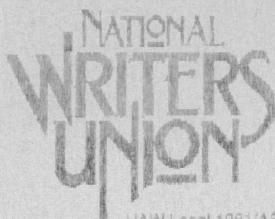


7.

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UAW Local 1981/AFL-CIO

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617/497-7193
October 17, 1994

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Organizing VP

Judith Cooper
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Executive Director

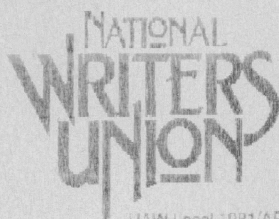
Mayor Reeves, Vice-Mayor Russell, and Members of the Council:

I have a speaking engagement this afternoon at Suffolk University Law School, from 5-6:30 to be followed by a reception from 6:30-7:30. I will get away as soon as I am able so that I may attend the meeting of the Cambridge City Council and have the accompanying testimony entered into the record. I realize that I may arrive after the matter has been considered, and therefore I take this advance opportunity to share our position with you.

Sincerely,

Bob Chatelle, Political Issues Chair
National Board Member

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October 17, 1994

Mayor Reeves, Vice-Mayor Russell, and Members of the Council:

My name is Robert B. Chatelle and for twelve years I have resided at 296 Western Avenue in Cambridge. I am currently the Political Issues Chair and a National Vice President of the National Writers Union, a labor union representing nearly 4,000 freelance writers. We are proud to be affiliated with the AFL-CIO as Local 1981 of the UAW—United Automobile, Aerospace and Agricultural Implement Workers of America. The Boston Local of the National Writers Union has nearly 800 members, and a substantial portion of these members live in Cambridge.

I testify today because of our concerns about attempts to shut down an art show by Cambridge artist Hans Evers at the gallery at 57 Inman Street, and because we wish to discourage attempts to impose restrictions on that gallery or upon the Cambridge Arts Council. The National Writers Union, by our constitution, "is committed to freedom of expression in all media, including print, film, and electronic media of any sort."

The City of Cambridge is under no obligation to support the arts. But having chosen to do so, you cannot now impose content restrictions upon the Arts Council. You are, in fact, prohibited from so doing by the First Amendment of the US Constitution. You can't fund art without funding freedom of expression.

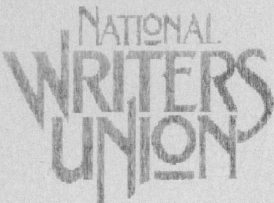
We're confident that you will resist all efforts to shut down the show, either permanently or temporarily. We're also concerned, however, about the proposal requiring that future peer-panels considering work for Gallery 57 contain as a member at least one employee who works at 57 Inman Street. At first glance, this sounds reasonable. We ask you, however, not to enact this proposal because it mandates an unconstitutional interference with the peer-panel process.

The essential problem of public support for the arts is protecting art from political interference and meddling. To insure that decisions get made for artistic and not for political reasons the peer-panel system has been developed. Decisions about what art to fund or what art to exhibit in publicly owned space should be made by working professionals, not by elected officials or by political appointees.

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Clora Naylor
William Noyak
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Gerald Posner
Barbara Raskind
Piri Thomas
Milton Viscusi
Dan Wakefield

Mada Pallante
Executive Director

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- Burton Chrenkoff
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- Maxine Kumin
- Dave Marsh
- E. Ethelbert Miller
- Jessica Mitford
- Glenn Naylor
- William Stryker
- Tillie Olsen
- Grace Paley
- Midge Pierce
- Gerard Pinter
- Barbara Raskin
- Pat Thomas
- Milton Viorst
- Da. Wilkeliety

Maria Pallante
Executive Director

Whenever a public-agency has shown disrespect for the peer-panel process, it has done great and irreversible damage to itself.

Therefore, I implore you to leave the process alone. Adding someone without demonstrated qualifications is a naked attempt at censorship. Such a policy will never hold up in court. And I guarantee you that if instituted it will be legally challenged and that the National Writers Union will participate in that challenge to the full extent we are able.

There is no need for the Cambridge City Council to do anything whatsoever. There is no "problem" to be solved. The controversy was not caused by the Cambridge Arts Council or by Hans Evers—an intelligent man, a gifted artist, a devoted teacher, a loving parent, and a decent and honest citizen of Cambridge. The controversy was caused by the rash actions of one city Councilor who appointed himself chief of the morality police and who took it upon himself to break the law and vandalize Mr. Evers property. The controversy has been fueled by the lowest, vilest, least professional and most unscrupulous members of the local media. Surely the Cambridge City Council has sufficient courage and integrity not to be intimidated by the likes of Howie Carr and Joe Fitzgerald.

We who are writers, artists, musicians and other cultural workers are given very little respect. Perfecting our craft takes many long years of intense dedication. We work very hard and put in very long hours. Most of us must hold down a full-time job in addition to our real work in order to feed ourselves and to pay our rent. An alarming number of us have no health insurance. Because we are poor, we have little power. And yet we are the favorite scapegoat, blamed for every imaginable social ill. The attacks come from all parts of the ideological spectrum. The right attacks us for being immoral; the left attacks us for being politically correct. But our aim is to promote neither correct morality nor correct politics. Our aim is to free and nurture the human spirit and we shall continue to do so with or without your support.

Sincerely,

Robert B. Chatelle, Political Issues Chair
National Board Member

S-449

Consent Comm. #7

Comm. was received from Bob Chatelle
of the National Writers Union regarding the
art exhibit at Gallery 57.

In City Council October 24, 1994

Placed on file