

Drawing in the streets

By ERIN STEUTER

A band of anonymous artists is splashing colour on the sidewalks and construction boardings of downtown Halifax. The colourful graffiti consists of drawings and messages, and is courtesy of a group calling itself the Public Works Committee (PWC).

"The idea is to make art public," says a spokesperson for the group. "People don't get a big experience with art, so we are bringing art to the public—that's why we call ourselves Public Works."

Much of their work is intended purely to make people smile. Their latest effort is a silvery "Good Morning Halifax", but there is also an aspect of social statement to their work.

On the construction boarding surrounding the Founders Square development project on Hollis and Prince Streets in Halifax, they have written, "Housing before Commerce."

In this case the "site created the message," says the PWC spokesperson. "This was a very personal response to going and seeing those beautiful buildings being torn down and having the ugly office building put up. Especially when housing is so difficult to find."

The PWC expect that some people will think that their message is offensive, but says one member, "I think that inadequate housing is offensive. To put up yet another office building is offensive to people without homes."

Most people do not find the graffiti offensive. Graham Downey is the Alderman for Ward 1 in Halifax. He says that he hasn't heard any complaints about the latest of Halifax's "writing on the wall".

Sergeant MacKenzie of the Halifax Police Department says that Halifax is fortunate in that it doesn't have a graffiti problem.

"Occasionally Winston Churchill [outside the Halifax Library] gets painted, but otherwise we haven't

had any complaints," says MacKenzie.

Graffiti is classed as a crime of 'damage' and carries with it a summary fine of up to \$500. But MacKenzie says that they have had very few arrests.

One person who does object is the owner of Emberley Galleries on Barrington St. He says that graffiti is destruction of private or public property by uneducated and lazy people who have too much time on their hands.

"Social commentary has no place on the walls of public buildings," he says.

A spokesperson for the Eye Level Gallery in Halifax disagrees.

"Not only is graffiti interesting, but it is art," he says. "It is all the rage in the street culture galleries of New York. In Europe, they think of it as American aboriginal art."

The PWC say while they believe graffiti can be destructive what they are doing is not vandalism.

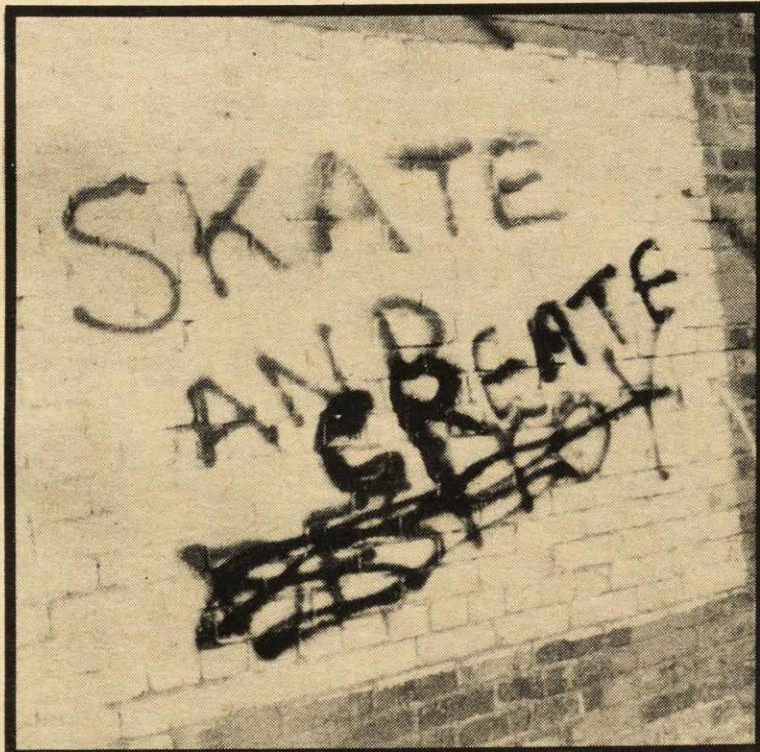
"A lot of graffiti is 'Jane loves Dick', that is purposeless, and that is defacement," says the PWC spokesperson. "In the PWC we insist on quality control. Preliminary drawings are done, and we choose the images very carefully."

The group paints only on construction boardings or the sidewalk. Said their spokesperson, "we restrict ourselves to disposable things—things that it doesn't matter if they are painted on."

"It is not our purpose to annoy people," says the PWC. "We want to make people smile, to make them think. They will be walking along with their heads down and all of a sudden—Wow—there's some color."

"I think that a lot of people would like to get a can of spray paint and do stuff like this. You get a feeling of creation, a feeling that you've done something worthwhile," said one PWC member.

When asked if the group has more projects planned, their spokesperson grins. "Sure," he says, "How does the saying go—'Coming soon to a sidewalk near you.'"



Skate and create is one of many graffiti slogans on the sides of Halifax's buildings. Teams of politically inspired artists are adding a touch of colour to the downtown area. Photo: Mary C. Sykes, Dal Photo.



Nova Scotia students lured to tour South Africa

By JOHN GUSHUE

The South African government is hoping students from Nova Scotia will visit the racially-segregated country through an international hostelling organization.

In the Fall 1984 edition of the *Nova Scotia Hosteller*, the International Youth Hostelling Federation lists South Africa as one of the countries open to travelling students. A "hostel on wheels" service brings interested students around the country and in neighbouring Lesotho, although no indications are given as to what participants can expect to see.

Nancy Jardine of the Nova Scotia branch of the Canadian Hostelling Association (CHA) says the purpose of the hostelling movement is to "promote interaction between countries, and to foster a better idea of . . . the common ground between people."

Geoff Martin, a fourth year political science student at Dalhousie University and chair of the Students' Union of Nova Scotia, doesn't think the South African government is interested in any such ideals.

"South Africa is having a currency shortage," Martin says, adding that the government has been lobbying travel agencies to attract foreign currency into their economy.

Other travel companies boycott South Africa because of the government's apartheid policies.

Jardine says the tour is not being arranged through the Canadian Hostelling Association, but through the country itself.

"We haven't received any specific information about it," she says.

Dan Bordeaux of the CHA office in Ottawa says South Africa, because of its apartheid policies, is not recognized as a full voting member of the organization, and is currently under review.

"We aren't supposed to support South Africa," Bordeaux says, saying that the CHA as a government-funded body should comply with

the federal government's anti-apartheid stand.

Bordeaux said he was surprised the *Nova Scotia Hosteller* printed the information about the tour.

Funding for the tour, as stated in the newsletter, was donated by the

Richard Sherman Fund of the IYHF, named after the founder of the hostelling movement. Additional funds were also obtained from Sweden, Finland, Denmark, Norway, Iceland, and the Federal Republic of Germany. □

Anti-apartheid leader says boycotts help black South Africans

By NAIRNE HOLTZ

"Apartheid is apartness," says Archbishop Trevor Huddleston. Huddleston, president of the anti-apartheid movement in the United Kingdom and recipient of a United Nations Gold Medal, spoke at Dalhousie Nov. 16. Through words and images Huddleston drew a horrifying picture of the oppression of blacks in South Africa for the MacMechan room audience.

"There is no other country in the world that makes race the determinant issue," said Huddleston.

South Africa's 4.5 million whites rule over 20 million blacks, 2.5 million coloured and nearly one million Indians. Blacks are only allowed to live in areas that government has deemed their homeland or "bantastan".

"This means that 75 per cent of the population live on 13 per cent of the total land area," he said.

Huddleston is critical of what the South African government called a "breakthrough in apartheid"—their new 1984 constitution. He says that although the legislature now consists of three chambers, white, coloured and Asian, the whites still rule South Africa.

"Whites still have the determining vote and the [white] executive president has a veto on all acts of

legislation," says Huddleston.

Outside political rights and in the realm of day-to-day realities, things are no better for black South Africans.

Every black over the age of 16 must carry an identity card, said Huddleston. "If one hasn't got it or if it's not in order you can be arrested for a criminal offence."

He says that in the last year alone a quarter of a million people were arrested for offences under the identity card law.

Huddleston says that other countries can improve conditions in the long run by boycotting South African goods.

When asked by a member of the audience if this policy would hurt black South African workers, he replied by quoting another member of the anti-apartheid movement—"We are suffering so much, let's have a few more sufferings and then getting it over with."

Recently Huddleston spoke with Margaret Thatcher and suggested the idea of isolating South Africa from world trade.

"Sanctions policies don't work," she replied.

"When you went to war with the Argentinians you got sanctions policies from all kinds of countries."

"Ah, but that was a war," Thatcher said.

"This is a war," Huddleston told her. □