

of the changes suggested in these discussions.

Jill Hughes

Counteract are touring NE and NW England and Scotland from April 18-May 14. Further details from Counteract, 27 Clerkenwell Close, London EC1. Phone 01-251 4977.

CTIONS

panels, to Halina Korn's sculptures, Hilda Bernstein's etchings of South Africa, satirical work by Gertrude Elias and Monica Sjøo's canvases on feminist themes — abortion, goddess worship, sisterhood.

For at least 200 years women have responded to exclusion from establishment

exhibitions by organising their own. A group like this can share the difficulties of locating the right space and finding money to transport their work, to insure it, install it and print a catalogue. This is the group's second exhibition. Each time they've chosen a public, accessible site, a library and a theatre rather than an art gallery.

We definitely want to see more women's art and are sure that their efforts will encourage others. The show is certainly prompting people to think about the situation of women and art — to ask why women's art is largely invisible.

But the title of the exhibition, 'The World as We See It', leads visitors to look for a unifying factor, a reason why these artists should be showing

together other than that they are discriminated against as women in the art world.

The group, founded in 1975, say they are aiming "to present an un-romantic view of life". Although a shared perception isn't obvious in the show itself, works reproduced in the catalogue nearly all illustrate oppression of one sort of another.

Charlotte Yeldham's introduction to the catalogue also suggests that social concern and empathy are characteristics common to all women's art. She writes, "Feminist art theory has stressed the human and sympathetic nature of women's art and its social application, at the same time rejecting 'cold abstraction' but it has done this chiefly in the

THE WORLD AS WE SEE IT

'The World as We See It' is an all women exhibition at London's Swiss Cottage Library. The work ranges from Mary Wolfard's embroidered



Hilda Bernstein: "Johannesburg was my home for more than 30 years and I was deeply committed to the struggle for liberation and human rights, and an active participant. Today I live in London and draw people, birds, trees, animals... But the images of Africa are part of my very existence, and seek expression."



Gertrude Elias: "The series of Doctor and Patients came into being in 1950. They were the residue of a confrontation with the pundits of the medical profession, and I tried to draw attention to the absurd way they view female patients..."



WARNING ON OVER-EATING

The excess calories taken in America would feed the entire population of England, or one-tenth of India's people, or several of the underfed countries in Africa.

"The World as We See It". Is there a female aesthetic or sensibility?

context of feminist art which portrays the experience of women to the exclusion of other groups. This exhibition suggests that a feminist art theory may be applied to a broader spectrum of women's art."

This gives the impression that there is a coherent body of feminist art theory and a general agreement as to what constitutes feminist art. In fact there are wide differences of opinion. For example women artists, including abstract artists, with no feminist message in their work consider that their attitude towards their work, the way they work and their relations with other women artists constitute the feminism in their work. Others insist that unless art is agitational and consciousness-raising it's not feminist.

And to talk about "the human and sympathetic nature of women's art" suggests that there is a universal female aesthetic or sensibility. Such

generalisations risk creating new stereotypes and ignore the fact that women artists develop their work within a male culture. At the moment perhaps all we can do is to look at an individual's work within a specific context and ask how her work reflects her own experience; to look, for example, at the different interpretations male and female Impressionists made of the same subject matter.

The exhibition's attempt to draw parallels between diverse work like Liz Moore's light filled landscapes or absorbing portraits, Gertrude Elias' black critiques of the medical/psychiatric establishment, and Mary Wolfard's intricate embroidered animals is confusing and detracts from the strengths of the individual pieces.

Rozsika Parker

Swiss Cottage Library until April 27.

Enquiries to Gertrude Elias, 16 Agincourt Road, London NW3. Tel: 01-267 1058.

THIS may be the last year that the Open Air Art Show is held in Hampstead. "It's almost impossible to make a profit," admitted organiser Christine Rey. "If the show's not a success this year we can't go on."

About 370 works—fewer than last year—were entered for the show, in Heath Street at weekends and about 270 were selected. Up to 45 per cent commission will be taken from sales to boost exhibition funds.

Compared with other open-air shows in London the standard is high, but as far as Hampstead is concerned this is one of the most disappointing exhibitions to date.

Most of the paintings are best passed by, although the backbone of those artists with more than average to say, from Hilda Bernstein to Jack Yates, remains.

People who want Camden captured in paint can buy the literal studies of Ints Bulitis or more down-to-earth aspects—like locals who have taken to drink—by his wife Anne.

Watercolours of the area with a sensitive touch and careful colour come from G. E. Tucker and succinct, comparatively sophisticated collages, from still life to a suggestion of the mechanical, are contributed by Anne Kendall.

In the craft section there are a few newcomers, although none makes much impression. Peter James Bacon produces pictures with pieces of string—mainly animals that are starkly commercial—and landscapes that have more depth.

There are the stained-glass lampshades of Hugh Skyrme which have a pleasing reflective effect on the ceiling but are otherwise uninspiring, and well-made but orthodox wooden toys from Pineapple Productions.

Some of the most memorable work in the craft section comes from exhibitors who have taken part before, Jim and Margaret Matthews, whose glossy ceramics range from house numbers to backgammon boards.

But more than this is needed to get the Open Air Show on its feet. Admittedly it is hard to strike a healthy balance between the commercial and the creative. Too much of the latter and works may not sell; too much of the former and they are not seriously worth considering.

The selectors have problems, but if

they can move towards achieving that delicate balance the show may yet be saved.

A Place to Die

“WHAT HAPPENED at Kane Hospital shows what you can accomplish when patients' families and employees work together instead of blaming each other for the miserable conditions.”

Located on a lush, green slope in the suburbs of Pittsburgh, Kane Hospital had a national reputation as a model nursing home. Built in 1958, the 2,200-bed facility served all Allegheny County's chronically ill and the elderly who could afford no other type of care.

Almost everyone in the area had a relative at Kane or knew someone who had. There were constantly circulating rumors of neglect, abuse, hunger, unsanitary conditions, but most people tried to ignore them. They felt powerless to change the situation, and to face the reality of conditions was to accept overwhelming guilt for having placed a relative or friend there.

In 1973 Emily Eckel and Joseph Nagy took jobs as nurse aids and began documenting conditions and within a year produced a report, *Kane Hospital: A Place to Die*.

For a while no one would publish it. Finally the Action Coalition of Elders (ACE), a grouping of 40 senior citizens organizations, agreed to sponsor the report. Gray Panthers offered their help. The authors contacted the U.S. Senate's Special Committee on Aging, and the report was released in hearings conducted in December 1975.

Storehouse of death.

The Allegheny County Commissioners, who have the ultimate responsibility for Kane Hospital, turned on their evening news programs one December evening to hear the chaplain at Kane telling the Senate committee members that he would rather bury his mother than place her there, and Hal Silverstein of ACE calling the hospital “a storehouse of death.”

Among the charges brought in the report were:

- Impossible work loads for nursing personnel (due to understaffing) lead to appalling neglect of patients; e.g., some bedridden patients sat in their own feces and urine for whole days; feeble patients, trying to walk without assistance, fell and broke legs and hips.

- Shortage of housekeeping personnel resulted in floors sticky with urine, filthy bathrooms and a “smell like a zoo” in the eating area.

- Shortage of linen and laundry facilities so severe that many patients never had clean sheets and spent their days in a dirty hospital gown with no underwear.

- Diet so inadequate that some patients slowly starved. Food was starchy and served cold. Fresh fruits, vegetables and meats were rarely, if ever, offered. Not enough staff was available to feed those who could not feed themselves.

- Lack of privacy that stripped patients of their dignity. Those who had urinated or moved their bowels while sitting in their wheelchairs (because they were not taken to the bathroom) were cleaned and changed in full view of others.

- Aides were untrained in sterile procedures for changing dressings on staph infections, etc. Festering bedsores the size of fists worsened when dressings and linen went unchanged, sometimes for days.

- Patients who persistently complained about conditions were evaluated by psychiatrists for possible paranoia. Family members who complained were told to take their relatives elsewhere. Employees who complained had their jobs threatened.

- Many of the high-paying administrative jobs were patronage plums, filled by untrained people who had been good campaign workers for the county commissioners.

Kane Hospital: A Place to Die was front-page news for days. The county commissioners denied all charges and countercharged that Eckel and Nagy and Mary Lewin, a social worker who collaborated with them, had worked at Kane too short a time to be qualified to judge. But inspection teams from federal and state regulatory bodies were now alerted and were duplicating the findings of the report.

Making change stick.

All those concerned realized that the uproar might lead to a few cosmetic changes, but that to force real change and make it stick there was need for a persistent citizen action group.

Emily Eckel recalls that “We worked seven days a week, 20 hours a day, trying to build an organization and respond to events at the same time.” One of the roadblocks was the tendency of the press to make Kane employees the scapegoats and so divide them from the patients and their advocates. ACE and the authors of the report wanted a group that represented the interests of both. Their organizing slogan was “Better Working Conditions Equal Better Patient Care.”

The turning point came when 88 registered nurses signed a petition supporting the report and some of the Kane employees agreed to work with the emerging “Committee to Improve Kane.” Eventually over 50 community groups and labor unions also endorsed or joined in the effort.

Higher wages, more staff.

The committee has used demonstrations, confrontations and public meetings to pressure federal and state regulators and county commissioners to make changes. So far the county has responded by hiring 1,000 new staff people and raising wages for R.N.s and L.P.N.s to levels near the local average. Aides' wages remain woefully low (\$583 per month).

The patient population at Kane has been reduced from 2,200 to 1,750. (Federal standards, if applied, would reduce the figure to 1,600.) Admissions were stopped in January 1977



“The Home” etching by Hilda Bernstein

and the committee is now suing to force the county to provide alternative care for those denied entry to Kane.

The State of Pennsylvania, which previously subsidized only private nursing homes, has agreed to subsidize Kane. The county no longer pockets the difference between Medicaid funds (from the federal government) and actual expenditures. The Kane budget has been increased by \$5 million a year. Patient care, food, and cleanliness have all been upgraded, although not enough and not evenly throughout the facility.

The committee has got this far by combining citizen action from outside with a solid information network inside the hospital. Linda Smith (a pseudonym) is a nurse aide who works closely with the committee and has built a group of fellow employees and patients who report to her. She keeps the committee informed on whether promised changes are actually carried out.

Margaret Jones (again, a pseudonym) is a relative who used to cross a river and two mountains every night after work to visit and

NURSING HOMES, A Citizens Action Guide

By Linda Horn and Elma Griesel
Beacon Press, Boston, 1977,
paper \$2.95

Linda Horn and Elma Griesel, young activists in the Gray Panthers, have written a handbook for those who want to make changes in the state of care given the elderly in nursing homes. Both have had first-hand experience with the problem.

Horn worked as a nurse, trying to change things from within a home. She got nowhere. Later she helped set up a committee in Davenport, Iowa, that changed Iowa's nursing home laws within two years.

Griesel was a public health inspector in Oklahoma. She wrote an honest evaluation of nursing homes there and was told by her boss that it would end her public health career. Later she “bugged Ralph Nader” and helped set up a group under his sponsorship, which has since merged with the Gray Panthers.

Out of this experience and a great deal of research, the authors have put together a useful compendium of facts and figures, laws and regulations that are relevant and easy to refer to. But the thrust of the book is action.

There are accounts of how 18 organizations around the country have won reform, and many suggestions on how to go about doing it yourself.

There are sections on organizing an action group, researching the local proprietary nursing home industry, doing public relations and lobbying. Once reform legislation is on the books, there are suggestions on how to make sure it is enforced. There is a chapter on helping nursing home workers upgrade their skills and raise their wages. The authors avoid the trap of blaming bad conditions on the aides. (See accompanying article.)

“The problems of the elderly in institutions are deeply-rooted in the prevalent attitudes of society and its material values,” writes Gray Panther convener, Maggie Kuhn, in the book's introduction. “Profit margins and ‘cost effectiveness,’ not patient needs, determine what services will be provided.”

Horn and Griesel agree that the basic problem is tied to larger issues in the society, but they believe that much change is possible within the present framework if all those concerned work for change. And who, ultimately, is not concerned?

—Judy Mac

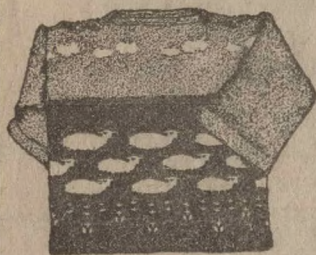
Continued on page 21.

Problem shared

'CONTACT a Family,' sponsored by the Make Children Happy campaign, is a scheme which enables families with a physically or mentally handicapped child to come together in the same neighbourhood, share one another's problems and experiences and form self-help groups. The scheme was established four years ago in Wandsworth, south London, and a film has been made which will be used to promote the idea nationally. There is a full-time staff offering advice and support to any group of parents interested in setting up a similar project in their area. Contact Noreen Miller, Contact a Family, 16-18 Strutton Ground, London SW1P 2HP.

24/1/78
Observation

HILDA Bernstein's new collection of etchings, drawings and paintings, inspired by her recent journey through Africa, are on show until 7 January at the Royal Free Hospital, Pond Street, London, NW3. The exhibition is on the ground floor and is open to the public throughout the day.



THE 'Sheep and Clouds' woolly shown above is for children of six months to two years, and comes from Tigermoth, 166 Portobello Road, W11. It's hand-knitted by a group in Herefordshire who call themselves Kids Knits, and comes in a range including fish, rabbit, duck and sea-scene patterns, all with matching hand-painted buttons. The pullovers are £7.50 each, package and postage 50p.

Observatory

work is sold, its number disappears from the list.

SISTERWRITE is a new cooperative women's bookshop at 190 Upper Street, London N1. They keep a large stock of British and American feminist books on women's studies, politics, history, and general literature of particular interest to women, as well as posters, records and magazines. They will also be offering their customers a mail-order service and catalogue in the near future. The shop is open Monday to Friday from 11 a.m. till 7 p.m. and from 10 a.m. till 6 p.m. on Saturday.

WHETHER you're looking for a flat, want to do voluntary work, think you're an alcoholic, need advice about sex, or don't know where to buy squid for supper, Capital Radio's Helpline will do its damndest to solve your problem. Pity that it's only Londoners who benefit—provincial radio stations could take a leaf out of this book.

I ALWAYS thought splayed was something humans decided dogs needed, but apparently, if you spell it 'Splayd,' it's an all-in-one fork, spoon and knife. So now you can carve, jab and scoop stand-up Christmas party food while simultaneously smoking and holding a handbag. They're £4.75 for a set of six from most Debenham stores.

THE white fur bear illustrated in Barty Phillips's toy column last week comes from The Tree House, 237 Kensington High Street, W8, and not The Children's Book Centre.

Inside...

THE BUZZ FROM AFRICA'S BUSH



● Hilda Bernstein's Baobab—"the land giant and the tree giant, both representing great age."

ARTISTS know there is a certain way that clouds hang in the sky in Africa; a certain way in which animals stand, half poised to run, half ready to attack.

These subtleties are the sort of images which artist Hilda Bernstein has rediscovered following her first return visit to Africa after fleeing from South Africa 14 years ago.

And the results can be seen in her current show at the Royal Free Hospital, the latest in the series of changing exhibitions mounted there by the Hampstead Artists Council.

Hilda Bernstein's etchings and watercolours of African wildlife have become very popular, both in Hampstead and a number of West End galleries. But it has also become true that many of the animals bear closer resemblances to inhabitants of Regent's Park Zoo than to their actual African cousins.

Now a remarkable three-month visit to Zambia, Kenya and Tanzania last summer has changed all that, and has produced a wealth of experience which gives this exhibition a buzz of renewed authenticity.

The main experience, she told me last week at her home in Rothwell Street, Primrose Hill, was an exciting six-day walking safari she joined in the Luanga River Valley game reserve in central Zambia.

"Quite simply, this was one of the nicest things I have ever done in my life; it was an experience quite out of the world I have known," she said.

"When you look at game from a car, you are a tourist. But when you are on foot, in the animals' domain, you become an animal among animals, and you share the same sense of quietness and tenseness they have."

Accompanied by a trail leader and an armed ranger, the small group—including the diminutive Mrs Bernstein—trekked through the African bush, sleeping overnight in huts at rest camps.

Being winter in the southern hemisphere it was not too hot, but the terrain was difficult all the same. There

were no paths and the ground was rough, and in many places treacherously pitted by elephant tracks made in the muddy rainy season and dried hard by the sun.

They waded across rivers teeming with hippos, not to mention crocodiles. "They told us that there were around 38 hippos for every mile of river in the reserve. But they just laughed at me when I asked about the danger of crocodiles," she said.

Their days started at 5.30 am—somewhat earlier than in Primrose Hill—and the safari was on the move no more than an hour later. It would take some three or four hours to walk to the next camp, and the rest of the day would be spent "stalking" game in the vicinity of the new camp.

The animals she saw have renewed her feel for wildlife drawing and the African environment. There is one etching in the show of three buffalo; powerful menacing and impressive beasts, yet the timidity and confusion of being an animal is also there.

The marvellous birdlife also made a great impression on her, as did the great variety of trees from the prehistoric baobabs and the spiky thorn trees to the unusual fig tree with aerial roots. These have also provided subjects for the exhibition.

"For me it was a process of renewal. I found different ways of using animals. The safari gave me the feeling that this is really a vanishing world. It is precious, and I felt it should be recorded."

Her trip also took her to the Rift Valley, in Kenya, a visit which resulted in the best work in the exhibition, an absolutely exquisite watercolour of the hanging stillness of the air in the valley.

Other watercolours—less successful—are the result of a few days spent near Lakes Naikuru and Naivasha in Kenya, renowned for their prolific birdlife. One painting is a distant view of pelicans at the water's edge.

"I just loved the pelicans—they were marvellous—like a song and dance act. They must have a choreographer!"

She also visited Mombassa, where she came across giant baobab trees, an

image which produced another of the powerful prints in the show: an elephant and a baobab—"the land giant and the tree giant, both representing great age".

Incidentally, for those who are not quite sure how etchings are made, Mrs Bernstein has on show a copper printing plate next to one of the prints it produced, which shows clearly how the process is carried out.

The final experience was a journey from Zambia's Copperbelt to Dar-es-Salaam by train along the famous 1,000-mile Chinese-built "Tan-Zam" railway.

The only white person on the train and a woman travelling alone, she was quite an item of interest.

"When we first arrived at the station in Zambia we found the concourse crammed with very poor people, sitting with their bundles and their wives and children, waiting for the train to arrive.

"It was like a scene out of some dark story. This was also another world—a world that western people are generally just not aware of.

"It was a station concourse without news stands, kiosks, sweets, buffet or litter bins. Just the bare breasts and meagre possessions of people living on a simple subsistence level.

"These were people for whom everything is a luxury, not least the miraculous train ride to destinations that took days of walking a few years ago."

Two days and two nights later the train reached Dar-es-Salaam, in Tanzania, which she described as: "Lively and dirty and run-down; full of thieves but with a great deal of vitality and character".

"All in all the whole experience made me begin to feel the disadvantages of the zoo as a place to draw African wildlife.

"One has to be reminded by the look and the smell and the huge skies and horizons. I had forgotten how beautiful Africa is."

Matthew Lewin

*Santa Barbara
News-Press Wed 14
April 79*

Exiled South African fought regime

Members of the community are being given an opportunity to hear about conditions in South Africa and to view the art work of Hilda Bernstein, an exiled South African, journalist and artist.

Here this week as a regents lecturer at UCSB, Ms. Bernstein will spend all day Friday at the UCSB Women's Center, where she will give a talk at noon.

Ms. Bernstein lived in Johannesburg, South Africa, for more than 30 years.

"From the first," she says, "I was absorbed into a political struggle in South Africa from both the point of view of a strong reaction to the racist conditions that I observed there and also because I was very idealistic, and I believed in not just the possibility or the probability, but the certainty of being able to create a better world, for everybody."

During her life in South Africa, Ms. Bernstein wrote for and edited several publications, both political and non-political, and was also involved in political organizations. She was active in the African National Congress, a major sponsor of activity by people of all races against repressive apartheid laws until it was declared illegal in the early 1960s.

From 1943 to 1946, Ms. Bernstein was a member of the Johannesburg City Council, on which she regarded herself as the spokesperson for black people, who had no representation.

Her official position on the City Council gave her the opportunity to get to know about the way black people in Johannesburg lived and worked, and to write and speak about those conditions. On the council, she found herself to be unpopular, both for her political beliefs and because she was one of very few women in public office.

In 1946, Ms. Bernstein was arrested for the first time by the South African regime. She and other people of all races had been working to aid black min-

ers near Johannesburg when their strike was brutally suppressed. It was her first arrest in a series of activities against the regime.

During the 1950s, Ms. Bernstein was involved in founding a number of organizations, including a Peace Council, which worked against the nuclear bomb, and the Federation of South African Women. The latter was later declared an illegal organization, partially because its membership was not restricted to one race.

In 1960, during a demonstration in a town called Sharpeville against repressive laws, South African police fired into a crowd, killing 80 people and wounding more than 200. The government immediately declared a state of emergency, and rounded up 20,000 people, 2,000 of whom were politically active. Ms. Bernstein and her husband were put in jail for the duration of the Emergency. She and the other detainees were prohibited from having visitors, from having books and newspapers, from communicating with the outside world in any way.

Ms. Bernstein comments that being confined with 20 other white women (prisoners are segregated racially as well as sexually) "was a real revelation to me, and it's remained with me all my life." The women worked together, studied together, even started a hunger strike and a sit-down strike together.

After her release from prison, Ms. Bernstein and her husband continued their activity against the regime. In 1963, Bernstein was arrested for treason along with seven black men and one other white man. Some of the defendants in the highly publicized "Rivonia trial" were leaders of the ANC. All of the others were sentenced to life imprisonment. Ms. Bernstein's husband was the only one acquitted.

He was immediately re-arrested. Ms. Bernstein knew that her arrest was imminent, and they decided to leave South Af-

rica. With the help of the ANC and other organizations in other countries, the Bernsteins left South Africa by way of Botswana, made their way north through Africa, and eventually went to England, where their four children joined them.

In retrospect, Ms. Bernstein says, "what we did in South Africa was necessary and right. Looking back at it, I don't think we could've acted any differently. The situation in South Africa is one that cuts to the very bone; it's like a knife; it's absolutely sharp. But in leaving South Africa I have never freed myself from a sense of betrayal. Most of all, I feel for those men who were sentenced to life imprisonment in the Rivonia trial and won't be released until we have a free South Africa."

In England, Ms. Bernstein worked as a journalist, contributing articles on South Africa to European and American journals. More recently she has been working as an artist. She continues to participate in the struggle against apartheid in South Africa, and has written two books and a number of articles on the subject of South Africa. Her books are "For Their Triumphs and for Their Tears: Women in South Africa" and "Steven Biko," a biography of the murdered black consciousness leader.

Ms. Bernstein's art work will be displayed at the Women's Center until Friday; and a display of photographs about South African life, "South Africa:

The Imprisoned Society," can be seen on the third floor of the UCSB Library, also until Friday.

—Dianne Leonard

Artists aid Kampuchea

MICRO-CHIPS and painting landscapes in acrylics may not seem to go together, but artist Philip Hughes, of Rochester Terrace, Kentish Town, has combined them to an effect both commercially and aesthetically pleasing.

Equally disparate might seem the comparison of an art exhibition and the recent horrors of Kampuchea, but this week the two are brought together by Medical and Scientific Aid for Vietnam, Laos and Kampuchea.

The paintings which Philip Hughes is donating to the exhibition will be sold in aid of the Medical and Scientific Aid fund which was started about 15 years ago to bring relief to the victims of war and its effects in South East Asia.

Mr Hughes is one of more than 30 artists, many of them local, who are giving their work either free of charge or at a very low price to be displayed in the charity's 12th art exhibition and sale.

Barbara Cartlidge, the exhibition's organiser, was delighted at the response she gained to the letters she sent round to artists asking them to donate their work. "We had a virtual hundred per cent success," she said. "Of course, many of the artists are long-standing exhibitors with us and know of our fund."

The present target stands at about £24,000—the amount needed to send six ambulances to Kampuchea. At the moment, the charity is about halfway there, but Mrs Cartlidge hopes that the art sale could boost the figure by another £4,000 or so.

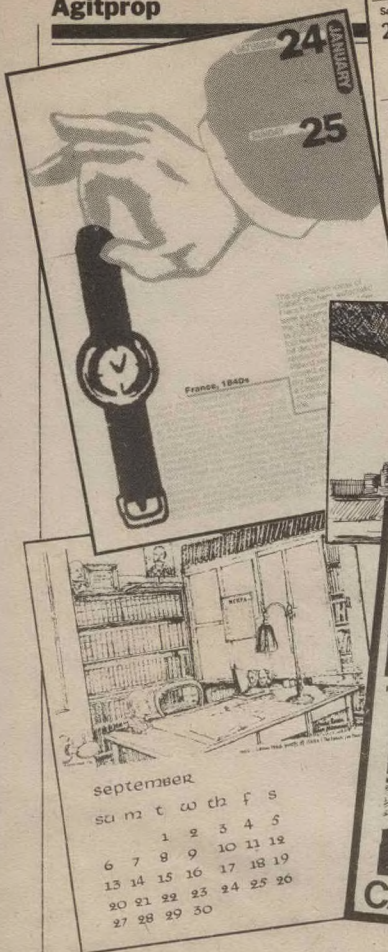
Mr Hughes is one artist who is a veteran of the cause. The chairman of Logica, a computer firm in the West End, he combines business and art by painting landscapes in acrylics, guache and coloured inks in his spare time.

A former Labour member of Camden Council, he finds inspiration both locally and further afield and was given an exhibition at the Francis Kyle gallery in the West End last year.

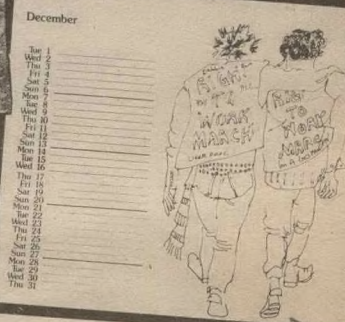
28/3/80
Other local artists who are also donating work to the sale are Hilda Bernstein, who is giving etchings of local scenes including Gulls on Primrose Hill and Swiss Cottage Saturday, and Oswald Blakeston, who has painted two seasonal pictures—Summer and Winter—in oils. Gertrude Elias, Keith Grant, Sheila Oliner and Michael Werner have also agreed to give their work.

This latest sale was inspired by journalist John Pilger's moving report on Kampuchea last year, which awakened many people to the plight of the Cambodians and gave Barbara Cartlidge the idea of asking John Pilger himself to open the exhibition.

This he gladly agreed to do. The opening will be tomorrow at 11 am and the exhibition will run from 11 am to 5 pm tomorrow and Sunday at the headquarters of ASLEF, 9 Arkwright Road, Hampstead. The rail union has let its hall to the charity free of charge for the event.



God rest you wicked jaymen, let nothing now impair A wise, impartial vendid upon those traitors there: For Liberty, and Justice and Security we care: — We chose you because we know you're fair: — We know you're fair: — So we chose you because we know you're fair.



Illustrations (clockwise from top left): Big Red diary; North London Anti Nuclear Group card; Spare Rib diary; NCCL card; anti-dumping T-shirt; Heretic card; Make It Gay diary conversion kit; Right to Work calendar; Save the Whale tea-towel; Chile Committee for Human Rights calendar; and Marx, Lenin in London calendar.

Every year Agitprop does a round-up of diaries, calendars and cards produced by the radical movement. This year we have also included a small selection of possible stocking-filling goodies. Don't forget the massive selection of posters, badges and books that are available in left bookshops, or direct from groups.

Calendars

Chile Committee for Human Rights Well-produced black and white, A3 format calendar. Each page has a striking photograph of the lives and plight of the Chilean people, and a poem (in both English and Spanish) by Eduardo Embry. £2.00 (+50p post) from 1 Cambridge Terrace, NW1 (935 5953).

East End Views is a 24-page, A4 calendar produced by *East End News* (the co-operative community newspaper due to be launched in March 1981). Black and white photographs showing people and places in the East End between 1890s and 1930s face the diary pages, which are annotated with a mixture of historical and current events. Also there is an information section on the boroughs of Hackney, Tower Hamlets and Newham. £1.50 (+25p post) from EEN, c/o 17 Victoria Park, E2. (981 1221).

Fightback 1981 24-page, black and white, A4 format fighting calendar. Each month's diary faces a page of photographs, posters and statistics drawn from last year's struggles against the cuts. £1 from 30 Camden Rd, NW1 (485 8100).

1981 (American) Guardian Calendar 'Images of Struggle' is a twelve-page 18" x 11" glossy colour calendar. Each page reproduces a picture culled from a different national struggle, while the diary is annotated with key historical dates. £2.50 (inc p+p); available in this country from Dave Berry, c/o Radical Bookseller, Unit 265, 27 Clerkenwell Close, EC1.

Marx, Lenin in London Twelve-page A4 format calendar with a pen and ink drawing of places where the great two lived, worked, are buried etc, plus two additional pages of information on them. Drawn and

produced by Alfred Head, Borough Architect LB Islington, Margery St, WC1, in aid of Amnesty (Islington Branch). Price £2.

Right to Work Campaign Month a-page calendar with pen and ink illustrations of events of this year's Right to Work March from South Wales to Brighton, which culminated in a lobby of the Tory Party conference. Drawn by Lynda Ayres. £1 (plus 20p post) from Right to Work Campaign, 265a Seven Sisters Rd, N4.

Diaries

Big Red Diary 4" x 6", red and blue; one week per double spread; well-illustrated with cartoons, photographs and quotes on the theme of Utopias. It also contains a directory of campaigns, pressure groups, publications, radical alternatives, and a section on Britain under the Tories. £2 + postage from Pluto Press, Unit 10, Spencer Court, 7 Chalcot Rd, NW1 (722 0141).

Labour Party Diary 6" x 3"; red and white; two weeks per double spread; no illustrations. It contains political reference material on the Labour Party as such conferences, affiliated organisations, addresses, and lists all Labour MPs and peers and their constituencies. £1.20 + postage. They've also produced an A2 poster-size year planner which contains important dates in the Labour movement year while leaving space for your own entries. 40p + postage. Both available from Labour Party, Literature Sales, 150 Walworth Rd, SE17 (703 0833).

Make it Gay A diary conversion kit for gay men, containing approximately 60/70 coloured stickers, informative, provocative, and entertaining. They are designed for 4" x 6" diaries upwards, and come with a slip-in information guide with addresses essential to gays. £1.70 from Homosexual Posters, 145 Raiton Rd, SE24.

Peace Diaries 3" x 5"; black and white; one week per double spread edition and a page-a-day edition; no illustrations. An impressive 64-page section lists all peace and libertarian organisations in the world. Week per double spread edition £1.95 +

postage; day a page edition £2.95 + postage from Housmans Bookshop, 5 Caledonian Rd, N1 (837 4473).

Spare Rib Women's Liberation Diary 4" x 6"; pink and yellow; illustrated with cartoons, photographs and punchy quotes exposing women's oppression. It contains a useful information list, a 'how to' section (like how to lobby your MP, how to make a poster, how to share childcare. . .), and a menstrual calendar. £2.50 + postage from Spare Rib, 27 Clerkenwell Close, EC1 (253 9792).

Goodies

Save the Whale Teatowel Beautifully designed, handprinted, blue on white, Irish linen teatowel. £1.50 (plus 20p post) from Kensington and Chelsea Friends of the Earth, 33 Lansdowne Rd, W11.

Spare Rib Teatowel simply and appropriately states (in blue on a purple background) 'You start by sinking into his arms and end up with your arms in his sink'. £1.25 (plus 25p post). Also an adjustable punning plastic belt 'Women will belt up no longer'; blue on white. £1.50 (plus 25p post). Spare Rib, 27 Clerkenwell Close, EC1 (253 9792).

Anti-Dumping T-shirts adorned with black on white cartoon by Steve Bell, available from N. Galer, 23 Linden Gardens, W2. Price £3 (£2.50 for children) inc p+p. Please state whether large, medium or small required when ordering. Proceeds to Welsh Anti Nuclear Alliance.

Greenpeace have produced a large number of T-shirts, sweatshirts, jewellery, stickers as well as a bag and a money box. Details from PO Box 371, Sports and Community Centre, Colombo St, SE1 (836 4241).

Prices and Incomes Game Topical variation on the traditional design of snakes and ladders game; printed on stiff card, supplied with cut-out counters and dice; available from Communist Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist), 155 Fortress Rd, NW5. Price 25p.

Make Maggie Dance Cut out cardboard Maggie Thatcher doll with standard issue anti-working class accessories — axe and club. Printed

in Tory blue, and waiting to be manipulated. 20p from Trojan Press, 85 Dalston Lane, E8.

Feminist Graffiti Kits consisting of pre-printed bright red slogans on yellow stickers, plain stickers, thick felt-tip pen, sheet of ideas etc. £1 from Women's Centre, 90 Cromer St, WC1.

Cards

Campaign Atom Pack of six different 4" x 6" single colour cards (+ envelopes) with quotes and illustrations pointing out the horror of nuclear weapons. 80p/single pack; £1.50/two packs from Campaign Atom Cards, c/o 48 Stratford St, Oxford.

Baron's Court Anti-Nuclear Group Ten copies of red on white cards (+ envelopes), showing Margaret Thatcher throwing a missile in a stocking and captioned 'Hope Your Xmas goes with a Bang'. £1.50 + postage from 16 Wellesley Mansions, Edith Villas, W14 (603 9308 after six).

North London Anti-Nuclear Group Three different 4" x 5" single colour cards (+ envelopes) two of which are original designs printed on 100% recycled paper; the other the well-known smiley sun. £1.10 + postage for 12; £1.95 + postage for 24 from 2 Oakington Way, N8 (340 3779).

Tyneside for Nuclear Disarmament 4" x 6" red on white cheery Santa on unusual sleigh. 10p + postage from R Collins, 73 Cavendish Rd, Newcastle 2 (0632-815090).

Chile Solidarity Campaign Pack of eight different 4" x 6" full colour cards (+ envelopes) of the famous Chilean patchworks. £1.50 (post free) from 129 Seven Sisters Rd, N7.

Communist Party of Britain (M-L) 3" x 6" single colour cartoon of children throwing snow balls at Thatcher snowpersion (+ envelope). 10p + postage from 155 Fortress Rd, NW5.

Defence and Aid Fund Five sets of different cards (+ envelopes) designed by well-known anti-apartheid campaigner Hilda

Bernstein. Some are full-colour African mother and child drawings, others woodcuts, and animal etchings. They range between 45p and 50p for a set of five. From Defence and Aid Fund, CCGS, 101 Hoe St, E17 (606 6123).

Heretic Cards Various one colour cards ranging between 3" x 5" and 4" x 6" (+ envelopes), with humorous and disrespectful cartoons and messages. 13p/15p + postage per card from 6 Stanstead Grove, SE6.

Irish Political Prisoners and Dependants Orange, green and black on white 4" x 6" card (+ envelope) showing a mass of people in solidarity on a backcloth of the Irish flag, and captioned 'Whilst there is one soul in Prison, You and I can never be Free'. 25p from Housmans Bookshop, 5 Caledonian Rd, N1.

Legalise It Subtle 4" x 6" green on white drawing of a cat on a snowy window ledge looking at some one having a Xmas smoke. The well-known leaves have been substituted for holly. £1 + postage for five cards from 2 Blenheim Cresc, W11 (727 8805).

National Council for Civil Liberties Two 4" x 6" cartoons by John Minnion, one showing Thatcher and Whitelaw backed up by the police singing carols. . . 'We're servants of Society', and the other showing judges looking after our liberty, justice and security. Also a clever typographical card by Robert Richardson in which 'Civil Liberties' turns into 'Official Secret'. £1 + postage for ten; £1.95 + postage for 20 from 186 Kings Cross Rd, WC1 (278 4575).

Stramullion Co-operative One 'In Sisterhood' card showing two women talking, and one unusual Holy Mary powdering a baby's bottom. Both with envelope, black and white, 4" x 6". 25p + postage from PDC, 27 Clerkenwell Close, EC1.

Tower Hamlets Arts Project Various full colour Dan Jones street scenes, in different sizes (+ envelope). 30p/12p from 178 Whitechapel Rd, E1 (247 0216).

ART 3/Matthew Lewin

OFF TO MARKET . . .

HILDA BERNSTEIN is one of those rare artists who seems to be able to move constructively in two or three directions at once, without losing coherence, while at the same time continuing to improve an overall talent.

All the new directions are represented in the special show of her work which forms part of the Hampstead Artists' Council's annual Open Exhibition at the Arts Centre in Arkwright Road, Hampstead, which opened at the weekend.

Without any formal training at all, Hilda Bernstein began to take her art seriously shortly after arriving in England with her family in 1964, a political refugee from South Africa.

She has become best known for her distinctive etchings of animals and of scenes drawn from her political experience in South Africa, but in recent years she has moved steadily towards portraying European subjects and scenes much closer to her home in Rothwell Street, Primrose Hill.

"There comes a time when it becomes absolutely wrong to go on pretending to be living in Johannesburg, and I've had to come to terms with that," she told me this week.

But that doesn't mean, however, that she has abandoned her life-long opposition to fascism and apartheid. She still remains an active political campaigner, particularly concerned with the condition of black women in South Africa, expressed through both her writing and her art.

There are, in the show, two pen drawings—inspired largely by photographs—which reflect her concern. The squalor and deprivation of shanty towns and enforced resettlement of Africans is vividly drawn.

Another current fascination is street markets, represented in a series of nine etchings on show, two of which were selected for the Royal Academy's Summer Exhibition.

These are careful and joyous studies of the colour, vitality and customers at



● Hilda Bernstein's etching of the shellfish market at Menton in France: "I just love the way people pick and poke at food in markets."

markets in France, Italy and London concentrating more on the intensity and underlying informality than on the surface hustle and bustle.

"I love doing markets. I love the people you find there and the colours and the way in which people poke and pick at food in Europe where it's all such a serious business.

"The variations are endless and the interpretations one can make are endless too. I want to continue doing markets."

There are also a few watercolours in the show which, for me, were less successful. Her natural inclination towards the clearness of line required for etching, and so evident in

most of her work, doesn't translate cleanly to the softness of watercolour.

Also in the show are some of the animal prints which have made Hilda Bernstein internationally known but which, she admits, make her feel "a little pink with embarrassment" nowadays.

They are, perhaps, a little soft-eyed and romantic compared with her more recent work. On the other hand there are more African pictures on the way: she is going to the remarkable swamps in the Okavongo Delta in Botswana in August.

"I've got new binoculars, and it is my intention to do flowers and birds for a while when I get back!"

Another special section in the exhibition is devoted to paintings by Halina Korn, another largely self-taught artist, who died in 1978.

My reaction to these 45 paintings was mixed. They are not lacking in emotion and atmosphere, and they are often a loving look at the individualistic figures and occasions she portrays.

Some cruelly and ruthlessly expose human nature; others take a much more compassionate stance. Solitary figures sometimes scream with loneliness. Groups of figures interact with a strange intensity.

But I found a certain spark of artistic accomplishment missing, an essential link of draughtsmanship that

could perhaps have given more bones to the figures and the constructions.

Her technique seems occasionally to have skirted problems of perspective and proportion rather than to have dealt with them in any personal or interpretive manner.

So that while the pictures are frequently very powerful, they are also slightly handicapped despite the excellent composition and despite the obviously successful feel for oils.

UNITY THEATRE PUBLIC MEETING

To launch the re-building of
Camden's oldest theatre.

Speakers include: Bill Owen, Alfie Bass, Raymond Cross, John

Hilda goes to market *1/9/82*

FANS of Hilda Bernstein, fast becoming one of the best known members of the Hampstead Artists' Council, will enjoy the latest show of her work in the HAC's permanent exhibition space in the main ground floor corridor of the Royal Free Hospital in Pond Street, Hampstead, writes MATTHEW LEWIN.

It contains a wide variety of her work, from her old love of African wildlife to colourful etchings of the excitement and bustle of European food markets.

The markets, mainly in France and Italy (but also

Portobello Road and Wembley), are leafy worlds in which people pick their purchases with intricate European concentration.

But I much prefer her simple black and white etchings and drawings, which include some wonderful studies of the dramatic rock villages of Liguria in Italy, which best display Mrs Bernstein's natural talent for line and form.

She is at her best when exploring humanity, and our habitat, under pressure: houses perched at impossible angles on hillsides; people living in impossible condi-

tions in South Africa. I also liked the watercolours in the show; gentle studies of the village of Dolceacqua, and five delightful small studies of the changing landscape of Primrose Hill, near her home in Rothwell Street.

Some of her etchings are sophisticated works exploring depths and planes with enormous skill. But she is also the kind of artist who will take time out to do an exquisite pen and ink drawing of a pine tree.

Her prices are very moderate, and prospective purchasers should hurry along while there are still some unsold works left.

Hanna High

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● Hilda Bernstein

‘I have always been a feminist, but like many women of my generation . . . I was too ready to accept the picture others had of me’

THE JOY and serenity of South African women and their will to survive is the triumphant image that has emerged — for the novelist Hilda Bernstein — out of the stark oppression of apartheid.

Amid the tears, the beatings and the murders, memories flood back of irrepressible laughter and song, that have sustained Hilda since her own

FREEDOM FIGHTER

Angela Cobbina talks to Hilda Bernstein, campaigner against apartheid, journalist, novelist — and now, artist.

politically-enforced exile from South Africa in the 1960s.

These images graphically thread through her many

books which describe the struggle of South African blacks against the humiliation of apartheid.

But they were also part of the inspiration which moved Hilda to try her hand at painting twelve years ago.

The results can be seen at exhibition of Hilda's works, which opened at the People's Gallery in Kentish Town on Monday.

Here, alongside the light relief of English market scenes and African wildlife, are paintings portraying the sufferings of South African women and, in some, of Every woman.

"All my work, whether decorative or political in intent, is figurative, because I feel bound to the real world," Hilda told me from her home in Rothwell Street, Primrose Hill.

"I am not interested in producing anything obscure. My main aim is to reach out and communicate with people so my work has to be something they understand."

Their skill of execution — she has already exhibited at the Royal Academy — belie the fact that Hilda began painting such a short time ago.

Feminist

"I have always been a feminist but like many women of my own generation I did not have any great expectations of myself. I was too ready to accept the picture that others had of me," she explained earnestly.

But with time on her hands, she decided to go along to the Camden Arts Centre in Hampstead for some basic art tuition.

"I have always enjoyed drawing but the last thing I imagined was that I had any talent for it. But now, for me, painting is far more enjoyable than writing."

The rush of creativity in later life — both in writing and in art — may lie in the block that was placed on her work as a journalist and a writer by the South African authorities as a result of her anti-apartheid activities with her husband "Rusty".

"As a journalist I was banned from writing or going into a newspaper office," Hilda still active in the African National Congress, recalled.

"And apart from that, I was banned from meeting other banned people."

That meant almost all her friends and associates, for since her teens Hilda, shocked and humiliated by the racist cruelty of her fellow whites towards black

people, had devoted herself to fighting apartheid.

In 1956, she braved the baton charge of the police with 20,000 other women in a defiant protest against the degradation of South Africa's Pass Law system — an event which was commemorated on Tuesday in the annual Africa Women's Day celebration.

But kicked and beaten, the women went to their cells — and often to their deaths — singing and joking, Hilda remembers.

"How can I ever forget them?" she asks.

"They had such tremendous strength of survival, a super strength, as it were, and a wonderful joyfulness, independence and militancy. It is something that will stick in my mind for ever."

She is now rewriting a book devoted to South Africa's female freedom fighters — Lillian Ngoye, Winnie Mandela, Ruth First, to name but a few — called *For Their Triumphs And For Their Fears*.

Meanwhile, the success of Hilda's latest novel, *Death is Part of the Process*, which won the Sinclair Prize for fiction, has enabled her to pursue her first love.

With her £5,000 winnings she is going on a painting tour of east and southern Africa.

● **JAMAICAN** Rudi Patterson and Miriam Katz are also included in the exhibition — *The Internationalists* — at the Peoples Gallery, Prince of Wales Road, Kentish Town. Runs until the end of the month.

Nice - Côte d'Azur



Everyone has a soft spot for the Riviera. Whether you intend to invest in Nice, or rent an eight-berth caravan at Cannes, the combination of a historic hedonism on one hand and mountains, money and Mediterranean on the other, make it the most intriguing coastal strip on earth. And there is always the prospect of seeing Mr Graham Greene peering over a clump of bougainvillea. Richard Gott sets the scene

Where even the French are friendly

IN AN AREA so loaded with history and legend, it is perhaps surprising that the South of France should have retained an air of such intense vitality. It could so easily have given up — like parts of Spain — to live on its memories. But the Côte d'Azur wears its cultural and historical legacy lightly. Its ancient towns and cities do not moulder behind museum glass. They thrive under the constant stimulus of change.

Its present painters and potters and glassblowers are mere pygmy followers of a generation that immortalised the light and colour of the Riviera for all time. But they do not give up. They flourish and proliferate, so that the hills and villages that fringe the great bay between Menton and St Tropez are alive with artistic endeavour.

During the first half of this century there was hardly a monarch, politician, newspaper proprietor, or painter who did not spend part of the year enjoying the pleasures of the South of France. And between the wars no government crisis was complete without ministers hurrying home from the Riviera. Out of office, Winston Churchill was often to be found in the hills above Cannes together with extensive entourage.

Lord Lloyd, once recounted the scene in a letter to his son in September 1936: "Winston had come over from Maxine Elliot's at the Chateau de l'Horizon at Cannes (the villa which the king had been going to take) to meet us at lunch. He arrived in an enormous Texan hat, the car full of easels and painting appliances plus the faithful Inches and was in very good form." Inches was the valet and — so his secretary

recalled — "we also had a rather grand Butler and Footman in those days."

Yet even in those days it was possible for the not-so-rich to enjoy the delights of the South of France — and the pleasurable semi-licit feeling of mingling with the wealthy and powerful. Today the coast has become more notably demotic — *le camping* — the chalets, and the caravans — but there is still an echo of that elitist and privileged past. Even the names now seem to have an Edwardian ring, those towns crushed between the mountains and



the sea: Menton, Monte Carlo, Villefranche, St Jean-Cap-Ferrat, Nice, Antibes, Juan-les-Pins, Cannes, Frejus, St Tropez — an endless coastline of up-market pleasure, with cooks and butlers and maids.

And beneath the bougainvillea and the frangipani,

the ghost of the Hispano Suiza for ever waiting ready to collect the guests from the station — travelling down from Paris on the Train Bleu or the Mistral. That railway line, squashed between the houses, the road, and the beach, remains an integral part of the landscape of the Riviera. Looking neither picturesque nor yet spectacularly ugly, it is just one more item on the palimpsest scenery, burrowing through the cliffs to its eternal destination at Ventimiglia.

But these are all memories. Today's South of France is different yet again, though the basic simple pleasures remain the same: food, drink, weather, company, accessibility, and the sea. And perhaps it is their happy juxtaposition that makes the place so uniquely agreeable.

The water is still the chief attraction. Every cove and harbour has a vast array of expensive yachts, huge motor yachts that look as though they never go to sea tied to the quayside — the dream of every bent policeman. And the beaches once cursed by the whining noise of the water-skiers are now blessed with the silent pirouettes of the windsurfers — a multicoloured visual delight of which even Dufy never dreamed. In the summer months almost everyone looks young and beautiful — except for the old and randy. Topless bathing is *de rigueur*, though *nudité integrale* is still frowned on except on a few distant beaches.

Accessibility might have threatened the whole thing, especially with the arrival of the great motorway that swaths through the forests on the other side of the mountains, but increasing numbers have created their

own antibodies. St Tropez, for example, is now virtually unapproachable by road in the summer months — a godsend to the inhabitants. A simple traffic jam prevents the town from becoming more than overfull. Those caught outside have to make do with Port Grimaud, a kind of new/old free-wheeling developer's dream of modern Venice built out into the marsh and the sea — with a gigantic car park.

Even the greatest enthusiast of the Côte d'Azur would agree that other regions of France have better food and drink. The wines of the Var are passable but not spectacular, while the prepared food is often a problem. Three stars in the Michelin is no kind of guide and often spells disaster. I even wonder if the politicians and house guests of yesterday really ate well here. Of course anything would have been better than the then-wars English cooking — but they rarely mention Riviera cuisine in their diaries and letters home. But the raw materials are more than adequate in their profusion. Go early to the market, and find the endless stalls of fresh fruit and vegetables, the art and handiwork of the charcutier and the epicier.

Yet when all's said and done, there's one ingredient of the Côte d'Azur that seems pre-eminent: the company. Perhaps the spirit of those great hostesses of the past still survives. It's the one part of France where the French themselves relax, and allow others to relax with them. They stop being top-down, and they stop looking down their noses at everyone else. They just wander about, talk friendly, and even start being nice to their children. *Quel triomphe!*



Drawings by Hilda Bernstein

It's Berkeley versus Las Vegas as a city weighs up its future

POLITICS
Paul Webster

ON the municipal billboards in Nice, the mayor, Jacques Medecin, appears arm in arm with a delighted old lady over a slogan promising Freedom and Security in the Mediterranean city.

The poster is part of a campaign to reassure a bewildered population after several years of underworld scandals directly touching the mayor's authority. At the same time, the posters underline his Right wing administration's claim that Nice is "free territory" in a hostile Socialist France.

In March, Nice's 350,000 population votes in the national municipal elections. It will decide whether it wants to continue with more than fifty years of Medecin rule through father and son or switch to socialism offered by one of France's best known popular authors, Max Gallo.

whose books concentrate on Nice's history.

The mayor, a disarmingly friendly former journalist who is now married to one of the Max Factor heiresses, was unshaken by the series of accusations against his administration which Graham Greene outlined in his pamphlet *J'Accuse*. When that came out last year from the author's home at Antibes, the flashy new Ruhl Casino, that was supposed to relaunch Nice's fortunes, had been officially closed after allegations of international underworld links seeking a Las Vegas style hold on the entire Riviera coastline.

But Mr Medecin's version of events is that he was the victim of political jealousy and that any criminal suspicions that might hang over Nice are irrelevant when compared to the reputation of neighbouring Marseilles where the Socialist mayor is Mr Gaston Deferre, Minister of the Interior.

"All the police forces in France turned over my city

hall without finding anything illegal," he said.

The rivalry between Nice and Marseilles, doubled by a conflict between two political systems, has much to do with the fact that Nice, far from wanting a graceful image created by English milords of the Victorian era, prefers to present itself as an aggressive stronghold of *laissez faire* enterprise values.

"I am a man of the street," is how Mr Medecin describes himself. "When I am attacked I reach for a knife." The reason why he is so often criticised, he claims, is because his attitude shocks the bureaucrats in Paris whose authority he rejects whatever the colour of government.

As an "Anarchist of the Right," he was sacked as Minister of Tourism by former President Giscard who considered him too insolent and he is still "on probation" as far as the Gaullist party is concerned. As a parliamentary deputy he votes

with them largely because of his admiration for the Mayor of Paris, Mr Jacques Chirac, some of whose ideas — particularly on street cleaning — he has adopted for Nice.

This independence increases the feeling that Nice, which has been annexed to France for only 122 years, is outside the national territory. The Mayor's own radio station, Baie des Anges, which transmits from the rooftop of his villa, sends out the regular message: "Nice must remain a free city," rather as if it had the autonomy of Monte Carlo.

At home the message is aimed at his vast network of support based on the 5,000 strong Friends of the Mayor movement which recruits as much from Nice University as it does from the flower market. Abroad, it is considered to be an essential message for attracting free enterprise capital, particularly American.

The mayor based considerable hopes of attracting invest-

ment on Miami scale but if the message does not get through to overseas investors a large dose of imagination will be needed. The boast by Mr Medecin that he would make Nice the "Las Vegas of Europe" has been wrecked by the closure of the Ruhl and the adjoining casino the Mediterranean Palace, bankrupted in a casino war.

What is desperately needed now is goodwill at home. Last month, the mayor made what seemed to be the first step towards some compromise with the Socialist Government by publicly committing Nice to backing regional development.

He went as far as promising Nice funds for poorer areas, a contradiction of his anti Socialist views. But behind the gesture may be a confirmation that he still believes that Nice's future can only be guaranteed by spectacular prestige projects.

The Regional Assembly, which will have enormous autonomy soon under new

decentralisation reforms, has yet to support Nice's candidature for the Summer and Winter Olympics of 1992.

Nice's problem is that it is obliged to look prosperous even at a time of serious slump," a city official said.

"It is a city created by wealth that has flown in from outside ever since English aristocrats and Russian emigres started the building boom. We have to give the impression that everyone would jump at the chance to come to the capital of the Riviera."

Even not counting the barred and chained Ruhl and the boarded up Mediterranean Palace, the Promenade des Anglais is giving the first sign of suffering from money scarcity, as speculative building programmes halt and facades look less than fresh.

But where the municipality has direct control there is an air of prosperity following the renovation of the central Place Massena, development of new pedestrian areas, smart shopping arcades, and

the construction of a £50 million Palais de Congres.

The Olympic project is crucial as it would underline both the area's excellent communications system and its attractiveness as France's best equipped leisure area. But any other long term decision making hangs on the municipal election outcome which, at the moment, promises to introduce a new era in which Mr Medecin's autocratic rule over the last 17 years will be severely cut back.

His opponents for the mayor's job, both from the Right and Left, have considerable local standing. Another of Mr Giscard's former ministers, Mr Fernand Icart, has based his campaign among the conservative population on the fact that his family has played a central role in the city's development for more than 200 years. For him, the Medecin family are upstarts who have ruined Nice's reputation by exposing it to scandal.

This Right wing challenge

is considered a trump card for the Socialist Max Gallo, who was advisor "to Graham Greene for *J'Accuse*." Nearly two metres tall, Gallo made his reputation as a writer of fictionalised histories of Nice. One of them is being filmed as *Boulevard Des Assassins*, where mayor startlingly like Mr Medecin is involved in what could be hellous goings on.

Gallo, who lectures at Nice University, has been a Socialist Deputy for a year. For the municipal elections campaign he uses more tact than as an author, not even referring to Mr Medecin by name and putting the scandals to one side. Instead he has based his campaign on the need for more care to be taken of Nice's underprivileged and the belief that the city should become a world intellectual capital. His opposition to Mr Medecin has been summed up as "Nice-Berkeley versus Nice-Las Vegas."

"The whole destiny of a city is at stake," he said.

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