

CUP Briefs

Force racist

by Heidi Modro

MONTREAL (CUP) — Chanting "Who do we want? Gosset. How do we want him? Dead!" over 200 demonstrators — many of them students from Toronto and Montreal — marched through a quiet residential district here on Remembrance Day to vent their anger over the shooting death of a black youth by a white police constable two years ago.

Anthony Griffin, 19, died on the night of Nov. 11, 1987 when shot by Montreal constable Allan Gosset outside a police station. Griffin, who was unarmed, had been stopped for failing to pay a taxi fare.

Organized by the newly-formed black youth group Also Known As... X (AKAX), the march made its way to the same neighbourhood where Griffin was shot two years ago on a rainy Saturday afternoon.

Marchers also protested the recent decision by a labour arbitrator ordering the police department to reinstate Gosset to the police force. The constable had been suspended without pay following the shooting.

"We want to make a statement," said AKAX member and Concordia University student Robert Douglas. "We've tried going through all of the normal channels to get our message across: Anthony Griffin's death was murder."

Douglas said his group wants to bring attention to the problem of racism within the police force and society.

"It basically comes down to the fact that the life of a black person just does not count as much as the life of a white person," Douglas said. "There's just no accommodation for black people in the traditional white justice system."

Lending support to the Montreal marchers were a busload of demonstrators from Toronto, where police have also come under attack after several shooting incidents against black civilians.

"The problem doesn't stem from the police officers themselves," said a member from Unity Force Toronto, a black rights group which sent a dozen people to Montreal for the demonstration.

"I see a link between the killing of every black person in this society because the system is racist and produces the conditions for oppression and injustice towards black people."

Dudley Laws from the Black Action Defense Group of Toronto said the history of police violence has not improved over the years.

"Police shooting and harassment may happen in different locations but it's always the same problem," he said. "Police feel they can shoot people at will because we have no political or economic strength."

Douglas said AKAX is planning to meet with other black youth groups in the city to decide what their next move will be to protest Gosset's reinstatement.

Woman beaten at party

by Wanda Stride

TORONTO (CUP) — A woman was assaulted by as many as five men at a Victoria College party earlier this month.

First-year student Heather Reid said at about 1:15 in the morning she saw several men punching a male friend. Reid said she tried to intervene, and a man threw her against a window. He and several other men punched and kicked her.

Reid was taken to hospital where she received three stitches in her head.

But a witness said the attackers did not seem to know the victim was a woman.

"I ran over and screamed 'you're beating up a girl!'," said second-year Vic student Tonya Reid, who is not related to the victim. She said the attackers then backed off and she dragged the victim away.

Party organizer Mike Thoms said things were pretty confused by that point.

"About three fights broke out at 1:15," he said. "I shut the music off and all my house mates and I were running around stopping fights."

Reid said the men were thrown out of the party, but no one phoned the authorities. She has filed a complaint with the police.

Reid said she thinks there should be more careful monitoring of who gets into house parties.

"I don't want them to ban alcohol or anything," she said. "But I want them to enforce showing student ID cards." She added residences hosting parties should force people to register guests, and they should limit the number of people admitted.

THE SPIRIT OF AFRICVILLE



Ruth Johnson, *Church Scene, Africville 1949*

by MareJo Boyce and Kirstie Creighton

Recent exhibitions at Mount Saint Vincent University have proven that the spirit of Africville is not dead. An art exhibit, celebration concert, and recent conference have raised many questions about the relocation of this Black community from the shores of the Bedford Basin 25 years ago. The main conference issues explored the reasons for the relocation in the first place and the retrieval of the land. Other issues included racism, housing, education, and employment, and their effects on the lives of many Black members of the Nova Scotia community.

The Africville Experience — Lessons for the Future reunited some of the key players in the decision made between 1964 and 1970 to discuss the problem of relocation 25 years after the fact. Alan Borovoy, a civil rights lawyer; Allen O'Brien, mayor of Halifax from 1966 to 1971; Gus Wedderburn, former president of the Nova Scotia Association for the Advancement of Coloured People; and Rev. Charles Coleman, a former pastor of Africville, were panel members. Their major conclusion was that if they had known then what they know now, their decision would have been different. They agreed that they did the best they could with the options they had. Staying in Africville was not an option offered 25 years ago.

On Saturday, a range of people from within the Africville community discussed *The Africville Response: how it felt then and how it feels now*. The basic feeling, even 25 years later, is one of

loss, anger, and injustice. The city of Halifax overlooked the fact that Africville was home to these people, and ignored their protests in "cleaning up" the city.

Saturday afternoon, a panel of Africville residents, descendants and people from the larger Black community discussed lessons to be learned from the experience. Education, in all aspects, was deemed the most important concern for the future. This included education for the children, public education concerning the Africville situation, and education to free our communities of racism. The panel agreed that many lessons had been learned. If faced with a similar situation, the Black community of Nova Scotia would not accept the injustice, racism, and ignorance that plagued the decision of relocation in 1964. Allen Borovoy recommended that fulfillment of the promises made in the days of relocation should be demanded.

The conference was a success. It brought Black and white people together in solidarity, understanding and hope for the future reunification of Africville.

The Spirit of Africville exhibit will tour across Canada in hopes of creating a greater understanding of the reality experienced by the people of Africville. As Ruth Johnson sang at the closing ceremony of the conference, "Africville, Africville, no more can I call you my home: Africville, Africville, I want to go home."

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25
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DOOR PRIZES
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8:00 FUNNY FARM
9:30 VACATION
11:00 EUROPEAN VACATION

CHEWY CHASE
LAMPPOON
CHRISTMAS
VACATION

A GREEN IS GREENER THAN A BLUE PRODUCTION