

## News commentary:

# Wounded Knee participant jailed

Frank Blackhorse is a Sioux Indian from South Dakota. He is incarcerated in the Fort Saskatchewan penitentiary — behind a prison wall and a veil of media of silence that has deepened over the 14 months of his imprisonment.

The real reasons for his jailing are political and complex, but the only thing he has been found guilty of is possession of one marijuana cigarette, easily making him the person held longest in Canadian jails for what

is now considered a minor offence.

Blackhorse, whose Sioux name is Shunka Wakan Sapa, is a member of the American Indian Movement (AIM) and was one of over 400 native people involved in what some call the "occupation" of Wounded Knee, South Dakota, in 1973. But the Sioux nation claim they have never ceded their lands and the real "occupation" is the century-long administration by the American government of Sioux lands in violation of treaties signed between the Sioux and American nations.

Charged, as were most of the Wounded Knee defenders, with a variety of criminal offences, Blackhorse fled to Canada, entering the country legally.

Unable to deport

Blackhorse the Canadian government sought to try him on several minor offences evidently in the hope a conviction could be obtained and he could then be quietly deported. This would have averted the need for the American authorities to demand the extradition of Blackhorse — which they have yet to do — and prevent unfavourable publicity resulting from the Canadian government acting openly as an agent of the American authorities against American native people.

Arrested in February, 1976, with AIM member Leonard Peltier, who has since been extradited despite tremendous public protest in both Canada and the United States, Blackhorse was charged with possession of firearms and possession of marijuana. The Crown withdrew the first charge but, despite a non-guilty plea on the second charge, he was found guilty and sentenced fourteen days in jail.

In what his lawyers call a violation of all civil liberties guaranteed under the Canadian Bill of Rights, Blackhorse has been held without bail while awaiting his appeal on the marijuana charge. He has been subjected to harsh treatment in Fort Saskatchewan jail, was for some time held in isolation, and is now kept in the maximum security unit despite technically being held on a charge that is minor under Canadian law — at least when whites are the accused.

Blackhorse does not view his treatment as unusual. Repres-

sion of native peoples by the authorities is very usual in both Canada and the United States, he says. In that respect, his treatment is typical of what Indians experience at the hands of white "occupiers" — especially for native peoples who refuse to give up their land and culture. The massive non-attention by the media to the Blackhorse case is indicative of the indifference of the media to the daily denial of civil liberties to native peoples.

A defence committee has been formed to focus public attention on Blackhorse and the treatment of native peoples in general. The committee is also hoping to raise funds to hire lawyers for Blackhorse's immigration hearings. Ultimately it is hoped that sufficient pressure

can be brought to bear upon the Canadian authorities to stop the harassment of Blackhorse and to allow him to stay in Canada.

Blackhorse's life, argues the defence committee, would be threatened if he were handed over to the FBI. Last year, for example, Anna Aquash, an AIM member, was found dead while in FBI custody. The FBI claim she died of exposure after an escape attempt. A pathologist hired by Aquash's parents thought otherwise: he thought she probably died as a result of the bullet-hole he found in her head.

Cheques and requests for further information can be sent to:

Blackhorse Defence Committee  
Box 264, SUB II  
U of A T6G 2E0

## Concert coming

L'Ensemble Vocal Michel Gervais, directed by Michel Gervais, a senior voice student in the U of A's department of music, will hold a concert, April 13, at Victoria High School, 10210 - 108 Avenue, Edmonton. The concert begins at 8:30 p.m.

Presented will be 20th Century music with works from Canada, England, France, Hungary, Spain and the United States. Included will be a cycle using a professional dancer.

And featured will be a Spanish work, sung in Spanish and accompanied by a classical guitar.

Tickets — \$3 for adults and \$2 for students and senior citizens — are available at the university department of music general office, at the Bay stores, and at the Carrefour.

## Unity forum

The United Canada Movement, a non-partisan organization recently formed to promote discussion on the subject of Canadian unity, will sponsor a forum at 7:30 p.m. Tues, April 12 in the Jubilee Auditorium.

The forum, entitled "Crisis in Canada: The Challenge of Unity" will feature speakers Harold Cardinal, native rights spokesman, Andy Russell, pioneer Alberta conservationist, Jean Forest, a member of the Alberta Human Rights Commission and Dr. J.T. Bugeaud, president of the Alberta French-Canadian Association.

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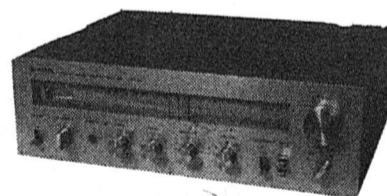
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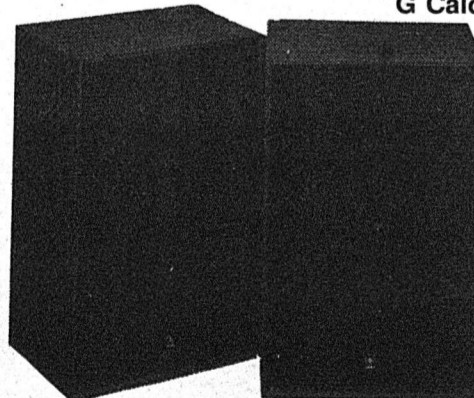
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