

morgenmuffel

number 13 - feb 2005 - 60p



rants
cartoons
travel tales too!

Hi! WELCOME TO MORGENMUFFEL #13 (EEK! UNLUCKY!) I'M SORRY ABOUT THE OUTRAGEDUS PRICERISE TO 60P BUT THERE'S MORE PAGES THAN USUAL YOU KNOW! SO THIS ISSUE CONTAINS THE TALES FROM MY LIFE AS ALWAYS, EXCEPT I MANAGED TO GO TRAVELLING: FINALLY AND PROPERLY! (AS OPPOSED TO GOING ON THE MEGABUS TO LEEDS FOR A WEEKEND). HENCE, TRAVEL REPORT! WE HAD A FUCKEN EXCELLENT TIME, DIDN'T GET



PLUGS:

ROBBED, INJURED OR EVEN FORCED TO BRIBE COPS.

THERE'S ALSO SOME TALES FROM HOME TOO... I'D LOVE TO GO OFF AGAIN BUT IT'LL BE A WHILE TIL I HAVE ANY MONEY!

OUR CO-OPERATIVE SOCIAL CENTRE, THE COWLEY CLUB, IS STILL GOING STRONG - WE RECENTLY CELEBRATED OUR 2ND BIRTHDAY (WITH CAKE AND DANCING) AND WE NOW ALSO HAVE A TABLE FOOTBALL!

OTHER THINGS I'VE BEEN BUSY WITH ARE WOMEN'S SELF DEFENCE THOUGH MY TEACHING PARTNER IS MOVING AWAY, WHICH IS VERY UPSETTING! AND COOKING WITH THE ANARCHIST TEAPOT OF COURSE.. WE HAVE A NEW BIG PAN. AND A NEW KNIFE SHARPENER. IN CASE YOU WANTED TO KNOW. I'M ALSO LEARNING ACCOUNTING AND I PROMISE I WILL NEVER DRAW A CARTOON ABOUT THAT. ONE THING I'M NOT DOING ANYMORE IS RAISING MONEY FOR OUR ABC PRISONER SUPPORT GROUP BY WORKING AT FESTIVALS WITH THE WORKERS BEER COMPANY - WE GOT BANNED COS WE DARED TO CRITICISE THEM FOR HAVING A PHOTOSHOOT WITH PAGE 3 MODELS IN OUR BAR. HYPOCRITICAL LEFTIES- THEY NEVER LIKED US ANYWAY.

I'M ALSO STILL DOING MY SMALL ZINE DISTRO, VIA MAIL & THE CLUB BOOKSHOP - SEND AN SAE IF YOU WANT A LIST. ACTIVE DISTRIBUTION HAVE PRINTED A COLLECTION OF MY BACK ISSUES (*2-11) WHICH YOU CAN GET FROM BM ACTIVE LONDON WC1N 3XX, WWW.ACTIVEDISTRIBUTION.ORG.UK (& CHECK OUT THEIR DISTRO ANYWAY.. WELL GOOD!). IT OCCURED TO ME TO LATE TO CALL THE COLLECTION 'MEGAMUFFEL'. I'VE ALSO BEEN DOING A STRIP FOR THE ANARCHIST FORTNIGHTLY 'FREEDOM', CHECK IT OUT IF YOU LIKE - WWW.FREEDOMPRESS.ORG.UK, 84B WHITECHAPEL HIGH ST LONDON E1 7QX WELL, HOPE YOU ENJOY THIS ISSUE. I'M THINKING OF DOING A COOKBOOK BASED ON THE ANARCHIST TEAPOT'S MASS CATERING EXPERIENCE SO WATCH THIS SPACE IF YOU'RE INTERESTED IN HOW TO MAKE PASTA FOR 200 PEOPLE WITHOUT IT ALL TURNING INTO A BIG LUMP OF STARCH.

FOR A SOCIAL REVOLUTION BASED ON THE LIBERATION OF OUR DESIRES AND PLENTY CHOCOLATE ~ LOVE & RAGE, I say

PS: I DREW THIS ALL IN 2 MONTHS! PERSONAL RECORD FOR ME..

ZINES: hm i got confused with the paragraphs here.. it's late, ok?

BITE THE HAND THAT FEEDS THE POISONED FOOD - C/O CORMY - PO BOX 578 - 2200 KØBENHAVN - DENMARK - RAZETHETRAY@HOTMAIL.COM - ANARCHOPUNK ZINE THAT I READ COVER TO COVER, EXCELLENT!

EARTH ZINE, RUNNING ZINE - PO BOX 74 - BTON BN1 4ZQ - CARTOONS & WRITINGS BY A MATE IT'S GREAT STUFF!

VIVA VOCE - ALSO BOB 74 - ANARCHOFEMINIST TOME FOCUSING ON WOMEN'S HEALTH & SEXUALITY, 2ND ISSUE IN PRODUCTION NOW..

FACIAL DISOBEDIENCE - C/O SUSPECT DEVICE, PO BOX 295 - SOUTHAMPTON SO17 1LW - PUNK ROCK PERSONAL ZINE, I REALLY ENJOYED READING - USUALLY A SPLIT ZINE GREEN ANARCHY - PO BOX 11331, EUGENE, OR 97440, USA - COLLECTIVE @ GREENANARCHY.ORG - RECOMMENDED!

AND FOR YOU RUSSIAN SPEAKERS:

ZHEST - ZHEST@PISEM.NET - ANARCHOFEMINIST ZINE FROM MOSCOW

AVTONOM - WWW.AVTONOM.ORG - ANARCHO ZINE

WEBSITES:

WWW.BRIGHTONABC.ORG.UK - PRISONER SUPPORT

WWW.EZO-ACTION.ORG/TEAPOT - REDOONE NOW, SOME CARTOONS OF MINE THERE TOO, DOH.

WWW.COWLEYCLUB.ORG.UK - SOON TO BE REVAMP. ED

WWW.DISSENT.ORG.UK - THE G8 SUMMIT

WILL BE HELD IN SCOTLAND IN EARLY JULY!

GET INVOLVED IN THE RESISTANCE!

AS WITNESSED BY A FRIEND AT THE K-TOWN FESTIVAL IN DENMARK

DON'T TELL ME WOT TO DO!

ARSEHOLE! ANARCHY MEANS RESPONSIBILITY & COLLECTIVE ORGANISATION!



morgenmuffel * PO BOX 74 * BRIGHTON BN1 4ZQ
Katchoo63@yahoo.co.uk

AFTER YEARS OF SAVING FROM ODD JOBS, AND TRYING TO FIND TIME, ME AND MY FRIEND MIKE FIGURED WE COULD GO TRAVELLING!

THIS WAS THE PLAN:



THE WHOLE TRIP WAS BY COACH, TRAIN AND BOAT - NO EVIL FLYING!

I WAS SOO EXCITED! I HADN'T BEEN AWAY 'PROPER' FOR AGES! AND I HADN'T SEEN MY KOREAN FAMILY FOR 11 YEARS...



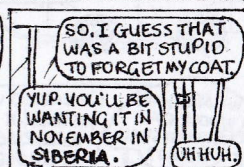
WE HAD A GUIDEBOOK FOR KOREA, A RUSSIAN PHRASEBOOK, THREE VISAS, AND 3 MONTHS TIME...



I CAN'T BELIEVE WE'RE OFF IN JUST THREE WEEKS!



SHIT! I'VE ONLY GOT TWO DAYS TO FINISH WRITING THIS PAMPHLET!



YUP, YOU'LL BE WANTING IT IN NOVEMBER IN SIBERIA.

UH HUH.

THEN, MID-SEPTEMBER, IT WAS TIME FOR OUR FIRST JOURNEY, BY COACH TO

BERLIN

WE'D BEEN TO BERLIN BEFORE AND HAD SOME FRIENDS THERE, SO WE WENT STRAIGHT TO THE SQUAT WE'D BE STAYING IN.



RING THE BELL!

HUH? WHO'S THAT? IS HE GONNA OPEN UP FOR US?

WHAT BELL?



20 MINUTES LATER...

OK, NOW MY FINGER'S HURTING.

WELL, EVENTUALLY WE GOT LET IN... AFTER COFFEE (WHICH THEY PERMANENTLY PRODUCE) WE WENT FOR VOKU

OH NEARLY EMPTY, LET'S MAKE SOME MORE



VOKU IS BASICALLY CHEAP FOOD COOKED IN SOME SQUAT.



AAH... SUN'S OUT, VOKU... WE'RE ON HOLIDAY!



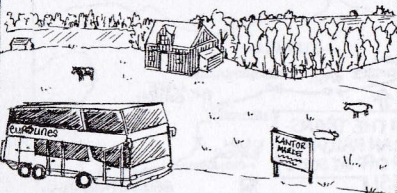
THE PARTY IS BORING, NO?

LET'S KEEP THE BOTTLE TOP!

WE CAN COLLECT THEM FROM ALL THE DIFFERENT BEERS WE HAVE! HOHO... BEER...

*EUROPUNK LANGUAGE!

WELL, WE GOT ON ANOTHER COACH & DROVE THROUGH POLAND FOR HOURS.



IT ALL LOOKED LIKE THIS..

AND A SHORT WHILE THRU LITHUANIA



CHECK OUT THAT BUS! FUCK, I'M GLAD WE'RE NOT ON THAT ONE...



WE ENDED UP IN THE 'MUSEUM OF LATVIAN OCCUPATION'. WOT A MESS UP HISTORY! IT WAS FIRST OCCUPIED BY THE SOVIET UNION IN 1940. THE CHEKA TERRORISED THE COUNTRY - 15500 LATVIAN WERE DEPORTED ON A SINGLE NIGHT (JUNE '41). THEN NAZI GERMANY ATTACKED THE SOVIET UNION, AND OCCUPIED AND TERRORISED LATVIA. THE SOVIET UNION ADVANCED AGAIN ENDED UP FORCED TO FIGHT SECOND SOVIET OCCUPATION (1991); THOUSANDS OF RUSS- THERE, LATVIANS FLED, AND IN 1944, BUT LATVIANS IN BOTH ARMIES. THE LASTED UNTIL AUGUST 1945. WE WERE RESCUED ARMED RESISTANCE CONTINUED UNTIL 1956.



WE WERE VERY PLEASED WE MANAGED TO BUY TRAIN TICKETS TO MOSCOW ALL BY OURSELVES.

OUR FIRST SLEEPER TRAIN!

WAHEY!

(FROM A PHOTO)



THE HOSTEL'S HERE ACCORDING TO THE MAP...

BUT IT'S NOT.



MY BAG IS HEAVY..

WELL, WE GOT THERE IN THE END, AND PHONED A COMRADE.

YES WE HAVE MEETING TO NIGHT. COME TO METRO STATION...



OOH! MEETING!

HE WAS FROM MOSCOW ABC, AND IT WAS A MEETING OF AUTONOMOUS ACTION OF WHICH THERE'S A NATIONAL NETWORK

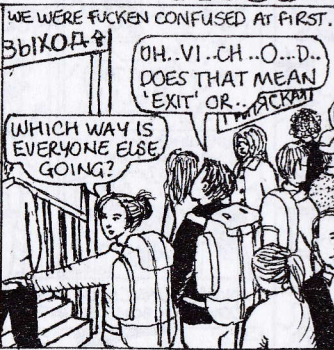
RIGA



*I BORROWED SOMEONE'S GUIDEBOOK ON THE COACH, ACTUALLY.



MOSCOW



WE HAD TO GO TO A HOSTEL TO 'REGISTER' OUR VISAS



& WE TALKED TO SOME AMERICAN GIRL THERE



OH! THIS MUST BE THE GUY



DUE TO A LACK OF MEETING SPACES IT WAS IN A WEIRD KRISHNA RESTAURANT



THEN WE WALKED DOWN THE ROAD..



ON OUR WAY HOME WE WERE ALREADY MORE CONFIDENT



OUR GERMAN MATE MET US THE NEXT DAY TO HELP US SORT TRAIKTICKETS AND A PLACE TO STAY. OVER THE NEXT FEW DAYS WE HAD A FUCKEN GREAT TIME!



WOW: WE'RE AT THE KREMLIN THIS ROCKS



WE HAD BEERS UNDER THE HO CHI MINH MONUMENT AND DRUNK VODKA WITH RUSSIAN PUNKS



WE WENT TO A CRITICAL MASS BIKE DEMONSTRATION...

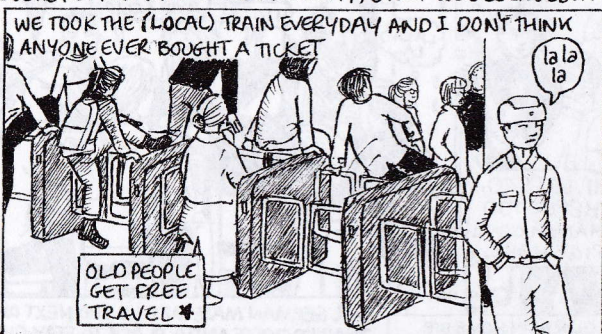


& SAW SOME GOOD BANDS AT THE 'JERRY RUBIN CLUB'

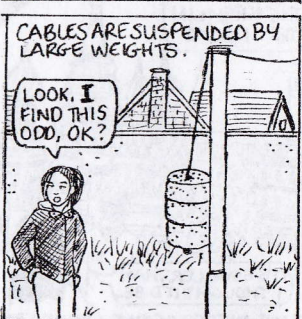
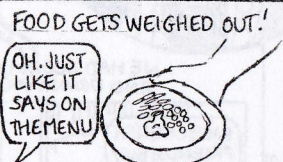
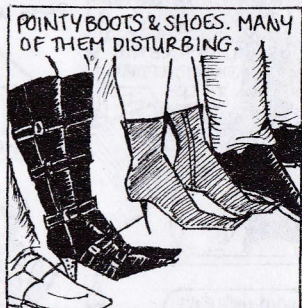


RUSSIA IS CRAZY!

BESIDES CORRUPT GOVERNMENT & SEVERE REPRESSION & POLICE BRUTALITY, STUFF WE OBSERVED...



ESCALATOR ATTENDANTS ON THE METRO! NOW THAT'S A CRAP JOB.



EXCEPT RECENTLY THEY'VE BEEN TALKING OF ABOLISHING THESE FREE PASSES AND THERE'S BEEN MASSIVE PROTESTS AGAINST THIS!

What follows is an interview with an inspiring woman we met in Moscow who took us around the sights, and to the Critical Mass demo, and to the Jerry Rubin club, etc....
We recorded this in a café one afternoon.



Me: First, maybe you can say who you are, what you do, what keeps you busy...

Olga: I'm Olga, from Moscow, and I can say that I am a part of Russian punk/hardcore scene, and through punk I came to some more ideas and movements. And now with some friends from Moscow punk/hc scene we try to establish Food not Bombs collective. We have organised 3 actions already. Also I played in several bands, mostly punk and hc, first guitar then bass guitar and now during whole year we are trying to start an all girls political band. With my friends we organise punk/hc shows in Moscow, and there's more, I don't remember right now...



Me: So you put on shows as well, and what kind of venues have you got here that you can use? What kind of difficulties do you have?

Olga: It's rather difficult to rent a place because real estate in Moscow is very expensive, and everybody knows about paranoia over terrorist attacks and so on, so we have to use normal rock clubs. Actually, there are two main venues for punk/hc shows, one of them is art club, rather ugly place. I don't like the atmosphere in this club but we have good conditions to organise there, so we can pay enough money to foreign bands like to cover their costs of visas and long way here. And usual number of people at these shows are 400 people. But we have the other place that I prefer, I love this club, it's the Jerry Rubin Club. It's the only underground place in Moscow and practises for bands take place there also and film screenings, documentaries and avant-garde exhibitions and performances, anarchist and Critical Mass meetings. It's really great place, but it can hold only 100 people. So, with the situation in Moscow in punk/hc, this club is too small for these kind of shows. How is the Club run, is it owned or rented, how do the authorities treat it..

Olga: The local social authorities know about this club, it's kind of a youth centre, so

the runner of the club, as I know, she doesn't pay rent for it. Well, all the authorities, the FSB - the contemporary KGB - they know that some radical activities take place in this club, so there are a lot of bugs everywhere, and sometimes there are problems with the police, they just come to harass. Sometimes it was very dangerous, two years ago nazis tried to attack this club after shows because they knew this club is a kind of antifa place.

Me: To me it feels like there are very many police here, and you have to deal with all sorts of things and it seems a bit repressive... Olga: Not a bit, a lot!!! Me: ...but there are still actions and good things happening... Olga:

On a small level... Me: ...but what do you think are the more successful things that go on, e.g. I was very impressed with the Critical Mass yesterday, and also that it happened without the police coming in and killing everyone - what kind of events are potentially successful?

Olga: Very difficult question, as I've said the level of activities is very small in Russia, unfortunately, and always the same people participate in different actions. You know I think that the situation that we have in Russia now is called near-totalitarianism. As my friend from Belarus, activist and vocalist of punk band Deviation called this. Because it looks like everything is forbidden but you can find ways. Not everything is under control. I think that such activities like Critical Mass and FNB and a lot of activity where you can combine protest and fun and forming a community, they have biggest potential. It's not like straight political struggle in the old understanding. And authorities can't know how to deal with this, because it's new and a bit strange people biking have fun, is it a crime? ...You know that we have war in Chechnya, the second war, it has been going on since Autumn 1999, and most of the Russian people just don't care about it, and the only people that can fight it are mostly human rights NGOs, e.g. in Moscow, and St Petersburg there are anti-war pickets weekly, but there are different people that come there, mostly human rights activists but also some ordinary people and St Petersburg anarchists also go there very often. It's good, but I don't think it helps much, actions like this, and also these demonstrations, anarchists together with Trotskyists organised several anti-war demos, very small ones with 100 people. I don't know what we can do about it, but for me, the Chechen war is one of the main problems of contemporary Russia because it's one of the sources of chauvinism and the promoting by the state of racism towards the people from the Caucasus and Chechnya. You probably already felt this spirit of hatred toward everybody who doesn't look like a Moscovite, like police always stop these people: give me your documents, do have a registration, oh you don't give me money...

Me: Yeah I read something scary about a Chechen being attacked on the train by 50 people, no one stopped it, it was very organised somehow...

Olga: By the way I remembered another activity of mine! I am a volunteer English teacher in a Civic Assistance Committee, a little NGO that helps refugees and forced migrants. It has existed since '91 and was the first organisation from the former Soviet Union that helped refugees. And also they give people medical aid, law advice, and there is also a free shop, I also help pick up clothes and stuff for this shop, and it's a centre for education and adoption of children of refugees. My pupil, Chechen girl of 18, she left school this year and went to Canada to college to study for 2 years for free, she's really smart, we helped her.

Me: Well, as we're talking generally about Russia now, because you have a government going on that has no policies and like 1000s of cops on the streets, it does seem to me though that many people manage to be here

without papers and somehow survive, with very little money and jump the trains etc... How do you think this works, you were saying when you get caught without registration, you just give some money? Both the people who are illegal and those who are legal, how do they cope with all this?

Olga: I have no ideal. Because the average salary is 100 euros a month or less, for the people who work for the state, so in hospitals, museums, universities, police, army, and if you work for some private company you have really good money, mostly in Moscow because most of the money in Russia is in Moscow. Russia is a very centralised country, but if you live on the periphery you can also earn good money in companies connected to oil or gas, but with unofficial data there are 70% of the population under the poverty line, and it's really huge. And people find different ways, mostly state forces them to be corrupted. Because there is no different way to survive. And if some policeman has a salary of 100 euros a month and rents a little, little flat, in a bad district of Moscow, that's more than 200 euros, and food as you know is rather expensive. This person is just forced to try to get money from the people and to be corrupted. The same for doctors, the same for teachers - they are looking for private lessons, and doctors ask for extra money to cure people... And what else do people do, they just can't afford to buy much stuff. Also, there is one tradition mostly that children live with their parents until they're 30, 40, 50, with their own families. For example, the drummer of my previous band married and he lives with his wife together with her parents and they have a little daughter, and they live together in a small flat with 2 rooms, and it's very spread here. What else, e.g. me, my salary is about 70 euros a month or less, I am a researcher in the Russian state academy of sciences. And I can't afford to eat in public places, I try to buy food in the market, but we live almost in the centre and also food in the market is expensive. I have a false paper to use the public transport so it's free for me. And, the worst thing is that now I can't afford to buy books. Because they became more and more expensive each year, and it looks like the government want to make books a luxury for rich people.

Me: You mentioned having trouble with nazis, I also heard of a lot of conflict with the Bolsheviks and the Left, how does this affect you in your daily life, and in political action, you were saying nazis target political groups and antifascists?

Olga: It's not so awful as in Belarus, I can also talk a bit about Belarus because I have a lot of friends there and I go there often. So, in Belarus there are not many ethnic minorities, and punk/hc kids were from the beginning openly anarchist and antifascist so they became the main target of nazis. And then every punk show is attacked by the nazis and also stopped by riot police and KGB (they still have KGB), and now they made a new law so you should get a licence before a show, so it could be very bad, I think the law is just against the punkshows!

Me: Is there a big punk subculture in Belarus?

Olga: No, but it's very political.

There are a lot of active people involved in antifascist, anarchist movement and some other activities. As for Moscow, you know it's a huge city, there are about 15 million people living here, and I think there are several thousand nazis. There are two rather dangerous nazi organisations, I'm not sure if both of them are still exist, but at least a couple years ago there were two, United Brigade 88, and Blood and Honour. And people usually were a bit afraid to claim openly they are antifascists because of them. And one band from St Petersburg, Spitfire, they play ska punk, they were fed up with nazis at shows in Moscow. So they began to say things against nazis at the shows, and once at one of the shows a lot of these serious nazis came from one of these organisations and they just were beating up people going out of the club, like 13 year old punks and skaters, and it was really mess. And one man from the club was just passing by the nazis and they attacked him, and he protected himself with a knife, and by chance killed one of them, an 18 year old guy, and after this there weren't any serious conflicts. It was in 1999, but since that time, a couple of times nazis tried to attack the Jerry Rubin club. But in the other Russian cities, the situation is a bit different and punk/hc movement - and Moscow to say the truth it is rather a-political, there are some persons who try to do something and are really active, but mostly the scene is rather a-political - but in the periphery, like in Kirov, Perm, the punk/hc DIY scenes were from the beginning very political, antifascist/anarchist and so they fight the fascists. For example people from Kirov came to tonight's show, they told me there is now a black resistance group that try to fight nazis, they find them and beat them. And of course always people destroy nazi graffiti and stickers.

Me: You were also at the eco-camp that happened this year in the Ural mountains?

Olga: That was in July/August. It was the ordinary annual eco-protest camp. These camps are organised usually by Rainbow Keepers, radical anarcho-environmental movement, but this one was organised mostly by Autonomous Action, anarchist movement, and some local people. So these camps have been organised since 1989, and this camp particularly was against dismantling ballistic missiles that are burnt, and it is very dangerous because of different reasons and one of them is that the solid fuel is very toxic and result of the burning is dioxins, one of the most dangerous substances on earth, it's worse than radiation in some sense. It has happened during a year in Perm city with more than 1 million inhabitants, it's awful it causes all these different diseases, cancer, and everything. So in different periods there were about 20, 30 people at the camp, coming and going from beginning of July until end of August. People organised pickets and during them people gave out leaflets and spread information about the problem and asked people to come to the big meetings and also people tried to organise different actions, for example we organised an action 'dioxin babies', we were



dressed like babies with pampers and I don't know how to say in English... all those things... *Me: pacifiers?*

Olga: Very funny action. In the children's park we gave out leaflets saying save your children before it's too late. And also we organised a Food not Bombs action of support for this camp, it was called Food not Rockets, and we wrote a press release, some local TV channels came and did interviews with us. And we talked about the problem of rockets, and people living below the poverty line, and homeless people, and so much money is paid for military industrial complex and nothing for people. And passers by supported us with these ideas, and lots of homeless people who came to eat, they also were very supportive of the ideas, it was a really nice experience. But two years ago there was another camp in the city Votkinsk, in Udmurtia, it was the same project about dismantling the same rockets, and local people supported it because they already had in Udmurtia many dangerous projects like chemical weapons, and so on, and a lot of people with cancer in this region of Russia. So almost the whole population of the city, like 70000 people all came to the streets and said No! and this project was frozen and then moved to Perm and this was done in absolute silence. People didn't know and when we came, as I said, it was working more than a year at the time, so it was much more difficult to stop it.

Me: Well it's kind of crazy they go and poison a whole city.

Olga: Yes, and also it was an action after the big meeting, just opposite the local administration building in Perm, people chained themselves to the building and the riot police attacked them very brutally, they just try to pull out the eyes and tear off the skin from the face, and they used electroshock that is forbidden in Russia, and one of my friends couldn't stand up even. It was really awful, because from the beginning we were thinking this is one of the most peaceful camps we ever had in Russia because usually from the beginning local authorities pay money to the police or to bandits to burn the camps, beat people. But after that action, at that moment I was already at Ecotopia in the Netherlands, and when I read it, email, I was really shocked.

Me: Maybe one last thing you can mention your zine projects you've done?

Olga: With my friends from Belarus, I made a fanzine called 'Without a Muzzle', and now I'm working on another fanzine, but I will tell more about it when it will be put out! Also, I want to mention because this project is almost done, with my friend from Old School Kids records, we are working on an anti-war compilation and I hope it will be ready at the end of this year, there are more than 30 bands from different countries, from Portugal, US, Canada, Chile, Latvia, Lithuania, Russia, Netherlands, UK, Iceland, and it will be benefit for the people suffering from the Chechen war, with a lot of messages and information about the problems, so if someone is interested in distribution of this compilation titled 'Fuck their war', contact mel

Old School Kids Records: oskrecords.com
info@oskrecords.com

Here's an interview with Szarapow, who we met in Moscow and who we went to visit on our way home, in St Petersburg. He's a fast talking hardworking punkrocker of many years and a great host too! We didn't get round to doing an interview so I left him some questions and he replied by email.



Me: tell me bout yourself. who are you? what keeps you busy?

Sz: i'm a 26 y.o. punk kid from st. petersburg, russia. i'd like to think of myself as at least a little politically minded, and not particularly boring but life does prove me wrong all the time. i am kept busy by all kinds of things; most commonly sleeping, eating, working, reading, surfing the net and listening to records, but also hanging out with people, doing stuff (tape label, distro, band, gigs, zines, books, etc.) i'm a bit antisocial which helps but also lazy which doesn't.

Me: what was russian punk all about and what was it like when you first got into it (& when was this)?

Sz: the very first underground punk gig i went to was on nov. 18, 1994 at TaMtAm club in st. petersburg. the band was trauben kalzium where my former classmate fil played drums. it was through him a year or so before that i got to hear dead kennedys, sex pistols, sonic youth and such (i had been into rockabilly, ska and what i'd now term classic rock before). the early scene related to TaMtAm has been exciting, wild and violent. i had at least 2 or 3 pairs of glasses destroyed there - some from pogoing and some from when people were trying to beat me up. it was then - in mid-nineties - that i've made some friends and got hooked up on some good music. there was no diy scene as we know it then but there were some people who had nice ideas, like hating nazis (of which at TaMtAm were quite a few). in mid-90s first punk fanzines started to appear in russian (bezumets in riga, diy punkcore bulletin and play hooky! in kirov, slonoboi / elephantboy in st. petersburg) but i only got introduced to the culture of xeroxed zines/tapes over mail a bit later. i think the situation is better now but nothing will replace the wild excitement of walking home at midnight after a gig where you heard some great music and pogoed your legs away - because there is no way you can be 17 again.

Me: are there any exciting new developments in the russian scene nowadays?

Sz: i can't really say for all of russia - i seldom travel the country, but here in north-west the situation is quite good, the gigs are regular (and they're mostly with foreign or out-of-town bands), there are tons of diy bands playing anything from garage and ska punk to grind and noisecore, labels, zines, and quite a few of the people are involved in some political stuff like anarchist infoshop epicenter, food not bombs group, direct confrontation with nazis in the streets, etc. so i'm proud to be a part of it all, however small. i can send you a scene report if you

need addresses and such. *Me: what inspires you?* Sz: love, first and foremost - love for the people and cats i love, for punk rock and music in general, nice and dedicated people, nice food (and that means cruelty-free), good books (i'm mostly into fiction), my friends' political stencils, nice gigs, everything good. people who have done what we're doing now are an inspiration too. not to say that things that piss me off aren't an inspiration, to quote p.i.l. "anger is an energy". *Me: and, what would be at the top of your hate list?* Sz: i was shit-scared of nuclear winter when i was a kid in the 1980s and i still am, so any war-monger is a personal enemy of mine that deserves a severe beating. i have irrational fear of dogs (which more often than not end up being nice to me) and cops (who are truly the filth of mankind and they prove it time and again). i don't much like nazis either - my great-grandfather was involved with the guerrillas so they shot him in 1942 near pskov. oh, i hate cars, russian politicians, heaps of things/people.

Me: you've amazed us with all yer knowledge of st petersburg & Russian history! is this just something you're interested in or how do you know all this stuff?

Sz: i was heaps into history before i got into music (=pre-teens and early teens), and i've read a whole bunch of stuff then, some of which i somehow still remember. i've lived in (north) leningrad/st petersburg pretty much all my life so it's only natural to be picking up stuff here and there. i do have a special interest in early/historical punk scenes which is kind of related. btw, first russian punk band, avtomaticheskije udovletvoriteli, has been formed in leningrad in 1979.

Me: what does it mean to be an anarchist in russia (as opposed to one in western europe)?

Sz: well, it means being quite apathetic by most part (and i mean myself too)... but the thing is, there is little tradition that was passed on due to severe stalinist repressions, and very little infrastructure (squats, infoshops, publications, etc.) unlike in most west european countries so everything is a lot harder to do. but on the other hand starting things from scratch means a possibility to do things your own way - which a few people are taking. i do hope that the punk scene will be more political than it is now, and there are a few people i'd call anarchopunks here in st. petersburg...

Me: you do records, and shows - what kinds of bands/people have you worked with?

Sz: i'm putting out tapes, not records (by most part anyway). i'm mostly "working" (=have a lot of hassle and little moola) with punk /hc bands from the diy scene, though some bands i released play, i dunno, post punk or electronica or dub metal. my musical tastes are eclectic (and punk's not music anyway). same with the gigs, whoever gets in touch with me i can do a gig for as long as they're not major-label related or religious (and if i don't violently dislike their music). i once set up a gig for deep insight from finland who turned out to be jehovah's witnesses or something and that was the last time i consciously dealt with christians. i mostly do gigs for foreign bands, if local gigs happen they're benefits (from the last one we did the money went to epicenter infoshop, food not bombs group, and for new year's gifts in a school for chechen refugees' kids in moscow). btw: the exploited play stadiums in russia, but they're one of the very few uk punk bands to come to russia - c'mon it's not that hard. i once did a gig for captain everything!, pop punk band from north london (really nice fellows, hope they'd come back again - judging by the money they made in Moscow they'd be stupid not to), and i gotta do a tape for boxed in from Yorkshire soon. i have never been to the uk so i don't know that many people there.

Me: what's it like, do you think, for western european or u.s. bands to come & play in russia?

Sz: i think it's kind of slightly crazy ('the cold war's over, comrade'), it must be interesting (if only for the cheap alcohol and sights to see), it's not hard (we'll help you with info on how to get visas, put you on trains/busses, and most gigs are good from what i hear), it is possible to get your money back or even make some (not always happens, but it's possible), it is usually fun (for us anyway). a good look at what can happen to you in russia you can find in hero dishonest (from finland) tour diaries - they played russia 3 times, 2003 tour's diary is on their website and last one's been in waterintober zine from england. they're coming over for 2 weeks next year and i can't wait to see those stinkers! i don't like jack osbourne anymore, which should help me deal with them.

Me: plug anything you'd like - websites/russian bands to look out for/your stuff...

Sz: hey everybody buy the morgenmuffel compilation book which is out on active! (is my free copy's in the post yet?) as for the bands, try to get a hold of stuff by 8 hz (grind/metal), potom budet pozdno (grind), distress (discore), ankylm (folk punk), sandinista! (metalcore), loa loa (emo violence), arttetter (grunge / postpunk), marschak (emocore), skafandr (dub metal), argument 5.45 (metalcore), etc. etc. - all russian, all good. my band's called svinokop and we play fast punk/hc with two bass guitars - gotta have a new recording early next year...

which i hope to release as a 7". my label's called szss and you can see the website at <http://www.svinokop.narod.ru>; other sources of info and stuff (just off the top of my head) might include www.diy.spb.ru, www.punk.ru, www.volja.nm.ru, www.novsvet.narod.ru, www.infoshop.spb.ru, www.russia.indymedia.org, www.karma-mira.nm.ru, www.oskrecords.com, www.sptimes.ru etc.

if you wanna get in touch with me or send me anything for review in knives n forks (the zine me and zhenya slon's been doing since 1998) or blah-blah-blood (my english-language zine) you can do so via:

diyhc@yahoo.com or at dmitrij ivanov, po box 30, st petersburg-9, 195009, russia
xo xo xo / hail to england / brighton rock



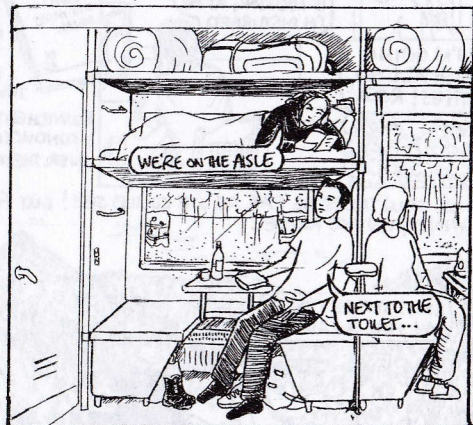
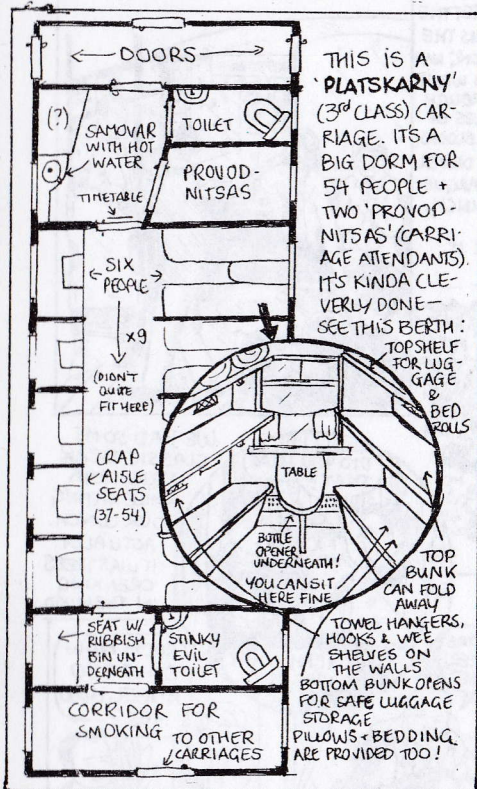
WSS
THE FUCK OFF MERCHANTS

SO WE GOT ON THE

TRANS-SIBERIAN EXPRESS

WHICH IS A RAILWAY-THOUSANDS OF KILOMETRES LONG (NOT ONE SPECIFIC TRAIN, ACTUALLY). WE WAS EXCITED! WE WERE IN THIRD CLASS AND THE FIRST BIT WAS 3 DAYS TO KRASNOYARSK, A RANDOM CHOICE OF DESTINATION IN SIBERIA.

UNFORTUNATELY WHEN WE FOUND OUR SEATS...



AARGHS! IT STANK. EVERYONE CAME PAST ALL THE TIME & THE DOOR WAS NOISY. I GOT UPSET & CLAUSTROPHOBIC.



MUST. RIP. DOOR..OFF.. KING ES..!

HORDES OF LOCALS WERE SELLING WARES AT STOPS - WE TRIED TO BUY TOMATOES - BUT FAILED!

SO, CAN WE BUY SOME?

HRMMPH!

THEN, ON TOP OF EVERYTHING ELSE, OUR FOLD-OUT TABLE JUST COLLAPSED...



I'M COVERED IN TEA & YES - I'VE LOST MY MORALE TOO

WE HAD NO MAP, FUCK-ALL INFO & GOT LOST.

GOYE DESHOUAYA GASTINITSAS? *



WHERE IS CHEAP HOTEL?

AFTER A SLEEPLESS NIGHT WITH PEOPLE CONSTANTLY PUSHING PAST MY HEAD, LOTS OF PEOPLE GOT OFF SOMEWHERE, AND WE ASKED THE PROVODNITSA IF WE COULD MOVE..



THE REST OF THE JOURNEY WAS FINE! AND WE GOT TO

KRASNOYARSK



WE DID END UP IN A HUGE ROOM, DESPITE THE TWO CRAZY LADIES AT THE RECEPTION.

genuinely excited →



THE BABY JESUS IS LOOKING AT ME I'M DISTURBED.

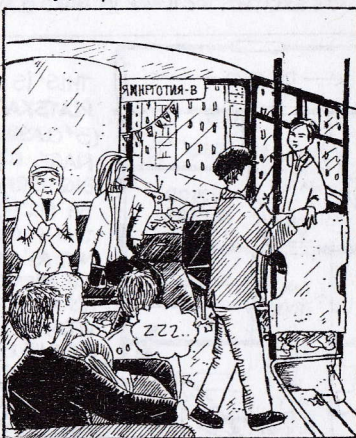
HA! I'M GOING TO WASH ALL MY CLOTHES! ROCK!



WE WANTED TO GO WALKING IN THE MOUNTAINS, AND THIS IS WHAT I'D COPIED FROM SOMEONE'S GUIDEBOOK. AND GUESS WHAT, WE MADE IT! THOUGH WE

Krasnoyarsk
nature reserve
bus no. 50 to
Sazalkha
stop! - 15 mins
south.

DID GET THE BUS THE WRONG WAY AND WENT THROUGH MILES OF TOWER BLOCKS, & WATCHED THE DRIVER & CONDUCTOR ARGUE OVER THEIR LUNCH.



THEN WE SAW TREES AS FAR AS WE COULD SEE! BUT FUCK IT WAS WINDY ON THE RIDGE!



SHIT! THERE GOES MY HAT AGAIN!

THEN WE GOT ONTO THE TRAIN AGAIN, OVERNIGHT TO

IRKUTSK



COME! DRINK MORE VODKA!

WHY YOU NOT MARRY?

SO, YOU'RE A PAINT-BALLING TEAM?

YES! COME FROM COMPETITION!

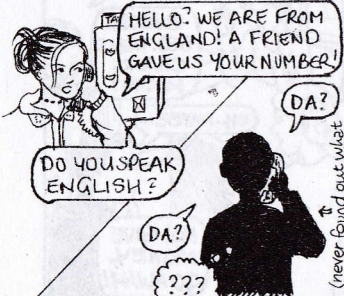
MORE BEER, DA?

YEAH. WHAT WAS IT?

ROOM NOW ONLY 720 RUBEL, GOOD YES?

SPASIBA!

IT'S A BIG STINKY CITY BUT IT'S NEAR LAKE BAIKAL, WHICH WE WANTED TO SEE. WE ALSO HAD CONTACTS FOR COMRADES:



HELLO? WE ARE FROM ENGLAND! A FRIEND GAVE US YOUR NUMBER!

DO YOU SPEAK ENGLISH?

DA?

???

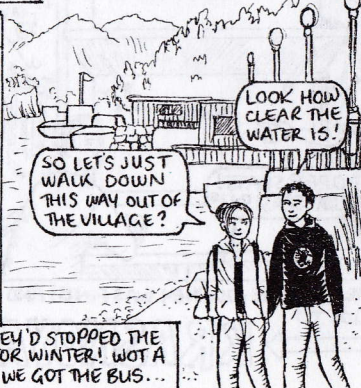
DA?

(never found out what they looked like!)

THESE GUYS WERE GREAT. IN IRKUTSK, THEY INSISTED ON HELPING US FIND A CHEAP HOTEL.

WE LEFT MOST OF OUR STUFF AT LEFT LUGGAGE AND WANTED TO HEAD OUT TO THE LAKE FOR A COUPLE DAYS.

THE BOATS LEAVING IN 5 MINUTES! QUICK!



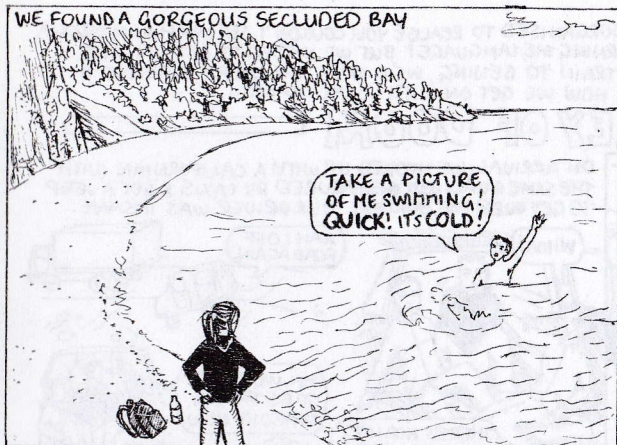
LOOK HOW CLEAR THE WATER IS!

SO LET'S JUST WALK DOWN THIS WAY OUT OF THE VILLAGE?

BUT THEY'D STOPPED THE BOAT FOR WINTER! WOT A SHAME! WE GOT THE BUS...

WELL, WE GAVE UP AFTER A BIT...

WE FOUND A GORGEOUS SECLUDED BAY

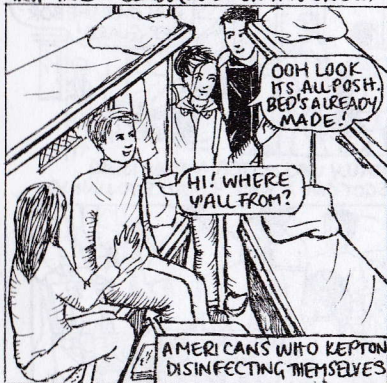


...PERFECT!

TIME FOR THE NEXT TRAIN - OUR FIRST TRIP IN 2ND CLASS (NO 3RD ON THIS ONE...)

ONTO

MONGOLIA



WE SPENT AN ENTIRE DAY AT THE BORDER CROSSING!



FINALLY, WE ARRIVED IN ULAAN BATAAR, A BIG CITY IN THE MIDDLE OF MOUNTAINS, WITH SUB-URBS FULL OF YURTS.



WE STAYED IN A PROPER HOSTEL - WELL CHEAP, BUT KINDA WEIRD.



SO WE ENDED UP SQUASHED INTO MINI-BUSSES WITH TO MONGOLIAN STUDENTS!



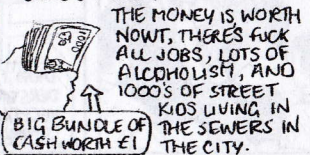
WE TRIED TO GET A BUS TO A NATURE RESERVE OR IT'S SUPPOSED TO GO FROM HERE



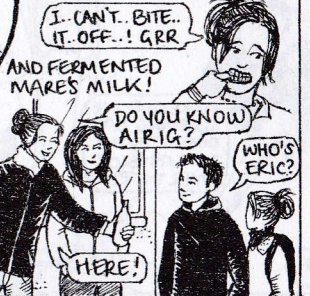
WE GOT CONFUSED & HAD TO ASK LOTSA PEOPLE. FINALLY WE FOUND A GUY WHO SPOKE ENGLISH



HEY LOOK WHAT HAPPENED TO OUR POT NOODLE



WE GOT TO TRY ODD MONGOLIAN DAIRY PRODUCTS



WE WERE TOO INDEPENDENTLY MINDED & DISORGANISED TO REALISE YOU COULDN'T SEE MUCH IN MONGOLIA WITHOUT JOINING ORGANISED TOURS, OR LEARNING THE LANGUAGE! BUT WE NEEDED TO GET ON, AND FIGURED INSTEAD OF TAKING THE DIRECT TRAIN TO BEIJING, WE'D TAKE THE CHEAPOPTION OF A TRAIN TO THE BORDER TOWN AND SEEING HOW WE GET ON WITH LOCAL TRAINS...

JOURNEY OF DOOM

WELL, THE FIRST TRAIN WAS FINE - AN OVERNIGHT 2ND CLASS SLEEPER TO ZAMIAN UUD.

BIG SAUSAGES!

FRCH GRCH TS TSAAR

1ST SKHLAAR HRR TSSS

ACTUALLY, THEY'RE NOT ARGUING, THE LANGUAGE JUST SOUNDS LIKE THAT.

ON ARRIVAL, WE HOOKED UP WITH A CALIFORNIAN WITH THE SAME GOAL, GOT BELEAGUED BY TAXIS & GOT A JEEP TO GET OVER THE BORDER. OUR DRIVER WAS INSANE.

WHOA!

AAH: OFF ROAD AGAIN

HM. WE SEEM TO BE TOWING SOMEONE NOW

THERE'S NOTHING TO HOLD ONTO!

AAH! WE'RE GONNA RUN OVER THE BORDER GUARD!

IN THE CHINESE BORDER TOWN, ERLIAN, WE GOT BELEAGUED, AGAIN!

BEIJING?

BUS TO BEIJING?

WE MANAGED TO ESCAPE TO THE TRAIN STATION

NO TRAIN!

ARE THEY STILL BEHIND US?

THERE REALLY WAS NO TRAIN TO BEIJING, BUT WE GOT ONE 1/2 WAY, 4 HOURS TO JINING.

NO, WE'LL TAKE THE TRAIN.

NO! NO TRAIN!

BUS 200¥!

IN JINING WE TRIED TO GET TRAIN TICKETS ONWARDS

IT'S 59¥. HOPE IT'S A SLEEPER!

UM... WHAT'S 'GOODBYE'?

WE WENT & GOT SOME DINNER

OH. A PLATE FULL OF PORK

DIDN'T THEY UNDERSTAND OUR 'VEGETARIANS' COMMUNICATION?

WE HAD TO SETTLE FOR THE SMOKING - AND SPITTING - CORRIDOR

MAKE SURE THE SLEEPING BAG DOESN'T GO IN THAT SPITBLOB OVER THERE.

THIS WAS STILL MORE COMFY THAN ONE MAN WE SAW

SOAP DISH

HAND WASH BIN

AND GOT ON TO OUR TRAIN...

OH. IT'S NOT A SLEEPER.

IT'S FULL

PEOPLE WERE SITTING/SLEEPING EVERYWHERE BY THE HOT WATER URN

IN THE AISLES

THEY'RE ALL STARING AT US

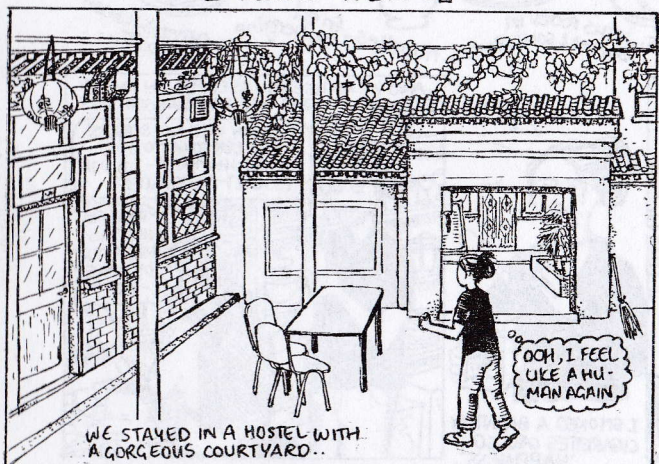
BUT, WE GOT THERE, AT 6 AM ... 36 HOURS TRAVEL, BUT IT ONLY COST £13!

WE CHECKED IN TO A HOSTEL...

AAH... BLISS

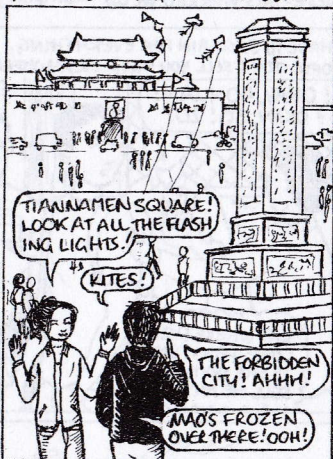
+ 1¥ = 6 PENCE

→ BEIJING →

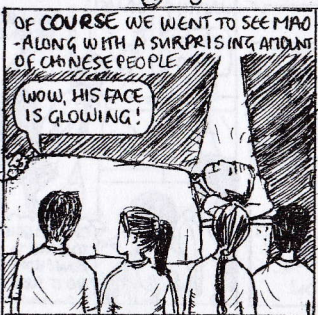
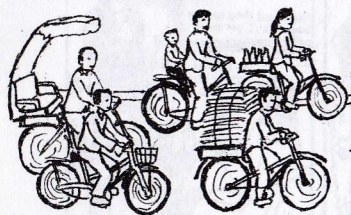


THE HOSTEL WAS IN A 'HUTONG' AREA WITH LOTS OF OLD HOUSES & LITTLE STREETS. IT WAS ALWAYS BUSY. IT REALLY WAS BEING LIKE IN A COMPLETELY DIFFERENT WORLD.

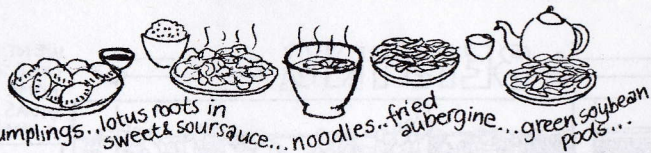
WE NEEDED TO BUY OUR TRAIN TICKET TO MOSCOW FOR OUR JOURNEY HOME & GET OUR RUSSIAN TRANSIT VISAS, SO WE'D BE IN BEIJING OVER A WEEK SORTING ALL THIS OUT.



AND THE BIKES! SO MANY! SUCH HUGE CYCLEPATHS! ANYTHING WOULD GET TRANSPORTED BY BIKE..



WE DEFINITELY ATE ALL THE PIES IN BEIJING. THERE WAS SO MUCH NICE FOOD! (AND WE GOT SOMEONE TO WRITE DOWN 'WE ONLY EAT VEGETABLES' IN CHINESE - THIS WORKED WELL)



YOU HAVE TO BARGAIN FOR EVERYTHING, & PEOPLE TRY & SELL YOU STUFF EVERYWHERE

50! OKAY, 40 YUAN!
NO? OKAY, 30! 20!

EH? WHERE'D SHE COME FROM? WOT IS SHE TRYING TO SELL ME ANYWAY?



I SMOKED A BRAND OF CIGARETTES CALLED 'HAPPINESS'..

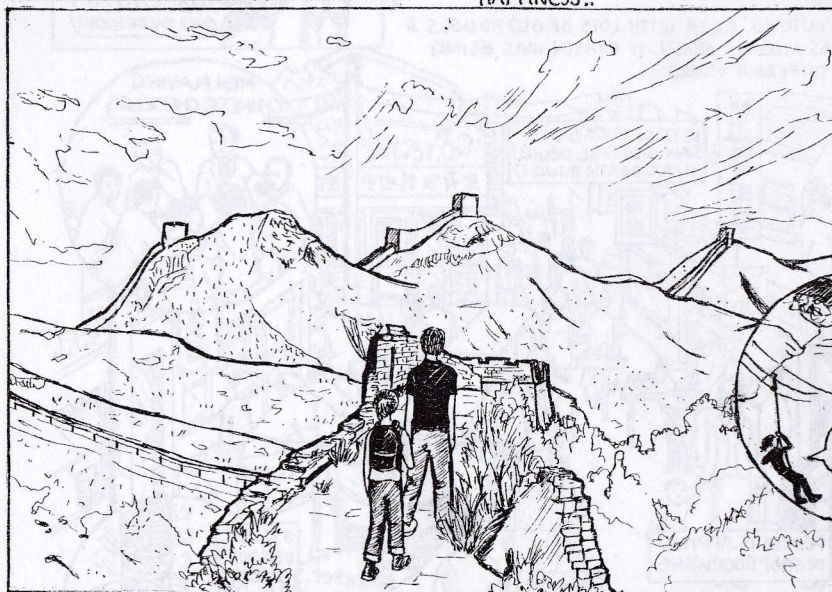
HAPPY!

..AND WE AMUSED OURSELVES IN AN UN-P.C. WAY WITH BAD ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS..

"DO AWAY WITH THE SCRAPS! IT IS MEET TO GO TO THE SCRAPS SHAMPOO" - I THINK IT'S ANTI-DANDRUFF?



"THE FLEETNESS IS MEET STURDY WAVE" - WOT?



THE HOSTEL ORGANISED DAY-TRIPS TO THE GREAT WALL SO WE WENT, & WALKED 10KM FROM JINSHAO LING TO SIMITAI. IT WAS SUNNY, & BEAUTIFUL.



AND WE WENT ON A ZIP WIRE DOWN TO THE CARPARK!

→ KOREA →



→ MY FAMILY →

IT WAS SO COOL TO SEE THEM ALL, AFTER 11 YEARS! I WAS NERVOUS, BUT IT TURNED OUT FINE - WE FEEL WELCOME, THEY WERE UBER-GENEROUS AND NICE TO US!

MY HALMONI (NAN) - SHE DOESN'T SPEAK ANY ENGLISH

MY ARCHITECT SAM-CHON WHO'S JUST GETTING DIVORCED, & HIS CHEEKY 10 YEAR OLD SON WHO SPEAKS GOOD ENGLISH



MY GRANDAD (HARABOJI) DIED A FEW YEARS AGO. WE WENT TO SEE HIS GRAVE, AND MY IMOS POURED SPIRITS ON IT, AND LIT A CIGARETTE FOR HIM! I REMEMBER HIM STILL WELL - A LOVELY MAN.

MY OLDEST AUNT ('IMO') - FORMER MISS KOREA, SHE LIVED IN NEW YORK & HAWAII, & HER NEW BOYFRIEND

MY DENTIST UNCLE ('SAM-CHON') & HIS WIFE

THEY HAVE 3 KIDS - TWO QUIET & SHY ONES, & ONE WE HUNG OUT WITH: SHE PLAYS IN A ROCK BAND!

THE KIDS ARE SO CUTE! I'M THEIR UN-AUNT? NO, THEIR... WHAT'S IT CALLED??

ANOTHER IMO, DIVORCED, AND HER TWO GROWN KIDS (HER SON'S WELL TALL, FOR A KOREAN!)

AND MY YOUNGEST IMO - STILL LOVELY & FUN! - SHE USED TO BABYSIT ME... AND HER FAMILY.

I TRIED TO SPEAK MY NEWLY LEARN'T KOREAN WITH MY NAN...

UH... KONGANG-UN OTTAEYO??

AIGUL! UH, OH! OTTAEYO??

EH?

* HOW IS HEALTH?

... AND WASHED OUR CLOTHES.

GIVE ME, I WILL WASH!

I'VE NEVER HAD SUCH CLEAN CLOTHES IN MY LIFE!

WHEN ARE YOU GETTING MARRIED?

HE LOOKS LIKE HARRISON FORD!

HE'S AN ENGLISH GENTLEMAN!

SHE HAD A SON BUT LOST TOUCH AFTER HER DIVORCE - THEY WERE ONLY RECENTLY REUNITED. SO WE GOT TO MEET A 'NEW' COUSIN, & HIS FAMILY!

WE STAYED AT MY RICH ARCHITECT SAM-CHON'S FLAT - IT WAS ENORMOUS, AND SO POSH!

HE HAD AN 'AJUMMA' - A MAID! SHE MADE US BREAK FAST.

KAMSAMNIDA!

THIS IS SO WEIRD - WOT DO WE DO??

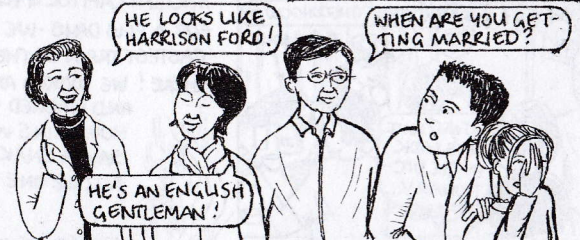
*THANK YOU!

ALL MY RELATIVES LIKED MY BOYFRIEND - A BIT TOO MUCH!

YOUR BATH-ROOM IS OVER HERE, AND...

YIKES!

THE TV'S BIGGER THAN... A VERY BIG THING!



WE SPENT ALMOST 4 WEEKS IN KOREA - THE TIME FLEW BY! MY FAMILY GAVE US LOTS A MONEY & THE PROLIFERATION OF SHOPS FULL OF CUTE THINGS TURNED ME INTO A RIGHT CONSUMER!

SEOUL, WHERE MY FAMILY ALL LIVE, IS SO MODERN IT'S LIKE THE FUTURE!



THERE'S COFFEE MACHINES ALL OVER!!

OOH COFFEE.

YOU JUST HAD ONE!



AND IT'S VERY FAST

THEY'RE ALL AS HECTIC AS YOU! HELP!

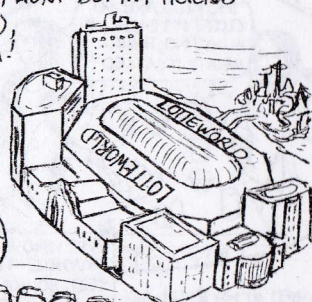


OUTSIDE THE CITIES IT'S WONDERFUL - LOTS A WOODED MOUNTAINS (WHICH ARE SACRED) AND LITTLE GARDEN PLOTS AND OLD HOUSES...

WE GOT TAKEN EVERYWHERE - THE PALACE, THE MARKET, THE 'FOLK VILLAGE', THE SKYSCRAPER VIEWING PLATFORM, RESTAURANTS, THE BATHHOUSE (I GOT TO GO IN WITH MY AUNT BUT MY FRIEND WAS BY HIMSELF & GOT CONFUSED!), THE PARK, AND MORE SHOPPING!



WE EVEN WENT TO TWO DIFFERENT AMUSEMENT PARKS - A COUSIN & HER FEWER TOOK US TO 'LOTTE WORLD', A GIANT MALL COMPLEX. WE WENT ON THE CRAZIEST RIDES:



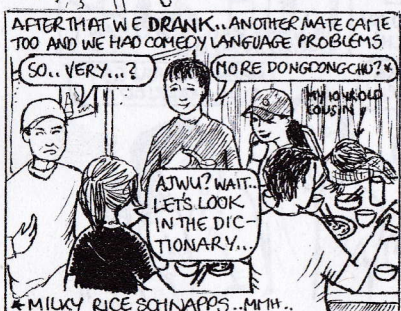
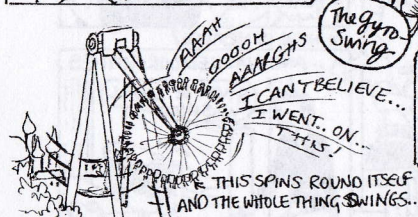
I'M NAKED! CAN I GO THERE? OH, OK. DO I GO TO THE HOT TUB OR THE POOL FIRST? OR WASH? WHAT ARE THE OTHERS DOING?

The gyro-Drop

IS YOUR HAND HURTING MY HAND...



70 METRES!



*MILKY RICE SCHNAPPS... MITH..

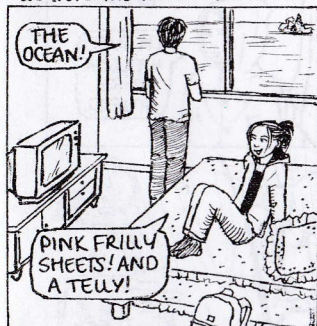
WE WENT ON A COUPLE OF TRIPS BY OURSELVES TOO - TO THE ANCIENT CAPITAL GYEONGJU FOR A FEW DAYS - WE TOOK THE FASTEST TRAIN IN THE WORLD THERE! WE LOOKED AT RUBBLE AND WALKED IN THE MOUNTAINS WHERE I SAW A SNAKE (ONLY A LITTLE ONE THOUGH..)



WE ALSO WENT TO A NATIONAL PARK ON THE EAST COAST..

→ SORAKSAN →

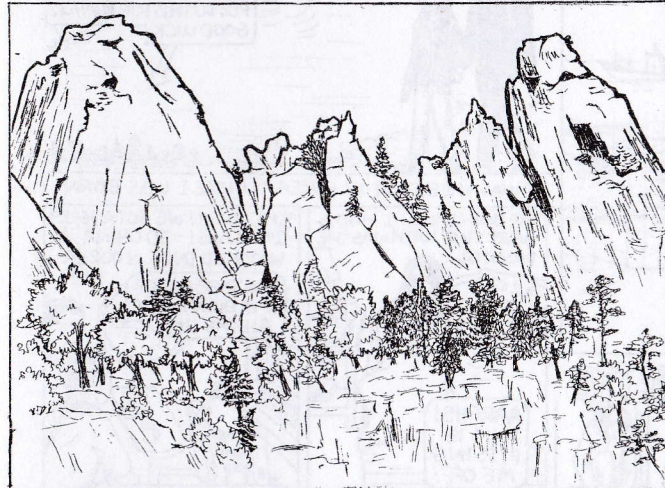
SO WE GOT A COACH TO SOKCHO WHERE MY AUNT HAD BOOKED US INTO THE WELCOME CONDO!



WE DECIDED TO GO WALKING FOR 2 DAYS UP & DOWN THE HIGHEST PEAK.



IT WAS INCREDIBLY BEAUTIFUL. THE LEAVES WERE ALL AUTUMN COLOURS. THE PATHS WERE BUSY AT FIRST, THEN QUIET AND QUITE SCRAMBLY, THERE WERE ROCKS, STREAMS, WATERFALLS, TEMPLES, LOTS OF BIRDS & CHIPMUNKS...



WE STAYED IN A SHELTER NEAR THE TOP FOR THE NIGHT



FINALLY THE FLOOR HEATING CAME ON!



THE NEXT MORNING...



WE STARTED OUR DESCENT...



WHOA! I SLIPPED AGAIN!

WHERE'S THE PATH? I CAN'T SEE ANY PATH...

WE CAME ACROSS A LOVELY TEMPLE RIGHT NEAR THE PEAK



I CAN'T BELIEVE THERE'S A COFFEE MACHINE UP HERE!

BUDDHA PROVIDES

FURTHER DOWN IT THAWED, AND THEN IT WAS RAINING! WE PUT ON OUR PLASTIC MACS WE BOUGHT IN THE PARK FOR CHEAP.



I'M SURE WE LOOK VERY STUPID.

SORAKSAN WAS SO BEAUTIFUL. KOREA'S FULL OF NATIONAL PARKS & THEY'RE WELL KEPT. PATHS GET CLOSED REGULARLY FOR REGENERATION AND MANY AREAS GET QUITE WILD ... SOMEDAY I'LL GO TO ALL THE PARKS!



WE GOT BACK TO THE CONDO & SPENT A MORNING ON THE BEACH...



ACTUALLY IT'S PRETTY COLD.



STACKED PEBBLES PEOPLE DO THIS FOR PRAYER/GOOD LUCK

IT WAS NICE TO BE IN KOREA - WHERE I WAS BORN

THE ONLY THING I HAD A HARD TIME WITH WAS THE DRY AIR...



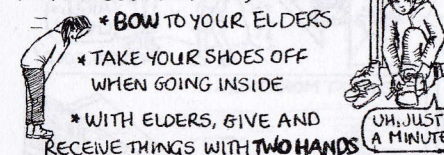
I GOT BAD ECZEMA ON MY LEGS & SLEPT CRAP LOTS!

TIME TO GO! WE GOT A FERRY 2ND CLASS! - TO CHINA, & WATCHED DVDs IN OUR CABIN

THIS'D BE BETTER IF IT DIDN'T JUMP ALL THE TIME



- A QUICK COURSE IN **KOREAN ETIQUETTE** IT'S ALL ABOUT RESPECT, MAN!



* **BOW** TO YOUR ELDER

* **TAKE YOUR SHOES OFF** WHEN GOING INSIDE

* **WITH ELDER**, GIVE AND RECEIVE THINGS WITH **TWO HANDS**

(ONE HAND WITH PEOPLE YOUNGER THAN YOU)

* **DON'T POUR YOUR OWN DRINK!** POUR FOR OTHERS (WITH BOTH HANDS, IF FOR ELDER)

* **THEN TOAST, WITH THE RIGHT HAND** (BOTH IF BLA...)



* **CHEERS**

* **DON'T CLEAR OUT YOUR PLATE** - THE HOST WILL RE-FILL IT THINKING YOU'RE STILL HUNGRY

* **DO SLURP YOUR SOUP & EAT NOISILY**, BUT **DON'T BLOW YOUR NOSE** AT THE TABLE

* **DON'T SMOKE** IN FRONT OF ELDER UNLESS THEY GIVE YOU PERMISSION (THIS MAKES PUBC SMOKING AWKWARD)



more random MEMORIES OF KOREA...



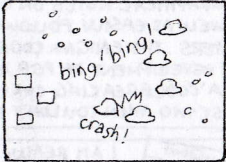
KOREANS ARE OBSESSED WITH THEIR HEALTH. THERE'S TONS OF 'HEALTH DRINKS'; ODD EXERCISE PLAYGROUNDS, AND YOU SEE LOTSA MIDDLE AGED PEOPLE WALKING ROUND 'EXERCISING'!



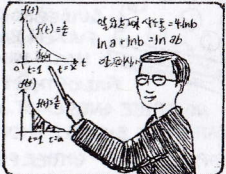
WE GOT GIVEN A COOKED POTATO HALFWAY UP A MOUNTAIN AT A BUDDHIST HERMITAGE!

OH! THANKS! I WAS HUNGRY!

KOREAN TV ROCKS!



THERE'S A CHANNEL SHOWING VIDEOGAMES ALL DAY



AN EDUCATIONAL CHANNEL: MATHS + PHYSICS 24h!

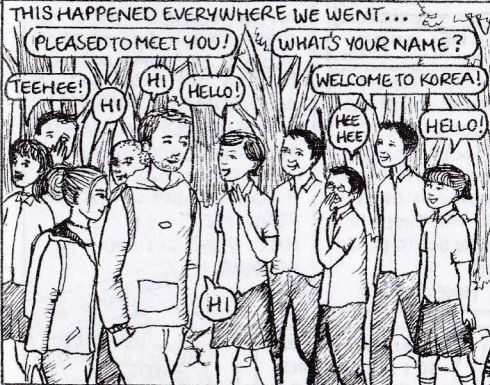
KNIGHT RIDER



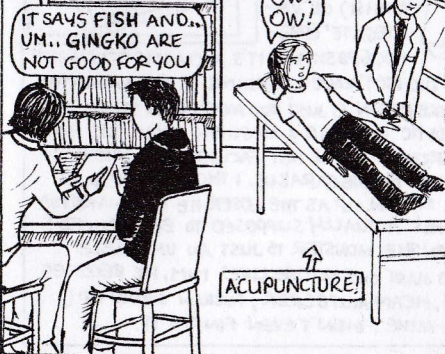
AN 80'S US TV SERIES CHANNEL! WAHEY!



WE SAW AN INFOMERCIAL FOR SOME SELF HEATING BED ABOUT 50 TIMES



MY AUNT TOOK US TO A CHINESE DOCTOR'S TO GET OUR 'BODY SYSTEMS CLASSIFIED' (AT MY MUM'S REQUEST)



THEY PLAY CHANTED SERMONS AT YOU ROUND BUDDHIST TEMPLES. IT'S UNSETTLING.

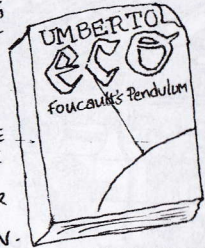
★ BOOK REVIEWS ★

SO I READ THESE WHILE AWAY, & ME & MY FRIEND SHARED OUR BOOKS, SO I'M GIVING YOU BOTH OUR RATINGS, OUT OF FIVE.

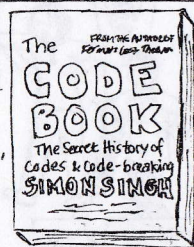
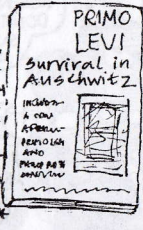


I REALLY LIKE SOME OF HER NOVELS, BUT THIS ONE WAS SHITE. SOME CRAP LOVE-TRIANGLE STORY AND I'VE ALREADY FORGOTTEN IT.
ME: ★ MIKE: DIDN'T BOTHER READING IT, WE DUMPED IT IN THE HOTEL IN KRASNOTARSK.

AH, THIS WAS A GOOD READ! MAKES YOU WANT TO LOOK UP LOTS OF OCCULT, IRRELEVANT HISTORICAL CONSPIRACY THEORIES. ITS ABOUT THREE GUYS WORKING IN A PUBUSHING HOUSE THAT DEALS WITH THESE AND THEY FIGURE THEY'RE ABOVE IT ALL, MAKE UP THEIR OWN CONSPIRACY, ONLY TO DISCOVER THE POWER OF FICTION AND IDEAS UNLEASHED.. A LOT OF REFERENCES WERE LOST ON ME BUT I ENJOYED IT ANYWAY.
ME: ★★☆☆ MIKE: ★★½



EXCELLENT AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL ACCOUNT- MAKING THE HORRORS OF THE HOLOCAUST & THE CAMPS REAL, AS WELL AS LOOKING AT WHAT HAPPENS TO HUMANS SUBJECTED TO SUCH A LIFE. IT'S NOT LONG, ENGROSSING, & ENDS WITH THE DESERTED CAMP INHABITANTS' STRUGGLE FOR SURVIVAL AFTER THE GERMANS LEFT. SOMETHING I'D NOT READ MUCH ABOUT BEFORE. ME & MIKE: ★★★★★



THIS WAS, AGAINST MY EXPECTATIONS, A REALLY GOOD READ. IT HAS HISTORICAL ANECDOTES AND BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES ON CODEMAKERS & BREAKERS, AS WELL AS EASILY FOLLOWED EXPLANATIONS OF CIPHERS. THE ENIGMA CODEMACHINE IN WW2 AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF PCP ARE INCLUDED AS WELL AS A 'CODEBREAKING CHALLENGE' - WE GOT THE FIRST TWO THEN COULDN'T BE ARSED ANYMORE. MIKE & ME: ★★★★★

THIS WRITER IS A BIT OF A CELEBRATED BLACK FEMALE FOLKLORIST AND I ENJOYED HER CLASSIC NOVEL 'THEIR EYES WERE WATCHING GOD' (MUCH RECOMMENDED) THIS BOOK IS A COLLECTION OF WRITINGS FROM HER TRAVELS IN THE 1930'S TO HAITI & JAMAICA FROM AN ANTHROPOLOGIST POINT OF VIEW, SO YOU GET TALES OF VODOO, CUSTOMS AND TRADITIONS, BUT ALSO POLITICS, COMMENTARY & PERSONAL EXPERIENCES. KINDA ALL OVER THE PLACE, AND A BIT UNSATISFACTORY ON THE INFO SIDE - BUT STILL A NICE READ. ME: ★★★★★ MIKE: DIDN'T GET ROUND TO READING IT.



I AM REALLY STARTING TO HATE THE MONOPOLY AND UBIQUITOUSNESS OF LONELY PLANET GUIDEBOOKS. EVERY FUCKEN BACKPACKER HAS A WHOLE BAG FULL OF THEM. IT'S LIKE

NO OTHER ONES EXIST. AND THEY'RE TREATED LIKE BIBLES! THEY'RE ALSO SO OPINIONATED - EITHER PUTTING YOU OFF OR BUILDING UP EXPECTATIONS BEFOREHAND. ITS WAY COOLER TO JUST GO & DISCOVER THINGS YOURSELF. THIS SAID, THE ONE WE HAD WAS AT LEAST WRITTEN BY SOMEONE GENUINELY INTERESTED IN KOREA'S NATIONAL PARKS.
ME: ★★½ MIKE: ★★★

GREEN ANARCHY - SUMMER OFF - WE GAVE OUR COPY TO COMRADES IN RUSSIA SO I DON'T HAVE IT HERE TO REFER TO (OR DRAW). BUT AS ALWAYS THIS WAS A GOOD READ - INFORMATIVE, INSIGHTFUL, VARIED & INSPIRING. MIKE & ME ARGUED OVER WHO GOT TO READ IT ON THE COACH.
ME: ★★★★★½ MIKE: ★★★★★



I RAN OUT OF BOOKS SO I BOUGHT THIS IN RUSSIA, SO IT INCLUDES VOCABULARY LIKE 'TUNULTOUS' (БЕСПОКОИЛИ) OR 'VARIEGATE' (РАЗНООБРАЗНО). IT'S A CLASSIC STORY BUT



OBVIOUSLY USEFUL IN SOME WAYS - RUSSIA IS A PLACE YOU NEED TO TRY & SPEAK THE LANGUAGE - BUT THE BOOK ANNOYED ME BY TRYING TO BE 'COOL'. LOADS OF SPACE WASTED ON 'DATING' & 'GETTING SERIOUS'



AS IF YOU COULD WHEN YOUR CONVERSATION IS LIMITED TO A PHRASEBOOK. IN THE 'EATING OUT' SECTION THERE'S LOTS OF SARCASM COMPLAINTS AND NO 'THAT WAS NICE' - 'FUCKEN' SUPERIOR TRAVELLER' ATTITUDE...!
ME & MIKE: ★★½

I DID NOT ENJOY READING IT. THE NARRATOR, DR FRANKENSTEIN IS JUST TOO MUCH OF A TWAT! HIS OVERDRAMATIC MOANING & ANGUISH ABOUT THE MONSTER HE CREATED WHILE NOT FACING UP TO THE CONSEQUENCES IS UNBEARABLE. I THOUGHT HE'D AT LEAST BE SHOWN UP AS THE LOSER HE IS TOWARD THE END BUT HE'S ACTUALLY SUPPOSED TO BE ADMIRABLE! WOT?! EVEN THE MONSTER IS JUST AN UNSTABLE IDIOT AND JUST COS NO ONE LIKES HIM, HE BECOMES A CRAFTY, MEAN MURDERER, FUCKEN GROW UP!
ME: ★ MIKE: DIDN'T EVEN FINISH IT.

BACK TO BEIJING, TO THE SAME HOSTEL!



→ RETURN TRIP... →

SO WE WERE GOING TO GET THE TRAIN TO MOSCOW FOR 7 DAYS! TIME TO STOCK UP...



WE HIRED BIKES FOR A DAY AND CYCLED WITH THE MASSES!



WE WERE SHARING OUR CABIN WITH A RUSSIAN COUPLE WHO GOT OFF & WAY LIKE MOST PEOPLE IN THE CARRIAGE THEY WERE TRADERS



THE SMOKING CORRIDOR GOT WELL COLD & ICY (& GOT USED AS A FRIDGE)



OUR CARRIAGE ATTENDANT ('PROVODNIK') VERY RUSSIAN!

SO, WHAT DO YOU DO ON A TRAIN FOR 7 DAYS YOU MIGHT ASK? READ, DO PUZZLES, EAT, MAKE TEA, DRINK IT, GO FOR A CIGARETTE, DO ODD PHYSICS CALCULATIONS IF YOU'RE MY FRIEND. GO VISIT THE NICE FRENCH PEOPLE IN 1ST CLASS, LOOK OUT OF THE WINDOW, PLAY BACKGAMMON, TRY TO WASH YOURSELF IN THE TOILET, STUDY, TALK CRAP. GET OFF AT STOPS, AND BUY THINGS FROM THE BABUSHKAS. SING 'SOUND OF MUSIC' SONGS *

THAT WAS AFTER A FEW DAYS...



THE PLATFORMS WERE ICY, AND THE BIT BETWEEN CARRIAGES!



WE VENTURED OUT ONCE TO SEE THE CITY VIEWS, AND THE STALIN COMMISSIONED SKYSCRAPERS.

I FEEL DWARFED & INSIGNIFICANT. MHH. MY FACE IS STARTING TO SEIZE UP. I FEEL COLD.



WE ALSO WENT TO SEE THE WINTER PALACE / HERMITAGE ART MUSEUM





WE WERE GOING TO GO TO POLAND, BUT, WE WERE TIRED & COULDN'T BE ARSED. SO WE JUST WENT TO BERLIN, BUT LOTS A MATES WEREN'T AROUND.

IT'S NOT AS NICE AS A RUSSIAN TRAIN



FOR SOME REASON, THE COACH WENT ONTO THE FERRY INSTEAD OF THROUGH THE TUNNEL



I WROTE DOWN EVERYTHING WHILE WE WERE AWAY (I'M LIKE THAT), SO: OUR TRIP IN NUMBERS:

- HOURS ON COACHES: 72
- HOURS ON TRAINS: 356
- HOURS ON BOATS: 46½
- MONEY SPENT ON TRANSPORT: £548.09
- MONEY SPENT ON VISAS: £183 (BASTARDS)
- TIMEZONES CROSSED: 9
- MOST SPENT ON ACCOMODATION: £13.50 (MOSCOW)
- LEAST SPENT ON ACCOMODATION: £3 (BEIJING)
- NUMBER OF ITEMS OF MAO KITSCH PURCHASED BETWEEN US IN CHINA: 13
- PACKETS OF CIGARETTES MY NAN BOUGHT ME: 16
- DIFFERENT BEER BOTTLETOPS BROUGHT BACK: 40
- NUMBER OF WEEKS YOU CAN GO AWAY AND STILL GET HOUSING BENEFIT: 13
- NUMBER OF WEEKS WE WERE AWAY: 12½

So this is an interview with a Latvian anarcho-punk – a great, friendly and hospitable guy we met through Sharapov and Mel in St Petersburg and whose house we stayed at for a few days on our journey homewards. We didn't have a tape recorder to do this so I just scribbled along, so some bits have ended up being more my own words...

Me: Tell me about yourself. What do you do all day? What are your passions and ideals?

Ivo: I'm Ivo, 24, just a desperate kid who wants to feel good. That's what my actions are motivated by. I try to make things easy for myself – otherwise, politics end up alienating, if it's not for yourself, it doesn't feel good, and that doesn't make sense. My biggest passion is to be happy! And I can only be happy when people around me are happy too, so I like to make community around me. I'm not individualistic. I think people are more happy socially, not by themselves.

Me: Tell me about life in Latvia. What's good, what's difficult, what's bad...

Ivo: It's bad that we have to work to get money – there are no opportunities to just work a little bit. In our house though, most of us aren't working. We're lucky that we have less needs and can get by better. The social politics are bad – it's becoming neoliberal. But compared to Russia and Belarus, it's easier here. Though you can't go and squat houses, you can't go and work just one day a week and survive, you have to work full time... Well, if you have education/a degree it's easier.

Me: What about Russian/Latvian relations? There was a big resettlement programme under the Soviet regime, and there's still lots of Russians in the population...

Ivo: I don't think there are nationalistic problems in society, but if I look around, 90% of my friends are Latvian – so there must be. I'm not feeling it, but obviously there is some sort of segregation in common life. The punk scene here is almost entirely Latvian. In working life, there are the same opportunities for both nationalities, but somehow Russians don't integrate. They might speak some Latvian at work for example, but live in Russian dominated neighbourhoods. When they settled here during Soviet times, it was segregated from the start, which I don't understand, because the Soviet policy was to mix. Only citizens can vote in Latvia, and lots of Russians aren't citizens. The criteria for citizenship is speaking the language, knowing the history, and being able to sing the anthem! It's different in Lithuania, everyone living there in 1991 received citizenship, but there were less Russians there anyway, only 10% of the population, in Latvia it's like 40-50%. The Russians show lots of Slavic chauvinism, and they don't want to learn Latvian – though now it's taught in Russian schools too.

Me: What's left of the revolutionary fervour from the struggle for independence?

Ivo: That's completely in the past. Now people are consumers, and the struggle is in the free market, not in national but in individual competition. There's some patriotic feeling on certain dates – the anniversary of the barricades in late January for example. That's also in decline. It was more active in the first few years after independence. Now we are under another power... At first, people were generally fighting oppressive power, now some of the 'leaders' are in social democratic parties. You can't really talk of left/right here though. Left wingers are communist, the right wing is nationalistic, and the central party is liberal.

Me: What about your band?

Ivo: We're called WHEN MY AUTHORITIES FALL, and I'm the bass player. Our first gig was in May 2003, so it's not an old band. Everyone else in it was involved in bands for a long time before, I'm the only newcomer to a punk band. There's 6 of us – 2 singers, 2 guitars, bass and drums. The music started out as metalcore, we were all into the metal thing, now we call it rock, or 'post metalcore', there's still metal parts in songs...

Me: What's the punk/hc scene like here? Is there lots going on? Is it a political scene? What are some good bands?



Ivo: Well, it started in the mid 90's, when an Australian guy, Simon Butcher, who had a Latvian wife, came here and ran a label and some others brought straight edge/hardcore stuff from the US which became very influential. Now none of those bands are left. There's a weird situation here of half the hardcore scene being Christian. It's really bad, cos it's hard to make revolution with Christians! It began cos some American guy from a church came over in '98 and played Californian style punkrock and lots of people liked

it. After he left, lots of Christian kids listened to this style and there were bands preaching from stage and throwing bibles from it (once someone burned one and threw it back!). We were the first band to radically boycott any event/project with Christian bands (other bands would play with them). Now some are Christian and anarchist – they believe in God but not as an institutionalised/preachy thing, more as an individual, this is a nice change, they come to actions and encourage the other Christian kids not to follow authority blindly.

There aren't really any other political bands. But other good bands are INSTORA – our drummer also plays with them – which grew out of the nu-metal scene but got radicalised. Some of them are straight edge but they aren't strictly political, they're more socially aware on a personal level. And they're workaholics – they've released 3 CDs. KRIEGSOPFER are good, they started off playing powerviolence, now their music's more like TRAGEDY. They've released one record and the new material coming soon should be good. I enjoy watching their shows. They're not political, but they are active socially. These two bands I like.

There's also HOPE DIES LAST, who probably won't be playing anymore. They play cliché hardcore, and they're the oldest band still around, they've been going 7 years.

Me: Do you feel like you're a part of the European anarcho/punk scene?

Ivo: Not really. We're the first band here with political messages, so it's not like the same as the crust and powerviolence scenes in Western Europe here. For example, there's a ska band in Lithuania, DR GREEN, who are very political. We have our own things going on here. Martins and me also want to do an anarchist hip hop project, to radicalise those kids here!

Also, we sing in Latvian. Our name and some of our first songs were in English, just cos we had the idea for the name, and out of habit. You have to overcome some things to sing in Latvian – now we don't want to go back because you can feel the power of singing in your own language. We're thinking of changing the name too, but we have to come up with something good.. Our name is so long, people end up calling us 'Authorities', which is a bit of a different meaning!

Me: Is it easy for foreign bands to come and play here?

Ivo: We've had some, but mostly pretty mainstream bands. We don't have our own venue, so we use normal clubs. If a band doesn't need too much money, say 100 euros, it's easy to put a gig on, but if a band's come from far away it's harder.

Me: I saw the Green Library and your zine – what is anarchist organising like here? What goes on?

Ivo: There's not really any anarchist organisations here, just some individuals with individual politics similar to anarchist politics. And very few of them. Some are just followers of fashion who wear slogans. The Green Library isn't anarchist, it's a part of the green movement which split into a green and a brown movement... There's five people working there, only one of them is okay – the others are into big projects and go to Brussels etc., and are alienated from life. They check laws and so on. But the library has good books, they have funds.

As to actions, there have been Critical Masses, and Mayday demonstrations. This year there was a celebration of joining the EU on the 1st May, which used to be a Soviet holiday, like International Women's Day too. So we handed out flyers about the meaning of Mayday, and celebrated it ourselves.

There was also some anti war stuff here, we took our red and black flags on the demonstrations in Riga. 75% of Latvians were against Latvia joining the war but the president just said fuck it. It was weird on the day when people should go and protest – the international day, February 15th – not so many people came. Latvian TV showed demos in London, Berlin but nothing from Riga. But there were 500 people at the US embassy, and we had 150 kids with us.

There are some Russian anarchists around who are former National Bolsheviks and strange, they want to do spectacular actions. We prefer to stay underground – it's better, and safer! At the moment, the secret police aren't acknowledging us, and this is good. Personally, I've had problems with them though, cos I did some anti election poster in my hometown, and they tried to make me be an informer, and scare me by saying my family would lose their jobs etc., but I argued with them and refused.

About our zine, PRETSPARS, we started it by translating stuff from Crimethinc into Latvian just to give to friends, on Buy Nothing Day. Afterwards, we had these translations and added our own reports and compiled ideas, and in May 2003 we put out a zine. The second issue followed in early 2004, which we treated more as a zine, not just a compilation, and we looked at different topics like gender, global issues, how people struggle in other places. We also want to publish pamphlets on certain issues under the name Pretspars, and the next zine will have a more countercultural focus and have a different name. We distribute it for free at gigs and we also have a small distro of different zines and books mostly from Russia. We got some solidarity money from Berlin and the UK for copying costs.

There was a lot of response to the first issue. It felt like it was getting popular, but unfortunately not the ideas in it! There's no other Latvian anarchist zines.

*Then we ran out of time and we had to go, but these are a couple of websites:
zine: pretspars.hardcore.lt
band (with downloadable music): wmaf.core.lv*



BABIES

I TELL YOU, SUDDENLY, THEY'RE EVERYWHERE!
IT'S THE BABY INVASION!!



GO TERROR-
ISE EARTH.

IN THE CAFÉ IN OUR SOCIAL CENTRE, THERE'S OFTEN MORE
BABIES THAN ADULTS! (WELL, ALMOST)



LOTS OF PEOPLE I KNOW HAVE HAD BABIES !!

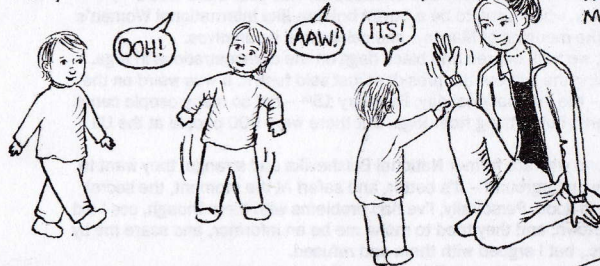


WELL, SHE'S KINDA COOL TO HAVE AROUND. NOW SHE CAN
WALK, DANCE, AND SAY MY NAME (NEARLY)

WE EVEN HAVE ONE IN OUR HOUSE!



WITH ALL THESE BABIES AROUND,
MAYBE I NEED ONE TOO??



NEXT TIME YOU
COME TO VISIT,
BRING A BEAU-
TIFUL BABY!

KOREAN AUNT

HM..I WOULD QUITE
LIKE TO BE A GRAND-
MOTHER...





LIKE EVERY YEAR, OUR ANARCHIST TEAPOT KITCHEN COOKED AT THE EF! GATHERING (EARTH FIRST! = "A CONVENIENT BANNER FOR THOSE WHO WANT TO USE DIRECT ACTION TO CONFRONT, STOP AND EVENTUALLY REVERSE THE FORCES THAT ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DESTRUCTION OF THE EARTH & ITS INHABITANTS," YOU KNOW.)



TALES OF LENTILS and the like...

INTRODUCING: (WELL, ME)

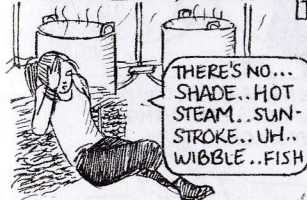
THE BRUMMIE

THE BIG BASQUE MAN

DRIVING TO THE SITE...



AT FIRST IT RAINED, BUT THEN THE SUN CAME OUT, & STAYED



KITCHEN MORNING MEETING:
OK, PEOPLE ALWAYS COMPLAIN WE'RE RUDE



Touchy, Feely, Nice Day!

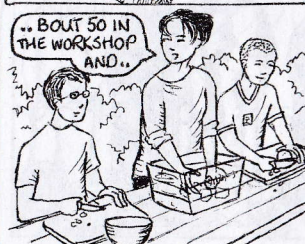
TIME FOR GROUP HUG!



IT WAS THE BASQUE'S BIRTHDAY TOO! WE GAVE HIM THE BUMPS



...BOUT 50 IN THE WORKSHOP AND...



ID CARDS WORKSHOP SPACE 2 NOW!



WE DIDN'T GET TO GO TO MANY WORKSHOPS, BUT WE HEARD EVERYTHING ANYWAY. WE RELY ON CHOPPING HELP. WE LIKE CHOPPING HELP WE DO.

THE HAZARDS ON SITE INCLUDED...



I WENT TO THE PRISONER SUPPORT WORKSHOP



OUR FOOD WENT DOWN WELL. TWO CURRIES!



I'D RECENTLY GOTTEN INTO LINEDANCING. SO, I GOT DRUNK, & MADE THE KITCHEN CREW PERFORM AT THE OPEN MIKE NIGHT.



NASTY BITING BUGS!



AND SLUGS! ICK!



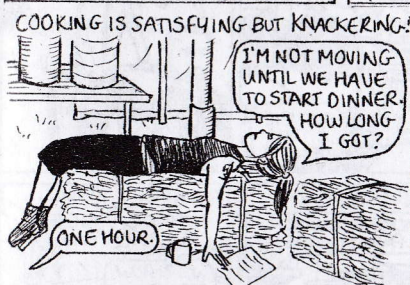
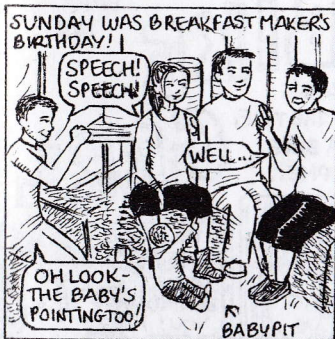
ICKY SLUG STORY:



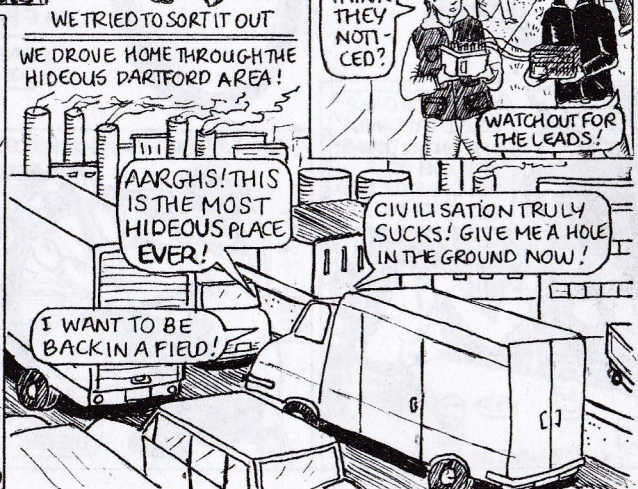
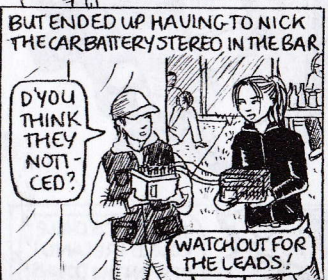
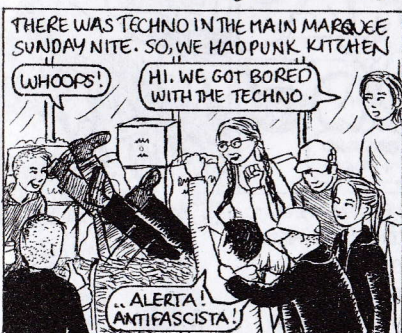
BUT WE'RE NEVER, EVER, DOING BUR- GERS, BANGERS, OR ANYTHING FRIED EVER AGAIN



* WELL, FAIR ENOUGH



THE GATHERING HAS A 'MEDIATION' GROUP FOR CONFLICTS. IT WAS A BIT OVERWORKED.

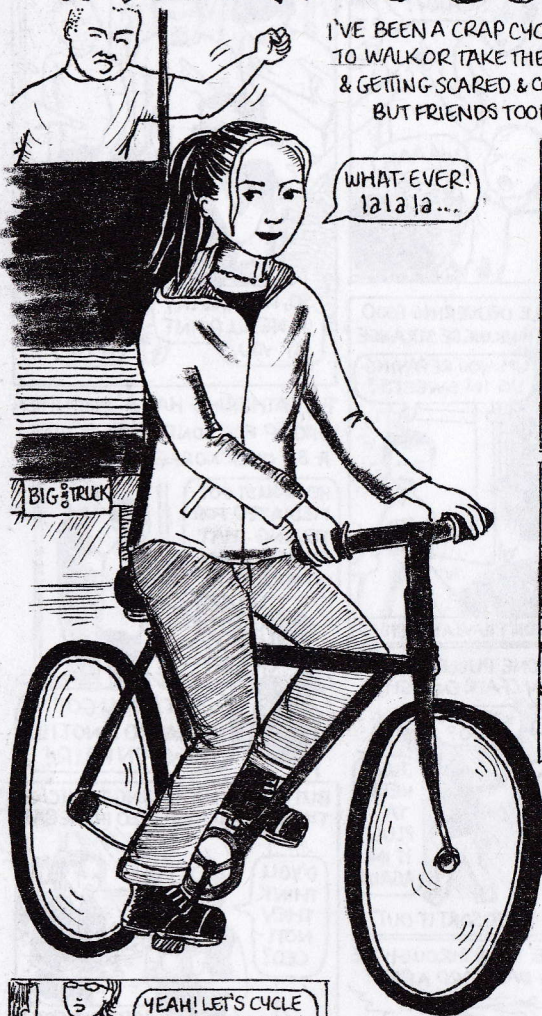


i'd love to be COOLBIKE

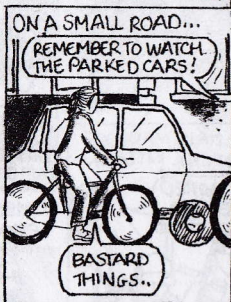
PART TWO!

GRRL

I'VE BEEN A CRAP CYCLIST-PREFERRING
TO WALK OR TAKE THE BUS MOST OF THE TIME,
& GETTING SCARED & CONFUSED ON A BIKE...
BUT FRIENDS TOOK IT ON TO HELP ME...



WHAT-EVER!
lala la...



ONE PROBLEM I NOTICED WAS I'D NEVER
HAD A GOOD BIKE!
SO, MY FRIEND HELPED
ME BUY ONE (£50
ON E BAY!)

WOW! IT'S, LIKE,
GOOD, I THINK.



I STILL HATE THE LOCKING-UP PROCEDURE



BUT I THINK I CAN NOW
WEAR THE BADGE WITH PRIDE!

