

Tillie Olson, writer in working-class and
women's communities;
Angela Davis, activist, Black writer, scholar;
Fernando Alegria, scholar and diplomat, writer
in the Latino community.

Book Exhibit: We will provide space for community bookstores,
publishers and magazines to display their publications.

Follow-Up Projects:

Bay Area Writers' Union
Publications

(Principles of the conference will be implemented by a
discussion of these proposals at the plenary session.)

In planning our conference we have set up the following
committees:

Agenda/Speakers

Steve Abbott (chair)
John Curl
Ricardo Mendoza
Q.R. Hand
Jack Hirschman
R.V. Cottam
Denise Kastan
Bruce Boone
Susu Jeffry
Bob Glück

Publicity

Leslie Simon (chair)
John Mueller
Steve Abbott
Patricia Kirkpatrick

Fund-Raising/ Finances

Bruce Boone (chair)
Ricardo Mendoza
Denise Kastan

Logistics/ Arrangements

Bob Glück (chair)

C.T. Hall

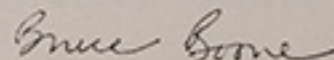
Darrell Schramm

Conference Coordinator

John Curl

The Steering Committee consists of the chairperson of each committee plus the conference coordinator.

Community Outreach: Approximately 22 poets and writers were first approached by mail in the following communities: Black, Chicano/Latino, Asian, Native American, lesbian, women and gay. (see supplementary materials) Suggestions of these writers were incorporated into the conference plans. We also sent press releases to community newspapers and distributed flyers announcing our meetings to insure participation of writers from various communities. (Please see supplementary material titled "History of the Planning Group") During the next three months the Publicity Committee plans radio spot announcements, notices in community newspapers and bookstores, and press releases to advertise the conference.



Bruce Boone
for the Finance Committee

with
Ricardo Mendoza and
Denise Kastan

note: sponsorship of this project has been tentatively approved by Intersection and has been scheduled for final Board approval at its next meeting.

SUPPLEMENTARY:
HISTORY OF THE PLANNING GROUP

The idea of a Writers and Politics Conference was independently conceived by Steve Abbott, poet and co-editor of the "Poetry Flash," and another writer, Bruce Boone, staff member of Small Press Traffic Bookstore. In the spring of 1980 these writers suggested to each other that they begin planning a conference that would bring together other writers of ethnic and minority communities in San Francisco in order to enable them to articulate their own community interests as well as create ties with writers from other groups. These communities of San Francisco had much to gain, they thought, by coming together and discovering political and writing areas of common concern. The time had come, they thought, for Black, Chicano, Native American and Asian writers, women writers, lesbian and gay writers and others to get to know each other and discuss writing and political practices together. Abbott and Boone discussed this idea with other writers and found a favorable response.

On this basis they sent out letters to writers who were involved with their communities, thirty or so minority, women and gay, disabled and older writers. They proposed a community oriented writers' conference and asked if the respondents would consider this an idea that was workable and could meet community needs. They proposed an exploratory meeting to evaluate responses they had received.

On July 20th a first meeting was held at Small Press Traffic Bookstore to determine whether to proceed with these plans, and if so, how to integrate suggestions that had come in. But with only five persons present, it was decided that further publicity would be necessary and more outreach into the various communities to insure that the idea could actually meet the needs of the various communities. It was also decided that press releases should be sent out to important community and general newspapers, radio stations and literary publications. A flyer and poster was made up to advertise this meeting, and it was decided that potentially interested

writers should also be notified individually.

As a result of this a further planning meeting was held at Small Press Traffic on Sept. 14. About 30-35 persons attended this enthusiastic, often tumultuous meeting. General principles were discussed and it was agreed that the conference would take place in February or March of next year, that it would be a conference for minority, women and other writing communities in the area and that an important organizing theme of the conference would be attacks on these communities from the right wing. A steering committee and four other committees were established: Publicity, Speakers/Agenda, Logistics, Finances. A conference coordinator, John Curl, was elected. The committees met briefly and then another date was decided on.

On Sept. 28 we met for the third time at Small Press Traffic Bookstore. In the meantime the committees had met and begun their planning, and they reported to the general meeting. After their reports the meeting agreed on a conference structure. Spread out over two days, there would be two panel discussions, the first to be more analytical and personal and the second more concrete, decision or action oriented; there would also be a number of workshops (9-12) and panels discussions in which other topics would be delved into in a more detailed way; there would be a general or plenary meeting in which the conference would sum up its proceedings and discuss follow-up events; finally there would be an evening of entertainment with film, musical or other events and socializing afterwards. In the morning, it was agreed, there would be time for socializing with coffee and doughnuts.

In addition to seeking foundation funding the meeting agreed to a film benefit for December and a poetry reading benefit for early January. We also decided to approach community organizations, bookstores and other groups for endorsements and contributions.

At this planning meeting-- assuming that enough of you are interested in attending-- we propose this agenda, trusting it can be amended by suggestion:

1. Nature of the conference
 - a. Specific proposals for workshops, lectures, etc.
 - b. How big? Panels or talks or roundrobins or workshops or some combination of these?
 - c. Suggestions for lecturers, panelists, workshop leaders, groups who would give presentations or performances, etc.
2. Elect a co-ordinating committee to take responsibility (4 or 5 people maybe?).
3. Logistics
 - a. When?
 - b. Where?
 - c. Publicity?
 - d. Money?

We would like to emphasize that the conference planning is open to all and all should feel welcome to take part so that a wide spectrum of viewpoints will be represented. Thus, if you are interested but cannot attend yourself, perhaps a friend could attend for you.

Hope to see you Sunday the 20th!

Sincerely,

Steve & Bruce

Steve Abbott (431-4844)
Bruce Boone (826-2055)

ATTEND OPEN PLANNING MEETING for 1981 WRITERS & POLITICS CONF.



HOW TO CURE BOLSHIEVISM - No. 6.



Rochester, N. Y.—Mrs. Price Bulge, a wealthy society woman of this city, has announced that she intends to devote much of her time and money to further the movement against the teachings of Bolshevism.

To a reporter she said: "Bolshevism will destroy the family."

Mrs. Bulge has been divorced four times.

SUNDAY, SEPT. 14 7:30 PM.
SMALL PRESS TRAFFIC · 3841-B 24th S

AS WRITERS OF COLOR, FEMINISTS, LESBIANS & GAY MEN, DISABLED & OLDER PEOPLE, SOCIALISTS & RADICALS WE SAY IT'S TIME TO JOIN TOGETHER AND **FIGHT BACK!**

HELP US PLAN FORUMS, PANELS, WORKSHOPS, LECTURES, READINGS, PERFORMANCES AND SO ON.



Left-Write meeting: 'Art as political action'

By HILTON OBENZINGER
Special to the Guardian

San Francisco

With Moral Majority-inspired censorship and new McCarthyite "subversives" hearings in the works, what should be the stand of activist cultural workers? With the rise of the right wing and U.S. threats of war and intervention in El Salvador, what should be the role of progressive, anti-imperialist writers?

A conference of writers convened Feb. 21 and 22 here for "Left Write! A Unity Conference of Writers on the Left" to struggle over these and other questions. Approximately 250 poets, fiction writers, dramatists and critics unanimously endorsed a resolution "that we stand united against fascism, imperialism, racism, sexism, homophobia and ageism."

Calling for a writer's union "in support of peace, political and economic democracy, self-determination and international solidarity among the working peoples of the world," participants proposed such projects as a writer's defense group, study groups and publications. Several recent literary trends converged at the conference. One trend was

the writers, publications and presses that blossomed in the 1960s and early 1970s as part of the anti-racist, women's and gay rights movements. Another trend was the recent attempts to form workplace writer's groups and consciously working-class literature. A third was the "small press" movement of experimental and new literature. A few writers associated with "new wave" and the "performance arts" also participated.

Finally, the conference attracted a large number of older writers, many of whom are veterans of the Communist Party during the 1930s and the McCarthy era.

With the rise of the right, all of these trends are being politically and economically bludgeoned. Tomas Ybarra-Frausto, during the Chicano and Latino writer's panel, summarized the history of Chicano writing, the rise of alternative Chicano presses, the teatro movement and other developments, noting how many presses and other institutions no longer exist because of financial difficulties.

The increasing monopolization of book publishing over the past 10 years, along with the cutbacks in foundation grants, have made many already marginal enter-

prises impossible. Ybarra-Frausto said. The discrimination faced by Latino and other minority writers in the bourgeois publishing world is only accentuated by the few exceptions that "make it."

Other panel participants included Nellie Wong of "Unbound Feet," an Asian women writers' collective; Al Richmond, former editor of People's World; Leslie Simon, founder of Poetry for the People; Alejandro Murguía, editor of *Tan-Tan*; Latino cultural magazine; and William Mandel, author of books on the Soviet Union and Pacifica Radio commentator.

ART AS POLITICS

The general ideological orientation toward art as a tool for change was expressed strongly throughout the conference. Robert Chrisman, editor of *Black Scholar*, described art as "a political action that expresses consciousness and shapes reality."

In reviewing the past decades, Chrisman critiqued the progressive writing trends for "often displaying an academic Marxism divorced from current political conditions, and for minority writers falling into a "nostalgic," cultural na-

tionalism.

Despite its strength, general political and ideological confusion was rampant at the conference, including a heavy dose of anticommunism. There was no guiding political line to place racism, sexism and gay oppression within the context of U.S. class society. The sharpest contradiction emerged around the issue of gay oppression. The lack of focus "seemed to magnify differences rather than overcome them," lesbian writer Amber Hollibaugh observed. "Frustrations around being writers forced people into being more competitive than the actual conditions in our communities."

Yvonne Bejarano-Yarbro, Chicana writer from the University of Washington, commented that despite these contradictions, the conference was a step forward. "Such a conference in the past would not have even included third world and gay writers," she said.

San Francisco has a long history of being a focus of literary and cultural movements. During the antifascist struggle of the 1930s and the antiwar movement of the 1960s and 1970s, writers played a role in building united fronts and in challenging bourgeois attitudes.

Film

"PORT APACHE, THE BRONX"

A Time-Life Films presentation

Produced by David Suskind

Starring Paul Newman, Edward Asner

By ELAYNE RAPPING

At a time when racism, sexism and random violence have become Hollywood staples, "Fort Apache, The Bronx" manages to stand out above the crowd. It is the most relentlessly racist and implicitly fascist major film in years.

Nor is that the end of its offensiveness. Unlike other reactionary films which claim to be "apolitical" or "mere entertainment," "Fort Apache" prides itself on an allegedly liberal political stance.

'Fort Apache' relentlessly racist

poverty. This is perceived as the natural and inevitable condition of such "degraded," "animal-like" beings.

The action begins with the fatal shooting of two white cops by a deranged, drugged-out Black prostitute (Pam Grier). A new law and order police chief named Connally (Ed Asner) comes on the scene determined to run things "by the book." His efforts exacerbate the situation and lead to two equally undesirable, cinematic situations: a day-long uncontrollable community "riot", and the heaving of an innocent Black youth from a roof top by a frustrated white policeman.

The latter incident is witnessed by Murphy and Correll. The film ends when Murphy, after

Almost every other woman in the film is a thoroughly corrupt and menacing prostitute, or a drug-crazed junkie or both. Indeed, the portrayal of the psychopathic "cop killer" as a nightmarishly terrifying Black booker is an all time low in racist/sexist stereotyping in films.

"Fort Apache, The Bronx" is clearly intended to shock. Its producers indulge in excess and overkill—both of racism and liberal sentimentality—to make an unambiguous point. "White middle-class America," they seem to be saying, "you have no idea how bad things really are. We have done our best to bring decency and civilization to these Black and Puerto Rican 'ghettos' but they won't have it. Some of us are willing to die in the name of liberal virtue, but

even this will be tragically futile."

This is the tear-jerking swan song of white liberalism. It proclaims the breakdown of the rule of bourgeois "democracy." Implicitly, there is a political message which is far more terrifying than any B-movie. If, as the film suggests, bourgeois institutions have clearly broken down, the country must move either to the left or right toward socialism or fascism.

In portraying Black and Latino "ghettos" with the same vicious, mindless, depraved stereotypes as all the other Bronx residents, "Fort Apache" clearly dismisses the left as a source of hope. What remains unsaid, of course, is that the only alternative in the war against barbarism must be fascism.

CALENDAR ITEM

July 28, 1980

FROM: Group for Writing & Politics
c/o 545 Ashbury St. #1
San Francisco, CA 94117

CONTACT: Bruce Boone or Steve Abbott
 826-2055 431-4844

For release: Immediately

SAN FRANCISCO. Monday, July 28, 1980

"Writing & Politics"--a conference for writers that focuses on our work as people of color, feminists, lesbians & gay men, disabled & older people, socialists and radicals--will be planned in an open meeting scheduled for Sunday, September 14 at Small Press Traffic Bookstore, 3841 B 24th St., S.F., at 7:30p.m. The conference is planned for January of 1981. For childcare call 431-4844.

Statement of Purpose

The Writers and Politics Conference is intended to bring together writers from the various communities of San Francisco: Black, Latino/Chicano, Asian, Native American, feminist, lesbian and gay, older, socialist and radical. The conference proceeds from two basic assumptions: 1) that at present ties among the various communities are weak and ill-developed and 2) that the communities would greatly benefit from the development of such ties among writers. We know writers are aware of the needs of their own communities and that they can also make connections with writers of other communities, given the opportunity. Our conference intends to provide this opportunity and be an occasion for planning other events that will bring communities together, rather than keep them apart.

Until recently there was no program for prenatal care for needy families in these areas. If the state money is lost there will

crime? Isn't the destruction of education and lack of jobs for youth a crime? Isn't it a

bag. v
boxes
"W
ing to

Left Write! Conference in S.F.

from: People's Tribune (Communist Labor Party) March 3, 1981

This article was submitted to the People's Tribune by a friend of our paper who is deeply involved in making proletarian culture an important weapon for the working class in their struggle for socialism.

Poets, writers, and other cultural workers came together in San Francisco, February 21-22, in an important conference called *Left Write!*

The purpose of the conference was to set into motion the first major cultural vanguard working in relation to the education of the masses at a grass roots level.

The conference, which included panels and workshops, the former with representatives of communist and socialist perspectives, and the latter with political problems of literature within the various communities—Chicano, Black, American Indian, Asian—allowed the delegates—most of whom are poets who sense the growing repression within the cultural sectors of society—to discuss a vast range of questions. These questions hopefully will be answered by a more solidaritous program of actions and propaganda.

The work of a cultural vanguard is at the heart of the proletarian revolution. In many respects, the communist movement has been slack in this respect. It has depended too heavily on past revolutionary voices or has narrowed the view of culture to exclude countless poets who have been captive of a bourgeois educational scheme, but who nonetheless have been writing to and for the

proletariat.

Left Write brings these workers forward. Many style themselves anarchists. Others sense that it is important to gather into a union force as poets and writers. Attacks against cultural workers are growing. The recent appeal denial for Amiri Baraka (which poets say was done because of his opposition to the government) has been termed an example of an academic McCarthyism returned.

The Baraka case was met with the *Left Write* "petition of 46," 46 poets and artists who put their names on the line in defense of their colleague demanding his release. This happened before the conference had even begun!

It is hoped that the conference will spur artists, photographers, street-agitational theater people and others to unity conferences of their own. Especially important in this regard is the case of artists associated with galleries that are within the bourgeois cultural structure. It is very necessary that a campaign be mounted whereby the artists spread the word of the international proletarian struggle to the captive galleries and insist that as part of its "advertising" it begin printing newsletters and petitions of international support as well as support for indigenous struggles of the proletariat.

Left Write is a broad coalition hoping to unify as a strong vanguard. Culture is indispensable to any successful revolutionary movement.

UMW CONF.

Continued from Page 8

with negotiations and that there was no hope for repeal under Reagan.

WHAT NEXT?

Instead of calling their own conference, District 17 officials have formed a Committee for the Repeal of Taft-Hartley, on the assumption that "a committee is the best place to pass the buck." They are now going along with Church's statement that he will call such a conference *after* the contract is settled.

District 17 officers are weaseling on Taft-Hartley because Taft-Hartley is at the foundation of capitalist profit and it is

Taft-Hartley will be repealed only by violating it and doing whatever is necessary to unite and organize the working class in its own defense. Taft-Hartley will be repealed on the picket line, in the sympathy strike, with the secondary boycott, and through the broken injunction. Taft-Hartley will be repealed when an organized and unified working class takes control of the economic and political system.

Miners in District 17 must bypass their cowardly district officials who have decided that getting reelected in May is more important than fighting for labor unity now. Miners must support the Davis miners

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28 May 80

Dear

We are writing to solicit feedback on the tentative idea of having a writers' conference next Fall. The general purpose of such a conference would be to bring together diverse writers to dialogue on questions of mutual interest, specifically regarding a writer's relationship to audience or community and other questions regarding the relationship of poetry and politics.

Obviously such a conference could be conducted in several ways. One approach would be to organize a large conference. 3 or 4 panels consisting of 4 panelists each could be held over a 3 day period with smaller workshops and perhaps one or two readings also presented. A drawback to this approach might be a) the greater amount of work to organize it, b) an audience relating passively to "star" panelists instead of actively engaging in dialogue, c) the more generalized nature of such a conference.

Another approach would be a smaller conference (100 person max.) with a narrower focus. Panels, workshops and readings could still be held in which everyone might more actively participate. A drawback to this approach might be the "converted" preaching only to each other while many of those most needing such a conference might be excluded. You might have still other ideas as to what kind of conference, if any, would be most beneficial.

In either a larger or smaller conference, we would hope the emphasis would be on participants examining and talking about their own and each other's work, not on generalized theoretical discussion. Thus workshops (of no more than 10 persons each) and workshop facilitators would be equally if not more important than panel discussions (the purpose of which would be to stimulate thinking in workshops).

Before proceeding further with this conference idea, we seek your response on what sort of conference, if any, you feel would be constructive. We'd also like to know a) what questions you feel panels should address, b) who would you like to see as panelists and workshop facilitators in such a conference (keeping in mind that at this point we anticipate no large grants or donations for honorariums) c) whether you would be interested in attending a general planning meeting regarding these matters and d) whether you know anyone else you think would be especially interested in working on such a conference (please feel free to show this or discuss it with other writers who might be interested).

We hope to hear from you soon so that if there is sufficient and widespread interest, a planning meeting can be arranged.

Respectfully,

Steve Abbot (545 Ashbury #1, SF 94117)
Bruce Boone

cc: Judy Grahn, Al Young, Karen Brodine, Leslie Simon, Tede Mathews, Nellie Wong, Ishmael Reed, Janice Mirikitani, David Henderson, Kathleen Fraser, Aaron Shurin, Victor Cruz, Bob Glück, Alejandro Murguia, Bob Callaghan, Richard Oyama, Nina Serrano, Gloria Anzaldua, Maurice Kenny, Pat Parker, Gloria Frym, Cush, Wendy Rose, Luisah Teish, Gail Newman, Erica Hunt, Ron Silliman.

BUDGET

Expenses

Publicity	100 2-color posters, 14" x 17"	
	artist's fee	50.
	printing	200.
	2000 flyers, b&w 8" x 11"	57.
	400 conference programs, 5" x 8½", 8-12 pp.	
	lay-out & type-setting	150.
	printing	125.
	advertisements in "Poetry <u>Flash" and community newspapers</u>	<u>200.</u>
		782.

Rent	large hall & 3 smaller rooms for two days	400.
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Refreshments/Entertainment

coffee & doughnuts, two mornings	300.
<u>film or musical evening</u>	<u>75.</u>
	375.

Operating Expenses	office supplies/postage	30.
	xerox	35.
	<u>telephone</u>	<u>25.</u>
		90.

Honoraria, Fees	workshop honoraria, 11 workshops @ 50. a workshop	550.
	panelist fees, 8 panelists @ 30. a panelist	240.
	airfare for keynote speaker, <u>Minneapolis-S.F. roundtrip</u>	<u>290.</u>
		1080.

Total 2727. * *

* please add 10% to 20% to this figure for
Intersection sponsorship.

Income

Foundation Funding	1817.
Registration Fees	600.
Program Advertisements	200.
Fund-raisers	
poetry benefit	40.
<u>film benefit</u>	<u>70.</u>
	110.

Total 2727.

NARRATIVE: WRITING
AND POLITICS CONFERENCE

We are at present a group of 15 women and men from several ethnic, sexual and other communities in San Francisco, who are planning a conference on writing and politics to take place in February or March of 1981. The tentative date scheduled for the conference is the weekend of Saturday, February 28 through Sunday, March 1, 1981. Negotiations are underway with the New College of California, 777 Valencia St. in San Francisco, for an adequate meeting space. Our needs as we foresee them are: one hall or large room, three to four smaller rooms and connecting hallways. We expect a conference attendance of 200-400 people. We will charge a registration fee of not less than \$3.00 and not more than \$5.00.

At the two day conference we will provide coffee and doughnuts at the beginning of each day. We will also print a conference program, listing each day's events with messages from supporters. The first day will begin with a panel discussion on how our needs and goals as writers arise from our particular communities. Then after a break, workshops all afternoon. Saturday evening there will be an entertainment, a political film or musical event. Sunday's schedule is similar, but with a concluding general session. The complete two day schedule is as follows:

Saturday

12:00-2:00 panel
2:00-2:30 break
2:30-4:00 workshops (3)
4:30-6:00 workshops (3-4)
Saturday night: entertainment

Sunday

12:00-2:00 panel
2:00-2:30 break
2:30-4:00 workshops (3-4)
4:00-6:00 general, or plenary, session

Workshops:

1. Women's Writers Union - Ann Finger, Coordinator.
2. Lesbian/Gay History Project - Jess Escoffier.
3. Getting Our Work into the Community - Leslie Simon, Kush, Cloud House: street readings, posters, poetry on the buses.
4. Left Writing in the U.S. - possible panelists: Kenneth Rexroth, Tillie Olsen, Meridel LeSueur, Kay Boyle and Jessica Mitford.
5. Writers as Workers - Coordinators, R.V. Cottam and Susu Jeffry.
6. Translation - Jack Hirschman and Nanos Valaoritis.
7. Writing and Criticism - Steve Abbott, Damage magazine, Al Richmond.
8. Chicano/Latino Literary Movement, a Historical Analysis - Yvonne Yabaro-Bejarano, Francisco Alarcón, Tomasa Ybarra.
9. Black Writing Workshop - African American Historical and Cultural Society - Deborah Major, writer-in-residence.
10. Asian-American Writing - possible panelists: Merle Woo, Nellie Wong, Frank Chin, Richard Oyama.
11. Native American Writing - Wendy Rose, Coordinator.

Saturday Panel: "How Our Work as Writers Arises from and Reflects our Communities."

Panelists: Alvah Bessie, older left activist and writer;
William Mandel, news commentator and activist;
Pat Parker, poet, Black lesbian feminist, Oakland Health Collective;
Karen Brodine, writer, union activist and S.F. Coordinator, Radical Women;
Judy Grahn, founder of Diana Press, lesbian activist.

Sunday Panel: "How Our individual Communities can be Linked With Each Other: Uniting for Common Goals."

Panelists: Ron Silliman, organizer for the elderly, poet;