

# kick it over



A Social Anarchist/Anti-Authoritarian Quarterly Publication • Winter 1999

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**About the Artist**  
Gail Schilke is a writer, poet and artist living in New York City. Her work accompanies the feature Seven Deadly Assumptions inside.

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- Anarchist Art
- The City In Anarchy
- Profile: Art Bartell
- Who Profits From Prisons
- Looking For An Anarchist Living Room

## PLUS:

- Letters, In Brief, World Without Borders, Poems & More

6519





**The Living Theatre production of Utopia 1995, photo by Paula Court**



**The Living Theatre Production of Waste directed by Judith Malina photo by Gianfranco Mantegna**



**The Living Theatre Production of Waste directed by Judith Malina, photo by Gianfranco Mantegna**



Kick It Over is a  
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## To The Reader

It's been three years since the last issue of Kick It Over. I'm not at all happy about that, nor am i happy about the fact that it took me as long as it did to realize that i wasn't going to be able to pull another issue together by myself. Eventually, however, i did realize it, and began looking for someone to pass the magazine on to. I am pleased with the response from the folks in Guelph, once they decided they were interested in taking on the magazine-i think they'll do a good job, both of putting out an interesting and informative magazine, and of getting onto a regular schedule. I trust readers will be patient with them while they learn the ropes.

I greatly enjoyed my time as editor of Kick It Over. It's very exciting to be making contact with anarchist and anti-authoritarian activists and thinkers from all over the world, to learn first hand about the struggles and projects that people are working on, and to explore with others some of the new ways of thinking about anarchist ideas and activities. I also enjoyed "meeting" so many interesting and challenging people ("meeting in quotes because in most cases these were meetings through the mails only, occasionally over the telephone, rarely actually in-person meetings).

I want to thank so many people and groups, it's impossible to name them all. There's a small core of folks that have given me help with things here in Toronto over the years, not just the former collective members, and i've appreciated all of what you've done. Everyone who wrote letters or notes of praise or encouragement with their subscriptions or donations-it can easily feel like the magazine is just going out into a void, and your notes remind me that there are real people out there reading the thing. While a few publications have dropped Kick It Over from their mailing lists due the long delay, many more have kept in touch-thanks. I hope that those who have canceled Kick It Over exchanges will resume them once they see that the magazine is back on track. And to every activist or project that has sent news of what they're doing, thanks for keeping in touch.

As i said, i'm not at all happy about not bringing Kick It Over out for so long, and i apologize to all those who have been wondering about their subscriptions, or where their donations went, or who wrote and never received an answer. Bringing out KIO #35 depleted not only the magazine's bank account, but also Maria's and my personal account. While the fundraising letter was very successful (we paid off all the bills owing from #35, and have a substantial fund to pass on to the new folks), it didn't ease the sense of depression and burn out that came with our financial problems. It was only moving from part time to full time work that made me feel some hope about our monetary situation. Ironically, of course, it was the resulting lack of time and energy that led me to realize that i could no longer continue with the magazine, and that i needed to find someone else to take it over.

Anyway-thanks again to everybody, it was great while it lasted.

- bob melcombe

## Letters

Dear Reader,

Welcome to the letters section. Letters are where it is at. Kick It Over welcomes and encourages your letters. We believe that the anarchist press should act as a forum for debate and discussion, not as a vehicle for soap boxing. Let's leave that to the politicians and corporate media. Consistent dialogue among our readers, our writers and our selves, is a vital part of this goal. We would like to print as many letters as we can so please keep your comments concise, preferably under 400 words. In good faith we reserve the right to edit letters for length. Please let us know in writing if you are opposed to having your letter printed, otherwise we will use our discretion. As it has been quite some time since the last KIO came out, the letters section for this issue is somewhat sparse. Together, however, we can develop a dynamic and relevant letters section in the future. Write us!

**Kick It Over Collective all-stars.**

Dear KIO,

Our world has a deep history of passionate struggle and hope towards someday achieving an all-encompassing freedom. All those who in the past or present work towards a global equality and liberty are connected. *Radical feminists, the French bohemians, that Spanish CNT-FAI, Black liberationists, the Gay Liberation Front, class struggle warriors, the organizers, activists, theorists, and writers of today.* These groups and individuals are strung together by a shared determination for a future we have yet to realize. It is ever important that the revolutionaries of today recognize their link with the rebels of yesteryear.

These histories of resistance have been robbed from us. They have been butchered and reassembled by revisionists wishing to stifle, scapegoat, alienate and ultimately silence those who threaten their places of power within the white supremacist capitalist patriarchy. However, as the ruling classes have and forever will find, there is no gag big enough to silence the voice that cries out for freedom; it will resonate and be answered in solidarity by those who

share its passion. The memories of those who at one time resisted, timeless as they are, will be cherished and kept alive by those who continue this tradition.

Emma Goldman is such an individual; hidden and disfigured by a crooked storytelling which passes for history. We must refuse to let her influences and inspiration die. To allow her history and the history of resistance to be repressed is to betray the will to overcome all tyranny and oppression.

To keep our history alive is to deny censorship of the past. It is to continue our struggle and inspire future generations of revolutionaries. **OUR HISTORIES MUST NOT, WILL NOT, BE STOLEN FROM US.** On June 27, remember Emma Goldman, anarchist, feminist, lover, revolutionary. Keep the spirit of resistance alive. Yours in struggle, **Eugene Kovoeos, DeWitt NY, USA**

Dear KIO,

I would like to talk to you about the racially motivated sentencing practices, specifically in the State of Alabama, yet I am certain its the same or similar throughout the USA. It is my belief that the people, African Americans specifically, need to know and understand such practices. I do not pretend to even scratch the problem with this letter, but it is one small step.

I sincerely believe that the sentencing laws instated today, are just one of the many means used to further the enslavement and genocide practiced by Euro Americans upon the African people that survived the earlier practices of re-enslavement and mental and spiritual genocide (primarily) after reconstruction in this country.

I am 48 years of age, and in 1986, I was tried and convicted in Mobile County, Alabama, for a murder that was committed when I was in Cleveland Ohio. I was sentenced to life without parole (LWOP). I have the hope of someday getting this

conviction overturned and a new trial, however, the question of my innocence or guilt is not the focus of this communication. Rather it deals with the LWOP sentence itself.

My sentence was enhanced by the use of four prior 1965 convictions, that occurred when I was a fifteen year old man-child, while the state was still governed under Jim Crow law, and racial segregation was in full effect in Alabama. These prior convictions were three burglaries (a year and a day, each), and assault (six months county jail).

In Alabama, to enhance a sentence to LWOP, one must be convicted of a Class A felony and must have been convicted on at least three prior felonies, regardless of where or how remote in time, as long as such would constitute a felony under the laws of Alabama today.

I was a child, never certified as an adult, as required by law, but was treated as one by Euro Americans. In todays USA, Jim Crow is outlawed, and racial segregation is (allegedly) illegal. Yet how can racial segregation be an illegal system, but not acts under the (then) racially segregated court system be used today, to further the injustice of the present court system! If the acts of the courts under that system be legal for enhancement purposes under todays system, then it must follow that any law declaring the past system of racial segregation illegal is nothing but a farce, a sham; a mockery in the face of the people. In the hearts, minds and souls of Euro Americans, segregation, then must still be the system and Jim Crow (alive & well) must still be the law!

Please do all you're able to help me and countless other Africans outlaw the acts committed under the system that is allegedly outlawed and ruled illegal. **THANK YOU SO VERY MUCH.** The struggle continues, **Umar Ibn Africa J.M. Young #090679Holman 3700 3D7 Atmore, AL 36503 3700 USA.**



**Dear KIO,**  
I read about your journal in Propagandhis latest album Less talk more Rock! and as I support the views presented in the Album, I would like to find more material on the issues presented. Could you please send me some info on your journal? Or a subscription form? Also any info you might have/ addresses for any Australian organisations?? **Christine Carey, Campbelltown, Australia.**

**Whats up,**  
I got your address from the new Propagandhi CD. Im a 16 year old anarchist, gutter punk, Canadian. But I live in fucking West Fargo North Dakota, USA. I am in a punk band called Martian. We have a 7 out. And we just recorded again. Cuz were going to be on a comp. On Coolidge Records. But any way, I was wondering if you could send me some stuff that you put out. I would really appreciate it. Or just write back. Talk to ya later. **Jordan S. West Fargo, ND, USA.**

**Dear KIO,**  
It was very, very nice to see your letter. It is always useful and inspirational to us to make contact with new people, organizations and papers. It was especially interesting that you're from Canada, where we don't have regular contact.

Here I send you the latest issue of our info-sheet called Torpedo News Flash. There you can find some information about our recent activities. But Ill use this opportunity to tell you a bit more about the group. The group (its full name is Revolutionary Group Torpedo) started officially in January 1994, but be had been holding joint meetings and discussions since late 1992. Since we began our work we have produced six pamphlets (translations of anarchist pamphlets never translated into Serbo-Croat languages), which have been distributed for free around the former Yugoslavia (Slovenia, Croatia, Macedonia, Serbia). We were able to produce these pamphlets only with the great help of comrades from Australia, USA, UK, and Greece. We have also produced 13 issues of Torpedo News Flash, our English language info-sheet, which we distribute world wide for free. Also, we have produced 16 issues of our Serbo-Croat language info-sheet called Torpedo Informator, of which we distribute a few hundred copies all through the former Yugoslavia for free by our own forces. We took part in producing a paper, Preko Zidova Nacionalizma i Rata (Over the

Walls of Nationalism and War, see KIO #35) which was written by libertarians and anarchists from all over the former Yugoslavia, and printed by Italian comrades from the group Germinal. And distributed for free through all parts of our former country.

I cant forget to mention that we produced a lot of leaflets and some stickers which we distributed all through our city. We also distribute leaflets from other anarchist or libertarian groups. (We are calculating 10,000 different leaflets distributed.) Our last big action was free distribution of the pacifist and anti-militarist paper Prigovor produced by a womens rights group from Belgrade called Zene u Cmom (Women in Black).

Right now we are mainly focusing on producing new pamphlets (we already have a few more translated pamphlets, and one written by us), and on trying to connect and federalize all libertarian and anarchist organizations in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (ie. Serbia and Montenegro). We also help other groups. We send them all our releases, but also we support them with office supplies which we have more than we need.

But now we find ourselves in deep, deep trouble. It is, of course, a matter of money. Thanks to our free and voluntary work we are in a position that we desperately need any financial sign of solidarity from abroad. We are so poor right now that I don't even know where I'll find the money to pay postage for this letter.

If you are able to help us with some financial support, that would be much more than great. Please don't send any checks, POs or International Money Orders, because our state will find a way to rob us even there. Cash is the only thing which is good here. If you wish to send something to us, then hide it well, between the pages of some silly TV guide or sports magazine (political papers are suspicious and regularly opened), and post it by printed matter mail. That's the safest way for sending money, we discovered recently. You can use this address because it is quite safe. Please do not write the name of the group on the envelope.

**Milan Djuric, M. Velikog 12/10, 11300 Smederevo, Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.**

**"Any movement that does not support their political internees is a sham movement" Ojore N. Lutalo**

I bring you greetings today on behalf of myself and other political prisoners, prisoners of war and politically

conscious brothers and sisters who are interned all over this country.

I also bring you our collective rage, and it is this rage that I wish to focus on in this missive. By virtue of your participation I am comfortable that many of you understand the oppression and genocide that people of color have endured in this country. Our history of struggle began when the first settler set foot on the continent of Africa and that same struggle continued through every second of every minute of the lives of Amerikas slaves. My comrades and I are a proud part of this struggle, which is born of rage reaching back to my ancestors. We are born with blood in our eyes.

It is because of this blood that I have been held in a sensory deprivation cage in the infamous Management Control Unit at New Jersey State Prison. As of last February 4, I am beginning my tenth year living in isolation. The people in power understand clearly that this blood in my eye represents a lifetime commitment for revolutionary change.

I also have another kind of anger- and that is my anger at the lack of support for us and the lack of activity by so-called progressive people out there in what I call minimum custody.

Word reaches us of this program or that event. We hear of great efforts attempting to raise the consciousness of the public. While none of us minimize the relevance of this kind of work, many of us feel abandoned in these cages. Unfortunately, most often when we do hear from folks at all, its because you need a statement or something else from us, not because you are offering us anything.

We get little or no material support in the way of food packages, stamps, needed clothing, or such luxuries as newspaper or magazine subscriptions, or radios. It seems to me that any movement that doesn't support its warriors is a sham. Make no mistake about it, we are here, I m here, because of the war you profess to be in.

Our anger is also directed at the lack of revolutionary action. That the Red Army Faction destroyed a newly built prison in Germany caused us great joy. That action also reminded us of the bitter taste of a movement which has abandoned not only us, but any committed action which could make a real difference. That the isolation torture chamber is completed and occupied in Florence Colorado is bewildering to those of us who still live this war every single day of our lives.

Be clear that I do not belong here.

That I am here because of who I am and what I believe. And that is exactly why your committed involvement is as important to you as it is to me. Angela Davis put it well. She said that, If they come for me in the morning, they'll come for you at night.

Another man also said it equally as well. Pastor Martin Niemoller noted that: In Germany, they came first for the Communists. And I didn't speak up because I was not a Communist. Then they came and got the Jews. And I didnt speak up because I wasn't a Jew. Then they came for the trade unionists, and I didnt speak up because I wasn't a trade unionist. Then they came for the Catholics, and I didnt speak up because I was a Protestant. Then they came for me, and by that time, no one was left to speak up. **Ojore N. Lutalo, CN-86559860, Trenton NJ MCU.**

**For more information about Ojore N. Lutalo and other political prisoners and prisoners of war in the United States, contact Youth Action Movement/Jacksonville Anarchist Black Cross, 3628 Park Street #20, Jacksonville FL 32205 USA.**

#### **Hallo, What's up?**

I'm Wally rat, I am an anarchist punk from Berlin Germany. I am very much into individual anarchy, earth liberation, and anti-work!!! I'm against all the consumerism and materialism, bullshit, of this "society". I'm against society, technology, and "modern civilization", which are all plagues and crimes against life. I reject money and having to conform to society. I think we have to survive without money. Soon there will be no cash money anymore, just one plastic card for everyone, and anyone who refuses that will be unable to survive in this society. Resist or die! We must go back to nature, and learn how to live with few money (or no money at all). So, how is Canada? Is it possible to squat there, to get free food (or cheap), to live in the woods etc.? Are there any real anarchists, nomads, travelers or back to nature groups left? I am prepared to die for what I believe in, and I mean it! I'm gonna take my dog and go live in the woods. I am looking for other people with similar ideas. Are there any left? We must drop out, stop supporting this sick society!!! Even if they get me anyway, even if they kill me anyway, I must try at least!! We must reject money, and all so called "values" of this society. Maybe I can't survive too long in the woods, but I would

rather die in the nature. I don't want to live and die in this sick, putrid, rotting society. All the "modern" civilized world is a fucking nightmare!!!! It is better to go back to the Stone Age than to live in George Orwell's "1984" police state! It's gonna be worser soon, so I'm going to live in the woods, mountains, or any places on this earth with real nature, not poisoned by the technology infected sick society!!!! I'm for life!!!! We must stop working in this society, we must go back to nature, and live in, with and for the nature. There is no other chance, to me.

**Otto Wally Valentin, Berlin Germany.**

#### **Dear KIO,**

My name is Pablo and I live in San Diego.

People think of me as an anarchist because the way I act and because of my Nihilistic attitude, but I dont think I am because a real anarchist knows his shit, you know, the inside shit about the government and organization. I want to be able to be wise about what goes on within the bounds of Authority (I know a lot already but knowing more won't hurt none). And I want to be able to justify my thoughts, actions, mind set. I hate our government, I hate any establishment that will tax its people to support warheads that won't ever be used, and even when they are used, what good will it do to the people who paid to have them made? And that's just the tip of the iceberg. But most of all I want to be able to spread the word!!

**Pablo Fabian, San Diego CA USA**

#### **Dear Editors.**

I am incarcerated in Texas, under the governments final solution. The rich get richer and the poor get ten to life, AKA politically correct genocide. Keeping the child bearing age minorities locked up while their Biological Big Bens tick on, and on, and on& A recent study done by the great States own Parole Board, showed that women receive harsher sentences [than men] from the very same courts and Judges for the very same crimes. If you could give me any addresses in this area of persons willing to come and teach or instruct I will write and do what is necessary to get them in here, thanks.

**Barbara Berg, Amarillo Texas USA**

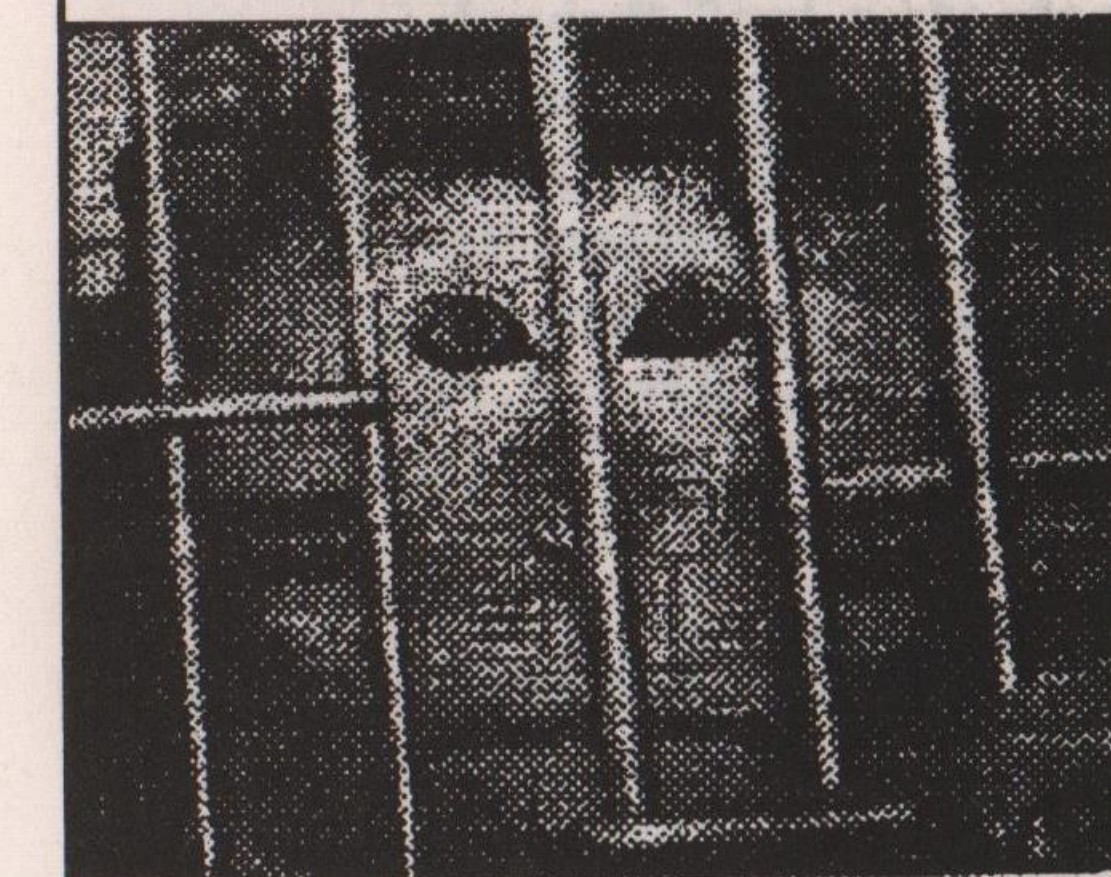
#### **Dear KIO,**

It seems that anarchism in some form seems more sensible, or at least the more necessary than ever. From the point of view of any likely immediate future, the perspectives that anarchism affords to

current forms of government and proposals for reform are truly essential, now that every thought seems to go toward loss of personal autonomy and loss of rational control over social forces. This loss is always under the mask- the wrong if believed statement- that greater control is being achieved.

**Albert Moritz, Toronto ON Canada**

### **ONE DAY PEOPLE WON'T HAVE TO RESCUE ANIMALS FROM PRISON...,**



### **...ONLY TO END UP THERE THEMSELVES**

#### **Support Animal Liberation Prisoners**

For current listings of ALF prisoners in North America and around the world, contact the North American ALF supporters group, Box 69597, 5845 Young St., Willowdale, Ontario. Canada M2M 4K3  
<naalfsg@envirolink.org>

## **Who's Emma**

Volunteer-Run Space

#### **Radical Books DIY Records**

661/2 Nassau  
St.  
Kensington  
Market  
Toronto,  
Ontario  
(416) 603-2557  
fax: (416) 603-0114





# I n B r i e f

If you or your group have any announcements that you think people ought to know about then give us a shout, and we will gladly help spread the word. Up-coming conferences, special anniversaries, forums, publications, proposals for direct actions, weddings, free-skools, projects of all descriptions are welcome. **Drop us a note via e-mail through <mbernhar@uoguelph.ca> Make sure you write "KIO Announcement" in the subject line. Or write to us at Kick It Over, Box 1836, Guelph, ON, N1H 7A1, Canada. Or fax us at 519-822-7089.** Or heck, just drop on by, we're friendly!

MAL (Estonian Anarchist Movement) is the movement of Estonian anarchists. The purpose of MAL is to be an info agency and to facilitate contacts with foreign anarchists and other revolutionary persons or organizations. **Contact addresses: MAL, Vilja 8a-55, EE-2710 Voru, ESTONIA. EDL (Estonian Democratic League), Sutiste 34-6, EE-0034 Tallinn, ESTONIA. RED EMMA (anarcha-feminists), Box 449 Tartu skj, EE-2400, ESTONIA. ANL (Anarcho-Nudist League), Box 449 Tartu skj, EE-2400, ESTONIA. AKF (Anarcho-Communist League) Box 449 Tartu skj, EE-2400, ESTONIA.**

Spunk Press is an archive of anarchist, alternative and underground material located on the Internet. We aim to help writers produce or convert their work, so it can be distributed over this global network. But we want to reach out into the world of BBS's and those without Internet access or even computers, so we are also trying to distribute material on diskette and paper. We seek contributions (Via E-mail or diskette) of 'zines, pamphlets, manifestos, books, articles, interviews, posters, reviews; in or out of print in any language. Spunk press is run by an editorial collective, with Members world wide, who make decisions on an open mailing list forum. **The collective can be reached at <spunk@lysator.liu.se>. If you want to receive regular information about Spunk Press send a message to**

**<spunk-info-equest@lysator.liu.se>. Or you can write to Spunk Press, 17 West Montgomery Place, Edinburgh, Scotland EH7 5HA, UK or in the USA at, Spunk Press c/o Practical Anarchy, PO Box 179, College Park, MD. 20741-1079, USA. The archive can be found on the World Wide Web at <www.spunk.org>**

Books to Prisoners, is a non-profit project, run entirely by volunteers, whose purpose is to fulfill the reading needs of prisoners. We do this by responding to book requests mailed directly to our organization by prisoners across the United States. The service is free of charge. Books To Prisoners was founded in 1979 by Left Bank Books Collective in Seattle WA, and is currently the largest and oldest organization of its kind serving the nation's imprisoned individuals.

We strongly believe in the idea of books as learning, mind-opening tools, enabling people to explore new possibilities in their lives. It is our hope that prisoners will benefit from our program by raising their political and cultural awareness and making their time on the inside more productive. Any donation of funds or relevant books to assist us in our work will be tremendously appreciated.

We offer a variety of subjects from which prisoners may choose. Popular non-fiction requests are dictionaries and thesauruses, African-American history, Native-American studies, GED materials, vocational/technology, politics (particularly anarchism), philosophy, art and drawing, psychology, languages (particularly Spanish), and health and fitness. A similarly wide range of fiction styles is also requested. Legal materials are generally not available, as we can not possibly hope to cover the myriad state and federal codes in depth. The only other subjects we do not cover are the major Western religions insofar as there are numerous religious-oriented prison projects to which prisoners have access.

To donate books please take a look at the subjects listed above. These are the best books to send. We often have to dispose of well meaning donations consisting of old school textbooks, obsolete material and ancient almanacs. We can only use paperback books, No hard cover please. **Please direct your questions to 206-**

**322-2868.**

**The address to make donations is Books To Prisoners, c/o Left Bank Distribution, 1404 18<sup>th</sup> Ave., Seattle, WA, 98122, USA.**

**If you are imprisoned and would like to receive books, please write: Books To Prisoners, c/o Left Bank Books, 92 Pike Street Box A, Seattle WA. 98101 USA.**

The New Jersey Social Ecology Discussion Group meets every third Sunday of each month except December in Hackensack NJ. **For further information contact Hackensack New Jersey Greens, PO Box 1645, South Hackensack NJ, 07606. Or call (201) 883-1531.**

OPIRG Peterborough Ontario is holding a Public Interest School, Jan 30-31 1999. Workshops include, how to do research on corporations, activism on the Internet, non-violent civil disobedience, starting a 'zine, youth activism and corporate rule, Fair Trade campaigns, and corporate profiles. Also on hand will be the Raging Grannies, delicious food, an Open Stage and FREE CHILDCARE. **For more information contact OPIRG at, 705-748-1767.**

Tuesday February 9<sup>th</sup> 1999, anarchist forum in New York City. "Anarchist Agenda for Today and Tomorrow." To be held at the Brecht Forum 10<sup>th</sup> Floor, 122 West 27<sup>th</sup> Street between 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> Avenues, Manhattan. Sponsored by the Libertarian Book Club. **For more information call 212-979-8353.**

OPIRG Brock is hosting a Public Interest School on the weekend of February 6<sup>th</sup> in St. Catharines ON. **For details contact 905-688-5550 ext. 3499.**

If you have access to the Internet, there is a cool community events listing site set up that you can access to find out what's going on, or to leave a message about what is going on near you. **Check out http://events.tao.ca.**

Global Street Party! A proposal for a day of carnival, chaos, protest and action in the financial centres across the Globe has been called for June 18, 1999 by activists from a diversity of groups including: Reclaim the

Streets, London Greenpeace, Earth First! Green Student Network and Partizans. This day of action is aimed at the heart of the global economy, the financial and banking districts. This proposal is made in the spirit of strengthening our international networks, and follows on from the success of the Global Street Party on May 16<sup>th</sup> 1998, when over 30 street parties took place in 21 different countries. These parties coincided with the G8 meeting in Birmingham, UK, an annual gathering of the leaders of the 8 most industrialised countries, to promote globalisation, free trade and corporate rule.

This year, between June 18<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> the G8 will be meeting in Köln, Germany. The idea is to take global action to coincide with the first day of this meeting. Actions would be autonomously organised by local groups in the spirit of international solidarity, by people who recognise that the global capitalist system, based on the exploitation of people and the planet for the profit of a few, is the root cause of our social and ecological troubles. **Visit <http://events.tao.ca> for a fuller explanation and how to get more information, or just do it.**

Arm the Spirit is an autonomist/anti-imperialist information collective based in Toronto, Canada. Our focus includes a wide variety of materials including political prisoners, national liberation struggles, armed communist resistance, anti-fascism, the fight against patriarchy, and more. We regularly publish our writings, research, and translation materials on our listserv called ATS-L. **For more information contact, Arm the Spirit, PO Box 6326, Station A, Toronto ON, M5W 1P7, Canada. E-mail, ats@etext.org.**

For those with E-mail accounts and a desire to discuss anarchist and lefty politics, here are some Internet list servers that you might want to check out:

Anarchy Discussion, subscription address: <anarchy-list-request@cwil.nl> organiser: <jack@cwil.nl>.

Anarchist Research, subscription address: <listserv@bred.univ-montp3.fr>. (send: SUB RA-L first name last name, in the body of the message) This list is moderated, and was started because the Anarchy-List can have a rather low signal-to-noise-ratio at times. Organiser: Ronald Creagh <rcreagh@alor.uviv-montp3.fr>.

A-INFOS, subscription address: <majordomo@tao.ca>. (send: subscribe a-infos, in the body of the message). News, reports and analysis of any subject of interest to the anarchist community. Items

are generally meant for inclusion in anarchist publications, and should be considered public domain.

A-INFOS-D, subscription address: <majordomo@tao.ca>. (send: subscribe a-infos-d, in the body of the message). Discussion on what is posted to A-INFOS.

Squat link, subscription address: <pepe@iww.org>. Ask to be placed on the squat link list server.

Left Wing Discussion List, subscription address: <listserv@cmlsa.berkeley.edu>. (send: sub left-l first name last name, in message body). The left list is an uncensored forum for the discussion of building a broad democratic left in the United States, and with in the world that can seek fundamental change in our economic and social system. Organiser: Nathan Newman <newman@garnet.berkeley.edu>.

Race Trader mailing list, subscription address: <majordomo@acpub.duke.edu>. (send: subscribe fightwhite, in the message body).

**Remember when you hear them begining to say Freedom, look carefully - see who it is that they want you to butcher**  
**- Alex Comfort**  
**from Song of Lazarus**

For discussing the need and methods for destroying whiteness, white skin privilege and the construct "white race". Organiser: <jschultz@acpub.duke.edu>.

Riot-L, subscription address: <listserv@bum.ucsd.edu>. (send: subscribe riot-l first name last name, in the body of the message). Includes articles from Reuters capitalist news service which deal with resistance to oppressive forces such as imperialism, patriarchy, capitalism and white supremacy etc.

Mujeres Libres, subscription address: <majordomo@tao.ca>. (send: subscribe mujeres libres, in the body of the message). This is a list for anarchist women. It is a space to meet, exchange information and learn about each other and each others struggles. It is not concerned with womens issues, but all issues that affect us. We wish to live in a free and equal society, one in which property and privilege, class and injustice, sexism and racism and all other oppressions have been

consigned to the history books.

Drop us a line and let us know if you have found these addresses useful, because we could include more of this kind of stuff in the future. <mbernhar@uoguelph.ca>. Good luck and drive carefully! Old school anarchist discussion can still be had in the letters pages of Kick It Over, PO Box 1836, Guelph On, N1H 7A1, Canada.

The anti-Fascist Forum network (AFF) is an info-group that collects and disseminates information, research and analysis on fascist activity and anti-fascist resistance. **E-mail: <aff@burn.ucsd.edu> Web site: <http://burn.ucsd.edu/~aff>. Better yet, subscribe to their Journal, ANTIFA-FORUM, 4issues for \$20. Write AFF, PO Box 6326, Station A, Toronto ON, M5W 1P7, Canada.**

Visions from Within, is dedicated to providing a network of opportunity and an environment of healing, hope, acceptance, love and support. By igniting the flame of self-esteem with in Native American inmates, tribal groups and individuals, we hope to make a positive difference.

As we begin to explore the rich heritage of culture and spirituality that is the root of all indigenous people, we find the missing pieces ourselves. Through the healing modality of our art and hand crafted items, we, as individuals, are beginning to find our way back to the red road, one step at a time. It is our prayer that each and every one of our affiliated artists continues to find strength and courage to turn their lives around and become a living symbol of gratitude to the Creator. It is our intent to help expand the feelings of connection to the one source of all that is and empower individuals while helping to preserve our cultures, our traditions, our languages and our spirituality. **Joan Cox, 305 Vineyard town center #256, Morgan Hill CA, 95037. 408-776-0536.**

February 6<sup>th</sup> of each year has become the International Day in Solidarity with Leonard Peltier, wrongly imprisoned American Indian Movement activist. Peltier



supporters have held marches and rallies on this day in many places internationally in the past. It does not matter where in the world you may be, it does not matter how small or how large a city you live in, please join us this year in this day of solidarity. Even if it is but a small hand-full of people who will come out on that day in your location. **Please contact LPDC at <lpdc@ldir.net> If you are willing to help organize in your location. Or The North West Leonard Peltier Support Network, PO Box 5464, Tacoma WA, 98415-0464, USA**

The Anarchist Black Cross Federation Starter Package includes material you will need to start an ABCF collective. Collective members are required to know it prior to joining. The package includes: the ABCF Guide to Political Prisoners and Prisoners of War, ABCF Constitution and Structure, PP/POWs supported by the ABCF, ABCF fold out flier, Building PP/POW Subsistence Programs fold out flier, Notes of the October 1995 Conference when the ABCF split, and a full set of ABCF Updates. The starter package available for \$10USD, cash is best, checks/money orders made out to Neil A. Batelli. **3628 Park Street, #20, Jacksonville, FL, 33205, USA**

The Anti-Racist Action Network consists of more than 120 anti-racist/anti-fascist groups in North America united by 4 principles:

1. We go where they go. Whenever fascists are organizing or active in public, were there. We dont believe in ignoring them or staying away from them. Never let the nazis have the streets
2. Dont rely on the cops or the courts to do our work. This doesnt mean that we never go to court, but we must rely on ourselves to protect ourselves and to stop the fascists.
3. Non-sectarian defense of other anti-fascists. In ARA-Net. we have lots of groups and individuals. We dont agree about everything, and we have a right to differ openly. But in this movement an attack on one is an attack on us all.
4. ARA-Net. Intends to do the hard work necessary to build a broad, strong movement against racism, sexism, anti-Semitism, homophobia, discrimination against the disables, the oldest and the youngest of our people. We intend to win.

**Contact ARA in the USA at: Columbus ARA, PO Box 82097,**

**Columbus Ohio, 43202, (614) 424-9074, <ara@coll.com> or in Canada at: Toronto ARA, PO Box 291 Station B, Toronto Ontario, M5T 2T2, (416) 631-8835, <ara@web.net>. A subscription to On the Prowl, news bulletin of ARA-Toronto is available for \$10 from Toronto ARA.**

An amazing, empowering, and awesome lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and questioning youth conference! The largest peer-run LGBTQ youth conference in the country! YLP will take place in San Francisco on July 10-12. We expect 600 youth to attend this conference. YLP provides a space for LGBTQ youth to network, gain organizing skills, meet new people and have lots of fun. This year we will also be adding a variety of workshops for adult allies and youth service providers. The conference is organized by the Lavender Youth Recreation and Information Center (LYRIC) with the support of the National Youth Advocacy Coalition

(NYAC) and the San Francisco Unified School District. For more information and registration for YLP 99 check our web site at <www.incite.org> or call the YLP line at 415/703-6150 ext. 25 YLP Internship now available. A paid internship for the YLP coordinator is available now. From April to July! Call Zak at LYRIC 415-703-6150 ext. 21 for description. Deadline is 3/31/99 Don't miss the opportunity to be part of the YLP Steering Committee Gain valuable organizing skills, work closely with other queer youth leaders and organizers. Put together a conference that will change the life of LGBTQ youth across the nation Call Zak at LYRIC 415/703-6150 ext. 21 to join the Steering Committee. If you are Interested in presenting at the conference, leading a caucus or speaking at YLP send us your address and we will send you a Request for Workshops Proposal (RFP) **Phone: 415/703-6150 ext. 25 Fax: 415/703-6153 email: ylp@lyric.org YLP c/o LYRIC 127 Collingwood St. San Francisco, CA 94114**

## C o n t a c t s

Marvin Henry is a prisoner in Texas who is looking for individuals who can help him promote his name and address in publications, bulletin boards, electronic bulletin boards and the Internet for pen pal ads. His interests are in science, technology, medicine and nature, exploring and learning. "I believe in living a life that adds to the world around me rather than takes from it, and I am, by reputation, good at it." Please use his mother's address, as the best way to get mail to him. **Marvin Henry, c/o PO Box 3333, Grapevine TX, 76099, USA**

Stephen L. Moore: I am seeking a female (race not important) Pen Pal or friend to correspond with. I am forty-three years young. I am a Black male. I have a Master of Arts degree in sociology. I am 6" tall and weigh 200lbs. I will answer all letters I receive. **Stephan L. Moore, Central Prison, 1300 Western Boulevard, Raleigh NC, 27606, USA**

Otto Valentin: I am looking for contact with Punks, Anarchists, Primitivists, Survivalists, Back to the Landers, self sufficient groups, people who live in log cabins in the mountains/woods, in old abandoned buildings and vehicles, in squats, on squatted land etc. I'm 29 years old, male, individualist anarchist and Punk,

have lost of interests and I'm looking for friends and contacts in Canada: freaks, outcasts, rebels, unusual strange weird radical people. **Otto Valentin, Schillemannstrasse NR 39, 10437, Berlin, Germany**

Wayne Lassell: Greetings! I write you from my prison cell at Pelican Bay State Prison in California. I am kept inside my cell up to 23 hours daily and have very few means of stimulation. Is there any way you could publish my name and address for Pen Pals? I have no one to write, and this favor would be heart felt beyond what I could tell you. **Wayne C. Lassell D71733, PO Box 7500 B4-111, Pelican Bay State Prison, Crescent City CA, 95531, USA.**

Its hard being an anarchist in [I cant make out this word] land. Radio+TV sux so bad here. Is Canadian TV rife with commercial vomitose? Can you list my address anywhere for pen pal contacts? Please do so **Hyrax, 1451 Lawrence Pl., Jacksonville FL, 32211, USA.**

Could you please put my name and address in the back of one of your future publications so I can get in contact with some Pen Pals, Id really appreciate it. Robert I. **Haynes 979436 IMU F-106, PO Box 900, Shelton Washington, 98584, USA.**

# World without borders

## Czech Anti-Fascists Under Attack

On Friday November 27<sup>th</sup> a group of at least five Czech neo-nazis physically attacked two FSA-IWA members in the Prague club Campton. The attackers are well known for their fascist convictions. Our comrades were attacked in the pub, taken by surprise by the group of neo-nazis, who arrived after they were informed by one of their sympathizers that Michael Patera was present there. After he received several hard strokes, he was injured and subsequently shocked. It had been made clear that the neo-nazis wanted to physically eliminate him. He had been cornered, and he used his legally owned automatic pistol. The most aggressive fascist was shot three times, and the others withdrew for a moment. Michael quickly managed to find an escape route, but was arrested shortly afterwards by the Police.

Michael and several of our comrades were already attacked by the same neo-nazi combat group six months previous. That time they avoided confrontation only thanks to the fact that they were not encircled.

After a short Police investigation and consultation with the special Anti-extremist Political Police Department, Michael was accused of, "attempted murder motivated by ideological conviction," under paragraph 8 to paragraph 219 of the Penal law. The next morning he was sentenced by the district judge to, "preliminary custody," to await trial. The average time spent in this custody before the beginning of trial is one year. Police interpreted the whole incident as, "ideologically motivated," attempted murder, committed by a well known, "leftist extremist," against a group of innocent ordinary, "young men". Michael is therefore endangered by a sentence of twenty-five years in the hardest type of

prison. Not one of the attacking neo-nazis face, even minor charges.

Just to illustrate the strength of the Czech neo-nazi movement, on the same day, they organized one of their many meetings combined with a festival of white music. More than ten neo-nazi musical groups and three hundred fascist attended the gig that was held near Pilsen. Assault Police troops did not intervene, although anti-Semitic and fascist slogans were publicly shouted and fascists were giving the nazi salute, which are serious offences according to Czech Penal law. One month before, for the first time since the 1930s, a fascist organization presented their candidates in municipal elections. Members of the Patriotic Front got more than 1% of the popular vote, which means more than 50,000 people.

According to Police information, there are at least 30,000 organized neo-nazis and active supporters of fascist ideology in Czech Republic, 3,000 in Prague alone. The Prague group of FSA-IWA has 10 members. According to the official statistics from the Ministry of Interior Affairs, more than one third of policemen are members or active sympathizers of neo-fascist, racist and extreme nationalist organizations. Sympathy, co-operation and also direct complicity of numerous police personnel with neo-nazis are well known facts.

Michael Patera is one of the most active and dedicated Czech class struggle anarchists and active revolutionary anti-fascist. Many times he has risked physical retaliation in direct actions against neo-nazis, and in defense of the anarchist movement. He is the editor of the FSA newspaper, The Voice of Direct Action, and a very active person in the field of international co-operation, especially with Eastern Countries.

Solidarity and Support is urgently Needed!

The financial resources of the Czechoslovak anarchist movement are exhausted after the campaign to support Vaclav Jez, an anarchist militant who was jailed after the same type of incident in July 1997. We raised more than 70,000 CZK (equal to 2,300 USD). The total costs of Vaclav's defense are estimated to be higher than 130,000 CZK (\$4,300 USD). It means almost 20 average monthly worker wages. We are not able to collect this sum again in

such a short time.

It is absolutely indispensable for Michael to have a good defense lawyer, because the police and capitalist justice system is biased. Costs shall be approximately the same as in the case of Vaclav Jez.

We ask all revolutionary anti-fascists and anarchists all over the world to support our imprisoned comrade. We, Czechoslovak class struggle anarchists and revolutionary anti-fascists, are under constant and terrible duress of a growing and very aggressive neo-nazi movement.

We are in a desperate situation and we can not manage the whole problem without efficient international solidarity. We received, in fact, absolutely no solidarity help from abroad in defending Vaclav Jez, whose case was reported in many foreign anarchist newspapers including Black Flag, Direkte Aktion etc. We can not go on like this, because at the moment we have no resources.

FSA-IWA Prague group is coordinating Michaels defense campaign. Please:

1. Write letters of solidarity to Michael at Michael Patera (1976), PO Box 5, 14057, Praha 4, Czech Republic.
2. Send letters of protest to your local Czech embassy. Demand the release of Michael Patera, born 1976, arrested 22, 11, 1998 in Prague and accused of Paragraph 8/1 to 219, from preliminary custody. Demand the dropping of the charges because he was brutally attacked for his anti-fascist and anarchist convictions, and used his gun in the act of legitimate self-defense.
3. Organize protest pickets.
4. Organize benefit gigs and collections to raise money for Michaels defense fund, spread this information world wide.
5. **FSA Praha, PO Box 5, 15006, Praha56, Czech Republic. FSA IWA International secretaries private number: Tel. \*42040)-290-006-917, Hotline: \*42040) 602-224-747. Alternative Hotline \*42040) 602-828-361, E-mail: <sam20uj@xpsu.fp.slu.cz>. The police often check our mail, please use the phone numbers and the E-mail addresses if possible.** Thank you.

Reprinted and edited from Anti-fa info bulletin, December 10, 1998



## Minnehaha Free State Raided By Police

The Minnehaha Free State/Liberated Zone in Minneapolis MN was raided the morning of Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> of December at 4am by 600 state troopers in what Minnesota Governor Arnie Carlson has called the largest law enforcement operation in MN history. Police fired tear gas into all seven houses occupied by a coalition of Big Woods Earth First!, the American Indian Movement (AIM), and members of the Mendota Mdewakanton Dakota community. Thirty-three people were arrested. Many of the protesters were tortured with pepper spray and pain compliance holds. One protester who was locked by the neck to a tripod had his life endangered when the police overturned the tripod without taking any precautions to protect him. Media were blocked from the site by a wall of riot police, and there are extensive reports of police brutality.

During the raid various items sacred to the Mendota Community were destroyed. The sacred fire was extinguished in violation of federal laws that protect Native American religious expression. The sun dance tipi was destroyed, and the sweat lodge was burnt down.

The protesters occupied the homes to block a new highway project intended to take a few minutes off the driving time from downtown Minneapolis to America's largest mall, The Mall of America. The highway will cut through a park, destroy homes, and one of the last remaining examples of old growth Oak Savannah, as well as sites sacred to the Mendota Mdewakanton Dakota community. Over the course of the last four months the Mendota have been fighting for federal recognition as part of their efforts to protect the oaks and a sacred spring from destruction. Sunday the 22<sup>nd</sup> of December was the protesters 133<sup>rd</sup> day of continuous occupation, believed to be the longest running urban occupation of its kind in American history.

**For more information call the Big Woods Earth First! hotline at**

**612-362-3387. Your support is needed to help with the legal defense and to keep the resistance alive. Checks made out to MNRAG and mailed to Big Woods Earth First! PO Box 580936, Minneapolis MN 55458-0936 would be greatly appreciated.**

Reprinted and edited from a-infos, December 23, 1998

## Russia/ Krasnodar: Repression of Anti- Fascists

The Russian region of Krasnodar is ruled by fascists, mainly supporters and members of the Russian National Unity. Mr. Kondratenko has long been active in taking repressive measures against anarchist there. Mostly they have been trying to intimidate anarchists, for example by sending FSB agents to follow local activists. We see the recent arrests as part of a fascist plan to rid the region of all radical, anti-fascist elements.

On November 28, 1998, Gennady Nepshikuev (17), Maria Randian (23), and Honza Musil (22) were stopped and arrested for possession of an explosive device. They are all being charged with articles 222 and 223 of the Russian Criminal Code, preparation and possession. This is a five-year sentence. Probably they will also be charged with transportation, adding three more years. If they are charged with terrorism, article 205, this will become 20 years.

We have reason to suspect that they are being framed by the Police. Maria, originally from Irkutsk, was well known to the local authorities, and had previously been expelled from the university in Krasnodar for anti-fascist activities. Gennady is of mixed nationality and Honza a foreigner from Czechia. They are most likely being singled out by the police not only for their political beliefs but for other reasons as well. Comrades who knew these people well were shocked by the

accusations, and do not believe them capable of the charges against them.

Following these arrests, other anarchists have been taken in and interrogated by the FSB. These have been strenuous interrogations video-taped by the authorities. We are afraid for the rest of our Comrades in the area.

The Russian authorities have been extremely tough in prosecuting acts of direct action. In previous cases, most still pending, the authorities have been pushing for terrorism charges when people have committed crimes against property, mostly statues. We consider damaging a public monument to be an act of vandalism, not terrorism. Terrorism, of course, is a crime committed most frequently by the state, followed by extreme nationalists.

We would like to stress that these Comrades are in rather difficult circumstances. They will not get a fair trial, and have no money for a defense. We are trying to help them as much as we can, and appreciate any support. **For more info contact <ralf@anarch.free.de>.**

Reprinted and edited from a-infos, December 23, 1998

## Ukraine State Celebrates Makhno's Birthday

On December 9-10, 1998, the State University of the city of Zaporozhye, together with the local authorities organized a celebration in honour of the anarchist revolutionary Nestor Makhno, in his birth place Gulyai-Polye. It consisted of a scientific conference organized by the University and a "people's party" organized by the local authorities.

**cont'd on page 25 .....**

# SEVEN DEADLY ASSUMPTIONS

by Tom Martin

As the close of the (arbitrary) millennium approaches, the doomsayers have grabbed the media spotlight to grab the imminent End - of something; perhaps just of History or the Cold War, or perhaps Life on Earth, or the Universe itself.

A similar panic seized Europe in the 990s, but nothing much happened in anno Domini 1000, unless it was Leif Ericson's landfall on Newfoundland. This time, however, Chicken Little may be right. Not that Christ is about to appear in glory on the Mount of Olives, nor even that the human race faces impending extinction due to ozone depletion or global warming. Something big is, however, definitely in the works, and the news is not necessarily bad. Western civilization, that vast perversion of human nature, is moribund, and cannot be expected to survive much longer.

This pernicious culture began to infect Europe and the Middle East about three thousand years ago. In the past five centuries it has metastasized across the face of the planet, and even into space. Its icons are the Golden Arches and the Crucifix, to name only two. Even the worst disease runs its course, however, and if it does not kill you it makes you stronger. Humanity's immune system began to fight back some two centuries ago, with the development of classical anarchism and early feminism — byproducts of French revolutionary fervor. Mary Wollstonecraft and William Godwin make a good metaphor here: their daughter created Frankenstein. In succeeding decades Darwin theorized about evolution, and the science of ecology emerged. Nietzsche signed God's death certificate. Late Newtonian physics, faced with the impossible paradox of entropy, lurched over an invisible line into a probabilistic quantum universe. All the key assumptions of Western civilization had been questioned by the early twentieth century. The West tried to save itself with its usual tools — violence and repression; the result was the two most horrible wars in history.

In the past few decades, however, radicals — by which I mean, those who make it their life's work to "subvert the dominant paradigm" — have been able to get the dismantling project back on track. The process was not well understood until Thomas Kuhn published

his *Structure of Scientific Revolutions* in 1962. Since then the idea of "paradigm shift" has been taken up by all manner of folks, and used to explain the wrenching and not-so-wrenching transformations taking place in all fields. Though it has become rather a trendy buzz-phrase, "paradigm shift" really is the best explanation for what is happening to the Western and Westernized world here at the end of the second millennium.

Eurasian humanity has experienced only one primary paradigm shift in its known history — that is, a shift so profound that it altered literally everything within human consciousness and rendered the past incomprehensible. This was the Neolithic Revolution, or the invention of agriculture and settled communities some ten or twelve thousand years ago. Since then we have passed through many secondary shifts: the fall of Rome, the Renaissance/Reformation, the Newtonian scientific revolution. These were secondary because they did not transform the fundamental assumptions of our culture. They were pendulum swings between two complementary world-views, the *yin* and *yang* of the West. One represents individualism, materialism, and change; the other emphasizes community, the spiritual, and stasis. Though we tend to notice only the differences, these two strains in Western thought share a great deal of common ground, and are both based on the same fundamental errors. The current paradigm shift is *primary* precisely because it transcends this dichotomy. But it also includes the realization that the survival of humanity depends on making this particular shift, and making it soon, and doing it *right*.<sup>1</sup>

Seven is a magic number in occult Christianity, and figures largely in the apocalyptic prophecies we are now bombarded with. Perhaps it is fitting, then, that we help the West "go smash" (in Henry Adams' felicitous phrase) by outlining and debunking its Seven Deadly Assumptions.



**1.** We can begin with where we came from, and where we are going: an inquiry that the West approaches in terms of *competition*. The Western tradition includes highly developed concepts of both co-operation and competition, though in the past five hundred years the latter has driven the former far into the outer darkness. The idea that a healthy economy — and by extension, all progressive and productive human relations — require competition has now become so pervasive that we can call it a fundamental assumption. For more than a century now Darwin's theory of evolution has been used to justify competition in all its guises: the fit survive and reproduce by winning the competition for scarce resources; should it not be the same for human society? This was not, of course, what Darwin was really saying; but Social Darwinism took over and perverted his message. As all anarchists know, there is a far better theory of evolution. It was developed by Peter Kropotkin, who demonstrated that the most successful organisms and species are those who learn how to co-operate with one another and how to connect symbiotically with their environment. In *Mutual Aid* Kropotkin applied the idea to humans. Like almost all other animals, people are naturally social, and we avoid struggles within the group because they negate the benefits of living together. Co-operation always was and still is the most vital relationship among people, but it has been stifled by the gradual emergence of capitalism and the state, and their accompanying coercive hierarchies.

Evolution may be considered the reverse of entropy: it involves the creation of order out of chaos by drawing in and organizing chaotic matter/energy. A living organism (however defined) survives to reproduce when it can reverse more entropy than its activities generate. Evolution strives constantly to improve that ability; the most "highly" evolved creature is one that makes the most efficient use of its ambient matter and energy. The secret is to achieve an equilibrium state, not to extract so much from the environment that one destroys it. Co-operation, not competition, is the method that works. If this view is correct, it certainly knocks *homo sapiens* a few branches lower on the tree of life. Nearly all creatures do a better job of symbiosis than we do.

Of all the classical anarchists, Kropotkin is the one most likely to carry over as a founder of the new post-Western paradigm. The others either ignored ecological and holistic concerns or, like Marx, assumed that "Man" is destined to conquer "Nature." While not entirely free of nineteenth-century scientific optimism, Kropotkin understood that humans are inextricably part of the natural world, and that our best hope for survival and growth lies in going with the natural flow instead of fighting it. That means resistance to artificial power structures that dominate through competition, and turning instead to small but diverse co-operative communities resembling ecosystems — which is what human societies are, after all. This means that we should reject

government and other institutions not because they are complex, but because they pervert. It must be understood in the new paradigm that power and domination are really about simplicity and uniformity, not complexity or diversity — see George Orwell. We will have to reconsider, then, what we mean by "complexity" and "simplicity," since the most successful organisms and ecosystems (assuming we can differentiate the two) are the most complex. We assume, for example, that human beings are more complex than rain-forest fungi. But is that really the case, considering that toadstools enjoy a far more successful ecological balance than we do? The redefinition involves changing how we think about boundaries. Where is the line that separates the organism from its environment? Is there one at all?

**2.** We might date Western civilization's "wrong turn" to a fateful hypothesis proposed 2500 years ago by the pre-Socratics of Greece: the *separation of humans and nature*. Trying to understand why people seem so different from all other species, these philosophers declared that they had found a fundamental dichotomy in nature: one set of rules applies to us, another set to everything else in the universe. Most of the world obeys *physis*, or natural law, dictated by the very structure of the cosmos. Humans, however, are the only species capable of thinking about those laws, questioning them, and occasionally finding ways to get round them. Thus we make our own law, called *nomos*. The two are not fundamentally opposed, since humans are certainly products of nature; but they are *different*. Ever since, most Western philosophers (except the Cynics and their successors) have assumed that we can get rid of neither *physis* nor *nomos*, and must work to reconcile them. Here is the philosophical source of the *hubris* and overweening pride that has characterized Western attitudes ever since. There is nothing wrong with manipulating nature to some limited degree, to make our lives more comfortable. But believing that we can do this without consequences, because different rules apply to us, is deadly. Respectful and cautious farming or hunting are one thing; hydrogen bombs are something else altogether.

If we are to make it through the next millennium alive, it is painfully clear that we must overcome this most pernicious of all false dichotomies. At present only anarchists, ecofeminists and some radical ecologists are making the effort. Unfortunately even radicals cannot see eye to eye on this life-and-death matter. Social ecologists and deep ecologists, for example, seem to vilify one another even more than they admonish the capitalists. No one really wants to give up *nomos* altogether and go back to living in caves. The issue is, *how much* of it must we surrender in order to assure our survival? All ecological radicals and most anarchists agree that we must abandon much of our technology and the scientific, rationalist attitudes that go with it. But how much can we keep? If the correct answer is *none of it*,

are we prepared to listen, or would we rather go extinct? Logic and reason are great triumphs of the human spirit. So are polio vaccines and windmills, on a different level. Most of us probably want to keep them. But what of television? Can we keep it if we stop using it as an addictive drug, purge it of its mindless profit-mongering content, and power it with solar panels? Or is television intrinsically anti-ecological? What about computers, clocks, clinometers, conveyor belts, chain saws, can openers? What tools and technologies can be made ecologically sound — in the broadest sense, where human mental health is part of ecological stability? We have an enormous task ahead of us, but before it can even begin, radicals must convince the rest of the world that the *physis-nomos* split should never have occurred in the first place.

**3.** Western culture has misread nature, and humanity as a whole; it has done the same for the divisions of humanity. *Races* may exist in social or historical terms, but our civilization has made it nearly impossible for them to coexist by contending that their differences are biological and therefore beyond our power to change. We now know this assumption to be catastrophically wrong. A least a few thoughtful scientists and historians

have always suspected what the Human Genome Project has now proved: race is a human, or even a Western, invention. Luca Cavalli-Sforza of Stanford became a prophet of the new paradigm when he published an exhaustive study of gene distribution, *The History and Geography of Human Genes*, in 1994.

According to Cavalli-Sforza, the usual "race markers" — skin and eye color, facial bone structure, hair — are highly superficial traits, developed over relatively brief centuries in response to local climate conditions. A very small number of genes do appear to be race-specific, though they are outnumbered thousands to one by the genes we all share. Cavalli-Sforza suggests that humanity may be divided, for genetic purposes, into only three groups: the black Africans, Australian aborigines, and everyone else. Note that there is no "white race" as such — people of European ancestry are about one-third black African, two-thirds Eurasian. The latter group includes people as colorfully diverse as the Swedes, the Chinese, the Polynesians, and the native Americans. Moreover, recent studies of mitochondrial DNA mutation and Y chromosome polymorphism have made us all descendants of one African woman and man (not necessarily mates) who lived about two hundred thousand years ago.

Gail Schilke





Assuming that we must find another way besides race to categorize people, what would it be? Ancestral geographic origin is no answer. Identifying oneself by nationality leads to disaster, as recent history shows. The same for religion. We might use some entirely new classification, such as eye color or height or retinal patterns, but that would be silly. Wouldn't it be better just to forget the whole thing?

**4.** Our habit of false dichotomizing does not stop with nonhuman nature or with racism. Even more pervasive, because no individual can escape its consequences, is *sexism*. That men and women are *different* is not the issue here, of course. That one sex may be *superior* to the other is the deadly assumption. Sexism is the most visible manifestation of Western civilization's key assumption, patriarchy.

Plenty has already been written about the origins and progress of patriarchy in Western civilization; I can add nothing new. The first form of domination may have been humans over nature, or men over women, or the old over the young — it doesn't much matter. Patriarchy still became the most pervasive form of domination in our culture (and in some others as well); it is the archetype for most if not all dominations, and its mode of operation is the pattern for all hierarchies. Homophobia, patriotism, organized religions, and war are among its nastier manifestations. That it is harmful to men as well as women seems beyond argument. Is there anything we can do about it?

Maybe there is. Only two decades ago most historians and anthropologists would have laughed at the suggestion that the whole human race once lived in matricentric societies. Now the theory is widely accepted, and has backing from the latest archaeological techniques. Patriarchy may be in the chromosomes — or maybe not; it doesn't matter, because human nature is highly plastic. Our remote ancestors once worshipped the Earth as a goddess, conferred respect and leadership on women, and as a result lived in greater harmony with nature and one another than we have ever been able to manage since we adopted patriarchy as an organizing principle. It is an interesting fact that nearly every mythology on earth, *except* the modern Western, sees the distant past as a paradise and the subsequent history of its culture as a long decline. Only the West sees history as upward progress away from a savage past. Is this a form of denial, by which we justify our necrophilic civilization by slandered its predecessors? We cannot, of course, admit the superiority of matricentric culture without pulling the rug out from under our patriarchy. Feminists have been trying to do this for two hundred years, sometimes aided by other radicals, sometimes not. The present centrality of radical ecology may have turned the balance by demonstrating that matricentric assumptions taken for granted ten thousand years ago do, in fact, have scientific and rational support.

## **We cannot of course, admit the superiority of matricentric culture without pulling the rug out from under patriarchy.**

The first four assumptions, destructive and ubiquitous as they may be, all have to do with practical matters. They can perhaps be overcome by appeals to common sense, and by retooling our educational process. The fifth, sixth and seventh are not so easily deconstructed, because they are rooted in our metaphysics and epistemology.

**5.** The *nature of time* has been grossly distorted by Western civilization, in a way that promotes the agendas of power and domination. Many tribal people still understand that time does not flow in a straight line, from past to present to future. Insofar as time moves at all, it moves in cycles. Even a cursory look at the natural world affirms this premise. The universe is a vast system of cycles within cycles. Today general systems theory is rediscovering what our distant ancestors took for granted: time and space are not absolutes, but are generated by ourselves, out of the linguistic and psychological parameters of the social systems we create and live in.

Our linear time sense is rooted in language. Nearly all Western languages evolved from a prehistoric Aryan or Indo-European source which is constructed around the concept of tense: past, present, future. Because our language forces us to think in linear time, it is all but impossible for us to view reality in any other way. The consequence is that we must think of time and space as separate phenomena, since time is going somewhere but space merely *is*. Worse, "time" in English (and every other Western language) is a noun, and nouns refer to concrete things, not to processes. Therefore we assume that time *must* be a thing, with definable properties that differentiate it from other things. Philosophers have worried endlessly, for example, about the logical impossibility of measuring time. This was because phenomena described by nouns are inherently measurable; in philosophical terms, they have *extension*. Time becomes a commodity: we divide it up as though it were sticks of margarine, and put dollar values on it. Our view of time is conditioned by our linguistic habit of counting 'things' that really cannot be counted, such as 'days.' We objectify the subjective. However, it does not take much reflection to see that "time" is not like "margarine" or "word." If we forget that "time" is a noun and remember that it is a process, or a way of describing contexts and relationships among things and events, we can no longer reify and commodify it. One philosopher

of history has recently argued that our linear time-sense borders on psychosis and is responsible for much of the vicious and bloody history of our civilization. "History, as such, taxes the capacity and tolerance of a mind constitutionally unsympathetic — neurologically not wired — for such a lunatic enterprise and contextualization."<sup>2</sup>

Rather than "past" and "future" many non-Western languages have "being" and "becoming," or objective and subjective, or manifested and manifesting, or any number of other paired terms. The latest developments in quantum physics point toward a definition of time that is actually closer to that of non-Western indigenous peoples. According to this saner concept the universe consists not of *things* but of *events*: phenomena which have happened or are happening, and other (not essentially different) phenomena which will or potentially can happen. All these events exist *now*, in one form or the other; therefore "actual" and "potential" are *not* merely different words for "past/present" and "future." The point of tangency between these two realms is my "here and now," the point in space/time which I inhabit. Since all human beings are nearly identical in brain structure and mental processes, and because we all occupy the same tiny speck of matter called "Earth," we all perceive nearly the same world: the differences are minuscule, compared to the points of agreement. When a Hopi looks at a tree or an airplane she sees what I see. How she *interprets* it may be quite another matter, however. Is our fundamentally different concept of time and space responsible for the fact that my culture dominates or destroys everything within reach, while hers does not?

Plenty has been written by anarchists and other libertarians about the tyranny of the clock, of Western capitalism's penchant for putting a price tag on everything, even minutes and seconds. If we are to break that tyranny, we must do some deep thinking about where our concept of time comes from, and how it reinforces structures of domination and oppression. Then we must look at some of the alternative concepts — there are plenty to choose from, and some are exhilaratingly mind-boggling — and decide where our best interest lies.

**6.** If we redefine time, we must do the same for space. The material contents of the universe do not, to put it mildly, much resemble what we have always been taught. The sixth deadly assumption is *objectivity*. But we cannot understand why it is both impossible and undesirable to be "objective" until we examine the nature of physical reality. This can't be done in a paragraph or two, or even in a whole library of books. But anarchists and other rebels against the Thought Police are perhaps better equipped than most people to grasp the basics. After all, we are not objective about our politics.

What philosophers call the "strong anthropic principle" suggests that the material universe exists only

because we are here to perceive and to name it. It might be more accurate to say that we create, not reality itself, but its patterns: the universe is a Rohrshach test. Reality is a seamless whole; objects (whether material or mental) are "created" by us as we decide where to draw the boundaries between *this* and *that*. The patterns, once established, are addictive; it is nearly impossible for us to erase and redraw the boundaries (except perhaps through Zen, or LSD, or peyote).

## **One philosopher of history has recently argued that our linear time-sense borders on psychosis and is responsible for much of the vicious and bloody history of our civilization.**

Whether objectivity is possible or desirable is now a matter of hot debate in the liberal arts. It has not yet touched the sciences, except in the narrow field of subatomic physics. But the answer is not difficult if one first accepts a holistic systems view of the universe. Objectivity is not possible for one very simple reason: it requires an absolute distinction between the knower and the known. Phenomena are of course distinct: people are not elephants, and galaxies are not beer bottles. But this differentiation can never be absolute in a universe where everything is connected to, and causes, and is reflected in, everything else. All human beings once knew this. If we can recover that knowledge, our attitude towards the ecosphere and one another and even towards ourselves will change in unimaginable ways. Our habit of reifying the universe — that is, obsessing on the *parts* so that we forget the *connections* — is more than a mere Western quirk, an item of intellectual interest. It is potentially fatal.

**7.** The last assumption is the most difficult to overcome, because we can't even think about it without using it: *consciousness*. Trying to define consciousness is like trying to look directly at one's own eye. One thing, at least, seems clear: the distinction between mind and body is a false dichotomy, what Gilbert Ryle calls the "Cartesian myth."<sup>3</sup> This dichotomy is another of the foundations of Western civilization — and one among many good reasons why it should be abandoned.



Consciousness is not located in the brain, or anywhere else; it is a process, a function of "the universe," whatever that is.

For reasons beyond our scope, anarchists and other radicals have for the most part rejected Freud's definition of consciousness, and have raised serious questions about Jung, whose thinking is in so many ways consonant with our own. Wilhelm Reich was perhaps closer than either of his mentors to a post-Western psychology. As a



materialist and semi-Marxist, Reich believed that consciousness is a byproduct of purely physical processes. However, he came to visualize the mind as an interconnected whole, in which any disturbance might radiate out to the edges and manifest in all sorts of unpredictable ways. He rejected the arbitrary compartments and categories of mind set up by the Freudians, and explored the ways in which authoritarian cultures force us to become accomplices to our own oppression. Arthur Koestler carried Reich's insights a step further by describing consciousness as an *emergent quality*, that is, a product of the complicated dialectic that goes on in our minds, producing a whole that is greater than the sum of its parts.

Whatever the real mechanism may be, all current thought and research points to a far broader and deeper definition of consciousness than even Reich or Jung could imagine. They were limited by their scientific rationalism — their assumption that, while emotion and intuition may cause us to *feel*, only through logic and reason can we *know*. Of course that is the case, when we are speaking of that segment of the universe which follows logical and rational rules. But most of it does not. We can best

understand "consciousness" and other such "metaphysical" ideas through intuition or direct apprehension without going through the media of sensation or analysis. Levels of reality such as S-matrix and bootstrap theory, Bohm's "implicate order," or even simple subatomic particles are not accessible to our rational minds, gathering data from limited physical senses. They are accessible only through intuition, a mental process that operates on those same levels. At this plane of realization we see that ideas once thought mutually exclusive are in fact complementary: past and future, causality and acausality, unity and diversity. This is the whole point of philosophic Buddhism and Hinduism, as also of the new physics.

Most anarchists would rather act in the "real world" than think about such esoterica. We do not have that luxury, however, in an age of paradigm shift. We must understand that the old definition of consciousness as a logical, rational process is a control device, a mechanism of power. It establishes a rigid hierarchy of thought and perception, and requires us to pass through difficult but pointless tests, like Masonic initiates, in order to reach the next level. Only those who have fulfilled all the academic and practical requirements (and paid the fees) are considered

"knowledgeable." They are entitled to tell the ghetto dweller and the *campesino* what to think, because their rational abilities are more highly trained. Indeed, it has only been very recently — under the pressure of democratic reformism — that the elite have conceded to the people at the bottom of the hierarchy any rational abilities at all. Intuition, emotion and spiritual gnosis are dangerous to authority, because they allow everyone to "know" without going through proper channels. That is why anarchists must help destroy the tyranny of reason.

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This essay has been intended to raise questions rather than answer them, by pointing to a handful of assumptions buried so deeply and ubiquitously in Western culture that it rarely occurs to us to wonder about them. It is not by any means an attempt to outline a new post-Western society. Post-Western anarchism must accept Kurt Gödel's Incompleteness Theorem: any formal system must be either incomplete or inconsistent. I suggest that we go for completeness rather than consistency.

# BROADENING The Anarchist Gene Pool

by Joseph Heathcott (nee Average)

Letters in issue number 35 from Jonathan Simcock and Larry Gambone, the program for the Active Resistance conference in Chicago, as well as a battery of articles in the past few years in magazines such as *Kick It Over*, *Practical Anarchy*, *Our Generation*, and *Social Anarchism*, point to a trend within anarchist thought and activism which is encouraging. Despite the vague homilies and dogmatic assertions by contemporary anarchists on the question of economic relations, a line of argument is emerging that promises a more useful — if more complex — set of ideas and strategies for transforming communities. Rooted in both historical and anthropological (rather than exclusively polemical) understandings of political economy, anarchists are beginning to realize the importance of thinking in terms of heterodox strategies rather than "ideal" systems.

The most significant weaknesses, in my estimation, of the anarchist critique historically have been in the realm of economics and in strategies for change. Marxists of all stripes have enjoyed a (mostly) dogmatic proscription on these questions, and have centered organization efforts around political economic transformation of the workplace in their bid for support and allegiance. Repulsed by the authoritarian mechanisms to which Marxist ideologues have generally appealed for transforming society into a post-capitalist state, anarchists have thrown the baby out with the bathwater. We have generally retreated from a focus on economics and on direct work toward social transformation in favor of less defined social critiques, limply trumpeted from podiums, books, and journals.

This was particularly true for Anglo anarchists in the post-World War Two years, who shifted attention to the psychic nature of human suffering in modern bureaucratic and totalitarian regimes. Anglo anarchists provided crucial and enlivening additions to the anarchist repertoire, opening up lively debates and inquiries into fields as diverse as psychology, education, architecture, and town planning.

George Woodcock, Paul Goodman, Dwight MacDonald, an early Colin Ward, Marie-Louise Berneri and the school of writers associated with Freedom Press were all prime innovators, carrying forward the anarchist cause despite demoralizing defeats. However, the result of this thrust has been, for some decades, a stagnation on economic questions and on strategies for social change.

More often than not, when anarchists have returned to such questions, it has usually been through highly polemical, idealized, and utopian visions rather than anything actually useful to people interested in gathering support for the transformation of communities. Whether advanced in the form of "Abolition of Work" arguments by relatively privileged First World intellectuals, or through appeals to return to a mythical, primitive social order from anti-technology camps, we anarchists have succeeded in further isolating ourselves from people in our communities. Even syndicalist ideas, once appealing and meaningful in certain historical contexts — Spain or the Pacific Northwest in the 1930s, for example — had become stale, outmoded relics of a high industrial era by the 1980s. In truth, anarchists have begun to look like a snotty coterie of middle-class intelligentsia, rather than a political network offering sensible, workable alternatives to the present destructive order.

But the strain of thinking which has gained currency



## Endnotes to Seven Deadly Assumptions

1. Fritjof Cpra and David Steindl-Rast, with Thomas Matus, *Belonging to the Universe: Explorations on the Frontiers of Science and Spirituality* (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1991), 80.
2. Calvin Luther Martin, *In the Spirit of the Earth: Rethinking History and Time* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1992), 125.
3. Gilbert Ryle explores this false dichotomy from a materialist standpoint in many of his works, but see especially *The Concept of Mind* (London, 1949).

### About the Artist:

Gail Schilke has a book of poems, stories and artwork called *From the Margin*. It is available for \$15.00 from Stray Dog Press, 50 East 1st Street, Storefront West, New York, NY 10003-9311 USA.



on the pages of *Kick It Over*, which has emerged from decades of grass-roots experimentation with alternative economic arrangements, and which has been most notably advanced in the anarchist press by writers like George Benello, Colin Ward, and Murray Bookchin, has been that which emphasizes dynamic, mixed, community-based, democratic economies. It takes as a starting point the understanding that economic relationships have tended toward heterodoxy in most every human society — even when large-scale, bureaucratic and totalitarian states attempt to force such relations into predictable, uniform regimes. Thus, as anarchists, our goal should not be to seek proscriptive formulae (like our Marxist and Libertarian cousins), but rather to work with others in our community to locate the right mix of economic relationships — a mix that includes appropriate technologies, ecologically-oriented production systems, varieties of work arrangements, and democratic control of basic resources. Capitalist economies are mixed economies as well, but they do not work to the benefit of most people. The challenge is to find mixes of ownership, control, circulation, and distribution of goods and resources which maximize equity, voluntary participation, creativity, and human capability.

This strain of thinking has five primary advantages. First, it incorporates anarchist values at the core of its thinking. Second, it is more properly based on understandings of history, on a knowledge of past successes and pitfalls of various economic arrangements and orders. Third, it is more properly anthropological, in that it has sought understanding from non-dogmatic research into the bewildering variety of economic relations which encompass diverse communities around the globe — many of which persist despite the encroachment of global capitalism. Fourth, this strain is doggedly pragmatic, finding sustenance in recent and current experiments, organizations, tendencies and trends which can be studied, documented, and applied. Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, this line of thinking and acting is translatable — that is, it can be readily understood and appreciated by non-anarchists in our communities.

This last factor is perhaps the most crucial for anarchists today, for we stand at the precipice of the dustbin of history. While magazines, infoshops, conferences, and projects devoted exclusively to anarchism and appealing nearly exclusively to anarchists can provide useful arenas of consultation and exchange, we are in great need of more anarchists willing to engage in community-based organizing. And by this I do not mean “taking anarchism to the masses.” Rather, I mean immersing ourselves in diverse organizations and groups in our communities that have as an end the mobilization of people in the political sphere, and sharing our time,

energy, expertise, and vision with non-anarchists.

An article by Tom Knoche in issue 21 of *Social Anarchism*, reproduced widely in pamphlet form, ably discusses the importance of anarchist involvement in community organizing. Pointing to the successes (and shortcomings) of traditional organizing institutions such as the Midwest Academy, Knoche proposes that anarchists become involved in issues and struggles that people in their communities feel are important, rather

## Anarchists have much to learn from grass-roots groups and community-based organizations — probably more than they have to learn from us — particularly in the realm of community relations and real-world relevance.

than imposing notions of what is and is not important onto other groups. According to Knoche (and in my own experience), working within this bottom-up strategy, building power within a community to tackle relevant issues, making connections and forging coalitions with non-anarchists in our neighborhoods will bring anarchists closer to their lip-service of “grass-roots” social transformation.

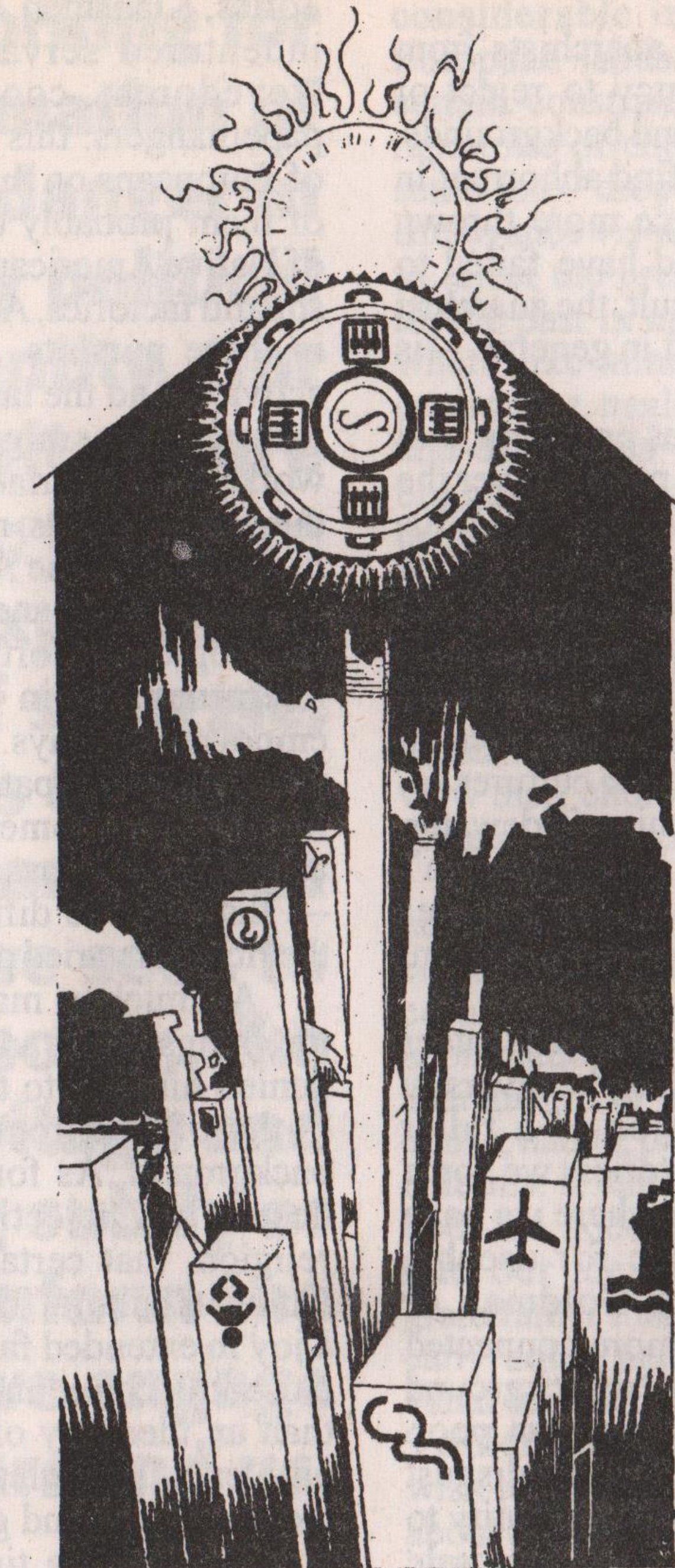
This is not to say that anarchists *must* adopt this strategy of joining non-anarchist organizations, engaging in coalition work, hitting the streets, knocking on doors, joining with neighbors and mobilizing around issues deemed important at the grass-roots. If anarchists value anything about our politics it should be diversity and heterodoxy, and the enjoyment of a wide variety of approaches to transforming society. My argument is merely that we must recognize the importance of these heterodox approaches, and that we should make community-based organizing as much a priority as establishing infoshops and web sites.

Experimentation with and agitation for economic democracy and community control of basic resources links anarchists into broader networks of activism. It brings us increasingly into contact with people and groups with whom we have had little contact or sympathy — especially grass-roots, community-based organizations. We are used to bumping elbows at the demo or march with the Hard and Soft Left. But how many anarchists have done much work with people right in their own neighborhoods and towns? People who may or may not define themselves politically, but who are generally just as frustrated and disgusted with the current order of things as we are. In the second half of the twentieth century, neither anarchists nor the Left in general have been successful in reaching such people. Instead both political networks have wallowed in self-aggrandizing irrelevance, while the managers of our political economic order laugh their way to the bank or to their public office.

Anarchists have much to learn from grass-roots

groups and community-based organizations — probably more than they have to learn from us — particularly in the realm of community relations and real-world relevance. Community-based organizations are at the forefront of appropriate neighborhood and regional development, and often reflect the impulses and perspectives of their constituent communities. At the same time, anarchists have much to say about group dynamics and authoritarianism in social and political relationships, and nurture a healthy mistrust of the state. Thus, we can offer pointed critiques of state-dependent or directed solutions to social problems in our communities, and present alternatives in various forms of egalitarian, direct-action organizing. Lastly, as much as we might struggle against our peculiar typecasts in Progressive and Left circles, few political traditions have such a creative heritage of protests, publications, and theatre as we do.

This exchange of perspectives and ideas can be fertile ground for a new wave of activism, and significantly enrich the anarchist repertoire. For example, syndicalist ideas have been rejuvenated — indeed transformed — through an intermingling with social ecology and community environmental movements. Anarcho-punks who established “spaces” in the late 1980s and 1990s have discovered how isolating the anarcho-punk subculture can be, and have taken steps to broaden their involvement in community affairs. And the cross-pollination of crusty old anarcho-punks like Benello and Ward with contemporary squatter campaigns, alternative economics projects, and grass-roots organizations dramatically improved their earlier, polemical prose toward acute, analytical, and pragmatic assessments of



strategies and courses for social change.

Our isolation from more integrated grass-roots activism has severely delimited our pool of ideas, and contributed to a certain staleness within the anarchist networks. But stale, inbred polemics are simply no longer useful if we really want to reach people. This in no way means we should abandon our principles; in fact, without a core of values that militate for equality, mutual aid, voluntary organization, and against the exercise of arbitrary authority, we would cease to be anarchists. Rather, I suggest that we re-assess our notions and strategies of social change (how to get from A to Z), and

reevaluate our role within larger trends in the struggle to transform communities. In other words, it's well and good to have Z in mind when we start from A, but can we simply leap from one point to the other, or do we need to devise ways to get there that are relevant, workable, and which carry our values forward? Good values, lofty ideals, even precise goals have little relevance if there is no strategic framework, no cogent set of approaches, to realize them.

In the end, anarchists will only be able to contribute to social transformation if we drop the pretenses, and begin to view anarchism not as a fixed order to achieve (a “workless” society, a pleistocene utopia) but rather as a set of tools and strategies for analyzing social conditions, identifying illegitimate forms of authority, and devising broad, participatory strategies for change. With this approach, one which is already gaining ground in anarchist networks, I am confident that we can wrench ourselves from insignificance and contribute to (and learn from) the



larger social movements which surround us.

Another factor in our isolation as anarchists from our communities has been our tendency to reject or distance ourselves from our own pasts and backgrounds. We have become repulsed by what we find abhorrent in our families and cultures, but have once more thrown out baby and bathwater wholesale, and have failed to come to grips with our histories. As a result, the anarchist "scene" — and to a large degree the Left in general — is populated by people without pasts.

This tendency has not always been as prevalent, and may reflect broader changes in identity politics over the past 20 or 30 years. For example, in the 1920s and 30s there was a strong and creative admixture of radical politics and cultural Zionism within Jewish anarchist networks. Membership in the CNT in Spain in 1936 did not erase the strong family, ethnic, and regional ties felt among people. The culture of the IWW was cohesive and continuous with white ethnic and folk cultures — particularly emanating from the Appalachian, Tidewater, and Piedmont South. Even today, many anarchists don't necessarily repudiate their own pasts, but rather subordinate them excessively in their adoption of more exclusively political identities.

This is not an appeal for ethnic chauvinism, but rather for an honest and measured consideration of the diversity among anarchists, and for a reclamation of a fuller identity politic. For in rejecting our histories, we force ourselves into incestuous enclaves from where we have only the anarchist/radical past to mine for useable histories. But while I admire Emma Goldman or Voltairine de Cleyre, I do not feel any more connected to them than to people from my own cultural background — i.e., Catholic working class and Appalachian poor. There are aspects of both histories that elate and disgust me, and it makes for a richer, more grounded identity to recognize what is good and bad in both. The wholesale adoption of anarchism as a core of identity — as with any politically exclusive identity — forces adherents into relative isolation. It ensconces us within discrete and closed networks which become more incestuous with time, and which delimit the range and diversity of experience. For once circulating in the sub-society, we are each and often compelled to forgo our pasts, to adopt a pattern of guilt, shame, and revulsion over our heritage. In the end, most anarchists in the subsociety merge into an identity politic which revolves around a false dichotomy: Whitey background vs. anarchist present.

This dichotomy fails on many counts as a healthy source of identity politic. First, it fails to recognize "White" as a construct, and instead assumes it as a legitimate historical category. In fact, there is great diversity amongst White people — and by extension White anarchists. Some hail from industrial river towns and working class families, while others grow up in large cities nurtured (or not) by an Eastern European heritage. Many hail from suburban America yet with diverse and varied backgrounds. Preachers, shyesters, con artists, horse thieves, civil servants, farmers, carpenters, doctors, bakers, truck drivers, insurance sellers, sheriffs and cattle

rustlers, suffragists and abolitionists, racists, Whigs, Tories, Klansmen, settlers, immigrants, soldiers, sailors, indentured servants, sodajerks, quilters, tanners, stevedores, coopers, maids, factory workers, paperhangers: this is a small slice of the muddy history of Europeans on this frenzied continent. A small portion of them probably owned slaves, directed the slaughter of Native Americans, or waged men and women in grim squalid factories. A larger portion probably assisted them in these pursuits. A still larger portion tolerated this activity. And the largest portion of all were wage-slaves themselves, or migrant labourers, immigrant sweat shop workers, industrial rank and file, indentured servants, thieves, criminals, rogues, prostitutes, and cannon fodder in the wars of the American Empire.

Race, class, and gender in our heritage, in our history as people of North America, have intermingled and interpenetrated in dazzling, complex, destructive, and empowering ways. Figuring these ways out constitutes a major preoccupation of the discipline of history — but it can also be something each of us seeks to understand about our own past. Not just our own individual heritages — that may be difficult or impossible for most — but the rich and varied pasts of our communities, our peoples.

As much as many folks dislike Tad Kepley, one of the things that I admire about him is that he has never denied his past to the anarchist networks or to himself — that of a kid from a poor, hardscrabble Kansas farming background. As for myself, I have come to realize — despite my rejection of the content of the Catholic religion, that certain crucial forms of my experience within its cultural fold press upon my identity even today: a joy in extended family ties, a love of ritual, a yearn for close-knit community, a sense of lateral solidarity rather than an ideology of individualism, a sympathy for the problems, struggles, and dignity of industrial workers like my father and grandfather.

At the same time I have to reject the patriarchal authoritarianism and the subtle and not-so-subtle racism of the Euro-American working class. But much more of who I am now as a person emerges from my immersion for nearly three decades in that world, one decade of which has been concurrent with my participation in socialist, then anarchist and grass-roots politics. Over time I have learned to reconcile my disparate identities, so that my own upbringing and experience can float against the rigidity which subsocieties like anarchism often demand. My identity, then, like everyone's, is conditional and contextual, not fixed and immotive, and is rooted in the dynamic structures of history and experience.

This reconciliation and recognition allows me a ground on which to live and work that might be difficult to locate otherwise. For when we scrap our histories we scrap much of what makes us unique in a political community. We then seek an exclusive community of common political (or, say, musical) identity, where in geographic proximity we can dissolve our histories and adopt anew. As punk and anarchist subsocieties are not well-known for their ability to pay high rents, we then end up living and working in enclaves within

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neighborhoods where we are regarded rightfully with suspicion and mistrust. The solution is not, of course, for all anarchists to return to the communities from which we came — many couldn't even afford the housing there! And many literally escaped their nuclear families to begin with, fleeing abuse and torment, perhaps incest and rape to locate a new family, a new ground, a new community. Often these people make the most diehard members of a subsociety — and more power to them.

However, when we are working for the transformation of society, there is danger in predominately political sources of identity. Our histories and heritage are important factors; they are relevant to the experience and process of struggle, as it is the very communities from which we come that we seek to transform — too often at a distance measured by our radical disjuncture from our pasts. Moreover, like it or not, our heritage and upbringing subtly and not-so-subtly inform the ways in which we engage the world around us. A purely political/polemical identity neglects this crucial factor, as well as the historical reality that popular social movements are comprised of people from diverse ethnic, religious, and familial backgrounds as well as of varying political persuasions.

While the hippies of the 1960s and early 70s made a considerable impact on the North American and European landscape, primarily in terms of breaking certain constraints on individuality and widening the repertoire of choices for living lives, their tendency to settle into "drop out" enclaves paved the way for their irrelevance vis-à-vis the larger society. Their tendencies to reject the present and to select uncritically from an idyllic past in order to usher in an "Age of Aquarius," where like-minded people could gather into isolated communes, neglected so many of the crucial differences and diversities — and ultimately the negative social baggage — that they carried with them onto the communal lands. Failure to highlight and confront these differences constitutes a principal failing of their experiments in "alternative living." This strategy, while perhaps fulfilling for some in the short or mid-term, has not been particularly transformative in regards the broader communities the hippies left behind. Many today view their choices, while understandable, as hopelessly groundless, disengaged, and ahistorical.

I don't want this to happen to anarchists. Along with heterodoxy in our approach to solving problems of unjust economic relationships, along with a turn toward community-based activism, we must adopt an appreciation for the heterogeneity within the society of anarchists. For we all carry within us many of the morals, ethics, habits, prejudices, and lessons of our families and cultures. It remains for us to sort these out, to recognize both the good and bad aspects, and to integrate these into our identities accordingly. What is it about a grandfather that drove a truck for 42 years, who was an early union agitator, that informs who you are today? What is it about a strong-willed grandmother who bore 9 children while managing the affairs of a farm that you wish to commemorate in your identity today? What is it about a set of great-grandparents that fled Croatia in the 1920s that makes you different from me?

In coming to terms with, reconciling, and perhaps even gaining a measure of sympathy for our own histories, for our own people, we will better equip and ground ourselves for working in our communities. With this grounding and appreciation, built upon a critical and sympathetic gaze into our pasts and into who we are, we can begin to foster more useful avenues of work and struggle. We will be better able to integrate ourselves into our adopted communities, as we gain sympathies for the complexity of peoples' pasts from our own experience. Finally, we can cease using the anarchist networks as surrogate cultures and press them into the service of social transformation in more relevant ways. Rather than a place to retreat and hide, we can use these networks to spread information about what is working and not working in our own communities, in our own neighborhoods. Eventually, we can use the relative freedom of an anarchist space to reflect on what is good and bad, useful and irrelevant, joyous and painful about our pasts. Finally, we will each be able to view our past not as a gory stigma or a weighty albatross, but rather as a resource for facing the world. We can cease to be the people without history.



## Post Script

Perhaps the thorniest issue that flows from questions of heterodoxy and identity revolve around relations between urban (big-city) anarchists — who are overwhelmingly of European descent — and their primarily African and Hispanic neighbors. Even if your family history is one of industrial wage-slavery, even if you grew up relatively poor, even if your ancestors had nothing to do with slavery, there is no escaping the power of racial constructs and relationships in North America. Within the construct you are not Native American, you are not African American, you are not Hispanic American. You are a European American.

While I have no magic solutions for this, as I personally live in a community of largely poor Euro-Americans, I would argue that these tensions are only exacerbated when anarchists lose, reject, or repudiate their own histories wholesale. The recognition of the dignity of others is conditional on the assumption of dignity within ourselves. Thus, in learning about and respecting the great diversity of experiences of people from other ethnicities, we can not forget that we ourselves also have ethnicities, histories, and heritage. The adoption of wholly new subcultures, while perhaps liberating for those involved, is often perceived as artificial, snotty, and stand-offish by communities of color. The priority on political mobilization against gentrification in these communities is an intelligent one.

Yet big-city anarchists must search in themselves for the reasons and priorities that found them migrating to those neighborhoods in the first place. As one African American comrade once asked me: "Why don't you all move into trailer parks and small towns where mostly White folk live? Then you could *really* do some good for Black folk, because in working with White folk in their neighborhoods for their own social justice, and against racism and scapegoating, you make things a lot easier for African American activists."

A very good question, indeed!

# The City in ANARCHY

by A.F. Moritz

When I began to envision an anarchist future, I thought immediately in terms of a city. I expected to create primarily an image as found in fiction or poetry, and since I have a taste for grandeur, I thought I would project a vast, complex and splendid metropolis.

But an unexpected thing happened. Imagining a desirable future based on anarchist insights, I found myself generating nothing at all in the way of physical appearances. Everything had to do with character: the character of each person and of the community. Will the city founded on anarchist principles be large or small, magnificent or unpretentious? I do not know, but I know that its outward form will be an expression of its inward character.

As I thought, there came back to me an experience of earliest childhood, a desperation I suddenly felt one day to awaken from the nightmare of this world in which not all have adequate material circumstances and significant work. What will it be like, the world we will wake up to?

It seemed to me the anarchist city will be based on

three ideas. The first is that each person is an autonomous centre of existence, equal in value to oneself, and must be treated with justice and compassion. The second is that each person must unite creativity and analysis, art and science, in her/his work, and must be allowed and encouraged by society to do so. The third is that, to be non-exploitative, the work of each person must participate in three major realms: conceiving the nature and goal of human existence, planning how to live in accord with our best insights, and doing the physical work to build a just world.

The anarchist city will be made up of men and women who know that every other person is a centre of existence, in whom the entire universe struggles, changes, is known and enjoyed. In

each person all things exist in a certain way that never can appear anywhere else. If a person is thwarted or destroyed, then in a real sense the entire universe, all of life, all of being, is spoiled. The poet William Blake said, "As all men are alike in outward form, So (and with the same infinite variety) all are alike in the Poetic Genius."

Each newly welcomed example of human experience adds a dimension to the way in which we must understand freedom and equality. Such welcoming is the real nature of compassion, which is not a vague virtue or warm feeling but rather the most complex, highly structured and dynamic coordination of human capacities. Exercising compassion is the most complete, difficult, advanced and exciting use any person can make of her/his potential.

Attentive openness to each person will point to many goals we will have to labour for. For example, work must be redefined so that it contains no element of subjection but rather flows from the autonomous individual's free choice to serve: it is anarchism which reveals the distinction between service and subjugation. Another example: The anarchist city's economic system will get necessary tasks done and allow everyone to pursue the goals she/he cherishes and do the work involved. Its structure will be the very opposite of today's economy, which day by day actually prevents the answering of huge needs and the worthy work they would involve: to succour the poor and diseased, to redesign what has been inhumanly planned, to clean what has been fouled, and many others.

A third example: Cultural forms will respect the autonomy of the mind, enter into its depths, and engage its full capacity. In the anarchist city people will see that art depends on the inner power of the responding person, and that in fact the written word, and unpretentiously presented music and images, are the arts with the greatest technical resource and the most true power. There will be an end to the exaggeration of sensation at the expense of true human content and intellectual power that is characteristic of so much in culture today.

Yet another example is this: the anarchist city will reunite science and art, now divided. For work to be directed, planned, motivated, and worthy of the human being, both are necessary.

Both reason and creativity have shortcomings and need to complete each other. While rational analysis helps us see through falsehood and discipline ourselves to pursue our aspirations, it is rationalism that created, and is spreading, the systems under which we now live, which exploit human weakness by inculcating false needs and then supplying them. Also, rationalism when adopted as a supreme value empties its adherents of comradeship and of all deep motivation while providing unprecedented tools of force to exploiters and despots. Because of rationalism, we face the situation that only despised outsiders, revolutionaries, and the poor who fall beneath the economic system's notice any longer act from deep human feelings and motives.

Creativity aids reason by insisting upon a retrieval of the deep human spring: "pleasure," the poet Wordsworth termed it, and his friend Coleridge called it "joy." Unless the person, the citizen, can draw from and

enjoy the richness of life, what is the point and purpose of any society whatsoever? Poets such as Shelley and Blake provided a complete analysis, in terms of poetic myth, of the way in which society was conforming whole populations almost from birth to the role of robots.

If revolutionary poets sometimes presented themselves as opponents of reason and science, they always understood that what they opposed was a false, an inhuman rationalism which had run away with the rider it supposedly served. Equally well did they understand that each person must defend and express her/his autonomy. Blake for instance spoke of "the real Man, the Imagination" and proclaimed, "I must create my own system or be enslaved by another man's."

The revolutionary poets, from Blake to Andre Breton, have led the demand for a renovated reason invigorated by a strong social imagination fed from humanity's deepest root, and a renovated imagination freed by reason from old errors and guided toward the projection of new, more fully human ideals. Increasingly joined by visionary scientists, the poets have called for mutual aid between the investigative/critical faculties and the creative/passionate ones, since only the union of the two realms can set humans free. Only this unity can allow us to know and respect each other as persons; it alone can guide and invigorate work.

Because the anarchist citizen will unite analytical ability and creativity, education in the anarchist city will have two goals: to train each person to see critically, especially into social structures and traditions, and to avoid deforming each person's inherent ability to respond and to make. Today, social criticism is largely limited to finding ways to extend the existing system. Few students, even in the sciences, are taught any real respect for the scientific method of systematic doubt of all results and independent critical examination of nature and society. The rare thinkers who, by their exalted originality, achieve an understanding of the scientific method and the right to use it, have been filtered through a process

**Each newly welcomed example of human experience adds a dimension to the way in which we must understand freedom and equality.**

that usually directs their thought to lines of inquiry that are politically inert. Though intellectually advanced they are socially naive, stripped of the ability and desire to understand the sociological function of their work, the conformist results that their very originality is made to yield.

Bakunin implies the second goal of anarchist



education, to avoid deforming creativity, when he says that children do not belong to the state or to their parents or to anything but their own future freedom. This aphorism raises the dilemma of the rights of children versus compulsory education, but also the deeper dilemma that any education is necessarily an indoctrination in the values of the society providing it. We must recognize that adults will never be perfectly able to avoid imposing their values and hence must rely upon the originality and resistance of the young. New generations bring the new perspectives necessary to reveal prejudices. Thus education, and each person's point of escape from education, will always be the

## Imagination is one of our greatest weapons in the struggle to create an anarchist society...What makes us anarchists is our imagination, our vision of what could be, and our desire to make that vision a reality

psychological site of the most crucial and dynamic mental fight.

In the anarchist city work will be valued, all types of work. People will recognize that physical work is a permanent basis of human society and so possesses an unsurpassable nobility. On the other hand, they will recognize that physical work cannot be done without planning and without a conception of the nature, goal and value of existence. Everyone will have a connection to physical work, at least through wholehearted respect for it. Equally important, everyone will participate in art, science and administration, at least through informed and free exercise of citizenship. "Poetry should be made by all," said Lautreamont, and to poetry the anarchist city will add science and social thought.

The hierarchical valuation of intellectual work and professional work — all sorts of "clean" work — over physical labour will be ended, as will the demeaning of tasks now defined by management as belonging to "support staff." In short, the anarchist city will be free of the capitalist institution of "professionalism" in science, technology, administration, law, and medicine. Fields such as education, the humanities and even art will no longer be tempted to ape professionalism to gain some of its spurious prestige. There will be an end to this priest-like culture of procedures and manners that is used to form a *de facto* aristocracy.

People will be able to understand how the desire for professional status and the fear of losing it was used to divide classes and force the professional classes to work unremittently at the expense of rounded human development. They will see how this enslaved professionals to their functions and prevented them, by fully occupying their talents, from discovering their own conformity and becoming a socially revolutionary group. They will see how professionalism helped devalue other forms of work, separate human beings from nature, deny dignity to necessary tasks, depress the working person socially and psychologically, and claim mental and artistic activity exclusively for certain classes.

The anarchist city will be alert to such forms of class

division and conformity, which are hidden under the appearance of social mobility and thus become more powerfully restrictive than the ruder structures of former times. The anarchist person will see through false appearances such as those by which current capitalism combats the threat posed to it by the human thirst for personal authenticity, replacing its old one-size-fits-all structure of regimentation with a virtually infinite variety of prefabricated "mix and match" options allowing modularized subcultures for every taste.

Anarchist citizens will be alert to such perversions and will build their city on the fact that a valid unity begins from "beneath," from each person, and is created

by social convergence of many personal and creative authenticities.

My image of the anarchist city does not require unchanging perfection. Even more, I reject such a concept. The interest and dynamism of living involves struggle. Human experience will never lack what we now call sorrow: personal shortcomings and self-deception, accident and disease, the evils of time, regret. The imperfection of earthly life, without ceasing to be imperfection, may however come to appear in a newly glorious form, now virtually unimaginable. In the anarchist person there will be an understanding, an acceptance of the roles played by limitation and destruction as well as preservation and progress. "Imperfection is the summit," as the poet Yves Bonnefoy has said.

I am not willing, however, simply to agree in advance to the vision of death now universally accepted, as though it were a proven fact and not a prejudice based on our long practice of self-deception and self-thwarting. The anarchist city will have said goodbye, maybe forever, to the tragic vision, to what Andre Breton called the "miserablism" of human culture historically: the assumption that the real story of life is decline and loss. Instead, life will be seen as adventure and work, a constant forging into the unknown to discover or create all that human desire demands.

We may never transcend life's limitations, but openness can allow mutual acknowledgement of our failures, sorrows, and evil impulses, our temptations to despair and destruction. And in doing so, it can free us from the capitalist state which — for its own purpose of dividing and conquering — falsifies, exaggerates, and moralizes these human depths, and makes them into shallow but fascinating images that can be sold to us in order to misinform us about ourselves.

The anarchist city will be characterized by the joy of terrific mental struggle, and hence by peace and shared labour: mutual aid. For "mental fight" leads directly to cherishing the bodies that support the minds that so exhilaratingly engage us.

Mental fight is a concept from Blake, who averred

that mental struggle is necessary, and that modern society dampens it under a soggy mass of sentimental and intellectually empty agreement: conformity. But this produces physical struggle: war and criminality, which are the opposites of mental struggle, for they reduce originality and creativity, and herd people toward conformity for the purpose of self-protection.

What we want is not this empty physical struggle but mental fight. Another term for this is, of course, permanent revolution. The best anarchists have exemplified it in their lives and have often as a result suffered pain, opprobrium, isolation and obscurity. Is not this, perhaps, another of the eternal human limitations:

that most human beings fear and despise those who see their deeper good and announce the hard changes it requires in current ways of life? I hope not. In my vision of the anarchist city, this terrible injustice has been eliminated, and benefactors are known for benefactors. And this is in part because all are engaged in the criticism of shortcomings and the creative production of the new.

The anarchist city will everywhere display what we find today in the work of art and science at their best: the most exalted use of intellect, united to the effective planning abilities of the adult, and to childhood's spontaneous love of the senses' play and the body's action among the things of the earth.

Imagination. Imagination is one of our greatest weapons in the struggle to create an anarchist society. It's easy to see what's wrong with the way our society is now, but even wishy-washy liberals are opposed to war, pollution and injustice. What makes us anarchists is our imagination, our vision of what could be, and our desire to make that vision a reality.

Most anarchist writing looks at the world as it is, and describes what's wrong with it. Some anarchist writing explores (and this is one of our projects at **Kick It Over**) the many ways in which anarchists are working to bring a new world about. But there's precious little writing that imagines that new world.

I think this is one reason for the popularity of Ursula LeGuin's *The Dispossessed* — that it offers us a vision of a world that could be. It's not a utopian fantasy world; it's an imagined real world, flawed and imperfect to be sure, but it's our world. Or at least one person's vision of what our world might be.

It takes imagination to be an anarchist. It takes imagination and vision to keep on keepin' on, to struggle against such overwhelming odds, to devote one's life to that struggle, to not sink into despair and apathy every time we hear about another atrocity.

It's easy, as we struggle just to keep this world from getting worse, to let the imagination slip, to lose sight of the vision. It's then that activists burn out, give up and give in.

So, starting with AF Moritz's delightful *The City in Anarchy*, we plan to feature a visionary piece in each issue of **Kick It Over**. Some might be essays, some might be fictions. The form is open. I expect many of the visions we publish will be far from the visions that sustain us at **Kick It Over**.

This is not by any stretch an exercise in planning the future. The future will be created by those who live it. The visions of those who come after us will differ, probably greatly, from the visions of those who write now, just as the visions of those who struggled in the early years of this century probably seem narrow and mundane to young people of today. This is as it should be. If an anarchist society ever settles into one vision, one way of being, it will cease being an anarchist society.

- bob melcombe

### ....WWB Ukrainian State cont'd from page 10

We arrived in the evening of the first day and found the participants of the conference in a fine restaurant, anarchists (from Russia and Ukraine) and "scholars" duly separated. The anarchists were also in two groups: on the one hand the anarchosyndicalists of the RKAS, with their friends, and on the other, the radical ecologists. On the whole the two groups got reasonably well on with each other. The next morning we took our flags and went to the square in front of the Palace of Culture in the centre of the city. When we arrived the square was already full of people, music played: the "people's party" was on. Loudspeakers made it impossible not to hear the results of the concentrated

efforts of the members of the local guild of poetry makers to paraphrase the word of the day: "Makhno is our Tsar, Makhno is our God". On the flagpost before the square flew the yellow and blue of the State.

Our bewilderment became indignation when cossacks from Zaporozhye appeared with their banners duly decorated with christian symbols. Their high command- the atamans- arrived in ostentatious foreign cars. The square became the square of the war mob [cossacks], and the war mob, together with the local authorities became the centre of the "people's party".

Representatives of the local authorities and of the cossacks had cheerfully spelled out Nestor Makhno's

merits as a fighter for the independence of the State of Ukraine, with not a single word about his role as an anarchist and revolutionary.

Ten of us anarchists sat together on our own with our anarchist flags. People came to see us, and some voiced their agreement: "Well done! Makhno flags: well done!" Some wanted to know what anarchism was about, and took literature.

What a day: those self-satisfied faces, those golden shoulder straps, those Petlyura and Gaidamac uniforms, those flags of the enemies of Nestor Makhno! All that had cost the lives of so many in the Makhno movement in the past, had surfaced again to smear, foul, and debase the memory of the Makhno- the anarchist. by, Sergey Shevchenko.



And do all those industries give prisoners any skills that will allow them to move away from a life of crime, or do they just perpetuate another future stint of cheap labour for Texas to move up to its corporate dream? In the end, hopefully, someone will one day realize that this misleading corporate dream has been achieved at the human cost of yet another taxpayer being victimized, because the eventually released prisoner has for years and often decades been shown nothing meaningful — other than the fact that he was hopelessly trapped in the

# A Call To Conscience: A European Mirror of Truth

by Marion Wollersheim

When we hear in the Netherlands of the justice system in the USA, it begins to clearly and rightfully evoke a deep-seated fear. For, in many ways, it has begun to sound like the old Germany, which was unable to stop the rise of the Nazis in tormenting and attempting to eradicate their so-called undesirables, much like the United States appears to have never been able to fully let go of the concept of slavery. If you don't believe me, look at the states of Alabama and Arizona, where they flaunt the image of chained human beings whom a court has declared undesirable or enemies of the state, herding them under the muzzles of guns along their roadways.

Next, look to Texas, where they all too proudly like to show visitors their museum, that demonstrates the process used to kill that state's prisoners. I'm talking about Huntsville, Texas's largest prisoner detention centre. How truly morbid it seems, to find a civilized nation in this day and age callously boasting of a new and alternative version of Dachau, the only difference being the execution of human beings one at a time. I can only stare in horror at the mind-set behind such a phenomenon.

Aside from the prisons and guards there, we also hear that the Texas Correctional Industries aspires to be the third largest corporation in the United States, in that they have their license plate, license plate sticker, engraving, and records and conversion plants, as well as box, mattress, furniture, shoe, soap, canning and brush factories, all making big money by utilizing prisoner labour with no wages. Are they, too, some new alternative to something else, such as a pre-civil war cotton field?

cycle of a social dilemma, from which only a few knowing people could or really wanted to release him. Look at how little prisoners are allowed to financially prepare themselves for their release, and you will soon realize that this claim substantiates itself.

We were also thinking long and hard as to why the United States was not allowing China the ability to sell things in America that political prisoners in China had made. In looking more closely at that time line between what the United States considers acceptable for its own prisoners, and that which intrudes upon a Chinese prisoner's rights, from a realistic perspective that distinction eludes us. But, also, we wonder whether the United States could meet those same standards and purported objectives of such laws, if they were applied in an unbiased and factual manner regarding its own prisons and prisoners?

When we hear and read that in Texas homosexuals and burglars can be shot and killed without the judges handling those cases as killings, we as thinking and compassionate human beings become even more fearful of this nation touting itself as a world leader. For what is the message being sent to other nations, who have succeeded in moving forward with time, truly showing and respecting equality among their people, when the United States moves toward accepting public acts of hostility on the fringes of decadent barbarism for the sake of extolling discriminative selection? It is not a good message at all, my dear North American neighbours!

Here in the Netherlands, we often perceive the United States' justice system as just being the same one slavery was, only slightly evolved from a time when blacks were allowed to be killed, raped and have their children sold, the only difference being that today the system includes Hispanics, native Americans, poor whites and all those who lack the intellectual or mental ability to escape being trapped

in that broad scope of revenge hidden in the name of justice. It's a startlingly cold truth to face.

How ironic it was to have watched the United States seek the freedom of former prisoner Nelson Mandela, when that same United States created the situation that forced Amnesty International to begin collecting information regarding racial discrimination in the application of its death penalty. Although the freedom and eventual election of Nelson Mandela was a beautiful thing to see, I couldn't believe my eyes when President Clinton and Hilary were in South Africa celebrating Mandela's election, when I knew fully well that President Clinton had previously approved the execution of a black man who had undergone a lobotomy and had the mentality of a five-year-old child.

Citizens of the Netherlands who commit crimes are punished also. But here, we think that it is quite enough to send them to prison to reflect upon whether or not money is worth paying the price for with their freedom. As you may have guessed from the preceding sentence, most of the crimes here are committed basically to get money. But never does crime occur with the frequency that it does in the United States, nor do people become so aggressive from the feeling of having been made worthless that they hurt or kill others. Here, they are handled with the basic respect every creature needs to live a normal life. For some, this may seem like a strange concept, but it has worked extremely well in making the Netherlands one of the least violent nations in the world.

It is surely another point to discuss, regarding exactly how severely prisoners need to be punished or treated in order to learn that they've done something wrong. Here in the Netherlands, we wonder how some people could end up getting sentences as long as 133 years. Someone who perhaps needs such a lengthy sentence may have needed instead the services of a doctor to help him function in society as he should have. Also, someone who could perceive giving someone such an unbelievably long sentence perhaps needs a doctor too! In truth, such sentences denote that there is something basically wrong, i.e. the causes of crime, and that it is being overlooked in the hysteria of seeking revenge.

All crimes have some reason for occurring, but if no one attempts to address those reasons, no solutions can ever be found. The abuse of prisoners does nothing to address reasons or causes, for it only works to diminish their self-respect and create a deep-seated hostility, from which little or no respect for their envisioned tax-paying tormentors can ever come. This is one fundamental flaw in your justice system, that desperately needs to be realized and addressed.

For the United States will otherwise embark upon a journey from which it may never be able to return to a progressive path. It has already come near to surpassing the staggering numbers of its citizens imprisoned by the former Soviet Union before its demise. Although some answers may never be easy to initially accept, perhaps it is time to look to the progressive nations that have justice systems that work, for the fruits of today's American justice system are not the legacy you will want to leave children of the next millennium. For in time, that legacy

will only eventually begin to look more like those of the old Germany and the no-longer-existing empire of the Soviet Union in the eyes of all those yet unborn children and the rest of the world. Is this what anyone truly wants for America?

## Rates of imprisonment in the United States and Europe in 1993 (number of prisoners per 100,000 of population)

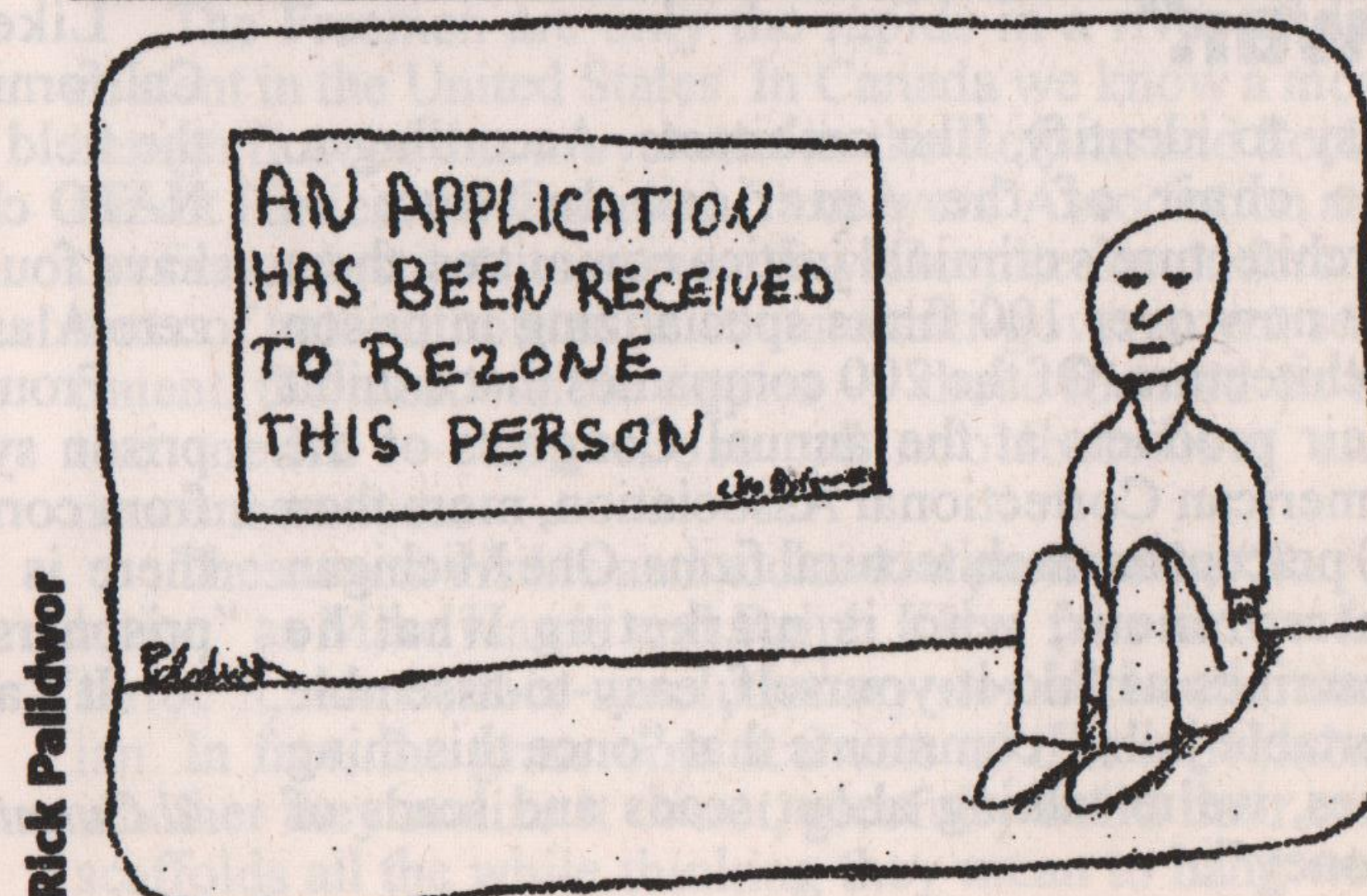
United States	546
Georgia	730
Texas	700
California	607
Florida	636
Michigan	550
New York	519
Italy	89
United Kingdom	86
France	84
Germany	80
Holland	51

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Correctional Populations in the United States, Washington, 1996 and Council of Europe, Penological Information Bulletin number 19-20, December 1995.

## Justice "by Race" Number of Prisoners per 100,000 adults

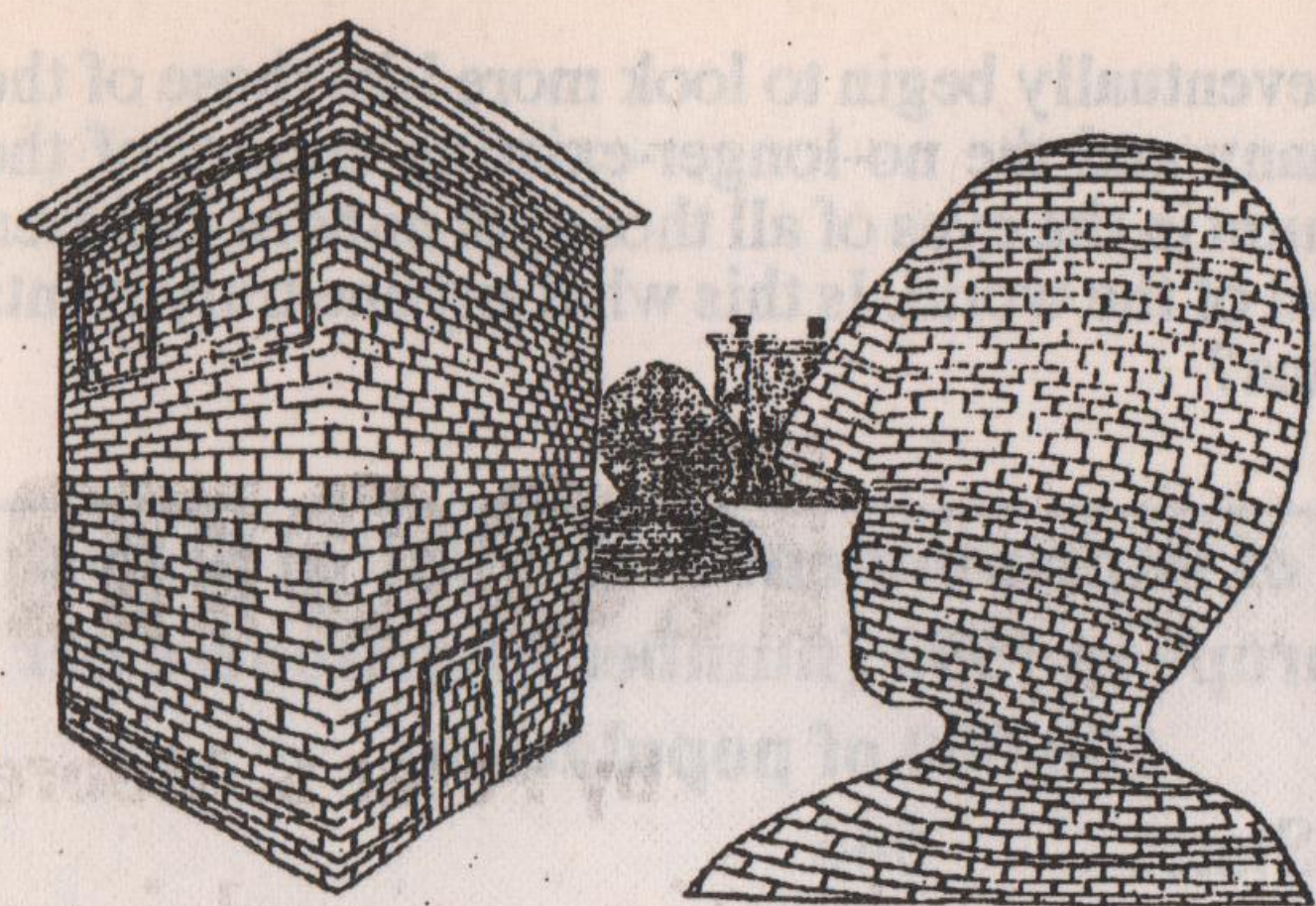
	1985	1990	1995
Blacks	3544	5365	6926
Whites	528	718	919
Disparity Ratio	3016	4647	6007
	6.7	7.4	7.5

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Correctional Populations in the United States, 1995, Government Printing Office, Washington, 1997.



Rick Pallwor





# Who Profits from Prisons?

by Al Cunningham

While the benefits of prisons may be questionable for the public, they are undeniable for a variety of corporate interests. To the \$51 billion spent for state and local criminal justice systems, we can add the amount spent for federal criminal justice agencies (\$5.7 billion in 1985) and private security systems (\$21.7 billion in 1980); the annual total thus lies in the neighbourhood of \$80 billion. (*Focus*, 1989)

By contrast, the amount of direct losses to individuals, households, banks and other businesses due to crime is approximately \$10 billion per year. In other words, for every dollar directly lost by victims of crime, we spend about \$8 to apprehend and punish the perpetrators.

Prisons take on another face if one views them as generators of profits. Some of those who profit from the business of imprisonment are

**It is a well-known fact today that "prisons are the number one industry in America, after war."**

easy to identify, like architects. According to the chair of the American Institute of Architecture's criminal justice committee, there are now over 100 firms specializing in prison architecture. Of the 200 companies that exhibit their products at the annual Congress of the American Correctional Association, more than 10 percent are architectural firms. One Michigan entrepreneur, who is marketing what he describes as "do-it-yourself, easy-to-assemble portable jails," comments that "once this thing goes, we're talking about scads and scads of money."

Architects are far from the only people with a vested interest in the proliferation of prisons. After successfully lobbying the state legislature for new prison construction, the former Alabama state prison commissioner, Robert Britton, moved into the private sector to head a for-profit medical firm that services Alabama's prison system. "I've always wondered what the corporate world is like," he said at the time.

The corporate world is extensively involved with prisons. San Quentin offers more than 350 products for prisoners to purchase, from cupcakes and fried pies to perm-cream relaxers and pin-up calendars. The wares annually exhibited for sale to corrections professionals at their convention include institutional hardware like Aerko International's Mister Clear-Out ("The state of the art in Tear Gas Hand Grenades, especially designed for indoor use"), and the products of the Peerless Handcuff Company ("A Major Breakthrough in Cuff Design!"). More prosaic products include the Muffin Monster from Disposable Waste System, Inc. ("It will grind up into small pieces all the things inmates put down toilets"); the food distribution company Servomation ("Justice is Served"); and the Coca-Cola Company ("Time Goes Better with Coke!").

It is a well-known fact today that "prisons are the number one industry in America, after war." Actually, in many cases, the two overlap. The American Security Fence Corp. of Phoenix, Arizona, manufactures the double-edged coiled razor blade that graces most prisons' fences (Razor Ribbon, "The Mean Stuff!"). According to the company's promotional literature, their top-of-the-line product, Bayonet Barb, which "combines awesome strength... and vicious effectiveness," is "manufactured in strict accordance with military specifications."

Likewise, GTE Security Systems of Mountain View, California, sells an electrified fence called Hot Wire. Tested on the field of battle, the product is advertised as being "so hot that NATO chose it for high-risk installations; so hot that thousands have found their place in military installations ranging from sub-zero Alaskan winters to sizzling South-East Asian summers."

From architects to academics (who study prisoners and the prison system), from food service vendors to health care firms, from corrections bureaucrats to psychologists and social workers, there is a lot of money to be made from the proliferation of prisoners.

It's a money thing!

*Al Cunningham is a prisoner at San Quentin, California.*

# Looking for an Anarchist Living Room

by Peter S. Moore

One of the problems and the freedoms of Nineties anarchism is the absence of any reliable guides as to what to do.

The anarcho-syndicalists had agricultural and industrial unions during the Twenties, Thirties and Forties and, fondly, we create memories for ourselves by reading the testimonials of their successes. Often we find ourselves trying to apply those out-dated models to the present day with the vague hope of recreating the past.

We cannot indulge in illusions; that is a primary problem of the contemporary anarchist movement. We must take advantage of our fundamental freedom to explore new avenues within the Nineties' rapidly polarizing political climate. We are looking at an unprecedented window of opportunity; we simply need to recognize it.

We must ask ourselves these two questions: What challenges do the North American peoples face and how can we help overcome them? What do they want?

The battlefield today is dominated by powerful neoliberals, mouthy neoconservatives and desperate welfare state liberals. By looking at how the public responds to these groups, we can see how and where anarchists can popularize our vision and struggle.

## Freemen or Free People?

Canada's political climate is intensely heated by the fires of anti-government literature, videos and speakers which have trickled northward from the United States and founded their own local followers (the July/August 1996 issue of *Canadian Forum* documents the creation of the right wing magazine, *The Next City* using the Donner Canadian Foundation's hefty contribution of \$1.4 million). They preach against the tyranny of Big Government. Conspiracies abound. The fictional *X-Files* serial and even a fact-based TV movie about the Ruby Ridge stand-off cast the state and the police in an increasingly uglier light. All of this is a product of what I'll call the "small government" movement, a combination of neoliberal and neoconservative interests.

The Montana Freemen are a good example of the extremists within the small government movement. The media portrays them as "anti-government," arguably our label. The Federal Bureau of Investigation has charged them with threatening the life of a federal judge and illegally printing their own bonds. They defend themselves with weapons.

They look a lot like anarchists during the Spanish Revolution, don't they? Anarchist regions printed their own currency. They stormed police stations and garisons many times in the 1930s, playing a key role in frustrating General Franco's initial fascist uprising in 1936. They controlled large rural and urban regions and declared themselves autonomous and free, too. Businesses were collectivized, while those who wanted to work independently often were allowed to do so.

Are the Freemen really anarchists?

Using the analytical tools of class, property and social status we get our answer: The Freemen are clearly not anarchists. For lack of a better term, they are "secessionary bourgeoisie," no different from the heads of corporations who hold communities hostage to gain less responsibilities (i.e., lower taxes and environmental standards), to improve their financial returns and lifestyles. The Freemen prefer to withdraw their resources totally into their own private space amounting to support for the tyranny of private property. This individualism merely justifies legally and morally a system of landed and inherited wealth.

The Freemen are only the rapids in a river of discontent in the United States. In Canada we know a more benign flow of this movement as the Reform and Social Credit Parties, the Canadian Taxpayers' Association and the Fraser Institute to name a few. Despite the undercurrents of anti-authoritarianism and anti-government sentiment, the most visible ripples — those focused on by the media — are those of neoliberalism and neoconservatism.

These most visible and acclaimed parts of the "Revolution" as Mike Harris and Ralph Klein fans like to describe it, are neither revolutionary nor anti-authoritarian. In fact, the grassroots activists of this movement, whether they realize it or not, gleefully build their own scaffolds all the while thinking they mean to hang wel-



fare cheats and bureaucrats. The small government movement will meet betrayal because the leaders' goals are first and foremost to re-legitimize government's authority, not to get rid of government.

### Small Government for Better Government

David Osborne and Ted Gaebler quote Peter Drucker in their book, *Reinventing Government* (whose cover boldly bears the anarchist colours — black and red) to drive home the point that all the state needs is a little more flexibility.

We do not face a 'withering away of the state.' On the contrary, we need a vigorous, a strong, and a very active government. But we do face a choice between big and impotent government and a government that is strong because it confines itself to decisions and directions and leaves the 'doing' to others.

Aside from their fundamental goal of re-legitimizing government, the leaders have managed to articulate the small government movement's desires into a platform of media buzz words: "decentralization," "targeting resources," "protect life and property" and "streamlining." These ideologically driven concepts are the key to returning our society to a sane existence, they say.

Let's examine some of the leaders' goals to see how we can respond as anarchists and re-direct the small government movement towards annihilating state authority.

### Devolution of Powers

Firstly, they seek decentralization through devolution of powers to the provinces. This goal appears more democratic because "local control is better." However, the opposite will occur simply because it is a devolution of power. Power is not dissolved, but handed down to the provinces. Thus provinces can impose more user fees, taxes and reduce funding for programs that ease the lives of the lower classes.

Strategically, the reduction of central control removes the federal government from direct attack and puts the provinces on the front lines of class war in Canada. This switch evades the formation of national coalitions and popular movements necessary to fight the state. The local control is merely more control for provincial tyrants, public as well as private.

Political activist Noam Chomsky assesses the situation in an interview excerpted in *The Progressive*:

Let's say you send block grants down to the states. Even middle-sized businesses have all kinds of ways to pressure states to make sure that this money ends up in their pockets and not in the pockets of hungry children. Devolution under these circumstances is a great way to increase tyranny and to decrease the threat of democracy as well as shift resources even more dramatically toward the rich and away from the poor.

Although Chomsky focuses on the US government, his analysis applies equally well to Canada's provinces. The switch to block funding and responsibility including partial administration of Unemployment Insurance

through the Canada Health and Social Transfer (CHST) on April 1, 1996, is most revealing. Suddenly, we have governments coating themselves in teflon to evade blame while cooking up the profits of devolution.

### Targeted Funding

Secondly, the neoliberals seek to target resources where they are needed most by the poor, the disabled and the disadvantaged. Going one step further, they suggest charities are best capable of helping these people because they are community-based. Therefore, we

should privatize public services into non-profit corporations.

This goal also has common sense to it, but when enacted it breaks with the important principles of universal human needs and of the responsibility of all people to care for each other (mutual aid). Already in Canada, poor, unemployed and disabled people are looked on as leaches; the constant accusations of welfare fraud in the media, notably by the *Sun* newspapers, keep that idea fresh in the public's mind.

These people on assistance are on universally accessible programs. Removing universal access will ostracise them further because the public will no longer have access to those funds. If this were to happen, even a moron could mobilize the population to dump financial assistance to the poor.

### Law and Order

The third goal is perhaps the easiest to understand. Historically, the goal of more protection for life and property always has been the goal of the bourgeois and the

rich. This demand goes hand in hand with deteriorating social conditions like the appearance of the homeless in downtown and suburban areas.

Today, the populist Reform Party is leading the charge on this issue, demanding (and getting!) a comprehensive review of the Young Offenders Act. Soon Canadians proudly can lock up their children to ensure their security, while ignoring why so many young people are getting involved in criminal activity.

This goal offers an intolerable trade-off between safety and liberty. For anarchists, these are mutually inclusive goals, using mutual aid and defence as the means to this end. Already Canada has one of the highest rates of incarceration in the G-7.

### Streamlining

Fourthly, the leaders have the goal of streamlining the public sector (known also as downsizing in the private sector). Again, the focus on efficiency and teamwork is admirable but misplaced. Streamlining the public sector is a rationalization for the privatization and "contracting out" of public services to the private sector to turn a profit.

In Alberta, the privatization of liquor stores increased prices and reduced selection variety contrary to the Minister Steve West's promise of more variety and lower prices. In addition, Alberta lost a major source of revenue, which only served to justify more cuts to social programs. To make up for lost revenue, user fees for other services not marketable to the private sector are raised. Again, we see a targeting of fees, not resources, in a perverted form of social punishment against groups that need help.

A sideline to this goal is the increased emphasis on team and Total Quality Management (TQM), especially in the private sector workplace. The result of downsizing was the savaging of the middle manager and a stronger demarcation of power within the workplace hierarchy.

Little wonder that the middle class is the backing force behind the small government movement. The Nineties have been especially traumatic for them. They lost their status, many lost their jobs or choked back a salary reduction. As well, the middle class face a major drop in their living standard and their children face crisis levels of under- and unemployment, not to mention increasing post-secondary tuition fees. Meanwhile, taxes hit them hard alongside interest payments for their status symbols (cars, houses, credit cards). All the while TQM clones innocently and repeatedly instruct them that this hell was necessary for them to keep their jobs and to ensure "complete customer satisfaction."

With Iaccoco's ladder missing its middle rungs, the middle class no longer has a clear route to the top, creating high levels of frustration. And as the middle class is

heavily composed of managerial workers, their sense of freedom and creativity has already been crushed by the structures that demanded they conform to retain their jobs in the first place. Some try to create opportunities for themselves through workaholicism. However, the result is the destruction of their personal, family and community lives not to mention their health and sanity.

The increased stratification of wealth and the drop in wages further provokes conflict between the upper and the middle classes. The atmosphere of total insecurity characterized by layoffs, unemployment and cutbacks to social services, makes managements' promises of a more receptive and open workplace through TQM echo hollowly with lies. The popular response to these new pressures can be partially gauged by the immense popularity of comic strips like *Dilbert*.

We should keep in mind that past revolutions often depended on the participation of the middle class to tip the balance (see the success of Nicaragua and the failure of El Salvador, for instance). Certainly in industrialized countries like Canada where nearly a third of the workers are managerial, revolution without them would mean mass murder and exclusion.

Before we examine the opportunities the small government movement offers anarchists, we need to examine the welfare state liberals fighting hard to maintain the status quo.

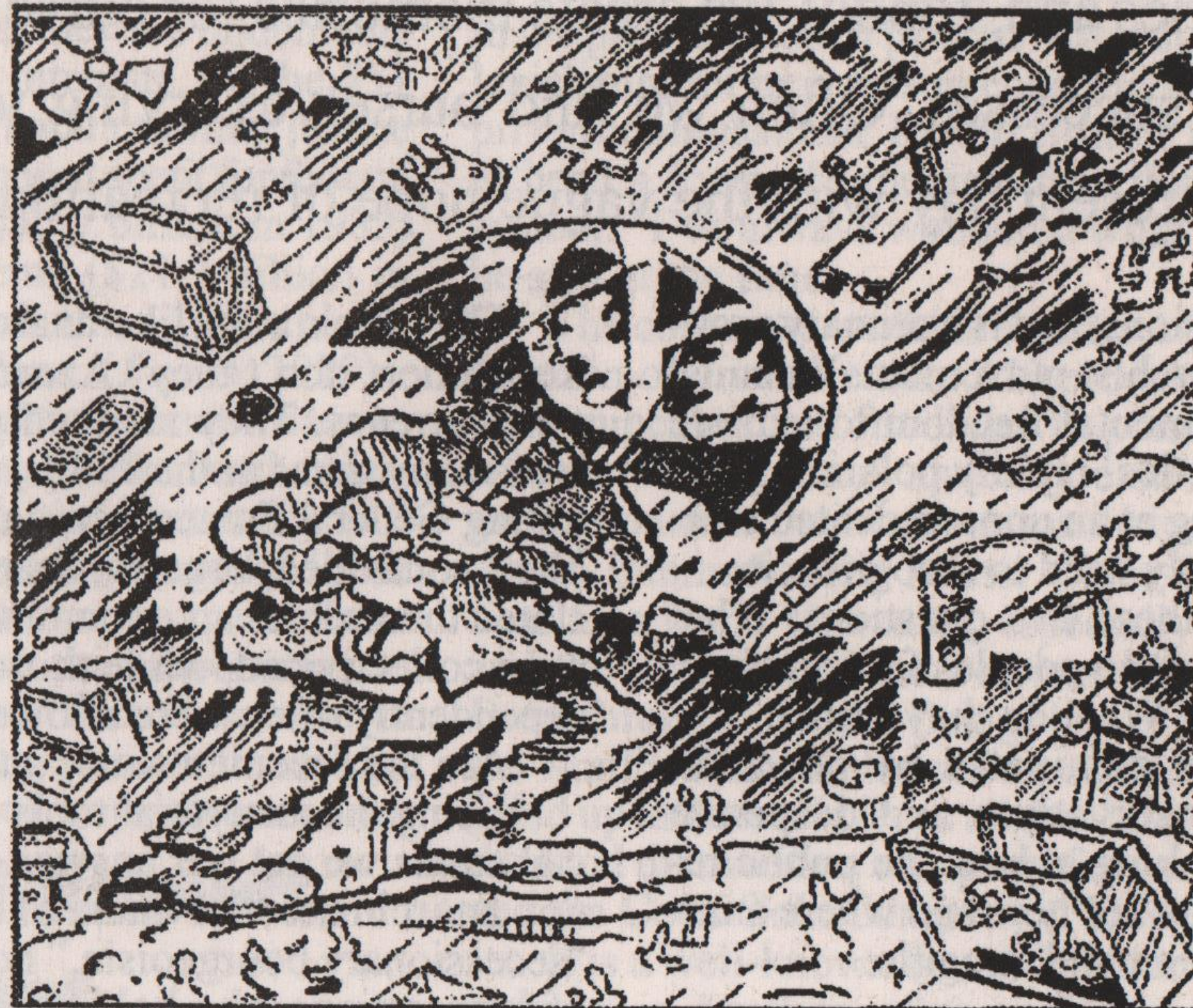
**Soon Canadians proudly can lock up their children to ensure their security, while ignoring why so many young people are getting involved in criminal activity.**

### Looking Under the "Good Guys" Rug

The anti-cutbacks movement is a statist movement. It believes that if we had the right government, a government that put people over profits, our lives would be much improved. Diverse as it is, this movement's goals are quite narrow: capturing state power through democratic elections or influencing it through lobbying and presenting policy alternatives. "There are alternatives" is a slogan of the Calgary movement, but it is a boast that's quite hollow. The only alternative this movement embraces is State intervention. Not surprisingly, these welfare state liberals and centre-left progressives feel uncomfortable with the word "Revolution."

One of the heroes of this movement, journalist and author Linda McQuaig whose badge of honour is media baron Conrad Black's hatred, revealed her own discomfort with revolution when confronted at the Dr. Irma M. Parhad Lecture of the University of Calgary earlier this year.

Calgary's resistance movement had turned out in force to hear McQuaig speak about *Shooting The Hippo*. During question period, one middle-aged man frustrated with the constant betrayal of the electorate, asked, "What do you think we should do? Should we have a bloody revolution?"





McQuaig balked at the question and then responded, "I think we should... We have to give democracy a chance."

Her answer rang hollow. Earlier in her talk she had described the process of Canadian democracy's constant betrayal: Canadians vote in Mulroney to avoid the GST and end up with the GST and Free Trade Agreement; Canadians vote in Chretien for jobs, the renegotiation of NAFTA, the removal of the GST and the preservation of social programs and end up with massive cuts to social programs, cut jobs, NAFTA and the GST. Over the past 15 years, parliamentary democracy has been a harsh master.

The reason for McQuaig's lukewarm advocacy of democracy comes clear in her books (otherwise excellent reads for understanding Corporate Canada). She advocates that the welfare state should and must be preserved because it is the best means to meet the needs of every Canadian through raised living standards.

Her argument condemns private spending on luxury items because it detracts from a wider vision of public need.

While there's enough money for Nintendo and other expensive and frivolous items of private consumption, there's a growing sense that we can no longer afford things we pay for communally through our taxes — things that, by any standard, are important items.

While what she says makes sense, the method — state-controlled social spending — really advocates putting more money and more resources at the disposal of the state. In short, it promotes reliance on a government of which the people lack direct or even representative control.

Similarly, the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives and Winnipeg's Chocces settle on formulating statist alternatives. Their annual budgets for municipal, provincial and federal governments use public consultations with unions, community groups, NGOs and many other groups — an excellent process — only to provide statist financial solutions to these groups' problems. It is much like taking a step backward in time into a social democrat convention in 19th century Europe: if we capture state power through elections we can rule the people benevolently. Perhaps we should go in search of Plato's philosopher king, too, because this movement sure needs help.

As the anti-cutbacks struggle intensifies, centrists and leftists alike have begun to close ranks around the state, justifying its existence morally using a sense of solidarity with public sector workers and practically with the passive hope that a "good state" will emerge.

At a Chocces workshop in Calgary, several workshop facilitators gave me a mild chastisement for suggesting that the hiring of more civil servants would be used by provincial and federal governments to show their benevolence. Their response was a short tirade (greeted with assenting nods from the group) on how hard civil servants work.

While the response avoided the question of political

manipulation through a softened cutbacks stance in an elections year (a strategy currently enacted in Alberta), it did highlight the closing off of critical dialogue about the role of the state in the anti-cutbacks movement. This juncture is critical for us, because it does to us what the Right has done to the old liberals and New Leftists: marginalize ideas. Fighting to keep these ideas in the dialogue is our first and most basic responsibility.

Today, Canada's anti-cutbacks movement has far more faith in government than the neoliberal "small government" movement (whose adulation of the free market approaches near legend). What remains clear is that both movements accept ideologically the role of authority in the lives of their members. As such, both movements constitute a betrayal of democratic and egalitarian principles.

### Identifying Our Role

Separation from the struggles of either movement is not the answer for Canada's nascent anarchist movement. When we participate in anti-cutbacks demonstrations we must always articulate our solidarity with principals we agree with — for instance universality, participation and autonomy. Meanwhile we can offer an alternative to the betrayal awaiting each movement by demonstrating how their social goals can reach fulfilment through political and economic anarchism.

These days, the political dialogue is dominated by the "experts" of economics. While economists have sought to make themselves respected members of the scientific community, all the evidence points at them as economic weatherpeople rather than experts. Often they're wrong, often they don't understand.

People need to know the fallibility of these technocrats. Popularizing economic knowledge is one way to deflate these economic prophets. But knowledge is only half the responsibility. We must also present alternatives. Emphasizing the replacement of the exploitative and dependency-oriented redistribution of wealth (whether through the bureaucratic state, tyrannical state or the liberal democratic state) to an anarchistic redistribution of wealth is one of those alternatives we need to develop.

### Participatory Economy

To this end, anarchists can begin advancing the idea of participatory economy, articulated by economic historian Robert Heilbroner as "a world in which widely shared decision-making by discussion and vote displaces decision-making by self-interest alone, or by persons privileged by wealth or position to make unilateral determinations."

Anarchists have always sought economic control as the basis of better distributing political power. The application of the economic principles of direct democracy is the future of twenty-first century anarchism.

Let's examine once again the goals of these movements in the context of a participatory economy. For the liberals and social democrats, we see an intense desire to preserve healthcare, social services and education. For the small government movement, we see desires to gain more local control for regions and municipalities, solve

social problems like poverty and have a safe neighbourhood.

In a participatory economy, local control will be ensured through confederations of decentralized municipalities. Income tax perhaps could be abolished in favour of responsible public infrastructure committees linked together through community confederations. Healthcare, social services, education — all would continue to function along direct democratic lines coordinated by committees of industry participants, benefactors and community members. Money would be reduced to exchange-only, with speculative markets removed or restricted. There would be an explosion of dialogue from every municipality about new and old ways of doing tasks describing the successes, the innovations and the failures of each organization.

This offering is a mere sketch of an order in an anarchist society based on principals of participatory economy, but it is a start. We will continue to have the services we enjoy now, but without surrendering our democratic rights and freedoms to the state or to the private tyranny of corporations. To accomplish this will take enormous energy, resources, time and struggle. In short, it will take multiple revolutions. To spark revolutions, survive them and continue to spark more revolutions, we must build up our resources, our numbers and our discourse to be inclusive, strong, flexible and articulate.

Articulate discourse is really critical in these beginning stages of building our movement. An example close to home is the BAC: Burn Alberta (to Hell) Campaign. On bridges, bus stops and signs of all sorts, graffiti flames lick the cross bar of the circle-A giving it a New Age feel. For some local flavour, they sprayed "Rev. 18:18" beneath some of the graffiti.

**To spark revolutions, survive them and continue to spark more revolutions, we must build up our resources, our numbers and our discourse to be inclusive, strong, flexible and articulate.**

While the idea of burning Klein's Alberta to the ground may give these propagandists gut satisfaction, this "campaign" is inarticulate. If anything, its comparison of Alberta to biblical Babylon reflects the depth of these comrades' cultural indoctrination and their fascination with the ease of a mystical apocalypse. Politically, it shows only an interest in offending the sensibilities of the Bible Belt and creating fear, not in raising awareness about any issue in particular. BAC also misplaces re-

sources — time, energy, spray paint — not to mention the risk of arrest, that could be used to send a useful message with which people can identify.

### Taking the Message to the People

We need to help people get comfortable with the idea of an anti-authoritarian society. Once comfortable, people can begin to identify with our developing goals and take the steps to forwarding the movement.

For example, the middle class can visualise not paying 40 per cent of their income in taxes; however, they cannot visualise living in collectives or communes, especially since most don't even know their neighbours. In reality, they will pay likely more than 40 per cent of their income, but the difference is that they will know exactly where every dollar goes because they chose to put it there.

In the big separation debate, we can propose a national federation of independent anarchist regions to create a new vision of Canada that can compete with the federalist versus separatist dichotomy. This federation would resolve native claims to land and also include an international perspective where human beings can live in harmony with one another and their environment. To this end, we need to discuss private property in a 1990s context using on-the-street language.

There is much to do and it is vital that we do it. Both movements (welfare state and small government) lead to the state as a solution. We know that whichever side triumphs through majoritarian election or elitist coercion, it will uphold state tyranny and herd the stampeding public once again into the ethical slaughterhouse. This likelihood makes our struggle that much more urgent.

Welcome to the Anarchist Living Room. Sit down, put your feet up and start thinking, planning and making the revolution happen step by step, fist by fist, smile by smile.

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Foto by: Paul Forsberg



# Passionate Anarchy: Portrait of a Life

by Don Alexander

**A**tilio Bortolotti, better known as Art Bartell, was an Italian-born anarchist, who emigrated to Canada in 1920, and eventually became a successful businessperson. For some 25 years after arriving in this country, Art remained an active anarchist and anti-fascist, becoming gradually more absorbed in his business affairs beginning in the late 1940s. From then until his recent death, Art used proceeds from the business to help support numerous anarchist publishers, schools, and archives throughout the Western world.

*Kick It Over*, founded in 1981, was one recipient of Art's generosity. When I met Art around 1985, *Kick It Over* was in desperate financial straits. Having heard about Art from our fellow anarchist publishers at *Strike!*, we decided to screw up our courage and go see him.

This we did and Art generously gave us \$500.00. We developed a relationship with Art which, while it had its financial component, was based on genuine respect and admiration. At the time we first met him, Art was 82 and his life-long companion Libera in her early 70s. Despite their age, the two were vigorous and passionate, and a constant source of advice and encouragement.

Art had an incredible memory, recalling events and persons with the same clarity of detail as when they first occurred. He and Libera were also keen exponents of healthy living, taking vitamins and eating fresh produce from their garden. Art once described junk food "as an outrage to the cells of the body."

Libera and Art were devoted to each other. As the younger member of the pair, Libera was saddled with some of the responsibility for looking after Art, especially after his faculties began to fail. She was warm and grandmotherly, but not above nagging when she felt Art was somehow being derelict in his duties. Being relatively well-off (and with the care of the business in the hands of their son), Art and Libera used to winter in Miami Beach each year. After I left *Kick It Over* (1989), I gradually lost touch with them, especially after moving to the West Coast. In 1995, I learned (belatedly) that Art had died.

## Art's Childhood in Italy

Art was the fifteenth of eighteen children and, by his own account, was the only rebellious one of the bunch. His family was Friulani, an ethnic group from the northeastern part of Italy which speaks Romansch, a language similar to that spoken in parts of Switzerland.

The first manifestation of Art's rebelliousness was in refusing to go to church. When the state passed a law ordering daily religious instruction for children, Art persuaded his friends (both male and female) to go play

doctor-and-nurse in a local granary. In another manifestation of rebelliousness, a 10-year old Art stole a load of manure for a poor widow from a neighbour who had lots to spare.

When he was 12, a friend suggested that he make love to one of the neighbourhood girls to ensure that he would never have to go into the priesthood. His father caught him in the act, and Art fled. For three days, he slept in a box car at the railway station. When his family found him, his father gave him a brutal beating. Art never spoke to his father again.

The experiences of the First World War turned Art into a convinced anti-militarist. In 1917, when he was 14, Art and his friends cut down an Italian soldier who had been strung up by his thumbs as punishment for dereliction of duty. That same year, Art and his family fled during a fire fight between German and Italian soldiers and, when they returned, they found the streets of the town littered with corpses.

Food was scarce, but Art proved a resourceful scavenger, and brought back lots of looted food for his mother and family. While his father and siblings were extremely religious, his mother waffled. Once, as he and she passed corpses in a ditch on the way back to town, his mother exclaimed "If there is a God, why does he allow wars and killing like this, if he is so powerful?... God must be a refugee." To find a kindred spirit in his mother made Art ecstatic.

His opposition to war was further confirmed when a German officer, billeted at their house, cradled and shielded a child who had become hysterical during an air raid. Having been fed propaganda about German atrocities, Art asked the man about these allegations. The officer replied: "Young man... I am a professor; I was teaching at the University of Berlin when I was called to serve in the army. I don't feel that I have the right to kill you because you were born here nor should you feel you can kill me because I was born in Berlin. I want you to remember three words: 'Freiheit uber alles!' [freedom over all]."

## Emigrating to North America

At the end of the war in 1918, Art decided to emigrate to Canada. Military service was mandatory in Italy, and Art didn't want to be a soldier for anyone. He wrote to his older brother in Windsor and was able to get entrance papers within a few weeks. However, the lack of space on transatlantic steamships delayed his passage, and that of another brother, until 1920.

When he finally left home, he was almost 17. He and his brother arrived at Ellis Island, where they were detained for a few days, and then made their way to

Windsor via Detroit. He entered Canada with a wooden box of clothing and \$14.00.

For three years he worked as a helper to a Ukrainian blacksmith in an Italian-owned shop. After getting into an altercation with the man (who always referred to him as "dago" or "wop"), he quit. Soon after, he illegally moved to Detroit and got a job at a Chrysler plant. This was in 1922. He had already been reading about religion, and came to describe himself as an atheist. After reading a leaflet about the trial of Sacco and Vanzetti, he began to explore the meaning of anarchism and that same year — at a discussion group that met in the back of a grocery store — first described himself as an "anarchist."

Soon after, he became part of an anarchist network which straddled the two cities. He borrowed pamphlets and books from a Sicilian candy store owner in Detroit, and began to participate in protests against Mussolini's rise to power. He also became an apostle of free love after reading a book on the subject by a man named Berthelot, and a copy of Emma Goldman's *Mother Earth* magazine.

Growing tired of being questioned about his nationality every time he took the ferry over to Detroit — especially since he considered himself Friulani not Italian — Art one day replied that "I was born in a town that is located at forty-six degrees of latitude and thirteen degrees of longitude, east of Greenwich." Though they sent him back to Windsor, he thereafter always used that refrain.

For the next few years, Art worked at blacksmithing, and at construction with one of his brothers. Economically, culturally, and politically he was as much a 'citizen' of Detroit as of Windsor. After a brawl which he helped instigate at a public presentation by the fascist Italian consul, Art's work site was visited by the American immigration police. Fortunately, he and his brother got away. Later, the Canadian authorities came looking for him where he rented a room, but his landlord put them off the scent. However, he was now unable to work in Windsor as the fascists had managed to get him blacklisted.

A short time later, Art was picked up and hauled in to see the Windsor chief of police, who told him to get out of town and out of Canada, or face a long prison term for sedition. Art was broke, owed money to his landlord, and wondered what he was going to do. He spent 5 cents on the ferry to Detroit, found a room, and saw an ad at Ford for a tool-and-die maker. He applied, under the pseudonym Art Berthelot, and got the job.

Meanwhile, the incarceration of Sacco and Vanzetti dragged on, and in August 1927, they were executed. On the night of the execution, Art got into a confrontation with a riot control officer at a demonstration. They exchanged blows with sticks and clubs, but Art managed to get away.

Art also continued to confront the fascists. At a rally

in Detroit on Columbus Day in 1928, a fascist shot two anti-fascist demonstrators, killing one and severely injuring another. Art started beating one of the fascists. When the police arrived, a sympathetic shopkeeper hid Art behind some barrels of apples, and thereby saved him from arrest.

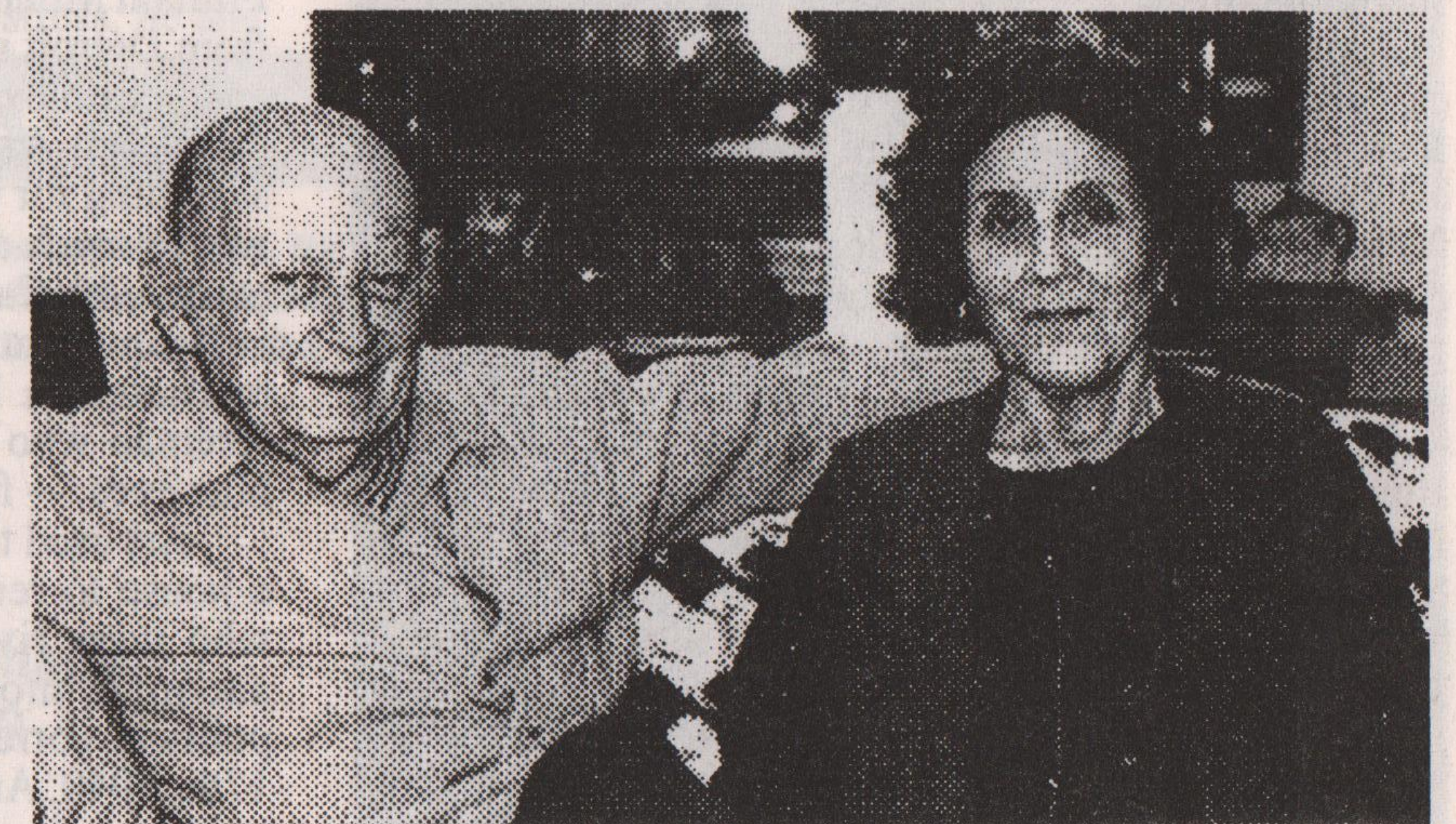
In 1929, he was distributing leaflets at the Fisher Body plant when he was arrested. After getting into a shouting match with his interrogators, he was knocked unconscious, and was transferred to the county jail.

Within weeks, he was put on trial, and when the trial judges found out he was an anarchist and an atheist, which he made no effort to hide, he was ordered deported. His comrades raised \$3000 bail, a huge sum in those days, to get him out of jail. His brother came to fetch him back to Windsor, and within a few days he had been involved in yet another altercation involving the fascist consul. As Windsor was getting too 'hot' for him, Art packed his few belongings and took the train to Toronto.

## Art's Years in Toronto

It took Art a couple of years to make solid contacts with the radical Italian community. At a meeting at the radical Matteotti Club, a socialist leader challenged him to a debate. Out of the debate a group was formed of fellow anarchists from Italy and Friuli, and they initiated a publication called *Il Libertario* [The Libertarian]. As Art relates:

In 1934 we started to print *Il Libertario*. We had an old duplicator — hell what a job! Four pages, six pages



Attilio Bortolotti and Libera Martignago

maximum. We tried our best but we had no one who was a writer. But what the hell! We were all workers and semi-illiterate as we were, or less, because many were totally illiterate at the time, the old Italians you know.

They also organized a drama group and put on regular plays and recitals, followed by benefit dances. Of the half-dozen or so anarchists in the group, most were anarcho-communists, though Art considered himself an "anarchist without adjectives," not wishing, as he put it, to put any one leader or theorist on a pedestal.



Ever internationalist in his outlook, Art formed a strong relationship with the local Jewish anarchists, and it was through one of them that he first met Emma Goldman. He describes the first time he heard her speak: "I went to hear her and was flabbergasted by the way she spoke, with her energy, with the beauty of her sentences. She was nothing to look at — short, fat, unattractive — but when she spoke, with that fire in her, you forgot everything."

Introduced to her at the time, Art did not see Emma again until 1939, when she was in Toronto to give some lectures. She stayed a month or two, and the two of them became good friends. He used to drive her around, and would sometimes arrange her lectures, including a couple that she gave in Windsor. Of course, Goldman was



terribly homesick for the United States, but all she could do was stare across the Detroit River at her adopted homeland.

In 1939, after exposing the fascists' attempts to hide their activities behind the 'neutral' veneer of a language school, in a lecture that was reported on in the *Windsor Star*, Art became the subject of new threats and began carrying a pistol for protection. The fascists also alerted the American and Canadian immigration authorities to his having jumped bail in Detroit. After a period under

constant surveillance, Art and two other comrades were arrested under the provisions of the War Measures Act, for carrying on anti-war agitation.

As the sole single man of the trio, Art took the rap for all the activities. Emma Goldman hired a top lawyer to defend him. Art was acquitted, but was rearrested a short time later, for entering the country illegally. He spent the next three and a half months in jail, awaiting deportation. During this time, he became quite sick, and it was Emma who both got him out of jail and nursed him back to health. What happened to his personal library is worth relating in Art's own words:

On the day of my arrest, the Toronto "red squad" came in and seized all my books and periodicals, a big collection of 1500 volumes, along with all my correspondence. A big truck arrived and hauled it all away, and two years later they burned it. The day before the burning, two Mounties came to my house [Art was out of jail by this time] and told me they would be burning everything the next day. I said, "You think that by burning my library you will burn my ideals?" A few days later another Mountie came, a young man born in Vancouver of Friulani parents. He brought me half a dozen pamphlets. That was all that remained of my collection. All the rest had been destroyed. If I live to be a thousand years old, I'll never forget that. The Mountie asked me what was anarchism. When I replied, he said "Why, that's democracy!"

The same year that Art was arrested, he and Libera, the daughter of an Italian anarchist, became involved with one another. Libera was in the apartment when the Friulani Mountie arrived and managed to warn a deserter from Detroit in Italian, who thus escaped imprisonment and possible death.

When Art got out of jail, he immediately began searching for work. His skill — tool-and-die making — was in much demand for the war effort but, as Italy was at war with Canada, he encountered much hostility. After striking out at a number of plants, he changed his name to Bartell, a Dutch name, and was hired by a Dutch foreman who mistook him — with his blond hair and blue eyes — for a countryman.

Art used the money from his new job to save up for a house to rent for Emma, himself, and her secretary, who were living in very cramped quarters, without adequate money for postage for their voluminous political correspondence. On the evening of February 17th, 1940, Art was en route to a speaking engagement to commemorate the anniversary of the burning at the stake of Giordano Bruno. Intercepted at a friend's, he learned that Emma had suffered a stroke and rushed right over.

Emma — who had played such an important role in getting Art released, and had probably saved his life — lost her powers of speech, which she never recovered. She lingered in the hospital and then died at home, three months later. It was only in death that the United States government allowed her back into the US, to be buried beside the Haymarket martyrs in Waldheim cemetery in Chicago.

foto Federico Arcos

## Art's Life After the War

After the war, Art and some colleagues were able to buy up used war machinery for very little, and they opened a machine shop. With a daughter from Libera's first marriage, and a son on the way, Art began to devote more time to his family responsibilities. One by one, Art's cohorts dropped out of the business, and Art remained saddled with its management.

In 1954, Art liquidated the business and went back to being a tool-and-die maker, doing machine maintenance and special projects for another firm. He still kept a few machines at home, and worked on various inventions. In 1959, he and Libera traveled to Italy for three months, his first visit in 39 years. To do so, they had to get legally married. The trip proved costly and, when he came back, he asked his boss for a \$5.00 a week raise. His boss refused, and Art quit and used his remaining equipment to set up a two-person tool-and-die shop. His son, Lee, helped on evenings and weekends, and joined the operation full-time in 1963.

It was around this time that Art got a request from an acquaintance who had a construction firm to design a concrete floor-finishing machine that would work better than the models currently available. The prototype he built proved so successful that it launched him into his own manufacturing business. As the business solidified in the late 60s and early 70s, and his son took over more of the running of it, Art was able to take time off. He and Libera continued to live frugally, and much of the proceeds of the business went to support anarchist projects around the world. This began in the 1950s, and has continued right up to the present. Throughout his early years as a businessperson, Art continued to raise money to support Italian immigrants in distress, he and

Libera put people up in their home, and cranked out leaflets on an old duplicator in their basement.

Art's health began to fail in the late 1980s, and on February 10, 1995, at the age of 91, Art passed away. He and Libera had been together for a total of 53 years. Towards the end of his life, Art suffered from a loss of mental capacity, which rendered him unable to read even his beloved books. This was a cruel end for a passionate soul. I think a fitting way to end this tribute to his remarkable life is to offer another excerpt from Art's own words:

Yes, I still feel the same way about anarchism. At first, I had been a real revolutionary. I was young and, like quicksilver, enamored of Galleani and of terrorists like Emile Henry. But during the Sacco-Vanzetti tragedy, which had great repercussions in Canada and made a lasting impression on me personally, the small response we got from the general population made me more reflective, more philosophical.

Money and property never made an incision in my psyche; money is not for our own aggrandizement, but to help those in need. Yet, I still believed in the necessity of violence up to the time of the Spanish Revolution. After May 1937 in Barcelona, I began to think: "Tens or hundreds of thousands of lives are being sacrificed. For what?" The anarchists had compromised their principles by joining the government. I began to see that anarchism cannot be imposed, that it can only be attained through education and propaganda.

**Author's Note:** Some of the quotations are taken from Paul Avrich's interview with Art Bartell in *Anarchist Voices* (reviewed in this issue), and some from an interview in KIO #17.

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# Anarchist Art

by Richard Kostelanetz

Works of art with anarchist themes and anarchist forms is not the same as art containing anarchist slogans. The latter includes certain poems by Kenneth Rexroth, Jackson Mac Low, or even Jenny Holzer, who write phrases that can be understood, or interpreted, as anarchist but are formally no different from newspaper headlines, which are not art — just newspaper headlines. Another artful masterpiece written by an anarchist is Emma Goldman's *Living My Life* (1930), which finally conveys not anarchist themes but the story of individual accomplishment over severe adversities. Instead, let us consider art that is distinctly anarchist in plot, anarchist in image, and anarchist in form.

An example of the first familiar to us all is Henry Miller's multi-volumed novel, which portrays self-liberation from society and the discovery of an instinctual self that cannot be socialized by outside forces, whether they be institutions, bureaucracies, employers, or marriage. I speak from personal experience, having read Miller while in college and even completing an honors thesis on his work in 1962, just as his best books were becoming commonly available here; for his book certainly affected my continued resistance to all those socializing antagonists.

A less familiar example of anarchist plot appears in Clayton Patterson's great videotape about the Tomkins Square Riot of 1988. Using an extremely portable video camera, held on his hip, and the natural lighting of a hot summer New York night, Patterson portrays the police attempt to disrupt a people's protest against the closing of a Lower East Side park that had become the last refuge of the homeless. As more and more cops come, Patterson's camera portrays them looking anxiously at one another, visually revealing the truth that officials later made public — that the policemen did not know what they were supposed to do. After many taunting screams and some violent exchanges, all intimately portrayed, a tall man in civilian clothes arrives, surveys the scene, and with a flick of his head instructs the police to retreat back into the buses that take them home. The film ends with the people retaking the park as the sun comes up.

Another unfamiliar example of anarchist plot is Lee Baxandall's play *Potsy* (1963), which tells of the local power

monopoly's attempt to electrify an outhouse over its owner's objections. In collusion with the state, which has no doubt authorized that all man-made constructions be electrically serviced, Consolidated, Incorporated, intimidates a reluctant customer. In response, Baxandall's protagonist Potsy lays his body on the pot, so to speak:

Pay yet some attention, workmen. Loka! Piszok Baika loka! Brudy! Mykja mykja! Skita. Cacones cacones. Alhorre zulla szenny! Szenny! Saasta bagla gaika, vaika. Lort, plehna. Lort lort lort lort lort! Kunya suka zurullo! Suka! (*The gestures grow more anguished.*) Szar ulosteet! Oosee oosee oosee cacones! Sprosnosc meconio. Mykjaa cach cauch, ossee oosee. Caakaaaaaaaaaaaaah! Track smuts. Aolach! Inneir, teyl fegradh schijt, mon. Gaorr, salachar. Orenlighet orenlighet orenlighet, cac cac! Bee-Emmm. oosee, oosee, oosee, ooseeeee-gamees! porcheria porcheria porcheria porcheria! Bouse crotte etron selles, gavno, crottin. Selles scheiss ficate, guano. Gavnoh sporchezza! Gavnoh! plot plop dump gamees! Gamees gamees gamees gamees! Feung feung, cacaaaah! Pez. Imundicia. [Etc.]

Though Baxandall thought himself a Marxist at the time, even compiling a bibliography of Marxist esthetics (and later editing the mostly Marxist *Radical Perspectives in the Arts* [1972]), it seemed to me clear at the time that the thrust of *Potsy* was anarchist, saying that society has no right to invade a human being's throne. So I was scarcely surprised that Baxandall went on to write guides to nude beaches, which is, needless to say, another kind of outhouse that authoritarians and their ally the state want to shut down.

An example of art with an anarchist image is the Living Theater's *Paradise Now* (1968). It is structured as a series of challenges to the audience, in which the performers scream slogans that are not ends in themselves but provocations designed to make the audience respond. "I'm not allowed to travel without a passport." "I'm not allowed to smoke marijuana." When they scream, "I'm not allowed to take my clothes off," some spectators respond by undressing and others not, creating an image in which some are liberated and others not. A second anarchist image so vivid in my head has audience members leaping off the stage into the crossed arms of several men. Both nudity and leaping into the air are images of liberation, which is what the paradise of *Paradise Now* is all about. (The leaping image resembles a famous Yves Klien photograph of himself, but without the context that, for the Living Theater, makes leaping political.) It is indicative that when the Internal Revenue Service closed the Living Theater in the fall of 1963, they were rehearsing a production of Baxandall's *Potsy*!

The master of anarchist form was John Cage, who from early in his career made sound pieces without

climaxes, without definite beginnings and ends, without boundaries. Another characteristic is that they were performed by individuals functioning as equals. Looking back over his entire work, to the beginning of his career in the 1930s, you'll find him never employing a conductor who makes interpretative decisions. (His conductors, instead, merely keep time, not even beat.) Nor does Cage allow solo performers to stand out from the background group.

His pieces are customarily characterized as chaotic but in their chaos is their politics. On the floor of *HPSCHD*, performed in a humongous basketball arena, were seven amplified harpsichordists each with different scores. Two had different collages of harpsichord music from Mozart to the present; three had differently fixed versions of Mozart's *Introduction to the Composition of Waltzes by Means of Dice*. One more harpsichordist played "computer print-out for twelve-tone gamut," while the last keyboard operator had nothing more specific than blanket instruction to play any Mozart he wished. Around the arena Cage distributed fifty-two tape machines, each playing tapes of computer-composed sound in fifty-two different scales (ranging from five tones to an octave to fifty-six tones). With so many disparate sound sources the result could only be microtonal din. If you listen to the recording made of this piece, that is what you hear. For the original performance Cage added a profusion of images from both slides and film. What is portrayed in this and in other Cage pieces is individuals working together and apart, each acting on his or her own authority, in concert with others, all without a conductor. In these respects, *HPSCHD* and other Cagean pieces become models of

an anarchist society.

He was always anarchist. When Cage was first invited to write music to accompany a text, back in the early 1940s, the writer he first approached was Henry Miller. Since Miller's obscenity proved problematic, Cage chose another writer whose politics were likewise anarchist, Kenneth Patchen; and when setting writers' texts, Cage frequently favored the poetry of e. e. cummings, whose politics were, to my mind, mostly anarchist as well. Consider not only *The Enormous Room* (1922), which is easily available, but the prose masterpiece that has long been out of print, *Eimi* (1933), which is a critical report of his 1931 trip to Russia. In the recently published collection of letters between Cage and Pierre Boulez in the late 1940s is Cage's charming proposal for "a society called Capitalists, Inc. (so that we will not be accused of being Communists). Everyone who joins has to show that he has destroyed not less than 100 disks of music or one sound recording device; also everyone who joins automatically becomes President." Making every member a king, Capitalists, Inc., would, of course, be another anarchist community.

Not unlike other anarchist art, Cage's work is essentially comedic; for whereas tragedy portrays what should not happen, comedy is about possibilities, not only in life but art. If you say, as I do, that nothing is more politically profound than anarchic comedy, then you could expand the canon of anarchist art to include the art of the Marx Brothers, Spike Mulligan, and even Bugs Bunny.

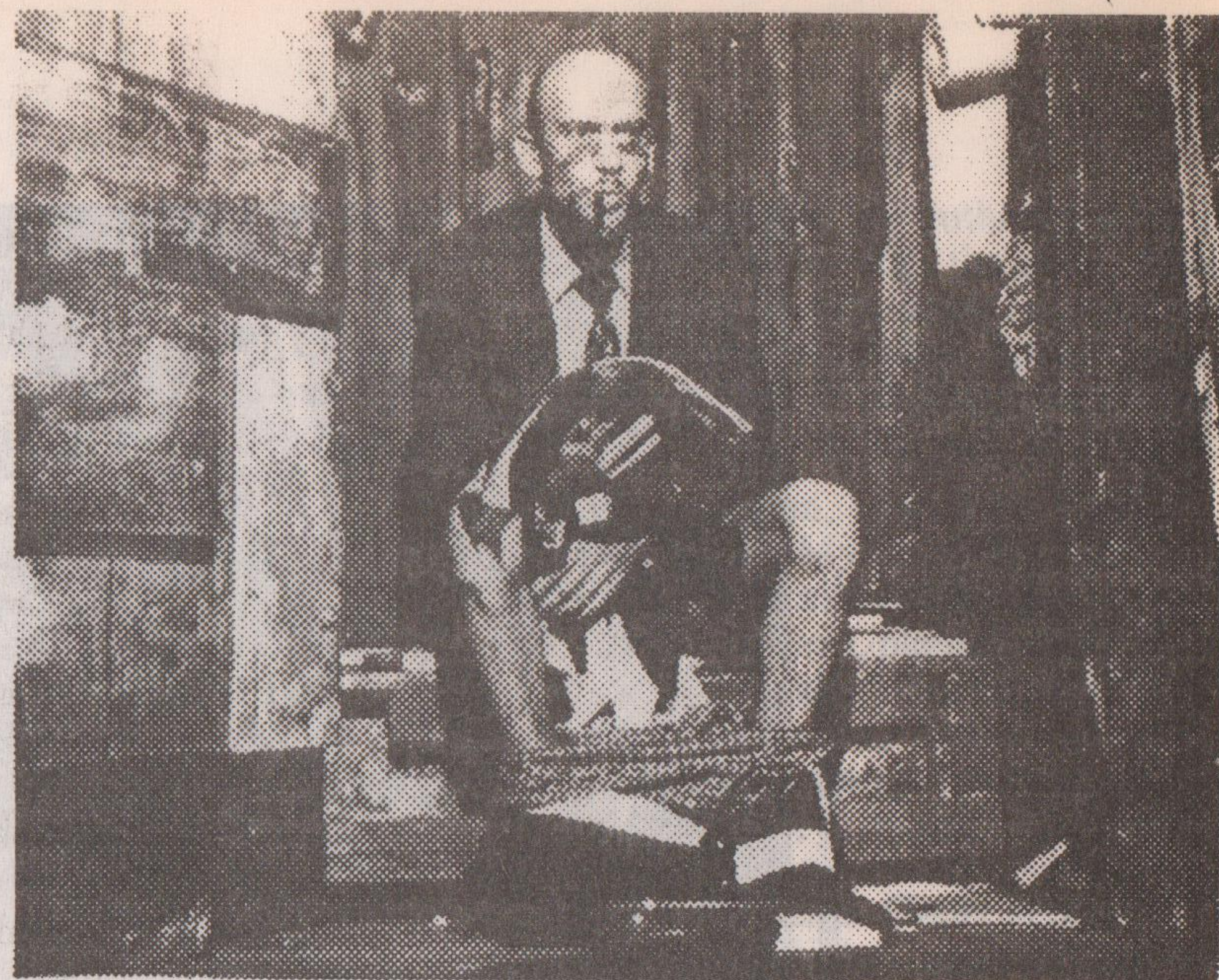
If a work of art is to be truly anarchist, its means corresponding to its ends, it must be anarchist in its plot, anarchist in its images, or anarchist in its form.



Mimmo Andreucci



Shit is universal, shit is eternal - but men's ways of regarding it are not. A history might be written of man and his shit. This merely is an account from a place and time, the present, where man and his shit hoard their feces, deny them, while accumulating surplus capital, labor discipline, the productive forces which transformed society. The choice now presents itself of living within the edifice that was made, learning its upkeep and further construction while also learning to let one's stools out in hip freedom - or alternatively, of moving from the house man thus built, in a gesture of despair, refusal, and above all irrational revolt.



Photos and artwork courtesy of Clayton Patterson, Lee Baxandall, and the Living Theater; thanks to all of them, and to Richard Kostelanetz for putting them in touch with Kick It Over.

Potsy: Shit.

(Heaving a sigh, POTSY lifts his coat-tails and sits on the opening. He lights a cigarillo; the match and burnt ashes drop between his legs into the depths. POTSY smokes during much of the action. He renews his resolve to speak.)

Potsy: We are in a bind. It was to be expected. (Pause) Is the analysis correct, however? One is never sure, with a bind, that it is a bind. (POTSY sighs. He rises and tests the rim with his thumb. He adjusts his coat and sits.)

Potsy: Constipated in the crapper. Our very precincts mock our inabilities. Yesterday dung laughed at us, so does dung today. Well, we know what to expect. (With care he twists on the seat.) We are bound in the knots of our infirmities and no deliverance. (Taking heart.) Huh, just a minute now... (POTSY's face is suffused with an effort. He grows tense. Gradually he relaxes, rises and looks in.)

POTSY: As ever. (POTSY shrugs and sits. He picks up a magazine, thumbs it, throws it down. He eats from a paper bag.)

POTSY: Disgusting, these prunes. Yet who would go alone and forswear classic remedies? (He munches.) Here is the exercise of saints. Each his own deliverer

and victor over all that cruel and crazy can come. (Brightening) Huh! Hold on.... (A strain clouds POTSY's face, dissipates and is lost. He rises and stares in, raising his smoked glasses.)

POTSY: Zero. (He settles on the seat.) And how should a man deliver? (He laughs harshly then holds a hand to his abdomen and breathes harshly.) Here we sit, or, it doesn't matter, we walk or run, for no angel calls to us. Now words penetrate the spaces. (He smokes and drops the ashes.) One looks after oneself. There is no help. (He bursts out.) Why were men's bowels constrained to give on slim portals? O abducat colon! O sphincter, recalcitrant aperture! How does nature relegate so philosophic task, so delightful function to this small unfit site? Could we deliver at will, out every pore! Can it be proper that fundamental transports are not shared throughout the flesh? What grief to know oneself beyond recourse a self-same cesspool, an ambulatory dungheap, a stink without proximate relief. We are possessors of coils that don't respond and don't endure. We bear the transport of some tissue that thinks, a knowing petrification; we sense it aloft on gleaming bony throne, briefly superior to the warm ooze whence it and all must at last tumble down. That fall seduces and escapes us. It eludes and we pursue. Better perhaps had matter never thought itself!

# an ode to bureaucracy

## Holding Patterns

Someone must be there, so you hold on the phone await the satisfaction of an answering click, but the voice that follows has those pre-recorded tones

and you must listen while it drones and drones telling you of options you can pick. Someone must be there, so you hold on the phone —

"Push one for this," (your sigh becomes a groan) with six or seven, you shout you're feeling sick, but the voice that follows has those pre-recorded tones.

Your kids come round in answer to your moans, it's *en francais* now, and your mind grows thick (someone must be there, so you hold on the phone).

The kids lose interest, again you stand alone, your head is aching and your palms are slick, but the voice that follows has those pre-recorded tones...

Lost in a bureaucratic Twilight Zone, (surely, a human being WILL answer if you fail to pick) someone must be there, so you hold on the phone, but the voice that follows has those pre-recorded tones.

## The Birth of Frustration

It begins innocently, you need proof of your existence. It seems the slip of paper that allowed you to marry, gained you entrance to foreign territories, is no longer sufficiently "official."

An under assistant officer informs you of your plight, slides your inadequate papers back to you, the cluck of her tongue muted by the plexiglass screen you're shouting through, "Registration," she continues undaunted, "requires proper documentation."

And so, begins your odyssey: letters, that read like genealogies, replies advising new offices to try; then forms and more forms (your mind fills with thoughts of de-forestation) each requiring information you've already offered in formally.

Cheques are rejected (remit money order, please), followed by a "verification of your request," that, for a moment, teases you into believing your quest is through.

Seven months, six inquiries, five letters, four forms, three phone calls, two cheques, and one money order later, Two documents proclaiming your authenticity, each stamped "officially," arrive by priority post.

You return to the under assistant clerk triumphantly. Slip your document her way. She inspects it, nods, slides her glasses down her nose, clears her throat, then smiles as her words quiver through the plexiglass, "Did I mention, you need an official copy of your marriage certificate, too?"

## Crossing Over

The border line-up's always long on holidays, but soon it's clear I've made a BIG mistake. While other cars in other lines go whisking through, the cars in my line seem to spend eternity.

A car pulls up, a window opens wide, I watch as nods become more animated, I watch as arms start waving everywhere. I watch, and curse my lousy luck; I watch while trying to decide if I can work my way around that truck and into another line.

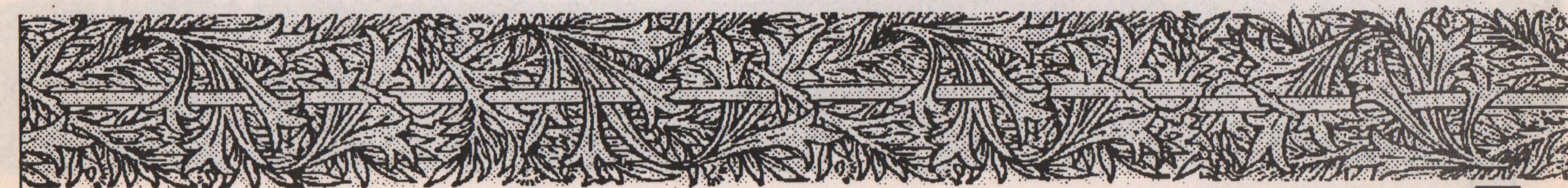
But, at last, I roll up to the agent my best-behaviour smile fixed on my face, I answer yes and no sirs, to his questions, recite my occupation, destination, tell him little details about what I'm bringing in, answer everything he asks about my place of birth, my length of stay.

I explain my son's dual citizenship— but here his face turns red. "Now listen, Honey," he adds (his last word sticking in my throat), "there ain't no doo-el citizens in the ol' USofA."

I long to argue, itch to pull out documentation, but he's pointing to the Statue of Liberty on his sleeve. "See this," he asks, "this gives me the right to do what I do! I won't tell you how to write, and you'll give me proper answers so's I can do my job honourably."

And, of course, I still believe I'm right, but what's right to a man who's been empowered to search your body's cavities. So I nod to him and Lady Liberty, say whatever he wants me to say, then accelerate as he waves me through gunning my car into the ol' US of A.

poetry by Ronnie R. Brown





## ken saro-wiwa's blues

the headlines proclaim a global crisis  
poisoned water, eroding wastelands, toxic air,  
hopeless humanity bulging at the seams  
doom laden words that nobody reads  
words that overpower us with their nihilism  
the voices come from fanatics the authorities say  
spoiled north american brats with nothing better to do

the other voices though, come from the dark continent  
that dead land turning to dust before their very eyes  
but when THEY say something somebody listens  
for those who have most to lose have nothing to lose  
the authorities don't laugh or scoff at these fanatics  
they put them on trial before they lead them to the gallows  
and when the poet falls through the trap door, there is silence

— by Tom Schmidt

### Not to be obedient

This time... this time...  
We will not be obedient!  
The pointed-gun loaded  
We will not turn it on ourselves  
Nor will we walk those treacherous planks

We have come too far... too far...  
Die too many deaths,  
Martyred too many times.  
This time armed mentally,  
We will not turn back.

Yes, we come again,  
And not to be obedient...

— by Rudyard Fearon

### The Little Things

from a distance the city looks like eldorado  
rising from the horizon above the freeway  
shimmering and golden and perfect  
towers of strength and freedom and wealth  
that we all can aspire to

but the little things betray the myth  
the streets are a sign of the times  
pot-holed arteries running through slow decay  
where front doors hang angular on broken hinges  
where people hang angry in rubble-strewn yards

where skewed houses teeter on the brink  
covered with eroding paint

flaking away like lives  
against the washed out colours of decay

where twelve year olds draw on reefers  
hunched between sad old buildings  
where skid row recyclers mine dumpsters  
wheeling the mother lode in swollen shopping carts  
a parade of ants through sweaty streets

they navigate this land of the brave  
this home of the free  
day after day after day after day  
past the sign on the ancient brick building  
its colourful message saying it all:  
plasma cheques cashed here

— by Tom Schmidt

### Otherwise (We Need A Thousand Poets)

or how should we come to hear  
from the clatter the chatter the clap-  
trap hum and drum  
numbing  
the mind

utters in the clutter of lies  
misconceptions arguments deceptions  
heating up  
helplessly,  
from the words

throats hiss buzz snap growl  
in the dark howl, from the bawl and  
clamor, from cradles and nurseries  
schools, banks  
from the swarm

from the seething slick and sinister  
from the hallelujah's and amen's  
hot hellfire and hymns'  
bleating dictums  
from the swagger

from the swell of Babel's building  
from the "Sturm und Drang" of red  
craws, Red Shirts' rallying  
cries, from the cracked rap  
and tap

from the rataplan roar 'n roll  
of heavy engines and cataphonic  
shellbursts' sudden thunder -

We need a thousand poets  
or how should we ever hear

the basso profundo  
the muffled

pistol shot  
in the study.

— by Allan Serafino

### Wouldn't We Be Fucked

Wouldn't we be fucked  
if God  
didn't have a plan  
OH  
we are a plan  
a good plan  
a mission

A whole reservation in heaven

protected  
by dead angels  
working Yonge St.

— by David Groulx

### Nationalism

Hoisting flags  
we celebrate  
bloody acts  
of brave men,

patriots like us  
who love  
one country enough  
to let it kill us

as we have killed them

— by Giovanni Malito

If we were all marcos  
there would be no need

for us to hide behind ski masks  
in the jungles of chiapas  
rather to let the wind blow free  
through our hair, while the sun  
turns our skin a darker shade of...

if we were all marcos  
there would be no hunger. No poor. No rich  
the sick would be looked after  
the children and elders treated with respect

if we were all marcos  
there would be no war in chiapas  
east timor, tibet  
rwanda, burundi  
azania  
kurdistan  
khalistan  
eelam  
bosnia  
no war in kanesatake, kahnawake  
nitassinan  
temagami  
wounded knee  
how long must this list go on?

If we were all marcos  
there would be no rape  
no torture  
no bloodshed

if we were all marcos  
we wouldn't live in cities  
destroying the earth  
with our good intentions  
living our all too comfortable lives  
lies  
pretending we are all marcos  
while we aid and abet  
the oppression going on

if we were all marcos  
there would be no oppression  
just all of us  
learning (again) what it means to live free

if we were all marcos  
marcos would be free

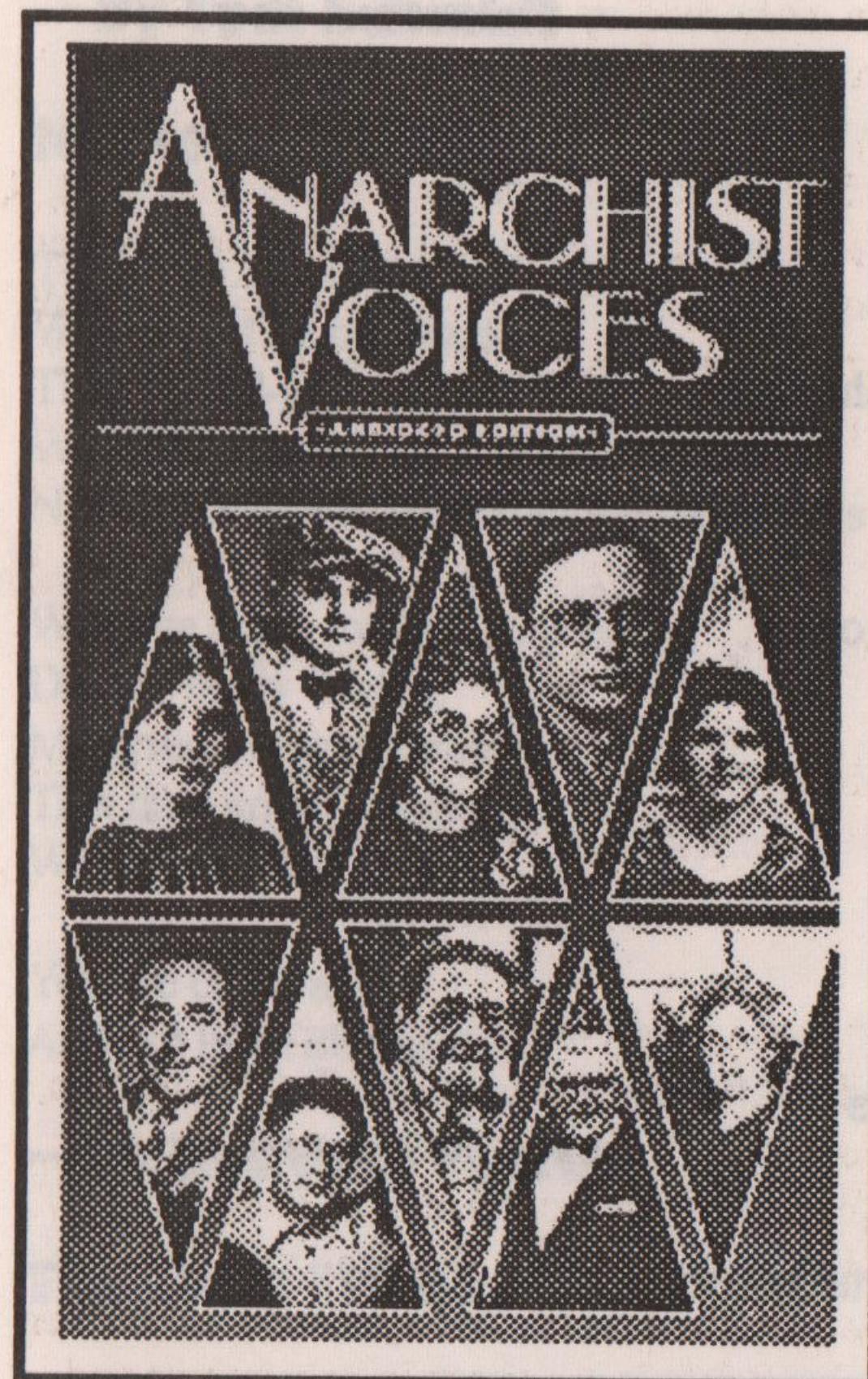
— by Phillip



# Book Reviews

## **Anarchist Voices; An Oral History of Anarchism in America.** by Paul

Avrich. Princeton University Press, 1995. 574pp. Index, List of Periodicals. Reviewed by David Stimpson



Of all the major movements of social reform, anarchism has been subject to the most gross misunderstandings of its nature and objectives. No group has been more maligned and misrepresented by the authorities or more feared and detested by the public."

After reading Paul Avrich's *Anarchist Voices*, and finding these statements without reference among my notes, I was hard-pressed to put a name to them. It was fruitless to try to place them among the 180 interviews which comprise the book, but the short effort led to my reminding myself of the diversity of opinion which oral history allows. Did the remarks belong to an onlooker and evaluator of anarchist movements and ideas or to a participant and advocate of anarchist

communities and observances? After all, they can suppose a convinced historical awareness or imply a personal conviction of justice; the proof of historical fact could easily take shape and become an individual comment on the lamentable short sightedness of others. Yet, when I learned that they were Avrich's own words, taken from the book's preface, I wasn't at all surprised. His long-time commitment to the examination of anarchism and its adherents reveals a sensitive mix of fine scholarship and belief in the necessity of such studies. In many ways *Anarchist Voices* marks a culmination of that work.

The interviews in this book were conducted by Avrich in the United States, over the period 1965 to 1991. Some names or comments of those interviewed and referred to, like pictures and cited references found in *Anarchist Voices*, have appeared in earlier studies by Avrich. As well, chapter divisions recall some of his monographs. But, here Avrich lifts his own pen and allows the interviewees to fill the page. What results is a collage of views, recollections and evaluations of the American movement by participants, their family members, friends, acquaintances and onlookers.

This book consists of six parts. Each one is introduced by a short essay which contextualise the figures, events, places and topics that the interviews refer to.

The opening group of interviews, *Pioneers* sets the tone for the book, mixing what is historically memorable for the anarchist movement with what is worthy of recollection to each interviewee. The results often are prosaic accounts of time spent in or near the shadows of dedicated and energetic people. Such is the mix that respectful thoughts of Benjamin Tucker and Rudolf Rocker share pages with the uncompromising words of [Peter] Kropotkin's daughter, Alexandra, and the fact that at an early age, during her family's departure through Europe, Mary Schwab locked herself in a ship's washroom.

In the second part the subjective nature of oral history affects the picture given of Emma Goldman, the focus of this section. These are memories of speeches and defences, her moods and presence and her relations and single-mindedness. She comes

across as generous and caring but also, consistently, as demanding and self-centred. The person is sometimes recalled less warmly –if not more distantly– than Emma Goldman the public figure and advocate. In comparison, relations with Alexander Berkman are fondly remembered. These attitudes, however, do not overshadow the strong impressions Goldman made on the interviewees, who often marvel at her conviction, efforts and ability to provoke people to thought and action.

"Sacco and Vanzetti", the third section, could have been titled "The Early Italian Anarchist Movement in America". Sure enough, in the interviews the case, executions and historical chunk of time comprise the focus, consistently presented against a background of new Americans with a common home-land and shared sense of struggle. Equally noteworthy, though, are the many references to Luigi Galleani and the banner-like, significance of *Cronaca Sovversiva*. Here, through descriptions of figures and attitudes, more than anywhere else in the book, division in approaches to attaining goals is evident: "gentle" is alongside "tough", some talk of the "soul" while others proclaim the "idea" and interspersed are preferences for the "contemplative" with the "intensive act".

Efforts to attain first-hand a more natural life, free from restrictions on personal development and from centralised power underlie the reminiscences in part four, "Schools and Colonies". The brief histories of such places as the Ferrer Center, the Modern School, Mohegan Colony, the Philadelphia Radical Library Group, Stelton, and Sunrise Colony are highlighted by recollections mostly coloured by expressions of freedom and excitement. There are also a number of explanations for the downfall or disruption of these establishments. The predominant reason for efforts becoming derailed was the inability to keep outside influences at bay. Other reasons included the transient nature of the colonies, which often required of members nothing more than a registration fee, and the War, the Red Scare and heated debates with Communists led to ideals and goals being shelved and the communities and colonies being worn away.

By part five I had become used to how most opening words explain where NOT

in the United States the interviewee was born and when he or she came to America. So, the use of the title "Ethnic Anarchists" was a bit puzzling. "Ethnic Anarchist Movements" might better represent the interviews that comprise this part. Commentary on four ethnic groups is presented here: Jews, Russians, Spanish (speaking) and Chinese. The Italians have their voices in "Sacco and Vanzetti". Information similar to that found in part three makes up these pages. Recollections are of social events and struggles, community and colony clashes and publication of periodicals. What pervades many of these memories is the feeling that life was provided with meaning thanks to efforts to realise anarchist goals. This process was not an exclusive one, but, rather, allowed all who wanted to take part in it.

The final section of the book is very much a compliment to the first chapters. It in part reveals how, after the First World War, the American anarchist movement survived the taking of power by the Bolsheviks and the American government and police efforts to stifle the movement's momentum. Noticeable here, too, is the fact that the new generation of anarchists was establishing itself in American life and shunning "parental" anarchist influence in favour of a contemporary voice. Despite external and internal pressures slowing the formation of its clear voice, the later movement had not discarded its essential conviction in its rightness to challenge strict rule. Nor had it lost its pulse as a live, thinking community.

The book is a browser's delight, yet it is also a foundation for further scholarship. The index is finely detailed and makes cross-referencing nearly effortless. Each interview is preceded by a short introduction, which assumes minimal to no prior knowledge of the interviewee and the figures he or she may touch on. And, events, names and publications which appear in the interview and require elaboration are end-noted and succinctly defined. The 629 end-notes which form this section of the book are a valuable collection in itself.

By my count some 70% of these interviews were made in the 1970s. But this does not age the information. In hindsight we are lucky it has been saved. When interviewed, a large number of these people were in their 70s and 80s and, as Avrich notes, it is often the case that the individual has died since the time.

The book should be considered a monument. It is a tribute to the American anarchist movement and to those who provide the interviews. It has captured their enthusiasm and frustration while tracing history from their personal points of view.

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**Reshaping Work** edited by Christopher Schenk & John Anderson. Published by the Ontario Federation of Labour and the Technological Adjustment Research Program. Reviewed by Bruce Allan

The editors of the essays which comprise *Reshaping Work* perceptively state in the introduction that they believe we in the labour movement have "to devote as much time to battling the issues of technological change and work orientation as we do on the front of free trade and economic restructuring." Consistent with this the authors analyse many of the profound changes in work organisation which are taking place and attempt to come to grips with them. The result is a potentially groundbreaking book for the labour movement in Canada.

*Reshaping Work* is potentially groundbreaking because it is the first major book produced by the Canadian labour movement which takes a serious, in-depth look at the issue of work organisation. This is a truly notable development because prior to this book's publication the issue of work organisation had been sorely neglected by most of the labour movement despite its claims to be seriously challenging the corporate agenda. Indeed, the movement's failure to adequately address the issue of work organisation has epitomised the shallowness of its opposition to the global corporate agenda.

This said, it is not surprising that the authors fail to map out a visionary strategy for dealing with the changes being made to the way work is organised. The strategies they do present are little more than

prescriptions for coping with and trying mitigate the adverse effects of work re-organisation. What we need but do not get is a truly comprehensive and multi-faceted

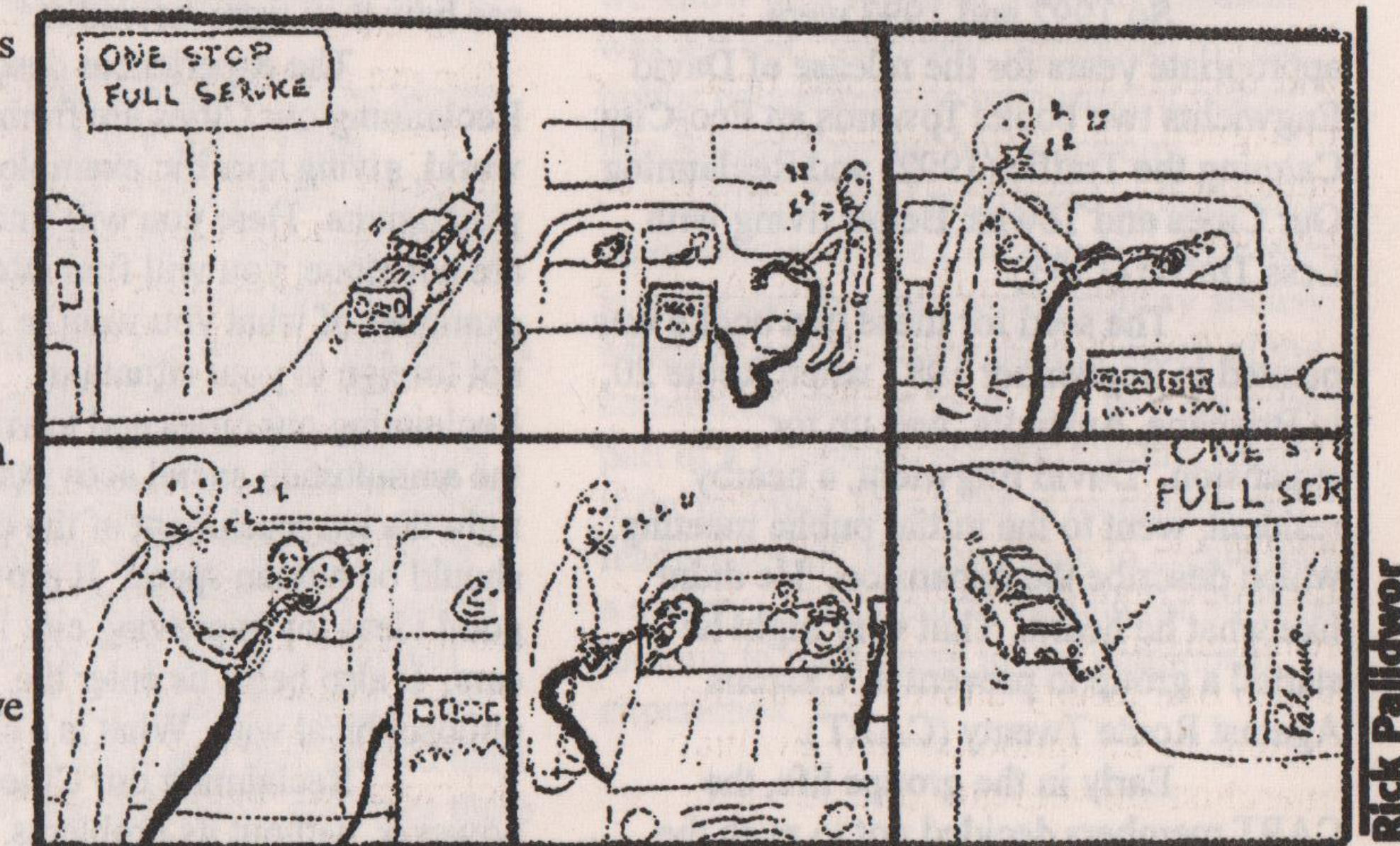
strategy of resistance to work re-organisation which thoroughly recognises that it is integral to capitalism.

One must ask why the authors did not dare to attempt to map out such a strategy? Is it because they fully understand the radical implications of seriously challenging the global corporate agenda (i.e. capitalism)? Or is it because the books editors were carefully selective about what to include in a book funded by the previous Ontario government?

Whatever the case, there is a real danger that this significant book and the important analytical work included within it will soon be forgotten like so many other documents produced by the labour movement. But hopefully this won't be the case. Hopefully *Reshaping Work* will be widely read by workers and, despite its weaknesses, encourage the long overdue publication of a multitude of material on the subject of work organisation. In short, it remains to be seen whether the appearance of *Reshaping Work* will mark a real turning point for labour in Canada, or prove to be just one more non-event.

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**Reclaiming Our Cities & Towns; Better living with less traffic.** by David Engwicht. 1993. Reviewed by Chris Ford.

"Today everyone who values cities, is disturbed by automobiles. Traffic arteries, along with parking lots, gas stations and drive-ins, are powerful and insistent instruments of city destruction. To accommodate them, city streets are broken down into loose sprawls, incoherent and vacuous for anyone afoot. Downtowns and other neighbourhoods that are marvels of





close-grained intricacy and compact mutual support are casually disemboweled. Landmarks are crumbled or are so sundered from their context in city life as to become irrelevant trivialities. City character is blurred until every place becomes more like every other place, all adding up to No place."

That was Jane Jacobs writing in 1961.

In about 1992 Statistics Canada said there were both more cars on the roads and more miles logged per car than ever before in Canada. Most of this traffic is generated in peoples getting to and from

problem of arterial roads onto someone elses doorstep, but to solve it. They thereby changed from being noisy residents to becoming instigators of social change.

After six months CART had won a reprieve; there would be no construction until an environmental impact study was finished. The impact study was due out almost 2 years later, in early 1989. CART members, in a brilliant bit of social action, followed Sir Isaac Brocks strategy: The best defense is offense. CART released its own report one-week before the consultants was due out. Thus CART was able to stake out the grounds of the debate. They were

so successful the consultants report was delayed so it could include some of CART material.

Five hundred copies of the CART report Traffic Calming were produced. It was sold both within Australia

and overseas.

In Reclaiming our Cities and Towns David Engwicht doesnt tell us what he thinks. This is just as well, since most planners would ignore such a list. Instead, Mr. Engwicht takes us through the process of getting to what he thinks. He shows us the sights and people and experiences that lead to his beliefs. Even professionals will see the importance of these ideas when they see how they were arrived at.

The experiences described in Reclaiming our Cities are from around the world, giving specific examples of general phenomena. Here you will find that you are not alone; you will find international examples of what you want to say that are not foreign to your situation. Reclaiming our cities and towns provides the ammunition social activists need to fight the encroachment of the car into what should be human space. It provides many good ideas for improving city life without cars. It also helps us enter the philosophical with, What is a city?

Reclaiming our Cities is not, however, without its problems. It does not

address the very important question of what holds cities together, and it is at the end of the day, a traffic planners manual.

What holds cities together, is what everyone should ask before they try to take them apart and put them back together again. Cities are held together by a myriad of things, one of which is budgets. To get a road arrested is a battle won, but, to have more than a singular victory, one needs to ask where the road- building money came from. One next has to get that money spent on alternative transportation- buses, park - and -ride parking, and trains etc. A mere absence of roads is not enough. One needs to encourage alternatives at the same time. They have to fit into the context of the city, become organic, or require huge and continuous effort, or they will simply be ignored. One must find out and describe what keeps people driving before one can get them to stop.

It may seem unreasonable to Mr. Engwicht to demand so much of his book. Reclaiming our Cities and Towns does so much; it identifies an important deficiency in our lives, it labels it clearly and it provides solutions. But, ignoring the stresses, strains and pressures that make and keep cities as they are is suicidal. Innovations cant hang on cities like Christmas balls, they must become integral to the tree like branches, or they will fall by the wayside. This point cannot be overstressed.

Jane Jacobs articulated the same problems Engwicht does, and provided equally beneficial, solutions, yet, in thirty-one years, the problem has gotten worse, not better. Jacobs were good solutions, but they were not organic: they werent used.

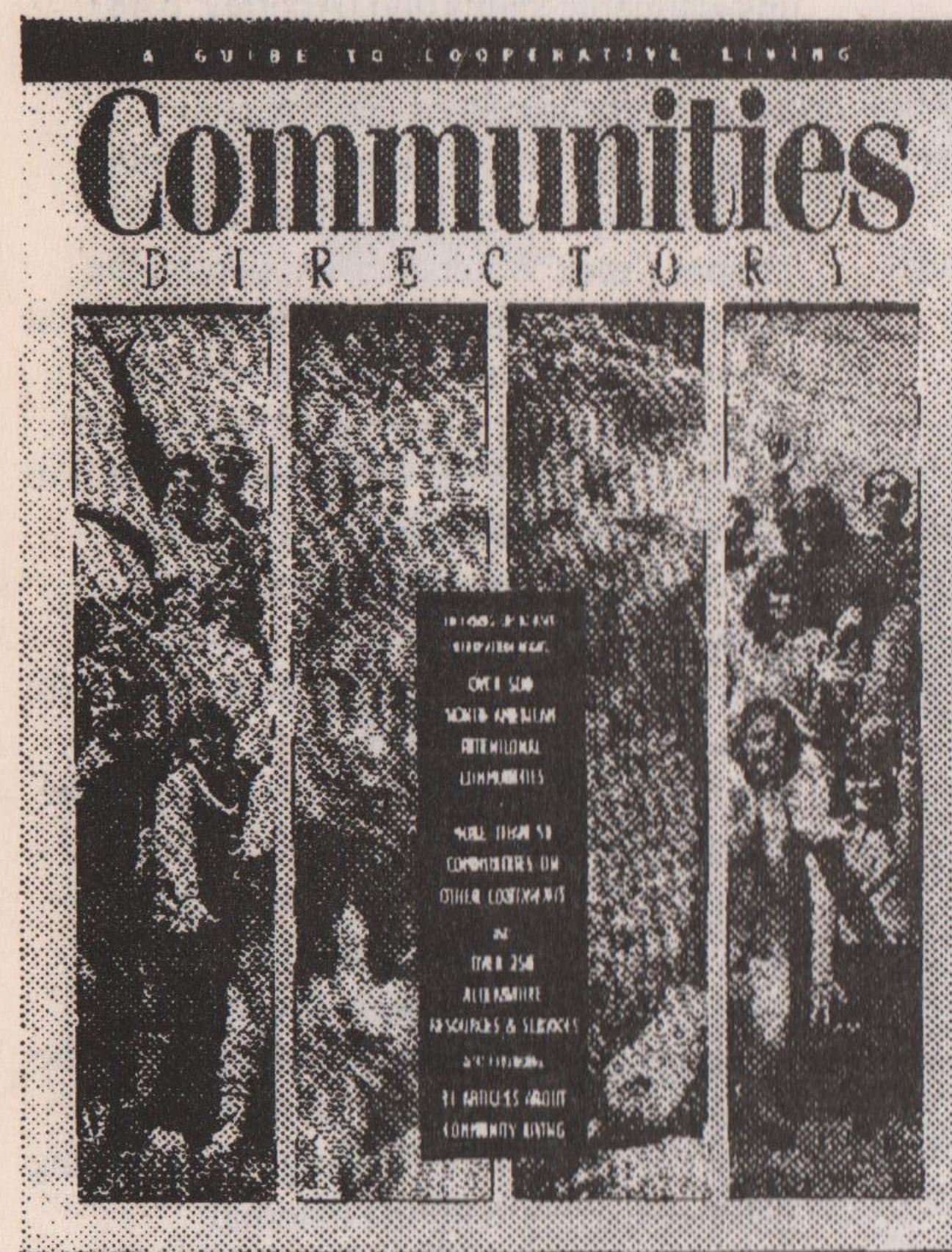
Jane Jacobs, The Death and Life of Great American Cities should be read by everyone however. It radically and wonderfully changed my idea of what cities are how they work and why they exist. It got me looking at cities as the living, breathing things they are. It brought on an epiphany.

Reclaiming our Cities and Towns shows its origins in civic traffic planning meetings. It is an important book for people in the fray against cars. It should be required reading for everyone in urban design or traffic departments. Sadly, it brings no epiphany.

Neither together nor separately, are these books enough. Death and Life, and Reclaiming our Cities will help win battles, but to win entire cities back for humankind someone must get behind the mere arteries and pavement.

## Communities Directory: A Guide to Cooperative Living, edited by Dan

Questenberry, Jillian Downey, Elph Morgan, Laird Schaub, Geopp Kozeny and Jenny Upton. published by Fellowship for International Community \$23.00 US \$25.00 (foreign, from Communities, Rt 4, Box 169-C, Louisa VA 23093, USA. Reviewed by bob melcombe.



This 1995 edition of the *Communities Directory* is a massive undertaking, both to compile and to read. But for those with an interest in the communal lifestyle, it is well worth the effort, with 31 feature articles on all aspects of communal living, 180 pages of community listings, covering some 540 projects, resources, references and plenty more.

For those looking to find a commune, community, co-operative, or co-housing project to join, the listings are a wealth of information, and worth the cost of the books themselves.

But while to listings may be the "raison d'être" for the book, even those with no more than an intellectual interest in the communal ideal will find the articles of interest. Articles are broken down into several sections, from the how-to, to the

theoretical; well theoretical is not the best word, since most of the essays are based in practical lived experience of communal successes, failures and problems.

The Opening Section, An Evolving Culture, explores the state of intentional community today. We learn that interest in communal living is growing to levels comparable to the late sixties/early seventies although taking many new forms as well as the more traditional commune. Helen Forsey and Laird Schaub describe community as a crucible for radically transforming our methods of social and personal interaction. Schaub notes, We engage in political issues through actually

trying to create something- not just talking about it, but offering models of how things could be different. This is a significant part of what I see as the anarchist potential for communal living, the experimentation with more socially involved ways of living. It is certainly true that too often this experimentation becomes an end in itself, rather than situating itself within the broader political context that is the case with many forms of political activity (including, it has to be said, direct action, street-fighting demos, and other forms of militancy). But these lapses shouldn't blind us to the radical potential of such experimentation.

Part two, Finding Your Community, and part five, Taking Care of Business, are just what they sound like, how-to chapters. In among the chapters on communal finances and buying property in the business section are re-prints of Joreens (Jo Freeman) controversial essay, *They Tyranny of Structurelessness*, and Caroline Estes *Consensus Ingredient*, both worthy of a re-read.

One of the most interesting pieces in the whole book is Kirsten Ellen Johnson's *Movers of Mountains, Shapers of worlds* in section three, Personal Growth. Johnson grew up in a rural commune in northern California; the movers and shapers were her parents and the other adult communards. In this article she describes the goods and the bads, the fun and games and the arguments and the weird visitors that made up her childhood. Its an honest and introspective look at the communal experience, that comes out hopeful at the end (she moved away and then moved back to the farm of her childhood, and lives there

now). Johnson writes that her experience as a child was much different than that of the adults who had to struggle with the day to day realities of a new way of living, and contrasts their disillusionment with the sense of belonging that she still feels. She sees hope for the future in the communal experiment.

Social Action is the theme of section four. Lois Arkin describes the Los Angeles Eco-village, an interesting concept with a potential for creating real social and environmental change, as does bio-regionalism, the subject of an article by David Haenke. It is difficult to imagine an anarchist or an ecological society (they should of course be the same thing) without its members having a strong sense of place, of where they live and who they live with. The Eco-Village can help develop that sense of place, and it turn can foster both a stronger sense of mutuality, both social and ecological. And the bio-region is the wider locus for the same thing, locating our activities within the natural habitat within which they take place. Arkin provides an in-depth look at the LA Eco-Village; Haenkes piece is a brief introduction to the bio-regional concept.

In the closing Communal History section, Glenn Morris looks at traditional Native American communalism, its effects on North American political and social development, and its modern rebirth. Lymaqn Tower Sargent explores some of the early North American experiments in communalism, and their influence on the larger community. In these increasingly individualistic times, its worth noting the historical and continuing (and rarely mentioned in history books) influence of communal societies and projects. While many of us know that the American constitution was modelled in part on the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) federation, do we know how much of the native system was left out? Similarly, our model of free public education was pioneered at places like Robert Owens New Harmony.

Little of what is covered in these and other articles in the *Communities Directory* is sufficient to creating a liberatory society. Much of what is covered, and much of the communal ideal in total, will be a necessary part of a liberatory society. For this reason, if for no other, this book is recommended reading for all those working to create such a society. It is essential reading for all those looking to participate in the communal experience.

work; people driving in cities. Yet people are worried about cars for all the reasons Jacobs was, and more besides; cars are the single largest producers of greenhouse gases, they cause stress and alienation among those who live on busy streets, they are hugely expensive and they kill people. In 1992 they killed 5,546 pedestrians in the USA.

So 1992 and 1993 were appropriate years for the release of David Engwichts two books *Towards an Eco-City: Calming the Traffic* (1992) and *Reclaiming Our Cities and Towns: Better living with Less Traffic* (1993).

The seed for these two books was planted in September 1987 when Route 20, in Brisbane, Australia, was up for expansion. David Engwicht, a nearby resident, went to the initial public meeting, which describe the expansion. He didnt like what he heard. That very night he started a group to prevent it, Citizens Against Route Twenty (CART).

Early in the groups life, the CART members decided not to push the



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**Boundaries of Home:  
 Mapping for Local  
 Empowerment**, by Doug

Aberly, Gabriola Island, British  
 Columbia: New Society Publishers,  
 1993. Can \$11.95/US 9.95.

Reviewed by Zoe Pfeiffer

Our homes are our spaces. They are where we express ourselves and where we find comfort, solace and inspiration. Our surrounding environment is outwardly our own creation, however the base of the physical reality profoundly influences our perception. Being able to recognize the hills under our streets, the boundaries of what is known and unknown, and the natural and political regions in which we move, are all empowering and necessary things. This bioregional attitude has pervaded activist thought for some time now, and this book presents itself as a nicely packaged introduction and a how-to manual.

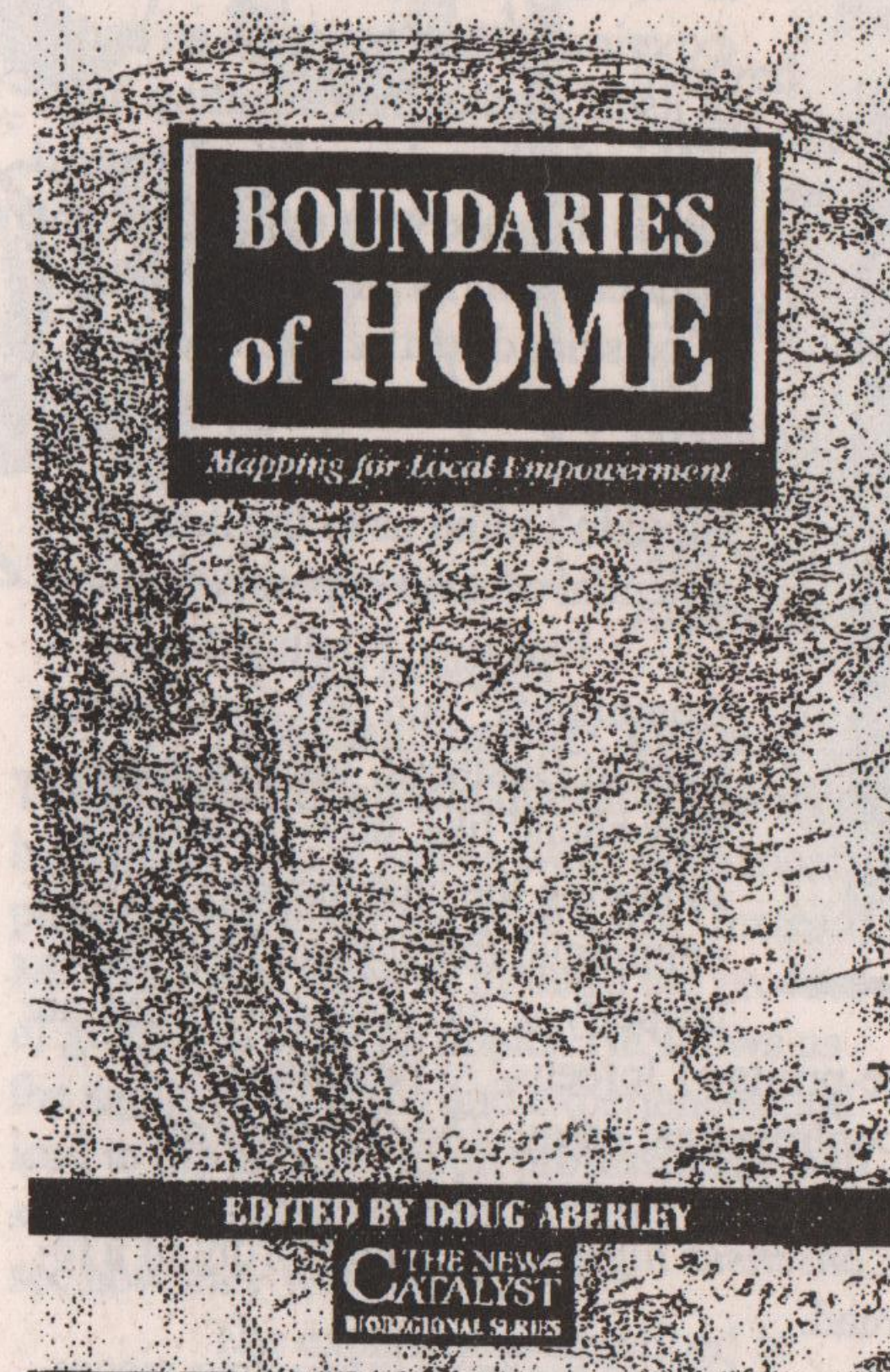
There has been a growing inward focus for many community activist groups. We are moving away from the global ecological type activism, as the idea of local community action gains popularity. With more and more local fights, ranging from protesting capitalistic urban sprawl, creating safe places for women and children, to sustainable local resource industries, this book will be an important addition to anyone's collection.

Boundaries of Home: Mapping for Local Empowerment, is a distinctly two part book. The first section includes an international all-star cast (mix) writing about different types of mapping, and giving their communities as examples. This book has a straight forward introduction, mapping out its intentions and tools. The first chapter is a fitting beginning, exploring the roots of mapping. Doug Aberley introduces aboriginal mapping techniques form around the world, immediately broadening the reader's conception and exposing the absolute control that our authorities have over our perception of our own homes.

Form there, Beatrice Briggs, of the Wild Onion Alliance of Chicago, and Whitney Smith of the Oak Ridges Bioregion in Toronto, write about the most familiar (likely) situations, being an environmental activist in heavily urbanized environments. Both pieces are incredibly

inspiring, focusing on encouraging anecdotes from their communities. The next four authors are all about rural and semi-rural environmental activism from Canada, the U.K., and the United States, all of which having the familiar undertones of the need to reclaim our space from governmental definitions.

With our increasing fetishization of technology, one of the topics that inevitably rises to the front when talking about mapping is the GIS (Geographical Information Software). This is expensive, large, and very specialized software that can help or completely derail community activism. In this book, Kai Snyder, of the Yuba Watershed Institute in California, Jonathan Doig, of Friends of the Earth, U.K., and Seth Zuckerman, of California's Mattole Valley, all address how GIS can be a useful tool, as well as how it has evolved. These articles are thorough and easy to understand, leaving the reader well enough equipped to make the basic decision of



whether or not GIS is suitable for their community projects. When reclaiming your space from the insensitive imposition of administrative boundaries it seems so revolutionary to use their own tools against them. However, given the available information and the existing base of information associated with GIS it is very easy to become overwhelmed and lose the creativity needed to discover your own spaces, and to end up with simply another map of governmental insensitivity. When it works out though, it is a seriously

wonderful tool, to be easily accessed, updated, and distributed. Whether a GIS succeeds in helping the discovery of your community or simply confusing the problem, it will be an instructive experience to say the least.

The second half of the book Boundaries of Home: Mapping for Local Empowerment includes a shallow introduction to the pros and cons of different mapping methods, and the ever useful mapping primer. Doug Aberley introduces the first chapter of this two chapter section as a fair representation of the type of thoughtful purpose that leads us into territories rich in wholistic perception and practical alternatives to an unsustainable status quo. (Aberley, p.48)

The chapter starts out with Stuart Allan, of Raven Maps and Images, rhapsodizing on the beauty that is a map, followed by Gene Marshall, of Texas' Timber Creek Watershed, explaining the rudiments of defining your bioregion. Next is Seth Zuckerman writing on how the particular way in which you look at your bioregion defines the way you describe it to others. David McCloskey, of Seattle University, writes a quick piece on the difference between boarders, explaining both the clean lines and the fuzzy lines. Not to leave anyone out, there is an article by George Tukel, a landscape designer, on the design principles behind the definition of bioregions, and a proposal for recreating wild spaces to help preserve wild species.

The last chapter is the mapping primer itself. This chapter is, in reality, the second half of the book. Doug Aberley takes you step by step through the mapping process starting with the external boundaries, followed by the internal boundaries, the illustration of the economic structure, and sub-maps of important local areas within the bioregion.

If you are looking at the possibility of taking a bioregional approach to dismantling your local power structures, this book is a good beginning. If, however, you are already involved in mapping the book my provide some ideas, but you would most likely want to look elsewhere, as the book is meant for beginners. Mapping your bioregion, whether by yourself or with your community, is certainly a very empowering thing. Becoming familiar with how your local government and other economic structures combine with your physical surroundings will expose many paths of resistance and future planning possibilities.

**P o t s y**  
 an epilogue in less than an  
 Act written by Lee  
 Baxandall

**Top Right: While Potsy wars on the defense industry's premises, workers Carson and Coolidge wire his premises, then throw the switch**



**centre right: Desperate that hi is powerless to buck the power company, Potsy grieves.**

**bottom right: Workmen from Consolidated, Inc., arrive with general mobilization orders. The crapper is to be wired with electricity.**



**bottom left: Fiercely intelligent, and helpless to provide for his elementary needs, this academic Everyman defines his production as 'shit'.**

