

THE VOICE

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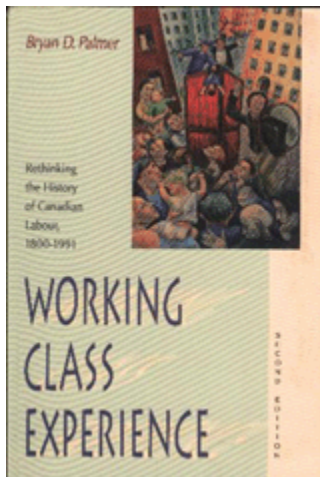
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A Bug In Your Ear...



Hi everyone! Hope you are all enjoying the new format of the Voice – we would love to hear your feedback and any suggestions you might have. I would just like to remind everyone that we are still looking for some new voices to add to our writing team. Please make an effort to share your ideas, thoughts and opinions with your peers- we need to build a forum where AU students can discuss topics and news that are relevant to all of us. Get involved and use your VOICE! Please write me at voice@ausu.org.

Tammy Moore



WORKING CLASS EXPERIENCE by Author Palmer **Review by Wayne Benedict**

"Working Class Experience" is an incredibly in-depth interpretive study of Canadian workers, their lives on and off the job, their politics or lack thereof, their infrequent joys and abundant sorrows. The book covers the period between 1800 and 1991. Politically, Palmer explores disparate ideologies practiced by those on the left and those on the right; Labourism, Syndicalism, Communism, Socialism, Socialism, Liberalism, Progressive Conservatism, Social Democracy, and neo-conservatism to name a few. Issues divisive of the working-class such as gender divisions, racism, regionalism, unilingualism, internationalism, leadership infighting, skilled/unskilled divisions and political polarizations are explored and their unfortunate effects on the movement as a whole are analyzed according to Palmer.

The author also exposes readers to the issues that have drawn the working-class together such as shared suffering, subjugation, and exploitation. The book is written in a dense prose and with the vocabulary one would expect from a Professor of History at Queens University. I would suggest that the reader keep a decent dictionary at hand while taking this trip into Canadian working-class past. This is not to say that the read is not worthwhile, to the contrary, this is the most incredible study of the subject that I have yet come cross. While only a parasitic capitalist could see the majority of the subject matter as positive, there are instances and periods of working-class victory and gains. The only way for the labour movement to move forward is to learn from the past and this book is the place to

start. Cyclical problems have faced the movement throughout our history, most of which can be boiled down to the failure of working-class self-realization and the resultant failure of broad based wage/salary earning class political action for change.

As Acting President of the Canadian Union of Transportation Employees Local 1, I will recommend this book to our members. Indeed, any wage/salary earner and/or labour leader would benefit from this work in broadening their understanding of where we came from and how to plot a course for our future. Other books of benefit to workers can be viewed at <http://www.cute1.org/cute1/read.htm>

Advise the PM, Win Cash Too! Magna Scholarship Contest Offers Cash Prizes and Internships



Canadian auto parts manufacturer, Magna International Inc., is inviting Canadian students to participate in its 7th annual “As Prime Minister” scholarship competition. Open to full-time students currently enrolled in undergraduate or graduate studies at an accredited college, university or CEGEP, the contest asks participants to submit a 2500-word essay responding to the question: “If you were the Prime Minister of Canada, what political vision would you offer to improve our living standards?” Winning submissions will be selected on the basis of practical, solution-driven and innovative proposals that demonstrate defensible, realistic visions for a stronger Canada.

Fifty semi-finalists will be flown to Toronto to present their essays to a panel of judges. The 10 best entries will then go on to the finals, to be announced at an awards dinner in Ottawa in November. All 50 semi-finalists will receive a \$500 award and a certificate recognizing their participation in the program, while the 10 finalists will receive \$10,000 and a four-month internship at Magna International, valued at \$12,000. The national winner will receive an additional \$10,000 and a one-year internship at Magna, valued at \$36,000.

Alberta ruling gives students access to academic references **By Christie Tucker, Alberta Bureau**

EDMONTON (CUP) -- Alberta’s Information and Privacy Commissioner has ruled that schools must release reference letters to students who request them.

The decision comes after a student who was refused admission to the doctoral program in anthropology asked the University of Alberta for access to her academic reference letters.

Prior to the ruling, it was U of A’s policy that letters of reference remain confidential, in order to protect the privacy of the professors who issued them.

But the student argued that there was no reason to keep the letters confidential, since the only personal information about the professor that was included in the letter was his or her name, position and phone number — details which the student already knew. Providing access to the content of the letters would not compromise the professors' privacy, she claimed.

The university, with the support of the professors who wrote the letters, argued that the personal information about the referees could not successfully be separated from the other pertinent information, and therefore the rights of the referees could only be upheld by maintaining the letters' confidentiality.

Under Alberta's Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, a person's signature, race, educational history, and other attributes are considered personal information. The commissioner, Robert Clark, agreed with the university's interpretation of personal information included in the reference letters, but ruled that the student's right to their own information precluded the referee's right to privacy.

"The point is that information expressed about you, which is recorded, is information to which you have access," said Information and Privacy portfolio officer John Ennis. "That is the cornerstone of [the act]."

Doug Owram, vice-president of academics, said he is worried that professors will now either refuse to write reference letters or that the letters will become bland and uninformative.

"The tradition in universities has been that reference letters are confidential in order to get a full and frank assessment of the student. ... More people will probably end up just picking up the phone," he said.

Universities and colleges have been subject to the act since September 1999, which is meant to clarify Albertans' rights to their own information. This is the first major order the commissioner has made against universities in that time. It may have a drastic effect on Alberta's post-secondary administrative policies.

From now on, Ennis said, the university is obliged to make it easier for students to access their letters of reference. "The public bodies must adjust their processes so they can do this on routine procedure instead of going through the hoops of the act every time a student would like to see his or her references," he explained.

Owram said the university pursued the issue with the commissioner because "we thought it would not be a change for the better."

U of A has 45 days to comply with the decision. If administrators wish the decision overturned, they can pursue an appeal in the Court of Queen's Bench.

But Ennis said an appeal is unlikely without evidence that the commissioner acted unreasonably. "No one has ever not done what an order has told them to do," Ennis said. The decision will apply to all students looking for access to their reference letters, from high school through to graduate school, but only for academic purposes.

Two Years on the Street

By Sarah Murphy, Cadre

CHARLOTTETOWN (CUP) – Andrée Cazabon spent two years on the street, and now she has a story to tell. Still young, she bares the marks of shame, frustration and despair of a former street youth, but somehow maintains a lightness of heart and an aura of hope unlike most.

Cazabon has left the street, rid herself of drugs and reunited with her family. She is now a director and has released a documentary with the National Film Board of Canada (NFB) depicting life on the streets. Through Laurent and Cathy, two Montreal street youths, Cazabon not only paints a portrait of the street, but also a portrait of addiction, survival and pain: the street as a prison without bars, offering little hope of escape for the captive.

In *No Quick Fix*, Cazabon pays careful attention to the parents of homeless youths, almost all of which are left to the sidelines to scour the streets in search of their drowning children. In his daughter's film, Cazabon's father rereads letters written to his child while she haunted the urban sidewalks and alleys. These letters speak eloquently of his grief.

Cazabon says the film was never meant to be therapy as she had already been through that and has been clean for 12 years. "It would have cost me a lot less personally to get a good therapist if I had needed that," she says. "That was the last thing I wanted to do ... make a heavy film."

She says *No Quick Fix* was simply an opportunity to make a documentary with a professional crew. "Working with the NFB was an incredible experience," she says.

When making a documentary such as this one, where you are literally chasing after participants, you do not want to add to your worries Cazabon says. Even the crew found the project demanding she admits, and says after a day of shooting most probably felt like they needed therapy.

"So it was not so much a therapeutic journey as much as it was that we felt we had to witness what the parents [of these street youths] go through," she says. "It seems like it's never been done before."

It took months to find participants, explains Cazabon, who went through the normal route – talking to individuals in the community – to find them for her project. However, she was forced to go back on the street where she interacted with street kids who in turn helped her find participants. Cathy and Laurent were two of them and when other participants did not show up for the shooting of the documentary, both agreed to step in and tell their story and that of their parents.

But how does Cazabon reach out to her audience, and how does she convince them that something must be done to bring an end to this problem? Cazabon feels that too many refuse to acknowledge that drugs are a problem on the streets of the Charlottetown community. She recalls when, at a high school in the city, students told her that buying cocaine and heroin was easy.

"I met kids here that were street kids," says Cazabon of her experience putting the film together. "And of course they are not going to be street kids here in P.E.I., but they were street kids on the streets of Halifax, on the streets of Montreal."

But Cazabon holds hope.

"What I did see in PEI that really impressed me was even though there is a lot of taboo around this [issue of drugs], and a lot of 'Not in my back yard' type of mentality, I still saw a genuine interest in doing something about this," she says. "I think that's really admirable because a lot of communities, when they get out of denial or they start looking at the issue, say 'This is so overwhelming. What can we do?' ... sort of throw in the towel before you even try. What I see in P.E.I., from the youth and the professionals, is 'OK, what can we do?'"

Cazabon suggests one solution is to go to the provincial health officials for help.

"If these kids were diabetic, and 10 years later we still had this problem, would we find it acceptable? No. So I think this is how we have to see this – as a health problem, not an individual problem. It is happening systematically all over, across barriers, social barriers, family barriers. It's happening to all kinds of kids, just like diabetes is happening."

As for the purpose behind *No Quick Fix*, Cazabon says, "What I try to do with the film is advocate for adequate youth treatment centres."

With her first film, *Letters to a Street Child*, she started a foundation to research the feasibility of getting a treatment centre in Toronto. The research has been completed and the group is now in the process of fundraising. "We would like it to be a cookie-cutter thing, so that every community can decide to adopt this," Cazabon says, noting that the number of addicted youths is rising, and that the resources to deal with this problem were not adequate for the 1980s, let alone for 2001.

Throughout the promotional tour for *No Quick Fix*, sponsored by Canada Youth Employment Strategy, Cazabon has gauged her audience for comments on the issue, and plans to bring these to the last stop of the tour, Parliament Hill. Above all, Cazabon would like to see the federal government make a commitment towards helping addicted street youths get off the streets and into treatment centres, where they can regain their lives and get a fresh start.

Speaking My Mind

by Mark A.C. Gueffroy



Ever had a non-profit or charity organization call you to solicit a contribution? Unless you are a very privileged individual, you have encountered a telephone fundraiser. In Canada, there are very few requirements for a non-profit organization to solicit donations by phone. If the organization solicits donations in accordance with the *Charitable Fundraising Act* (provincial legislation), they are not violating any legislation. An organization does not even have to be an incorporated society to telephone solicit for donations! The non-profit organization industry is a very *caveat emptor* field (*caveat emptor* is a Latin phrase translated as "let the buyer beware").

The Canadian Association of Non-Profit Organizations is a non-profit organization that is dedicated to the licensing of organizations for telephone solicitation and other types of fundraising. The CANPO is dedicated to the development and implementation of mandatory industry standards and ethical responsibilities through voluntary membership and political lobbying. You can contact the Canadian Association of Non-Profit Organizations by e-mail at canadanonprofit@hotmail.com or phone them at (780) 623-1632.

Enlightening Information

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