of housing construction and urban renovation (consistent with the needs of the workers) which encourages the integration of residential, commercial and industrial sectors.
- \*Increasing takeover of housing from private enterprise and the creation of a public enterprise for the restoration of housing in accordance with the needs of the workers.
- \*In order to realize these objectives and the total elimination of land speculation, the establishment of a growing land bank.



Anyone wishing to help with the production of ACTION should come to our office, Room 304, University Settlement, 3553 St. Urbain. Articles, letters, announcements for the calendar, literary and art contributions, etc. should be submitted for consideration by the 21st of each month.

# EDITORIAL STATEMENT

We have come together to publish an English-language monthly which will report the activities of movements for progressive social change in Montreal. We will report actions that combat aspects of life in Montreal which obstruct people's efforts to build full and rewarding personal lives within a humane socio-political environment.

To this end the paper will have three areas of emphasis:

**INFORMATION:** We will work to facilitate information flow between progressive groups and people outside those groups; and to encourage people to be active by telling them what various groups are doing and how to contact these groups. We especially want to report on actions and movements that are successful and which provide models for further action. In general, we will report what is happening as opposed to theorizing on the movement.

**THEORY:** Our stand can only be described as open leftist. We have a common interest in promoting change and a desire for solidarity with all groups which share this goal; but we work from many different levels of political development and orientation. Therefore our critique is as varied as our experiences.

**CREATIVITY:** We believe that change in our society must also take place in its esthetics and so we wish to publish poems, stories and graphics that bring new information or impulses to the reader, lead the reader to think critically of her/himself and society, and build visions of the new society we are seeking.

Our staff consists of volunteers and everyone who is interested can join us. Our practice is that the group makes the paper. We do not write collectively but rather, individual articles are subjected to staff criticism. Editorial decisions on all work are made by staff consensus. If consensus cannot be reached, the main points of the discussion will be printed with the article in order that everyone may learn from this critique. We will reflect on our group just like the other groups we report about and we will print discussions of our work and struggles.

We, like all groups in Montreal, want to recruit active supporters—people to write, edit, share ideas. We also need cooperation from all groups in the city so that we may aid them in publicizing actions and recruiting supporters.

LYNN DUBNOFF  
DREW FERGUSON  
BRYAN MCCARTHY

KLAUS-BERND VOLLMAR  
ILONA VOLLMAR-MAEK  
MAGGY WALLER

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3553 St. Urbain Street,  
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To The Editor:

**WARNING:** To those who might see El Topo—Be Prepared. This is a film for those who don't mind watching scene after scene of cruelty and blood. The director tries to show us a modern Christ using the vile tricks of a devil. It is not the Exorcist, but it is violence, torture, warped bodies and minds.

The director, Jodorowsky, has outdone himself to shock the audience. There is one scene I won't forget for some time—a scene of butchered peasants and animals. The animals' stomachs had been split and their bloated guts spilt to the ground while animal and human alike lay in pools of blood. What I really won't forget is that those animals were real. There seems to be a new fad among directors that murdering animals for the sake of art is honorable.

Many films have recently employed animals for special effects. Immediately I think of Pat Garrett and Billy the Kid and its gun-fighters using live chickens for target practise. The feathers and meat really flew in cinemascope and technicolor. Sam Peckinpah, the director, is also one of those who believe in using trip-wiring of horses. Spills from this method can break legs and necks, but it is easy and quick.

There are other movies guilty of murder but from what I've heard of Jodorowsky's new movie "The Holy Mountain" they can be considered innocent by comparison.

Where is it going to end? Maybe we will soon import the newest craze in Germany, Party swingers there are eating mock severed heads, marzipan male genitalia and chocolate human embryos for dessert.

Lynn Bryers

# HOUSING POLICY A "RIP-OFF"

Post war housing development in Canada has been an enormous Government-backed rip-off perpetrated by big business on the people, according to housing expert Melvin Charney.

The University of Montreal Professor of Architecture, speaking at the St. Urbain Street Community Centre, February 12th, stated that the Government, taxing the whole population, had delivered housing to the people who needed it least--members of the newly-affluent middle and upper-middle class.

At the same time, despite huge subsidization of the housing industry and a per capita productivity exceeding that of the United States, the situation of the low-income citizen had deteriorated. Housing stocks in the low-income bracket had gone down--a direct result of Government disinvestment, Charney alleged.

"We have now in Montreal the phenomenon of 'abandonment'--houses boarded up and abandoned by their owner. This process began in American cities in the 1960's."

All this had happened, Charney alleged, because "the people in Ottawa have a concept of housing which is totally producer-oriented. They have no concept of the person who lives in the house and what his needs are. They respond to the industry and act as bankers to the industry.

"The Government is using social measures not to redirect resources to the mass of the population, but to keep the market economy going in housing at all costs."

## Debt Society

The postwar middle class generation had been manipulated into "debt society": a life in the suburbs, where about half the average person's budget went into the mortgage payment. It was a way of life which went with the second car--and a blank environment: lacking a sense of community and with meagre or remote amenities. In bringing this about the Government had subsidized such social problems as automobile pollution, destruction of land by highways, and the deterioration of city neighbourhoods. These in turn reinforced the flight to the suburbs.

Professor Charney contrasted the new development with housing indigenous to Montreal built between 1880 and 1920. This "first generation mass urban housing" which still makes up the bulk of housing throughout the province "is particularly evident in old urban neighbourhoods. There, street life is a collective life. The whole block is conceived of as a unit. There is a resultant sense of community, a sense of sticking together. People today who look for suburban homes are really looking for this collective feeling in a gut way, but cannot find it.

The old style builder, Charney continued, was sufficiently in touch with the community to intuit the needs of the tenants and express them architecturally. But today, said Charney, there was no feedback from the consumer to the people who make the decisions about what should be built. The mod-

ern suburban house was primarily something owned by its isolated buyer. This feature was amusingly illustrated by a slide captioned: WIN A HOUSE FROM NESCAFE--A

\$40,000 Alcan Dream House to drink your coffee in. "It's that kind of Nescafe," Charney commented, "that kind of instant house--all built of aluminium. The brick is aluminium. The wood is aluminium. The thing is a prop of a way of life that any kind of product can satisfy."

## The Manipulative Process

"How it works is that alternative options in housing are blocked off. One gets the feeling that alternatives are not possible when in fact they are very possible.

"For example, in 1970, for the first time in Canada, a co-operative movement built 1600 dwellings in Quebec...But in 1970 the Federal Government blocked funding of the co-op movement. The \$46 million destined for Co-op Habitat went to private entrepreneurs."

Another instance of how Government "distorted demand" was shown by the widespread view that there was no demand for rehabilitation. The president of the Montreal Home Builders Association thought there was no market for rehabilitation "at a time when there was and is four billion dollars in rehabilitation in the USA...They have a perception of what they can produce, because they know they can get mortgage funds.

Acting through Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation, the Government subsidized 94% of all housing and actually controlled 40% to 60% of all housing in Canada--a very high percentage. The comparable figure for the United States was only 20%.

This power had been used to extract money from those who work hard to acquire it and to deliver it to those who control it, Charney alleged.

## Public Housing

A small amount of public housing had been produced, Charney stated. It generally consisted of impersonal lifeless blocks of tiny containers in which a semblance of life was lived. A slide showed a block with meaningless balconies which related to nothing outside. It was a bleak picture.

## Remedies

"The thing is to get away from the suburbs. In Montreal we have a considerable older housing stock. There are 100,000 dwellings needing rehabilitation and to reproduce this as new housing would be expensive."

Charney proposed that a moratorium be declared on all new house building in Montreal for the next two years and all money be put into rehabilitation instead. He also recommended construction of more infill housing: "If one looks closely at the inner city there is lots of land that can be filled up."

The immediate way of helping the housing situation would be to "pour money" into the people who live in Montreal. And to

open up other options--"if one is serious"  
--instead of Expo and the Olympics.

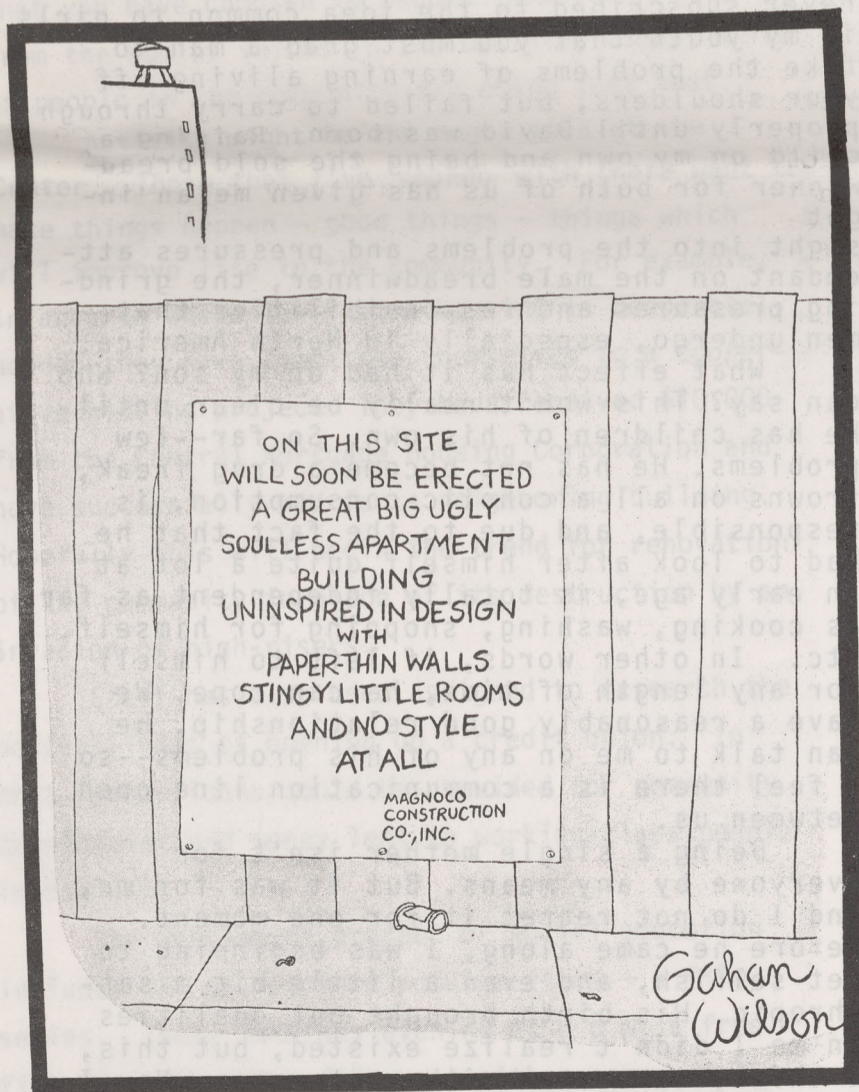
Main Area Cooperative Housing

During the discussion period which followed, Dimitrios Roussopoulos, President of the University Settlement, explained how the Settlement was endeavouring to set up housing cooperatives in the Main Area and attempting to obtain funds from CMHC to renovate houses.

"This is a very tricky proposition. The more we look at it the more we realize what a razor thin proposition it is. The whole confining and constricting definition of what CMHC allows you to do in the area of renovation forces you to walk on an insane tightrope, inviting disaster every inch of the way."

Master Planning

Another questioner described "master planning" as practised in some sections of New York. Citizens are given the chance to participate in the formulation of a plan stating assets and specific needs. Developers must conform to these guidelines; any citizen has the right to challenge the developer in court if he thinks the developer is violating the rules. This system is far ahead of anything existing in Montreal.



Moratorium on Building

Summing up, Charney stressed that the best hope for the future lay in citizens pressing for a moratorium on all house-building coupled with intensive rehabilitation. He stressed the need for the citizen to get into the act, remarking that he was convinced that architects "cannot design housing."

**SINGLE**

*Mothers*  
**RESOURCES**

ASSOCIATION DES MERES ETANT SEULES (ADMES)  
A group of 200 single mothers. Committees active on issues of special concern, including a journal. Membership fee \$6.  
Contact: Mireille Beaudry, 351-4027  
Write: PO Box 405, Station M, Montreal 129

BACHELOR MOTHERS

A self-help group of single mothers to help women cope, develop and find solutions to common problems. Meetings bi-monthly.

Contact: YWCA Women's Centre, 866-9941  
1355 Dorchester West

BIRTHRIGHT/GROSSESSE SECOURS

Helps women keep their babies if they don't want to have an abortion. Moral and material support. Counselling, information on community resources, medical and legal aid.  
1040 Atwater, Telephone 947-9324

CENTRE ROSALIE JETTE

Run by Les Soeurs de Misericorde. Several homes for unmarried mothers including residences for students with an educational program. Post-delivery re-integration program.

Telephone: 376-5621  
7400 St. Michel Blvd. Montreal 453

ELIZABETH HOUSE

Residence for unwed mothers run by church groups in cooperation with welfare agencies and schools. Priority given to school-age women. Program stresses education so that women can return to their studies.

Telephone: 482-2488  
2131 Marlow, Montreal 260

SALVATION ARMY - GRAVE HAVEN

Residence for unmarried mothers.

Telephone: 484-2228  
6690 Monkland Avenue, Montreal 262

SERVICE SOCIAL VILLE-MARIE

Social service to unmarried parents.

Telephone: 526-9211  
2285 Papineau, Montreal 133

In 1971 when Bourassa consulted him on what Quebec should do about housing, Charney replied: "If you want a radical housing program, walk out on the street and ask the first guy you meet what he needs done to his house, and there is your radical program."

NOTE: Citizens wishing to find out more about the housing situation with a view to democratic action should contact SAVE MONTREAL at 486-8395 or 932-4080.

Bryan McCarthy

# SINGLE

# MOTHER

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I am a single mother. My son, now aged seventeen, was conceived accidentally, which is usually the case, but brought up by me alone, which was my choice, and mine alone, not foisted on me by circumstances or desertion by his father, or any of the traditional ideas so prevalent at the time of his birth.

I came to Canada from Britain five months before his birth; my decision to come to this country had been made before his birth. I carried it through--I was determined to come here, make a life for myself and my child, but I had, and still have, no rancour towards his father, who did not desert me. The reverse was true--I deserted him!

To say that there were economic difficulties due to my decision is the understatement of the year. Before my son's birth, I had run around Europe, doing odd jobs, coming back to England, staying perhaps for a year or two, and then disappearing again, thereby learning no specific skill or trade, just doing odd office work which was not particularly well-paid. It took the birth, and the upbringing of a child of my own to make me realize that a skill is absolutely essential for a woman, whether she is single, married, divorced, whatever.

So, I was propelled into teaching myself. I taught myself to type--in the evenings, after I had put him to bed, done the dishes, washed out our clothes---doing a lesson each night, typing until I had the lesson perfect and then practising each lunch-time on the typewriter belonging to my friend at the office. I then went on to short-hand in the same way, studying each night until I had the lesson perfect. It was laborious and exhausting, but I did it. I perfected a skill and therefore was able to obtain better-paying work. I shared my apartment with an assortment of people to help pay the rent. I managed to pay my bills without too much hardship, but even now it is hard for me to buy clothes without feeling guilty about it.

As regards men, I kept in touch over the years with his father, who came here to Canada when the child was a year old. His stay was not a success, due to his attitude--like that of so many British immigrants--of resentment that he could not walk into a well-paying job straight away. However, he stayed two years, saw his child and went back to Ireland when the boy was three years old. As I said, we kept in touch, my son saw his father at regular intervals until fairly recently. As regards other men, I met many, I liked them, I even considered a few of them in the light of a husband and father for my son. But nothing materialized--mainly because I felt that marriage was not for me. Basically, I am not what is known as a "marrying type." In one way I now regret this, as I would very much have liked to have another child. In other ways I don't, but this does not mean to say that a relationship with a man is not an essential part of my life.

The attitudes of other people towards me as a single mother have been varied. Seventeen years ago, many people were prejudiced, and at one job, where I worked for two years, when David was one year old, I was ostracized by several people; others patronized, and still others took it upon themselves to lecture me upon my "sins." Most of the time, however, people took it in their stride, and I have not lost any friends through this--if I did, I would not have considered them friends in the first place. I have never found, though, that men considered that I had "let myself go" in one instance--and therefore I could "let myself go" with them.

Would I do it over again? Yes, unhesitatingly, but if I had it to do over again, there would be a few modifications. The first would be economic. Whatever course in life one takes, one has to eat first. Therefore the ability to earn the wherewithall to buy food is of the utmost importance. It took the birth and upbringing of a child of my own to drive home the importance of a trade, a skill, a profession, what have you, into my head! I have never subscribed to the idea common to girls in my youth that you must grab a man to take the problems of earning a living off your shoulders, but failed to carry through properly until David was born. Raising a child on my own and being the sold breadwinner for both of us has given me an insight into the problems and pressures attendant on the male breadwinner, the grinding pressures and responsibilities that men undergo, especially in North America.

What effect has it had on my son? Who can say? This won't really be clear until he has children of his own. So far--few problems. He has not become a drug freak, frowns on all alcoholic consumption, is responsible, and due to the fact that he had to look after himself quite a lot at an early age, is totally independent as far as cooking, washing, shopping for himself, etc. In other words, if left to himself for any length of time, he can cope. We have a reasonably good relationship, he can talk to me on any of his problems--so I feel there is a communication line open between us.

Being a single mother isn't for everyone by any means. But it was for me, and I do not regret it for one moment. Before he came along, I was beginning to get selfish, and even a little bit misanthropic. His birth brought out qualities in me I didn't realize existed, but this, I think, is common with most women. No, I don't regret it--it was the best thing that ever happened to me.

J. Mills

CALL DAIN 842-3348

FREE HOME REPAIRS (PAINTING AND GENERAL FIX-UP) FOR LOW-INCOME PEOPLE AND SENIOR CITIZENS. WORKSHOP: 3754 ST. DOMINIQUE.

# ST. URBAIN COMMUNITY CENTER

Don't be fooled by the innocent appearance of the pale orange brick building sitting on St. Urbain street across from St. Jeanne D'Arc Hospital. Inside it is a hotbed of activity.

The building is still commonly known as the "University Settlement", but it has a second name which is really more descriptive -- St. Urbain Community Center. And it is a community center alive with purpose, or lots of purposes to be more exact. The service area is made up of too many different sorts of people for the center to have just one purpose. The neighborhood is a hodge-podge of French, English, and Greek, Spanish, and Portuguese immigrants. The center's lobby is plastered with posters and announcements of a wide variety of activities that one can choose to join. Obviously, it is not what you choose to join that matters to the staff and volunteers, it is the fact that you have chosen to become involved. Judging from the hum of voices in the building today, a lot of people in the community are doing just that.

Activity might be the magic word at the Center. Those that I've spoken with there want to make things happen -- good things -- things which will improve life in the community. For example, in an area where low-income housing is desperately needed they have committed themselves to a cooperative housing project. They have received \$10,000 from the Central Mortgage Housing Corporation and have successfully bid for a neighboring building. Hopefully this will begin the trend for renovation of the community in place of its destruction by an invasion of high-risers.

Staff has also been assigned to research the possibilities of opening up a credit union. In that manner loans could be provided for community development and money lent to working-class people in the area.

The Settlement project of social education includes one of the more popular items -- a film series. Every Saturday evening at 8 p.m. a free film is shown. The films are either commercial or national film board but they usually have something to say. I have personally been well entertained by such films as Mon Oncle Antoine, Johny Got His Gun, and Sacco et Vanzetti. For a schedule of films plus the Center's newsletter all one has to do is give them a ring at 842-8836 and ask.

The Center's education program also includes films in foreign languages, Latin American entertainment evenings, and speaking engagements by prominent individuals on pertinent problems. A french language course has also been begun by those responsible for social education. (Unlike the lessons available to most of us, these are free.)

But while the Center's people are always cooking up new projects to keep the place humming, they make sure that there is space available for other community groups in need. For example, when McGill professors and students wished to hold classes but not cross the striking maintenance workers' picket lines, they chose the Center as meeting place. When a group of ex-Haitians discovered that their house had been destroyed by fire, the Community Center granted them permission to temporarily set up shop here.

## THE LOUNGE



There are many groups which house themselves at the community center and offer services. These include Welfare & Low-Income Citizens, an anti-poverty group which specializes in welfare and unemployment problems; Committee De Linge, who repair and sell for a tiny fee

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10

lovely old flat decorated with comfortable Salvation Army furniture. One can usually find a cup of coffee and a friend there between the hours of 7 and 11 every evening. In May the centre opened with 3 staff and 2 chairs, a bed & a bureau-but when the official opening came in June, 150 people crowded into the apartment. The Montreal media enjoyed their visit and gave the drop-in centre a fairly good review. Their review is a plus sign in Montreal's favour for quite often the gay movement is boycotted by the media. For instance, last year the Toronto Star and the Globe & Mail refused to print a classified ad for the Body Politic (a gay newspaper); in November the Vancouver Sun refused to print classified ads for a gay social group and a gay newspaper; and in Montreal, La Presse refused to carry an ad for a Gay Montreal dance. The Gay Assn. is very interested in fighting this sort of discrimination and is planning soon to meet with the Canadian Civil Liberties Association.

Besides fulfilling a social need, the drop-in center offers counselling, information and referrals. For further details call them at 288-1101.

Also of service to the homophile community is the gay book store at 1225a Crescent Street. The name is Androgyny and it is open from noon to 8 p.m.. The bookstore also offers a full selection of women's books and books for free children.

Gay Women seem to be limited to meeting at the Women's Place, 3764 St. Lawrence Boul., every thursday evening; or as I was told, 'There are a couple of bars.'

What seems especially nice about the gay organization is that one doesn't have to end up in certain bars for company. Believe it or not, even some gay bars do not allow holding hands. It appears that in a world of money-hungry, war-mongering, wife-cheating law-makers nothing is as immoral as two people of the same sex falling in love.

Those who wish to increase their knowledge of this topic in an academic way can call John Southin at 392-4265 for information on the continuing gay seminars.

L.D.



used clothing; Project Change which serves the senior citizen community; Community Athletics for the sports-minded; Garderie Centre Ville which provides day care services; the arts & crafts workshop; "Up to the Neck (ACTION)", a newspaper which seeks the enlightenment of the English community and there is also a bilingual community newspaper, "S.L.S.", which is filled with cartoons, pictures, and news of the community and center.

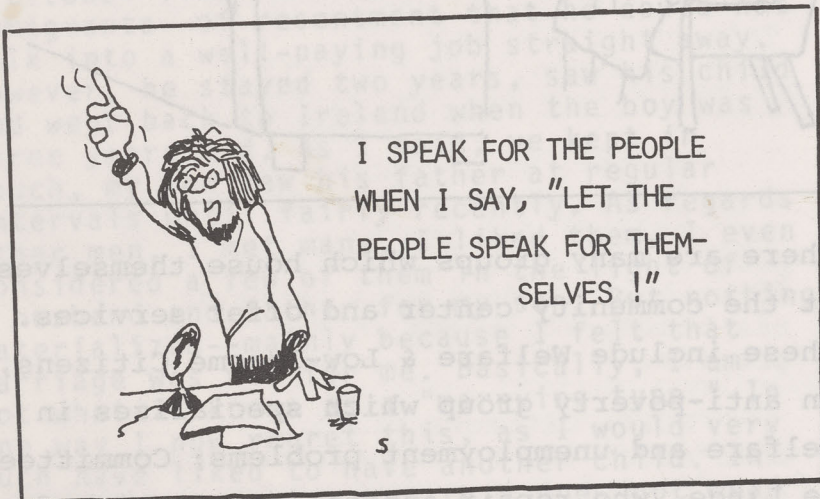
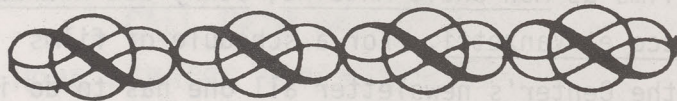
The center also offers a comfortable lounge filled with magazines, periodicals and newspapers, many of which are usually hard to find. There is coffee (the first one is free) and one can usually talk with friends over a background of soft music.

The Community Center has had a long history. Back in 1891, the McGill Alumnae responded to a need by opening a working girls' lunch and rest room at 47 Jurors. Throughout the years their services expanded and their premises changed. At one time or another they have been involved with health and dental clinics, milk stations, social clubs, libraries, sewing classes, language classes, recreational facilities and alley projects.

Red Feather funding plus a lot of hard working volunteers has made the center possible. The Center has benefited greatly from the idea that those of the community should be responsible for its upkeep and the decisions on priorities. Today the board of directors is almost completely comprised of "ordinary" folk living in the neighborhood. In a small way, they are helping the slogan PEOPLE POWER become a reality.

L.D.

(In future issues the activities of the Center will be dealt with more fully)





# together

(ESPECIALLY DENMARK &amp; USA)

The differing histories of socialistic movements in Europe and North America have caused a great difference in the organization and development of all emancipatory movements. One such movement is the commune movement, a movement particular to young people. The word commune here means a group of people, living together and sharing all things, that has a group consciousness based on the concrete experiences of all members.

The student movement in Denmark and Sweden has been guided by materialistic psychological literature. The social-psychological critique of capitalistic society by Wilhelm Reich was especially influential. In his work Reich tried to integrate the critiques of Karl Marx and Sigmund Freud with a total critique of everyday life under capitalism. Reich lived most of his life in Germany and Denmark where he encouraged young people to establish communes.

With this background certain political groups began to found communes in the 1960's. Life in this new social-psychological surrounding was supposed to generate new and better political work. Through these communes people hoped to overcome the alienation of capitalist society.

All the communes in Scandinavia have a similar organization model. There is a general assembly at least once a week in which every member can and should speak about all problems, subjective as well as objective. Rather than an arbitrary vote, decisions are reached through discussion to consensus. A certain person is never chosen to do a job because the experience from the political work has been, that chosen people only take a job because they are chosen but if they don't like it they run it badly. Except for the very large communes, all the groups have no private property. Finally, in Europe there is little commercialization of commune products because they are strongly anti-capitalistically oriented.

In Denmark the communes were modeled after the Kabouters in the Netherlands and the Kommune 1 and 2 in Western Germany. In the city of Copenhagen, and later in the country, many communes were established. All these communes had the concrete objective of changing current western society.

They began to publish a newspaper about communal life which provided a forum for discussion of problems inside the communes, gave suggestions for how to found communes, and tried to present a realistic picture of communes to people outside the commune themselves. This paper was so successful that soon two new

papers were founded. One was based in Copenhagen and covered urban communes. The other was mainly concerned with rural communes, especially farm communes. The paper in Copenhagen gave free legal aid, sensitivity training and study sessions in group dynamics for practising and potential commune members, and gave direction and assistance to persons seeking to join communes. The other paper wrote about the activities of the rural communes and coordinated the exchange of natural products between communes. It published farming information and sponsored regular meetings of all communes in Denmark. These papers are still publishing today and belong to the communes themselves which help support them.

The Fredensgade Commune in Copenhagen is typical of European communes. They live the principal of mutual help. This means costs of energy, building restoration and so on are paid by those who have money. Other people, for example the drug addicted, who are unable to pay may also live there but must take part in the common works.

This group of 200 persons lives in a block of houses which they occupied in the workers' district. They often hold big festivals in the backyards of these houses and invite workers to discuss pollution, the common market, NATO, tariff policies, etc. They run a political bookstore, a restaurant like the iggers where they give away food and drinks without a certain price, and a daycare centre open to everyone.

Since the end of the sixties members of the Fredensgade Commune have operated a free high school at Dlagsace (six miles from Copenhagen downtown). The school is a libertarian milieu after the model of Francesco Ferrer, a Spanish anarchist pedagogue who died during the Spanish Civil War. This school is open for everyone, particularly workers' children.

In Denmark also the farm communes have jointly run a 'mobile university' since 1972. Members of the communes take turns touring the countryside in an old truck to visit and help the farmers. They discuss political, sociological and economic problems. In the poorest part of Denmark, Nord Jylland, people of the mobile university made great progress in 1973. With their help the

farmers established a cooperative. The members of the communes have benefited also because they have learned useful techniques from the farmers.

American activists and the staff of an anarchistic Danish paper occupied the island Kristiania at Copenhagen. This island was an unused military camp owned by the war ministry of Denmark. The occupation of this island was supported by a demonstration organized by the two newspapers of the commune movement. Thousands of people joined in this demonstration and the occupation of the island. Eventually the war ministry, under pressure from the citizens of Copenhagen, made a treaty with the Kristiania people giving them the island free as a self-governed state.

Today about 2000 people live on Kristiania. They are partly supported by the farm communes. Like the American communes, Kristiania has had problems with criminals because in such a large group social control through face-to-face contact breaks down. Members of the commune have tried to solve this problem by arranging regular meetings and group projects to develop group consciousness and allegiance to the community. In these rallies the people come to know each other. Today people who are unknown to members of the commune must live for a time in the guests' sector and much of the common equipment is closed to them. These actions have solved many of the problems of Kristiania.

Since 1973 in Skandinavia (particularly Denmark and Sweden) and Germany, Switzerland and Austria the communes developed an international European centre and newspaper for the communes. The paper aids the general exchange of ideas and is organizing systems for free medical care and common production and marketing. It also sought to develop a plan for more efficient exchange of products inside the communes.

Frequent struggles among different European political groups (particularly between orthodox communist groups on the Moscow line and other leftists) cause problems in this organization. There is no group able to represent all leftist elements in the way that the SDS spoke for US radicals in the early sixties. The strongest political group in the European commune movement are the collective anarchists. There are also communes of Maoists and orthodox communists.

The rapid growth of the commune movement in Denmark is understandable in view of the anarchistic tradition there. All the communes are very involved in certain political problems of the people, eg. the squatters' movement. Since 1971 communes have also been involved in special problems in Danish politics such as the struggle to withdraw from NATO and the organization of opposition to Denmark's entrance in the Common Market.

The "freak" communes common in North America in which the people are totally passive and apolitical are scarce in Europe. Besides this the neoromantic transcendental movements such as the Hare Krishna and Jesus people are not prominent.

In 1968 when the Haight Ashbury (San Francisco) and East Village (New York) communes were dissolved many Americans came to live in Danish communes. The communes had difficulties

with those Americans from the HIP and YIP movements because of their passivity. Most groups decided to allow these people to live in their communes only if they took part in political work and made an effort to contribute financially just as every other member of the commune. After that many Americans went home again.

Because of the political consciousness of West European groups their organization level is higher than that of communes in North America. The commune milieu in Europe is more intellectual than affective. The members of a typical European commune have a common ideology as well as common sentiments. This endangers the movement because the predominance of rationality soon leads to competition and achievement only on another level. In comparison the American communes which emphasise non-verbal communication and personal interaction produce a semi-erotic milieu which is quite different from the system outside the communes and this is in a way good. However, there is a danger that American groups may become withdrawn and passive, perhaps as a reaction to the oppression of the alienating capitalistic system. Those groups after their rejection of the symbol systems of the existing society make a new perception of their surroundings in taking drugs and creating minimal languages. However, such a new beginning causes dangerous isolation from 'normal' people. In Europe, communes cannot be easily smashed by the police because they are more connected with the people.

klaus-bernd vollmar



LOOK TO THE FUTURE

Yesterday I was alone  
Yesterday I was afraid of love  
so I decided  
to marry  
Yesterday I had a husband  
Yesterday I was respectable and  
alone

Today I am not alone  
Today I am not afraid of love  
because I decided  
to love a woman and a man  
Today I have friends  
Today I am feeling better  
than yesterday

Tomorrow I shall be together  
with all of them  
because  
we need more than  
one husband  
one apartment  
one touch  
one kiss  
one life

Ilona Vollmar-Maek

## BELL DISCRIMINATES AGAINST LOW-INCOME CITIZENS

Bell Canada discriminates against low-income citizens while according Government and Big Business "kidglove care", GMAPCC alleged recently in a hard-hitting brief to the Canadian Transport Commission.

"Treatment is very definitely selective. Class B customers (second only to the government and corporations) can run a two month bill under \$25.00 or a one month bill up to ten times the charge for local service.

"Class M (poor people), on the other hand, have to maintain credit with a \$50 deposit. Also, poor people do not get reminders for overdue bills. They receive a 'denial of service' notice and have their phones cut after ten days.

Low-income customers will be hardest hit by the proposed price-hike (up to 20c) for pay telephones. These phones are often their only means of telecommunication, the report alleged, pointing out that in areas such as Point St. Charles there are few pay phones. This policy "pressures low-income people to subscribe to private lines that are more profitable to the company."

### Earnings Up

The brief questions the reason given by Bell to justify increases, namely that Bell is not earning an "appropriate" rate of return. In fact, the brief states, earnings of stock holders have gone up. It is true that return rates from other kinds of investment are "significantly higher." But this, the report argues, may well be due to the investment of capital in subsidiaries such as Northern Electric which, to date, has received \$113,975,000 from Bell.

"We feel that Bell should only be allowed to own subsidiaries if it can publicly demonstrate that these operations would result in substantial decreases in our rates."

### Nationalization

GMAPCC urges a moratorium on rate increases pending a study on the possibilities of nationalization. If the present system is retained, GMAPCC recommends that a Consumer Referral Agency be set up within the jurisdiction of the Canadian Transport Commission to "regulate inconsistencies within the Bell, and to ensure that special consideration is given to low-income people, old age pensioners, disabled and sick people."

If you're interested in fighting Bell, or would like more information, call 935-9556 or drop in at Greater Montreal Anti-Poverty Coordinating Committee headquarters at 790 Atwater Street.

## NEW GROUPS

This month a new group joined GMAPCC. The group is called Cote de Neige Action Committee. It was formed in November 1973 by concerned people living in the area. It handles traffic problems and refers people to where they can get help concerning welfare and housing problems. If you live in the Cote de Neige area and would like some action in changing the traffic situation or would like to know where to get help with a welfare or housing problem call 392-5195, 737-9061 or drop in at 4650 Barklay, apt. 1.

Another group in the Cote de Neige area, Recreation Cote de Neige, (not affiliated with GMAPCC) is a local initiatives project concerning recreation for elementary children. It has teacher aids in Coronation, Van Horn, and Ste. Kevins Elementary Schools. It has a recreation program of drama, arts and crafts, and tutoring in reading for elementary aged children every thursday and friday from 6:30 - 8:30 p.m. at Van Horn Elementary School. For further information call 392-5195 or 737-8896, or drop in at 4940 Barklay Ave. apt. 4.

### TO THE EDITOR:

On the day after Christmas, the 26th of December, Kelen Travel Service, located at 1467 Mansfield, held captive a wild bird in their display window for all to see. Now this bird had somehow managed to wedge itself between the glass display window and a small piece of clear plexiglass next to the bottom of the display window. We called the police and told them of the bird and wondered if they could come to its rescue. Their reply was that they did not handle that sort of thing. On calling the S.P.C.A. we were informed that since there was no one in the office and it was on private property they could not get in. We suggested they ask the police to open the office. This would have been a simple solution but although the S.P.C.A. replied that it might be possible, he just didn't sound very interested. Our conversation ended. We went back and watched the bird struggling yet getting nowhere and realized that none cared enough to free it.

We feel that there should be an arrangement between the S.P.C.A. that would allow the police to free trapped animals in closed stores and deserted apartments.

Sincerely,  
Faye Bryers.

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## BOYCOTT DOMINION MAINLY BECAUSE OF THE CHILDREN

Quebec Support Committee for Farmworkers  
1290 St. Denis St., 5th Floor, Montreal 129  
Telephone: 866-9795



We are picketing Dominion stores mainly because of the children who must work in U.S. agriculture to help their families piece together a survival income. If their parents were allowed to have a strong farm workers union, there would be no need for the children in the fields. But the California grape and lettuce growers are trying to destroy the effort of their workers to have their own union. So the children must continue to work.

Dominion knows this, but continues to buy California grapes and iceberg lettuce. Dominion, in fact, is the largest buyer of the boycotted grapes and lettuce in Canada.

Child labour was outlawed in the U.S. in 1938 in industry, but children still comprise one fourth of the of the U.S. farm labour force--the job area that is ranked third for accidental death and injury by the Department of Labor.

The United Farm Workers of America, AFL-CIO, a union formed by the farm workers themselves, does not permit child labour on farms where the union has contracts, but they are rebuffed and denied their right to have their own union. They ask us to boycott the California grapes and lettuce. PLEASE BUY ONLY FROM STORES THAT HONOR THE BOYCOTT. RESPECT OUR PICKETLINES...MAINLY BECAUSE OF THE CHILDREN.

CELEBRATE INTERNATIONAL BOYCOTT DAY - JUNE 15