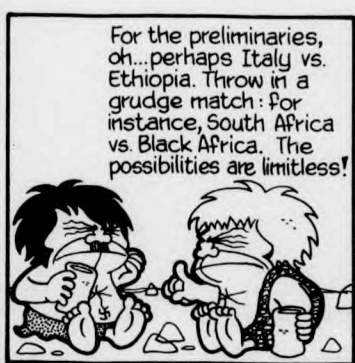
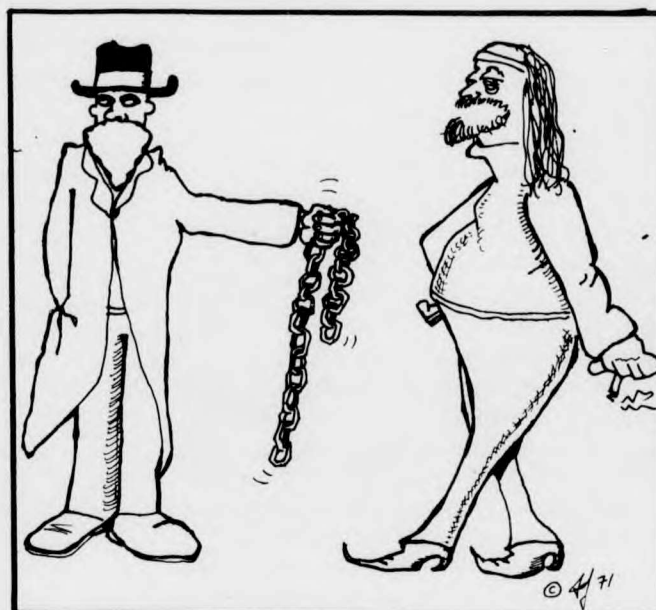
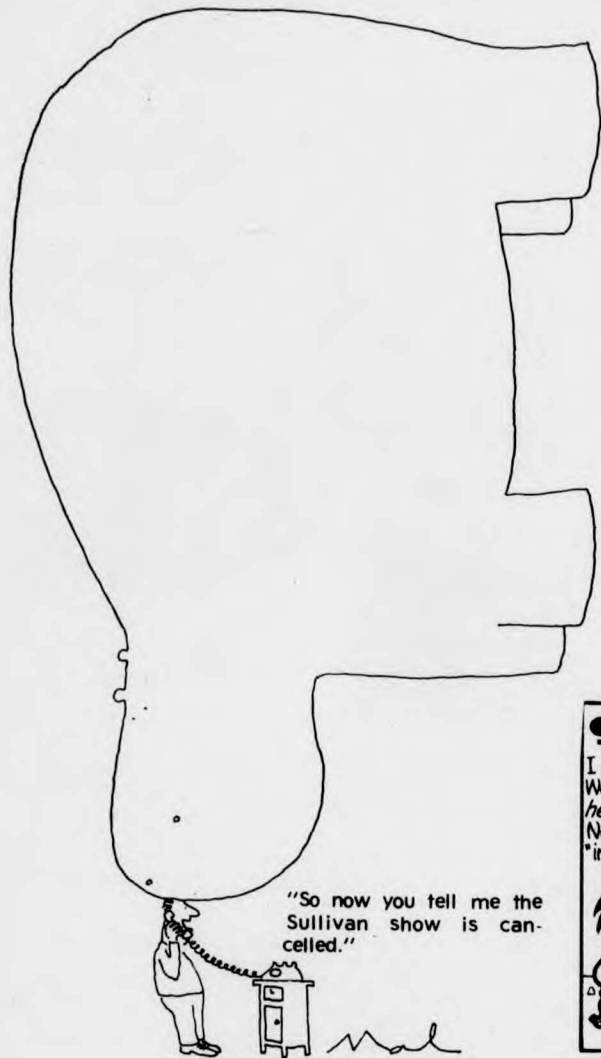
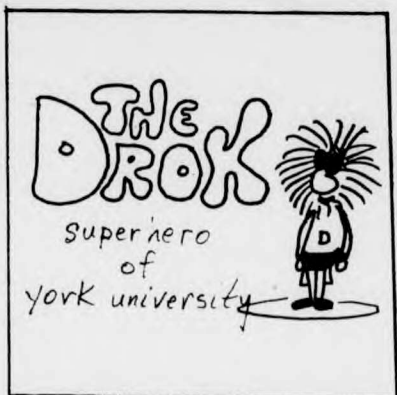


COMIX!



NAKED CAME POLONSKY:

By JOE POLONSKY

I can honestly and conscientiously proclaim to the world that I do indeed admire Gordon Sinclair.

But nothing including the latest in barbs from the latest of Canadian nationalists is going to make me proclaim my profound respect for Lloyd Robertson smiling his way through the National, or Kay Signorenson (or however you spell her name) benignly mumbling her way through her hosting duties on Weekend, the supposed 'bigone' in CBC public affairs programming. I shall not have my viewing tastes morally dictated by The Committee for an Independent Canada. Most countries at least have revolutionary nationalist movements. We have a committee.

And who leads the committee? Oh it doesn't really matter. Rightists, leftists, mystics, nihilists, all working together to create that great participatory democracy we've come to know and laugh at. It doesn't really matter what the economic commitment is, we're all in this together. It seems to me, that it all strikes a little too close to the Uncle Sam myth for comfort.

The Committee smacks a little too dearly of the same self righteous, non-ideological, chauvinism of our good friend across the border. The whole approach to Canadian nationalism appears to be a carbon copy of a nationalism which is floundering on its own right. And as for building my future on the stirring hope of a country run by Canadian capitalists, just ask a Maritimer or a Westerner whom he prefers, Canadian industrialists or American ones.

While thumbing through the latest copy of Saturday Night, I detected a slight bias in the magazine's contents. Every article was selling Canadian nationalism, in a scraping attempt not to be out-nationalized by that other stalwart of The North, McLeans: where monthly, the friends of Peter and Christian Newman can entertain you with stories they love to tell and hear at Canadian cocktail parties.

It all reminded me of a film I caught in the summer where someone from the secretary of state department went around asking famous Canadians what they thought of Canada. Robert Fulford, editor of Saturday Night said in effect, "Gordie Lightfoot gives

me the shivers." The state department was then going to take this tape and play it off the side of a bus in supermarkets across the country. It kind of gives you the shivers, doesn't it?

And I'm supposed to feel patriotic because over the past decade Robert Fulford switched from being an arty continentalist to an ardent nationalist. Man knoweth no fury like that of a chauvinist with a guilty conscience.

The best way to enjoy the Old Spaghetti Factory Restaurant is in a group. Alas, the hardest way to get into the place is also in a group. For the Spaghetti Factory is a very busy emporium and no reservations are accepted.

As the name implies, it is a converted factory. The walls are festooned with and occasionally even created of a wild collection of bric-a-brac and memorabilia, including old pictures, and signs, mirrors, fake plants, old lamps, dolls, barometers, even a baby carriage, and a brass bedframe hanging by the cash register. Spread around the floor are such oddities as old stuffed furniture, a dilapidated wheelchair, a rheumatic pump-organ, and a full-sized TTC Belt Line railway car.

In this atmosphere of unrestrained and irrepressible cheerfulness, the menu, not unexpectedly, consists solely of spaghetti served with a selection of sauces, plus one veal, and one steak dish. You can choose from rich meat, spicy meat, clam, mushroom (which are low on meat, spices, clams and mushrooms respectively), tomato, chicken liver (identified appropriately enough by a large chicken liver), burnt butter and mizithra cheese, and mixtures of two or four of the above. Generally the sauces need more body but are relatively tasty. A good, (but not distinguished by any means), group of entrees.

The salads, however, were fresh and crisp, and served in hearty helpings with quite tasty dressings. Another pleasant surprise was the

Is nationalism American?

While thumbing through the last few issues of the Toronto Star I noticed hidden amongst the odes to Walter Gordon, that Simpsons' was celebrating its 100th birthday. And Simpsons' was pleased to announce that it had received congratulations from its reputable competitors around the world such as Macy's, Gimble's and friends. Well, it made me proud to be a Canadian. And to celebrate its centennial, Simpsons' was

treating us not to just one page of ads in the Star, but half a dozen, with special flyers to boot. It was also treating us to carnival-like activities all the way from Sherway Gardens to Yorkdale. Instead of good old Dionysian orgies, we are granted permission to blow our ids plunging through the panty hose at Yorkdale.

If we are to be serious in de-Americanizing our culture there are some hard decisions to be made. And inevitably the fat cats are going to have to lose if we are to start to build a Canadian consciousness suitably appropriate for the year 2000 and suitably commensurate with the shift to cosmic consciousness. We must demystify what the American culture has long covered up, the dialectic between economics and consciousness so that we can reap the benefits of the paradox or secularization in an attempt at spiritualization.

The way to create a higher order of culture is not to turn Toronto into a lower order New York where all those who previously couldn't make it in New York are now given instant status by McLeans. It is really no longer necessary for an artist in a McLuhan age to make his pilgrimage to the big city for cultural enrichment. Communications are advanced enough, and the big cities congested enough that talented people could stay at home.

We should capitalize on the return to nature phenomenon by economically and culturally promoting an exodus back to the smaller cities. Most cities in Canada now have either universities or community colleges and these should be forced to open their doors for the benefit of the entire community. Funds should be made available so that a host of community newspapers could be set up to counter the absolute drive of the Thompson chain. The Age of The Global Village de-accentuates the need for the big, overcrowded, overpolluted city, and facilitates the reemergence of the plain, but now extraordinary village.

So, let us de-Americanize Canadian nationalism. Let us rather look forward to a higher level of nationalism, based on a restructuring of our economic possibilities and an opening of our cultural potential, beyond the borders of Metro Toronto. Much, much further beyond.

★ GOOD EATS ★ The Old Spaghetti Factory

hot loaves of San Francisco sourdough bread served on a board with a bread knife and crocks of butter and garlic butter. The dessert was a refreshing spumoni ice cream, and coffee and tea are served in practical thermal vases.

Unwittingly, one of the members of our group ordered the crisp salad bowl, naively believing it to be a glorified tossed salad along the lines of everybody else's. But stand back; it is a massive main-course-plus affair composed of a mountain of romaine and head lettuce, liberally laced with cheese cubes, garnished with tomatoes, olives, anchovies, and sausage slivers, and slathered with your favorite dressing.

Just about everything (except the veal, steak, and salad special) is \$1.90 or \$1.95, and this includes the bread, salad, main course, dessert, and coffee. Now that's a-value! But, you guessed it, The Old Spaghetti Factory is licensed. Their wine list is very good, considering, and the prices are reasonable. One corner of the old factory is a rollicking, Old West Bar (replete with a row of barber chairs along one wall). At least in there, you can't hear the radio station sound track that regales the rest of The Old Spaghetti Factory's many patrons.

If you're going, remember, there are better places to get spaghetti, but the atmosphere is great for a party. So take your group on an 'off-night' if you want to get seats. And the next regular column will probably include some good pasta fare to compensate for the Factory's limp offerings.