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♦ *New Perspectives on Politics, Culture, Media and Life*

Clamor

What It Means To Be Active

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13 • March / April 2002



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Hello Everyone!

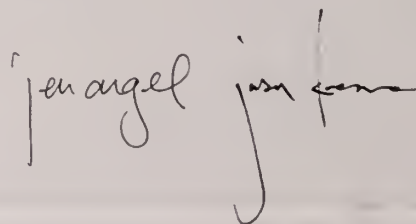
Part of the CLAMOR mission statements says, "CLAMOR is an advocate of progressive social change through active creation of political and cultural alternatives." Simply put, we support those efforts where people are working together to make the world a better place to live. This goal influences almost all of the decisions we make about the magazine. Sometimes we hit it right on target. Other times it seems like we miss our mark, but it's all part of the process. We expect that our readers (as participants in this mission) will acknowledge and support us when we're doing good work as well as constructively criticize us when we feel we could be doing a little better. It's a way that we can all learn from each other.

In each issue of CLAMOR, we work to further this mission by illustrating what people are doing to affect change in their own lives. This time, we're being a little more direct about it. We offer you an issue full of the ideas that further the work of positive cultural and political growth — a celebration of the myriad ways we can all take an active role in such necessary work. We are taking a few moments here to offer direct criticism and reflection — from Sonja Sivesind's piece on race in organizing (p. 65), to the cover story (p. 9), in which Justin Ruben brings us the reflections of activists who are working for social justice. Joe Levasseuer (p. 53) and Matthew Williams (p. 58) both suggest that there are a few things that radical activists could be doing to further their work and build alliances with other progressive movements. Scott Puckett takes activists to task for speaking in a language that effectively alienates all the people that many activists consider to be allies. All of this from the people who are out there making things happen.

We were told recently that CLAMOR is working to make the world a little smaller (in a good way, not in a "free-trade" kind of way). While we're reluctant to accept such a compliment, we do appreciate the fact that CLAMOR has encouraged communication between people who might never come into contact with each other elsewhere. We think this is crucial work and to take it one step further, we will host the Fourth Annual Underground Publishing Conference here in Bowling Green, Ohio this summer. This is a meeting of media producers, consumers, and activists from all over the country who come together to share ideas, exchange wares, and discuss trends in independent media. The UPC will be June 22 and 23, 2002 — for more information, please contact us or go to our website at www.clamormagazine.org/upc. This year's conference will be specifically geared toward the work of building independent media structures. In other words, we'll all spend the weekend teaching each other ways to reclaim media resources to meet our needs, and we'll leave with real tools and resources to take back to our communities. We look forward to seeing you there!

Thank you, again, for reading CLAMOR. In the coming year, look for features and cover stories on youth culture, fashion, aging, and sexuality. Please check our website or contact us for ways that you can participate in future issues.

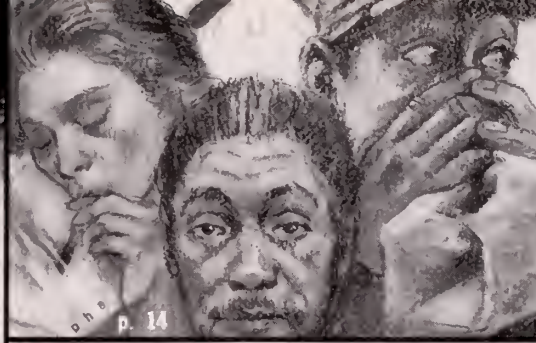
All the best,



CLAMOR's mission is to provide a media outlet that reflects the reality of alternative politics and culture in a format that is accessible to people from a variety of backgrounds. CLAMOR exists to fill the voids left by mainstream media. We recognize and celebrate the fact that each of us can and should participate in media, politics, and culture. We publish writing and art that exemplifies the value we place on autonomy, creativity, exploration, and cooperation. CLAMOR is an advocate of progressive social change through active creation of political and cultural alternatives.



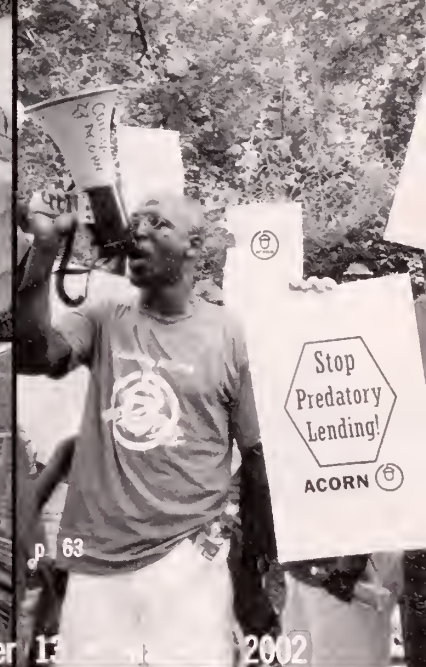
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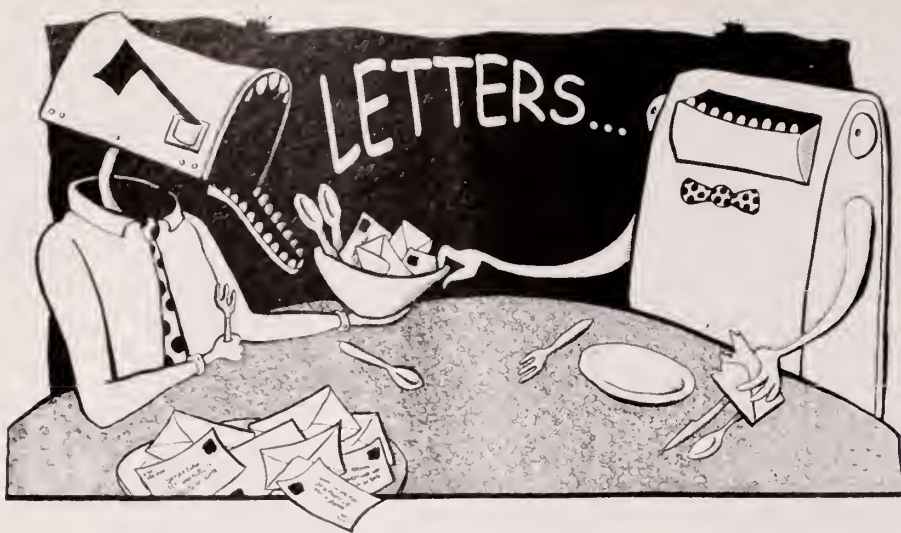
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of the cover

Beka Economopoulos, New York City activist and co-editor of *Another World Is Possible: Conversations In A Time of Terror*, photographed by Greg Fuchs, January 2002.



Hello Jen/Jason:

I do support what you are doing but I gotta tell you that I'm renewing my subscription "under protest" because:

- The uncritical, fawning interview with terrorist Bill Ayers (Jan/Feb 2002), a man who, in his time, celebrated Charles Manson while deriding Martin Luther King as an Uncle Tom. Bill Ayers is an insult to humanity.

- The hate and celebration of violence expressed by Derrick Jensen (Dec/Jan 2001) in another fawning, uncritical interview.

I really hope that CLAMOR becomes something more than a preaching-to-the-converted leftist/anarchist magazine aimed at yuppies. I have no problem with the interviews with folks like Derrick Jensen. I do have a problem with uncritical interviews. If you are going to just ask softball questions and not challenge the "out there" statements, then just give the person ad space but don't call it an interview. The interesting interview subjects will thrive on challenge. The other ones who are "offended" by thoughts that conflict with their rants are not worthy of your space. Let 'em do their own zine.

Howard Park
Washington, D.C.

Hello there, Clamor!

I enjoyed your article on the Coup ("Five Million Ways..." Nov/Dec, 2001). I work at a newsstand/bookshop in Asheville, North Carolina where we were provided with a sample issue of *The Free America*, a right-wing conspiracy bullshit magazine — which we, of course, declined to carry.

The enclosed article (from *The Free American*) may amuse/disturb you. Their implication that the Coup's album cover was a signal to the terrorist is clearly ludicrous, but their complete misrepresentation of the armed mother-figure backed by the red star of socialism as a "person sitting in the seat of an airplane with their body jerking forward" is a good indication of how bizarre their reasoning works.

N Holt
Asheville, NC

Clamor Folks,

I just wanted to write you to let you know how wonderful CLAMOR is. I only discovered it recently but it was a wonderful read — honest, intelligent.

and heartfelt. Too many zines, especially punk and anarchist ones, are so pretentious that it's hard to stomach their ideas, no matter how good those ideas might be. CLAMOR was so refreshing — like (I mean this in the best possible way) a punk rock *Utne Reader*. I loved the articles on Faslane ("Postcards from the Edge: Tales from the Anti-Nuclear Movement in the UK" Nov/Dec 01) and Eagle Creek ("Forest Activism: The Eagle Creek

Free State" Nov/Dec 01). Eagle Creek's right in my backyard, and the fight there is very inspiring. What the Cascadia Forest Alliance and other kids are doing is important, heroic, and inspiring. The Faslane article was wonderful — I was lucky enough to visit it about a year ago, though no one was there at the time as it was the dead of winter. Still, the actual site was inspiring. I've enclosed some Faslane Photos for you. Thank you for what you do.

Love & revolution,
Andrew Daily
Portland, OR

Dear Clamorers,

This is Sean Goblin out of West Oakland, i just got the newest Clamor and it's been pretty cool consistently. I've found some of the articles to be really good, some to be pretty boring, but generally, i am digging it. Especially as far as carrying over a good deal of the lessons learned in the Punk scene into a non-punk forum, it's a very good thing to do. Especially as far as politicing the college attending kids,

which the magazine seems to be targeting, they really need it.

It's funny, the other day i got all of my old MRRs and Profane Existences from this crate i had



Faslane Peace Camp in Scotland (A. Daily)

at my dad's house and i read most of them, and i was amazed at the self destructiveness of the culture, i mean, i remembered it, but i didn't really remember it. It was just sort of insane, the stuff going on in the letters columns you know? Kids tearing each other to pieces, because there was so much propaganda about destroying

society and the system, but what can all these sixteen year old kids do about that? Anyway, it was just crazy... and one reason i like Clamor is cos i haven't seen that go on in the letters column yet, or at least i don't remember seeing it. In *Adbusters* that seems to go on quite a bit, and in my more paranoid moments i sometimes decide it is because of CIA counter intelligence programs and the like... to set people up against each other... similarly with the militant vegans and straight edge and all this, or even the militant drunks... maybe it's just human nature, but if we really want to continue the revolution and overthrow these corporate fucks, we've got to get beyond that, and i see you've been working on doing that, and i thank you!

Peace and all that.
Sean
Oakland, CA
<http://www.lentilvillage.org>
<http://www.goblinko.com>

Hey Guys.

I'm so glad someone is drawing attention to the dangers of photographic chemicals ("Not a Pretty Picture — Eastman Kodak's Legacy" Jan/Feb 2002). I have been working in one-hour photo labs for the past three years as a more convenient and inexpensive way to work on my own photography, but not only has it turned me from being a creative thinker into a monkey behind a machine churning out "memories in minutes" (see also "And If You Gaze Long Into The Abyss... How Money Distorts Art" Jan/Feb 2002), I've become afraid to even breathe in my workplace. Every day I see labels that say "may cause respiratory distress" and "may be mutagenic," and even though we wear safety gear when we mix the chemicals, the machines are constantly emitting toxic vapors. None of these OSHA regulated labs have any sort of specialized ventilation, and the used chemicals get dumped down an ordinary drain. As much as I hate the idea of photography becoming an entirely computerized process, hopefully it will become advanced enough so that we can retire these cancer-causing factories and workplaces.

Sincerely,
Diane Deaton
Pittsburgh, PA

Hi,

In your Jan/Feb 2002 issue you feature a review of Bill Ayers' memoir *Fugitive Days*. While I agree with the reviewer's overall assessment of the book, I would take issue with one of his introductory assertions—that virtually no historical or analytical works on the Weather Underground are currently in print. At the risk of tooting my horn (which is not my intent), I would suggest the he and others who are interested in a history of this militant anti-imperialist organization take a look at my book titled *The Way the Wind Blew: A History of the Weather Underground*. While hard to find for purchase, it is not out of print (and hopefully may go into a second printing) and provides a readable history (albeit a bit short on analysis) of this group. Indeed, it is available in close to 500 libraries in the United States and Canada.

Ron Jacobs
Burlington, VT

Hello,

We would like to invite Clamor readers to The Festival del Pueblo! A five-day celebration of resistance, of community, and of freedom that will happen on May 1-5 in Boston, Massachusetts. The purpose of this festival is multifaceted.

First, it is a conscious attempt to build links between those involved in the "protest movement" and so-called "ordinary people;" a deliberate move away from summit-hopping towards more community oriented initiatives, without compromising the militant flavor of large mobilizations. It is recognition of the need to reconcile the emerging anti-capi-

talist movement with the day-to-day struggles of our own communities and workplaces. It is also a recognition that the myriad of different issues and struggles, ranging from environmental to labor, can all be attributed to one root cause: capitalism.

Furthermore, because we are not flocking to a gathering of the elite, but instead acting on our own initiative, it is a convergence of a proactive nature, rather than a reactive one. As such, it is an opportunity for us to set the tone, thus dictating the when, where, and why of the convergence.

Finally, by encouraging a wide variety of cultural and social events, we hope to strengthen the culture of resistance by providing opportunities for individuals and groups from across North America (and hopefully beyond) to interact, socialize, and share ideas.

The Festival del Pueblo Includes:

- * Anarchist Bookfair and Free School
- * Debates
- * Workshops
- * Trainings
- * Homebrew Festival
- * Radical Film Fest
- * Picnics
- * Soccer and Basketball Tournaments
- * 3 nights of revolutionary music (from punk to hip-hop, from folk to jazz)

* Community Carnival (featuring "Dunk the Landlord" and "Pin the badge on the pig" booths, and much, much more!)

- * Marches
- * Direct Actions

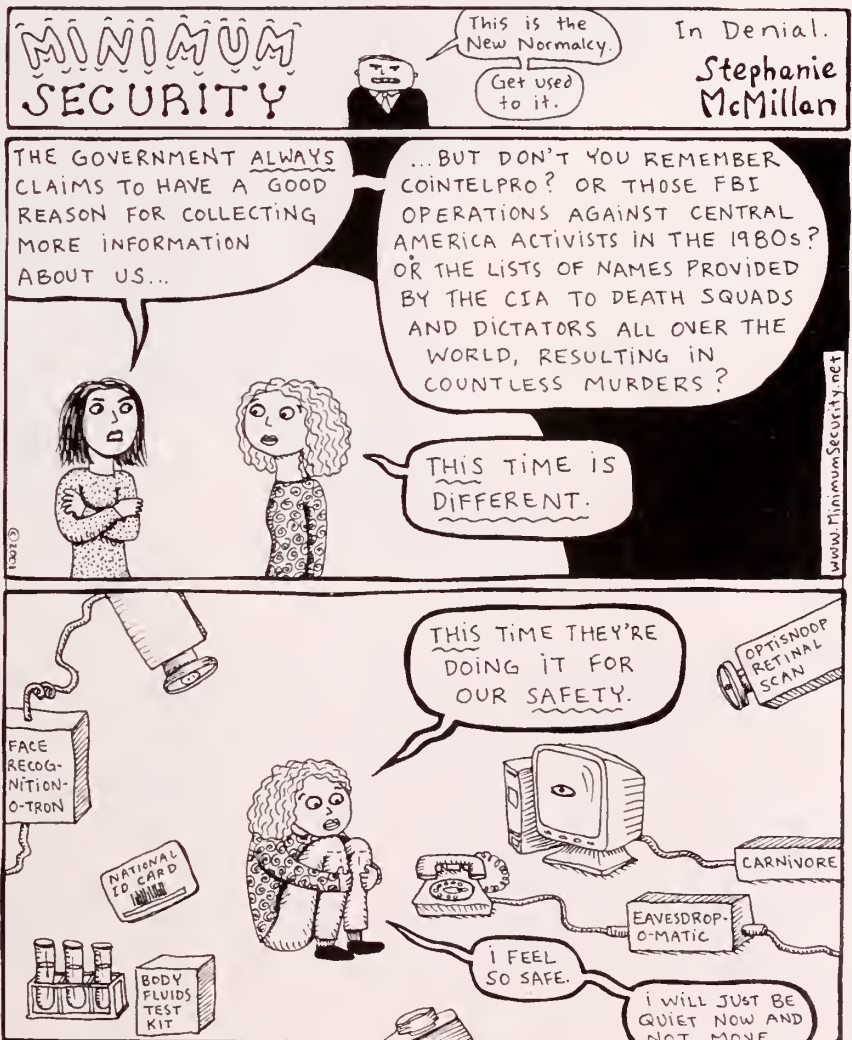
We are looking for radical and anti-authoritarian groups to get involved by endorsing the event, tabling, organizing workshops, submitting movies, or helping to organize any of the many street events (marches, carnival, direct action, etc.) We welcome new ideas and initiatives.

To get involved, or for more information, please contact the Festival del Pueblo General Assembly at: FestivaldelPueblo@hotmail.com or Festival del Pueblo. C/O Barricada, P.O. Box 73 Boston, MA 02133, USA

Corrections:

In a review of the Crimethinc book, *Evasion* (Jan/Feb 02), the author mistakenly noted that the book is a series of essays by different people. In truth, the entire book is written by one person.

The illustrations accompanying "Feeding the Appetite of Ill-logic" (Jan/Feb 02) were drawn by Mike Taylor.



clamor contributors

Joseph Adolphe (p. 14) is currently living and working in Williamsburg, Brooklyn and is married with two daughters. He is also a full time instructor at St. John's University Department of Fine Arts. Visit his web site: www.jadolphe.com or email him at jadolphe@juno.com.

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Joshua Krause (p. 30) is an artist living in New York. He uses illustration, design, photography and fine art in a variety of approaches. View his work at <http://www.KrauseArt.com>.

George Lakey (p. 62) is Director of Training for Change (TfC). TfC sees its job not to argue positions on movement controversies, but to facilitate workshops as safe places where activists themselves explore options and develop strategies. In his role as trainer, George has facilitated over 1,000 social change workshops on five continents. He can be reached at: Training for Change, 1501 Cherry St., Philadelphia, PA 19102, georgelakey@yahoo.com, www.TrainingforChange.org.

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Colleen McGraw (p. 23) has a Bachelor of Arts degree in History from Lewis & Clark College and, as a result, can barely pay her rent. She does, however, kick serious butt at Trivial Pursuit so four years of heady academic jargon has really payed off. She can be reached at mcgrawcolleen@hotmail.com.

Scott Puckett (p. 34) is little more than a malcontent who can spell. As such, he's been in journalism for more than a decade and runs his own zine, *Sick To Move*, and Web site, www.punkrockacademy.com. He recently took complete leave of his senses and started a record label. E-mail: puckett@crash.cts.com.

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Sonja Sivesind (p. 65) is an activist from Seattle now living in Brooklyn. Reach her at welcominggirl@hotmail.com.

Sunshine (p. 53) is an artist and musician. His main site is <http://www.armoredbaby.com> soon to present a spectacular array of nonsense. Currently reading: Solomon Northup, *Twelve Years a Slave* (1853).

Kristian Williams (p. 17) is a member of Portland Copwatch. He is currently at work on an history of American policing, titled *Our Enemies In Blue*, due from Soft Skull Press later this year.

Matthew Williams (p. 58) is a graduate student in sociology at Boston College (yes, it's a university despite its name) and a member of the Boston Independent Media Center. His articles have also appeared in *Turning Wheel*, *Social Anarchism*, and *Z Magazine*. He can be reached at third_aardvark@hotmail.com.

JT Yost (p. 23) hopes to ensure a rung in hell closer to Lucifer's beating wings with his recent contribution to Clamor. Additional monstrosities can be viewed at www.jtyost.com.

WHAT IT MEANS TO BE ACTIVE



reflections on where progressive activism is and where it needs to be

interview by Justin Ruben

Capture Peoples' Imagination

In the wake of last September's horrific attacks, both the World Bank/International Monetary Fund meetings in Washington, DC, and the massive protests planned around them were cancelled. To the best of my knowledge, no one suggested that this marked the demise of the two international financial institutions, but pundits were quick to declare the global justice movement yet another casualty of terror. As Naomi Klein has pointed out, this movement (perhaps better described as a confluence of movements) has been declared dead with some regularity since it was first "spotted" in Seattle, and it is not clear that the diagnosis is any more fitting this time than it has been in the past.

At the time of this writing, however, it does seem clear that we in this movement face a new set of challenges after September 11. When almost anyone who suggests that U.S. government policies are unjust is open to charges of "being unpatriotic" or even "condoning terrorism," some of us wonder whether we should reframe our critique of corporate-driven economic and foreign policy. Congress has already passed "anti-terrorism" legislation that gives government new powers to crack down on dissent. It appears that the risks associated with direct action may have increased dramatically, and those risks could preclude an even greater number of people from taking part (at least one Arab-American immigrant with whom I have worked closely is now afraid that *any* association with our relatively tame group may result in deportation). And the U.S. military response has provoked wildly different reactions within different sectors of our movement, exacerbating pre-existing tensions. In the face of these challenges, the question of strategy—how to move forward—looms large.

In fact, this strategic soul-searching, like the global economy's most recent downward spiral, actually began long before the attacks. Since Genoa, and even since the "a16" IMF/World Bank protests in April of 2000, it has been clear to many of us that if we really hope to transform the global economic and political order, this movement needs to grow and evolve. But how?

Around the middle of last year, I decided that one important set of answers would come from people who have been building this movement from the ground up. So I interviewed 20 people from a variety of backgrounds and viewpoints, all organizers of the recent North American mass actions. I spoke with paid organizers and volunteers, anarchists and leaders of organizations that pursue legislative reform, white people and people of color, people who work on women's issues, workers' rights, the environment, the prison-industrial complex, youth of color empowerment, and a host of other concerns (an extensive set of selections from these interviews can be found at <http://pantheon.yale.edu/~jar67>).

Although these conversations happened before September 11, 2001, if anything, they seem *more* relevant in the post-World Trade Center world. These organizers warn that without strong links to liberals and grassroots groups outside our movement, we will remain vulnerable to the government attacks that now seem even more threatening than before. Their call for aggressively internationalizing our movement resonates in the face of mounting xenophobia. As our anger over recent events — and our divergent responses — make it difficult to communicate with each other and with the public, these organizers demand that we do the hard work of connecting with the local struggles and lived experience of "everyday Americans," especially working class communities and communities of color.

Responding to last fall's horrific events will require new approaches, but it will also mean redoubling our efforts to address challenges that have dogged this movement from the beginning. In that spirit, I offer you some savvy organizers' best thoughts on the questions that face all of us engaged in this struggle for global liberation, sustainability, and justice.

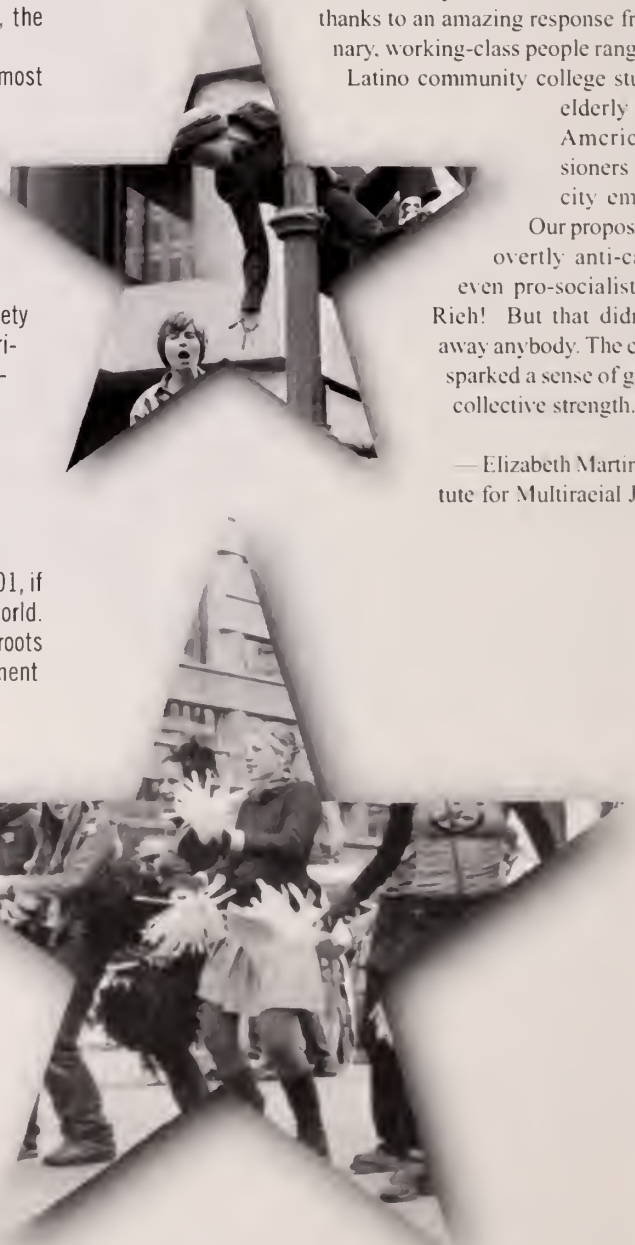
I think the basic weakness today of leftists, progressives, revolutionaries — whatever we want to call ourselves — is that we lack a mass social base. By that I mean a grassroots, working class, poor folks, people of color, base. The strategic question then is, how to build that base. To do this in the United States, a worldview and a program of action that move people at the base are crucial. This means putting forth projects that encourage a sense of potential victory and a sense of community.

For example, an organization I worked with in the late '70s launched a campaign to tax the big corporations when it became clear that California's Proposition 13 was going to pass. That radical new law cut the tax base of all kinds of services like health care, public schools, and libraries. Our group came up with a proposition to save those services by taxing the big corporations, which we put on the San Francisco city ballot. It almost passed, thanks to an amazing response from ordinary, working-class people ranging from Latino community college students to

elderly African-American pensioners to white city employees.

Our proposition was overtly anti-capitalist, even pro-socialist—Tax the Rich! But that didn't scare away anybody. The campaign sparked a sense of grassroots collective strength.

—Elizabeth Martinez, Institute for Multiracial Justice



Target the Intersection of Corporate Power and Governmental Decision-making

If you go after corporations, you're going after one corporation at a time. So what good does that do? You can go after governments and push governments to reassert control over corporations, but the corporations are the real source of the power. My formula for this, although it's very abstract, is that campaigns and direct actions should target the intersection of corporate power and governmental decision-making. I think the WTO was a good example of that, because it was where corporations were directly participating in this new world economic government.

— Mike Prokosch, United for a Fair Economy

It's About More Than "Diversity"

I definitely think that a middle class white organization has a lot to contribute, in terms of, maybe, say, an understanding of the global economy or something. But it's definitely a misunderstanding of what needs to happen to say... "We need to do outreach and educate [poor people and communities of color] about the global economy so they can understand that it's important to them."

The difference is for us to be able to support the work that needs to be done in those communities for real survival struggles, but in a way that is building those millions or thousands of survival struggles into a movement. We need to figure out how those different things that they're struggling against are structurally part of the problem, and to be able to promote their analysis and their leadership.

— Jia Ching Chen, JustAct: Youth Acting for Global Justice

White Folks: Organize White Folks

I find it real problematic when white middle class people are trying to organize poor people of color. Real problematic. Where they place their time and energy on organizing poor people of color, because they say that, "Well, this group is being screwed the worst, so why even bother with our own group." It's really important for white people, particularly white middle class people, to organize white middle class people. So go back to your community. So don't stand in Harlem handing out newspapers about the problems of society. Go home. Talk to your mother. Talk to your neighbors. Do that work. And that's harder work, because they do have a lot invested in the society, and it is going to be a lot harder to get them won over, for lack of a better word, to liberation. But that's part of your responsibility.

— Kai Lumumba Barrow, Student Liberation Action Movement (SLAM!)

Choosing Your Issue is a Privilege

You have to be pretty privileged to have the ability to choose your issue. Most people that are involved in resistance are involved in resistance due to survival. Their community is under attack... As opposed to a lot of white activists who come from a more privileged background, who are choosing their issues.

Rather, what we can do is to be more aware. People are always trying to create a diverse movement, but they're putting the cart before the horse. The way you get to a diverse movement is not simply to have lots of meetings and go and meet with people and do different things — that's a piece of it — but you have to begin with the intellectual diversity, the understanding to see how different communities experience the world in different ways, and particularly experience coercive power in different ways.

— Patrick Reinsborough, Rainforest Action Network



Go Beyond the Sexy Stuff

I think the movement right now is too flashy. It creates this opportunity in which young, white, middle class [people] and middle class young people in general can pretend that they're actually doing something to change the world by just locking arms and holding off streets. And it allows them the opportunity to ameliorate their class guilt.

I really think that the movement needs to do the hard-core organizing. That means canvassing, talking to people, holding smaller events like teach-ins and workshops and town meetings, and listening projects, and do the analysis, and the relationship building.

— Thoai Nguyen, The Brown Collective

Ask Yourself: What Are You Doing in This Community?

The large protest without consistent grassroots organizing work does not work. The two have to go hand in hand. Their success depends on each other. You definitely need the bigger actions and all that to support the grassroots, more community-based organizing. But you also need the more community-based organizing to make the larger mobilizations and actions effective. And the only way they're going to be effective is if people can relate to them and understand them, and that can't happen without the community organizing.

— Howl, New York youth of color organizer

Structure is Not a Four-Letter Word

I think that one problem in the movement was on the question of leadership. Because although I have a lot of respect for the desire not to have any hierarchy, I also think a lot of crap happened because there was nobody that was taking responsibility. There was no method of accountability. You know, you have a meeting, and whoever was there made the decisions, and so nothing was ever decided or continued or kept going, and that's also why I think that some of the networks that were built up haven't met again.

— Phoebe Schellenberg,
Wages for Housework
Campaign

It Didn't Start in Seattle

The movement has to become more humble in terms of how we think of ourselves, how we see ourselves... We didn't start this movement. We're just sort of cresting. This movement has been going on for at least 40 years because of the policies of the IMF and the World Bank. Indigenous people and third world people have been fighting these policies since day one... So the struggle just didn't begin in Seattle.

— Thoai Nguyen, The Brown Collective

Tactics Don't Alienate People

It's not a tactic that alienates the public. It's that if we don't do the work ahead of time to get support for an issue, we alienate the public. A good example is Northwest tree sits. Generally the "general public" in the logging towns out here hate them. They try to shoot at them. There is an example of a tree sit that happened out here... They actually went and did community organizing before they put up the tree sit. And so once the tree sit went up, the community of Randolph was saying things like, "I would never climb a tree, but I think it's great that they're up there." I think that the public understands the expression of complete and utter discontent if it supports us on why we're doing what we're doing.

— Liz Butler, Forest Ethics

Internationalism vs. Buchanan

In the short term, there are always contradictions within the movement. Like white workers who profit from racism, in the sense that they get a job and a black worker doesn't. In the short term, yes, they're benefiting, but ultimately that's going to come back to haunt them and be used to crush both of them.

And the same is true on a world scale... Corporations are creating a global labor market. That's causing the labor market in this country to collapse... Ultimately it's going to mean unions are going to be forced to build alliances across borders...

I don't think we're against globalization. We're against corporate globalization. Globalization is good, because, if it does exist on a real level, it's going to lessen the chance of war and things that divide workers too... [So] it's a constant struggle to make sure the rhetoric isn't racist, or chauvinist, or xenophobic. And that's where Buchanan will come in. But fundamentally [workers in the global North and South] have the same interests.

— Russ Davis, Massachusetts Jobs
With Justice

Get Beyond Casey Neil and Propagandhi

I think artists and writers play an immensely important role. And one of the weaknesses I think of our movement right now is the real lack of art and culture that resonates with mass society. You have a lot of art and culture that resonates with a real marginal white hippie left, but I listen to hip hop and electronica, and I wonder why we don't have more of a political left on an artistic and cultural level...

Because there's going to always be in society, especially in the United States, where there's a large number of folks who aren't too badly off, a large number of folks who think things suck but would rather hang out with their friends than organize. But the awareness of those people... is really best supported and sustained through art, and things that give people a way to share in common, and not through a constant anger. Because people don't want to be angry all the time. They want to hang out and enjoy life.

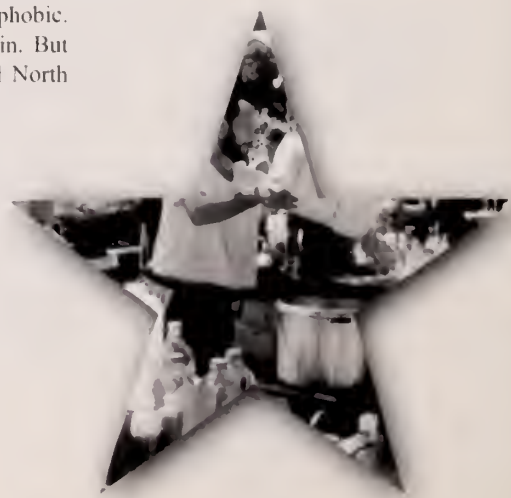
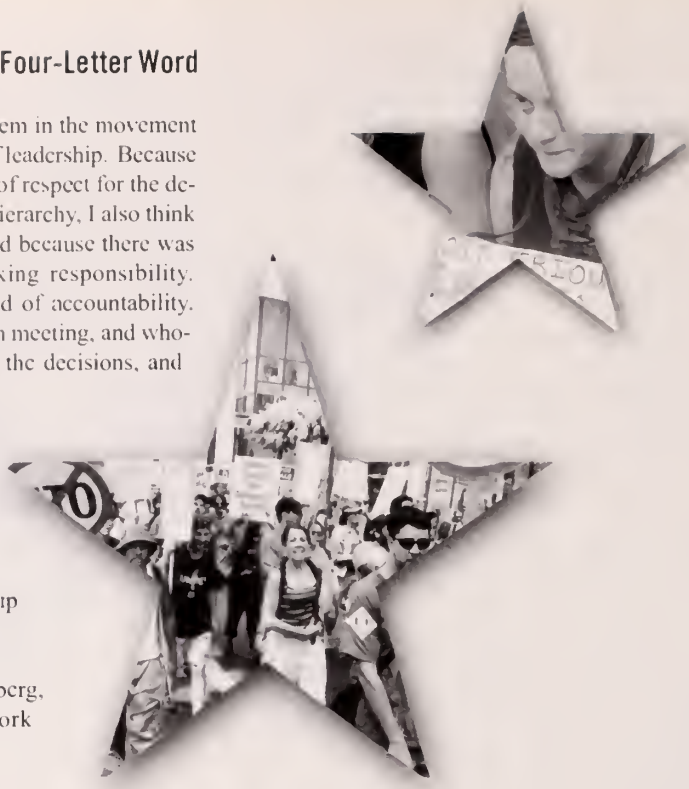
— Terra Lawson-Remer, Student Alliance to Reform Corporations (STARC)

Get Into the Box, Dammit!

[In terms of tactics] we have to recognize that even though we may not agree, there has to be some way to be accountable to each other... I don't think that the goal... should be to force everybody into the same [tactical] box... [but to get] people into a particular box at a particular time, for the purpose of having a strategic alliance or tactical alliance, because that is where we're more powerful and we're not undermining each other.

In Prague, you had people who wanted to throw rocks. Unfortunately, they wanted to throw them from the back of the march, so you had demonstrators who were getting hit in the front of the march.

— Lisa Fithian, LA Direct Action Network



Our Economic Institutions Become Our Political Base

The interesting thing about one of the main strains of opposition, Marxism, is: central to Marxism is a focus on control over the means of production... But Marxists pretty much have talked about that and not done it... They don't even control the print shop that prints their books. Let alone setting up stores to provide services and goods to people.

So then what you're left with is this Leninist model that the Left creates a political vanguard... that's going to lead the working class to seizing the State. And then the State will force the capitalists to be nice. The only problem is, it doesn't work. We have enough proof to show that it doesn't work, and, in fact, in still-existing communist states like China, we see that they're perfectly happy to combine the worst aspects of Stalinism with markets, so you get market Stalinism. Great. A corporate takeover of the economy and no political freedoms to fight against the worst aspects of that market economy...

So that's one of the key things. We have to develop green enterprise. To actually build an alternative economic structure. Then, if you run a green party, and that green party is founded on an economic base where there's organic farmers, and solar power companies, and socially responsible investors, a whole sector that is predicated on a different ideology about the economy, I think then you have the chance of getting state power where it's not just based on a once-every-four-years vote.

— Kevin Danaher, Global Exchange

It's A Battle of Ideas and Power, Not a Military Battle

I think there's space for lots of different [tactics]. Each community and each sector needs to be incredibly smart and strategic, because what we're up against is so sophisticated. You can't just get all your friends and duke it out in the street like you could 500 years ago. A lot of the battle is about the hearts and minds of the folks looking on. What we're doing is trying to intervene in the hype, using images and associations. Direct action and disruptive tactics are one way to do that, but if they're not well thought out, instead of empowering people, framing things, communicating, they become weak openings that allow the state to attack us.

It's about realizing that it's a battle of ideas and power and not a military battle between protesters and police. When we get into those situations we need to be clear about why people should back us up and support us, so that we don't let the system marginalize us. We want to make it so politically expensive for them to attack us that if they do, it backfires and catalyzes more people to join the movement, and if they don't, we get to do what we want.

— David Solnit, Freedom Rising Affinity Group

Fuse Social Service and Politics

I really like what the [Black] Panthers did in the '60s as a party. They had a radical analysis but they fused social service with their politics. We really need to take this to communities that are affected in the trenches and the front lines of globalization and activate more people, and that's one way to do it. For people who don't have health care, we should have free clinics.

— Beka Economopoulos, co-editor of *Another World Is Possible: Conversations In A Time of Terror*

Hey You! Support Indy Media!

I think that this movement will never ever succeed, no matter what, until we have our own media that is truly democratic. I think that non-corporate controlled ways to speak to masses of people at once is really, really important. And the internet is not going to be it for an awful long time at least... I think that everyone needs to be working on whatever they're working on *and* cultivating indy media.

— Han Shan, the Ruckus Society
This movement is best represented by a multiplicity of voices. But I can't resist offering some of the lessons I took away from these conversations:

1. We have to hit the streets with our clipboards instead of our gasmasks, and carry on an extended conversation with all kinds of people outside of the movement. We need to speak honestly, in language that people can understand, but even more importantly, we need to listen. Among other things, listening can help us understand the forms of privilege that many of us have because of our skin color, class, gender, etc., and the blinders that come with that privilege.
2. We need to move beyond mass actions to promote a wild range of creative local actions and local campaigns (not just protests!) that have more relevance to peoples' daily lives and allow all kinds of people to participate.
3. Our media need to extend beyond the internet, and to be aimed at people outside the movement. And we need better strategies for using the corporate media to communicate with the public.
4. We need to recover the kind of disciplined, militant, non-violent direct action used during the Civil Rights movement; tactics designed as much to communicate as to disrupt.
5. We need to learn that democracy and accountability are not tradeoffs, they are complements.
6. We will not succeed without stronger ties with our brothers and sisters around the world, particularly in the global South.

7. We DO need to build alternative institutions, but we should learn from their spotty record. The history of the left is littered with countless examples of infoshops, coops, and other institutions that have sucked massive quantities of peoples' time, only to doom their efforts to failure or irrelevancy.

I believe time will prove predictions of this movement's demise to be premature. On the contrary, our movement has never been more relevant.

For many marginalized and impoverished people around the globe, ideologies of hatred and xenophobia — from Buchanan-style populism to Bin Laden-style Fundamentalism — offer the most compelling alternative to a morally bankrupt Washington "consensus" that promises salvation through ever-widening corporate control and consumer "choice" (backed up of course by the threat of U.S. bombs). But we have our own alternative — a vision of a world where people cooperate across borders to build an international system designed to promote justice and increase peoples' control over their lives and their communities. Never before has this vision been so sorely needed.

The definition of "unsustainable" is something that *cannot* continue. The system will change. Our job is to push for a world centered not on profit nor on hatred, but on justice, cooperation, sustainability, and true democracy. And to be as smart as we can about how we do it. ★



Rethinking Drug Courts

America's War on Drugs has been fought on many fronts, the most recent of which is the drug court. Developed to punish addicts with treatment rather than prison, the media's coverage of the criminal justice system turned social worker has been laughable at best. Drug courts claim to save lives gone wrong, but many have started to take a second look.

by Melissa Hostetler
or Joseph Adolphe

Welcome to the San Francisco County drug court, just one of nearly a thousand courts in the country and one of more than a hundred in California alone offering drug treatment over incarceration. The court begins to come alive as the defendants, or "clients," as drug court professionals like to call them, arrive and speak in hushed tones with their counselors and attorneys.

In the hall, a counselor hugs a client twice her size and encourages him to stay with the treatment program. The client is later sent to jail on Judge Julie Tang's order for testing positive for drugs. Though this weekend-long prison stay is only considered a sanction, this client may very well end up in jail long-term.

A female clad in an orange jumper sits and watches as a half dozen soon to be ex-clients tell their story of how treatment and a second chance has changed their lives. As a new drug court recruit, she hears about their new jobs, new lives, and a new outlook on staying sober. She decides drug court is for her – the freedom of a probation-style life, the allure of having all charges dropped upon completion of the program, and the hope of finally being rid of the drug addiction disease seem all too convincing.

And though the argument for treatment-based drug courts seems convincing – the media are sold on the idea of treatment over prison, and the drug court movement is picking up steam as politicians who strive to be tough on crime and compassionate in one swoop are singing its praises – there are many who are starting to question whether or not the drug court movement is the panacea of good will everyone says it is.

Since the first treatment-based program was founded in Miami, Fla. ten years ago, the drug court epidemic has spread to nearly every state, adding up to more than 800 drug courts nationwide either operating or in the planning stages. (Gebelein & About Drug Court Program Office — Tauber) US federal funding for the program now totals more than \$80 million since 1995 in a political phenomenon that is getting support from all sides. Actor Martin Sheen, Drug Czar Barry McCaffrey, and Attorney General Janet Reno – who helped found the Florida drug court when she was Florida Attorney General (CK) – have lined up behind the program.

They call them the elixir to cure prison overcrowding, the cycling of drug offenders in and out of the criminal justice system, and the skyrocketing price-tag of the US prison system. In a closer look though, many have found that drug courts not only *don't* accomplish their goals but they may be widening the criminal justice net, increasing costs to the system, taking treatment slots away from voluntary, community-based programs, and blurring the traditional roles of judges, prosecutors, and defense attorneys.

"Drug courts are just the latest Band-Aid we have tried to apply over the deep wound of our schizophrenia about drugs," says Denver, Colo. Judge Morris B. Hoffman in a North Carolina Law review article that is one of the few critical pieces on drug courts. "Drug courts themselves have become a kind of institutional narcotic upon which the entire criminal justice system is becoming increasingly dependent."

Though they are designed to relieve the criminal justice system of some of its burden — one in four American prisoners are incarcerated for a non-violent drug offense — drug courts may actually be *increasing* the number of people brought into the system and also negating most of their expected savings.

"What we've started to see happening is people who previously would have essentially not been arrested at all or given a short term of probation or a fine wound up getting arrested," says Katherine Huffman

of the Lindesmith Center for Drug Policy Foundation.

In Denver, Colo. drug filings tripled just two years into the drug court program. Not only had the number tripled but the percentage of drug filings went from 30 percent of all filings to 52 percent in that same period.

California, home to more than 100 drug courts, also saw drug arrests for possession-only offenses increase from 40 percent of all drug arrests to 53 percent in the past ten years. It is not clear though what effect, if any, drug courts have made directly.

"All we know is that drug courts have not resulted in fewer people sentenced to prison for drug possession offenses in California," says Dan Macalair of the Justice Policy Institute. "In fact, the evidence is just the opposite."

The increased arrests, says Jeff Tauber, president of the National Association of Drug Court Professionals (www.nadcp.org), is that the justice system has chosen to start dealing with those previously ignored. By bringing offenders into the system early on, drug courts can avoid repeated offenses, he says.

A survey suggests, though, that law enforcement see drug courts as a solution to America's drug problems. Two-thirds of the 300 police chiefs polled in a recent survey do not want to cut federal drug court funding, and 60 percent claim drug courts are more effective than prison or jail time.

"The very presence of the drug court ... has caused police to make arrests in, and prosecutors to file, the kinds of ten- and twenty-dollar hand-to-hand drug cases that the system simply would not have bothered with before, certainly not as felonies," says Judge Hoffman.

With the increased number of drug offenders coming into the criminal justice system, the cost savings promised by drug courts are largely non-existent. According to the Vera Institute of Justice, many cost-savings analyses fail to account for common drug court practices that ultimately erode savings – detaining offenders for detoxification and punishing non-complaint participants with jail time. When interim jail stays are counted, drug court participants could spend more time in jail than if they had simply been sentenced. The Vera Institute also found evidence to suggest that participants who fail in drug court may be sentenced more harshly than those never entering a drug court.

The problem though with determining whether or not drug courts are actually working is in the research itself.

For example, drug courts claim to reduce the cycle of drug offenders coming in and out of the prison system. The Department of Justice's Drug Courts Program Office claims a reduction in recidivism between five and 28 percent, but not all studies show these results. An Arizona drug court study found no difference in recidivism between those in standard probation and those in drug court. Another evaluation of 21 drug courts found that five could not claim they reduced recidivism.

The problem says Judge Hoffman is the method of evaluation. Drug court professionals who have a vested interest in continuing the program are often the ones doing the drug court impact studies, resulting in what is little more than a morale booster for drug court professionals.

The very nature of localized drug courts allows for survey results that cannot be compared. Without a comprehensive data source, there is no telling how well the drug court program is actually working, says Macalair. Not to mention, he adds, the surveys themselves do not seem to be asking the right questions – for example, true cost analyses of drug court treatment programs have seldom been done.

Tauber says the results are not solely in speculated recidivism improvements. Retention, he says, is the defining factor of how well the program is working, citing that drug courts keep people in treatment longer making it more likely they will stick to their new lifestyle.

But on top of these woes are the concerns for the larger picture of drug treatment in America.

Most who question the drug court strategy prefer treatment to incarceration, but would rather see resources put into voluntary treatment and court-mandated treatment. But instead of creating new slots to answer the call of the thousands waiting for treatment, drug courts are absorbing some of these treatment slots, says Graham Boyd, Director of the ACLU Drug Litigation Project.

Drug courts have flourished largely because of the enormous political support given them. But there is no such will for adding more community-based treatment, leaving the system skewed in favor of the criminal justice system at the cost of voluntary treatment, says Daniel Abrahamson, director of legal affairs for the Lindesmith Center.

It's logical to want to treat everyone, Tauber says, but the motivation and consequences of drug court are much stronger and tangible for addicts to complete the program and get off drugs than if they entered treatment on their own. In fact, Tauber says drug courts provide better results than voluntary treatment because they tend to keep addicts in treatment longer.

But even if drug courts are working, their essential nature runs contrary to the traditional roles of the justice system. That, say critics, is not only bad for drug court defendants but for the public as well.

This non-adversarial nature found in drug courts – where the judge, the prosecutor, and the defense attorney are all working toward the uniform goal keeping the defendant in treatment – is precisely why drug courts work, say drug court professionals. Drug court judges are able to exercise a fair amount of discretion, thus making the system more tailored for each individual. The drug court system though allows judges to become social workers and pseudo-doctors, and critics

say this is not the type of discretion that the criminal justice system needs or deserves. The judicial branch, they say, is not the arena for handling what is essentially a public policy issue.

"The real problem with the drug courts is that the judges don't know what treatment is," says Dr. John McCarthy, a psychiatrist and addiction medicine specialist at the Bi-Valley Medical Clinic in Sacramento. Judges aren't doctors, he says, and the drug court structure makes "every judge his own king."

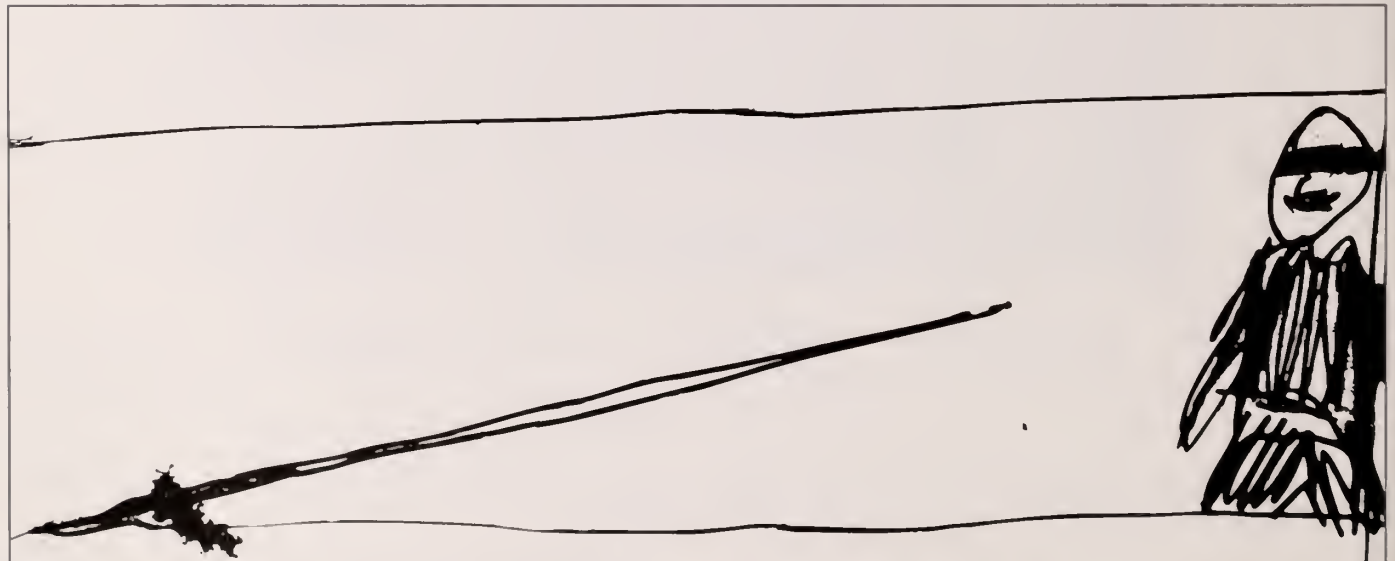
Though in some jurisdictions treatment professionals are in the court to directly advise a judge on what to do, the judge ultimately gets to make the final decisions.

"I cannot imagine a more dangerous branch than an unrestrained judiciary full of amateur psychiatrists poised to 'do good' rather than to apply the law," says Judge Hoffman.

The drug court method, in fact, is just the first sample of what may come if the problem-solving court model spreads to the arenas of domestic violence, mental health, and prostitution as many like Tauber hope it will. To function, these courts will need these non-traditional roles and judges willing to institute them, says San Francisco Superior Court Judge Julie Tang.

"In other courts, the outcome is punishment and rehabilitation if necessary," she says. "On our case it's rehabilitation as the goal and purpose of the court. You need to have a different structure to produce outcomes."

Though the idea may be a noble and humane one – helping people and keeping them out of prison – critics say it is wrong to treat these problems as diseases and then punish offenders for it all in a system where no one is really working for the offenders themselves. In a system that is being exported across borders – Canada's federal government has plans to set up drug courts in every major city by 2004 – this, critics say, could end in a strange downward spiral where the judicial system serves the welfare state and no one serves the law or the people. ★



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The Criminalization of Anarchism



Part Two:

Guilt by Association, Questionable Confessions, and Mandatory Minimums

by Kristian Williams

Late in the evening of March 29, 2001, a Portland, Oregon house party took a very unusual turn. The party itself was a fairly typical affair — cheap beer, Prince on the stereo, the lights turned low. A few dozen punk rockers were basically enjoying themselves and hanging out. A quiet evening, tame even.

All that changed at about 1:00 a.m. when, allegedly responding to a noise complaint, three police arrived at the house. Within minutes more than 40 additional officers appeared on the scene. Guns drawn, shouting threats mingled with curses, they charged into the house. Police accounts list numerous uses of force, including the use of batons, flashlights, fists, and pepper spray. Lt. Sharp's report mentions one unfortunate subject who "struck the ball end of the baton with the back of his head" (2).

The cops herded everyone outside, handcuffed them, and put them on the ground. The surrounding streets were closed as one by one, the party-goers were photographed, searched, and loaded onto a city bus. "The party-goers were questioned about the Earth and Animal Liberation Fronts, and what their tattoos meant. The police took Polaroids of tattoos and patches, presumably for files being compiled" (Johnson 7).

Nine people were then taken to detox, though many of them had

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not been drinking. A few were taken to jail; most were questioned and released. But two young men — Chad Hapshe and Bjorn Einertsen — found themselves indicted on charges of Assault and Kidnapping. (Imarisha 4/24 01).

The police claim that when Sgt. David Fort approached the house to discuss the noise, the unlucky constable was grabbed by the suspects, dragged into the house, and savagely beaten. Fort describes the scene in his report: "I responded with above Officers to a loud party call at listed location. The officers were talking to the two people identified as persons in charge of the house. Suddenly I was jumped by 10-12 of the people that were on the porch. I was pulled pushed inside the house, and someone slammed the door behind me. Officer Reynaga kicked the door open, and I managed to escape to the porch again. The large group continued to swing their fists wildly at me" (2).

Fort later described the beating he allegedly received inside the house: "I felt a lot of blows on my back and shoulders, um, I didn't, I didn't feel much on my head and face. My feelings were that it was mostly my shoulders and my back and my chest and my waist, and that kind of thing. . . . A repetitive barrage of blows, there were, they were, they were way too many to even count" (interview 5). "(Sigh) My thoughts honestly at that time were that they were going to absolutely beat me — unconscious. My, my, I, I really thought that, that they were, there were so many people there, swinging so wildly, and, and it, it seemed like such a rage, that were gonna, they were gonna basically destroy me with their fists. . . . I, I swear that if, if I went to the ground, my feelings were they would kill me, either with their boots, or feet, fists, something. There were that many people, and could not have, I, I don't, I don't think that I could have gotten away from that" (interview 7).

Fort then goes on to list the injuries he received: a fracture in his index finger, a bruised shoulder, and a scraped shin (interview 10). Not bad for a man who feared being "destroy[ed]."

Fort's story strains the limits of credibility. The idea that some punk kids, without provocation or warning, suddenly overpowered a towering police sergeant is, of course, absurd. You would expect Fort at least to be embarrassed by the claim. The further thought that he received the beating he described and escaped, somehow, with only minor wounds does not even bear considering. But the accusations were as serious as they were silly: Kidnapping carries a sentence of nine years, a mandatory minimum (Croll 7).

In my previous article, "The Criminalization of Anarchism" (April/May 2001), I outlined two models of criminalization as the process is applied to political cases. The first, the "Haymarket" model, involves charging the leaders of a political movement for crimes they may have inspired, but did not commit. The second, the "Sacco-Vanzetti" model, occurs when police lack clues for a crime, and out of laziness or malice decide to pin it on someone whose social standing makes them vulnerable, such as political dissidents.

What I overlooked, apparently, is the most straightforward approach: the police can manufacture an incident altogether, either through provocation or perjury, selecting members of the target group more or less at random and making examples out of them. I will correct that oversight here. I will also expand on my earlier analysis concerning the means by which police classify groups of people as criminals. It is commonly understood that "terrorism" is a politically loaded term, used to criminalize political dissent. In this article, I will consider the similar application of the concept of the "gang."

The Anarchist Profile

Animosity between punks and police is nothing new and the conflict between the two has often been overtly political. "Douglas Squirrel. . . became [Portland's] most infamous anarchist in 1993 when he was arrested after a standoff between angry youth and police at an all-ages nightclub. After an informant allegedly tipped police that a demonstration was being planned inside, they cordoned off the popular X-Ray Café. . . ." (Waltz 27). When concert-goers tried to leave through police lines, a ruckus ensued. Two windows were broken, and 31 people arrested. Squirrel wasn't even at the scene, but was arrested anyway because, as police spokesperson Derrick Foxworth explained, their files identified him as the "leader of the anarchists" (Waltz 27). Files released during Squirrel's trial revealed an extensive pattern of political surveillance, including the use of informants against groups with no criminal history. Squirrel was acquitted, and a subsequent lawsuit (Squirrel v. City of Portland) produced a financial settlement, as well as a ruling limiting police intelligence activity. Of course, the city's red squad never went away, but conflicts between police and punks didn't reach the same pitch for several years.

The recent party raid, marking a return to open combat, represents the high-water mark after a two-year period of steadily escalating



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police tactics. Since the WTO protests, Portland police have kept a close eye on the local anarchist punk scene, especially the communal houses in the northeast quarter of the city. The media-concocted stereotype of anarchists as young white people with dreadlocks, piercings, and tattoos, and wearing black clothing covered with spikes, studs, and patches, has since been developed by police into a full-fledged profile.

Police interactions with the punk community have come to be characterized by conspicuous surveillance and pretext stops. Police have made a regular practice of following punks to or from their homes, stopping them for minor infractions (no bike light, failure to signal a turn, jaywalking), questioning them, searching them, and sometimes writing them a ticket. Often, the person stopped is photographed, with police taking a special interest in tattoos and the patches on their clothing. Perhaps the most disturbing component of this routine is its sometimes explicitly political nature, as when police question suspects about their political views or their participation in demonstrations. Some suspects have been asked directly, "Are you an anarchist?"

The Gang Theory

Skeptics are likely to attribute such work to a handful of overzealous officers, more concerned with playing cowboy than with doing their jobs. The evidence, however, points to an organized campaign of repression directed against a group of people who have become, rightly or wrongly, associated in the minds of the authorities with a dissident political ideology. The party raid, for example, bears the marks of a pre-planned, coordinated police action, not the spontaneous response to some emergency: more than 40 cops arrived at the house *nearly simultaneously*, prepared for mass arrests. Officer Strobel described their arrival thus: "It seemed that within just a minute or two of calling for cover, numerous officers began to arrive" (report 3).

Furthermore, there is direct evidence linking this case to a branch of the police bureau which specializes in organizing just such campaigns. On the day of Hapshe and Einertsen's arraignments, I personally saw police videotaping everyone who came for the hearing. After the arraignment, I then saw one of the defendants' friends apprehended by two plainclothesmen, allegedly for jaywalking. When approached, one of the cops refused to identify himself, and the other claimed to be off-duty. They called for back-up, and soon there were seven other police on the scene, including a lieutenant. When members of Portland Copwatch reminded the lieutenant of police regulations concerning

officer identification, he ordered the two plainclothes cops to distribute business cards. The cards identified them as officers Stradley and Crannell, both members of the Gang Enforcement Team (GET).

These two officers, along with Sergeant David Howe (also GET) were principally responsible for interviewing witnesses afterward. One of their reports, dated April 14, 2001, was prominently labeled "Portland Police Bureau Gang Enforcement Team Taped Statement Transcript" (Strobel interview 1).

The GET would seem a natural choice for political operations of this sort. They already have the training and skills required: they've developed the techniques of intelligence gathering, routine harassment, and disruption. All they need to do, then, is apply their craft to a new target. Gang units are designed for breaking up group affiliations which prove inconvenient for the state — whether these affiliations are "criminal," cultural, or political makes very little difference.

In gang suppression campaigns, "A basic deterrence philosophy is adapted, accepting the notion that heavy surveillance, along with rapid, certain, and serious sanctioning, will lead gang members to reduce, or desist from, street crime. Thus the emphasis is on selective enforcement (less politely termed harassment), arrests, enhanced prosecution, conviction, maximum sentencing practices, and a correctional focus on probation and parole violations" (Klein 160, parentheses in original). Likewise, the attention given to tattoos and patches fits with gang suppression techniques (Jackson and McBride 99).

The Portland Police Bureau's Gang Enforcement Team has been used for political purposes before. In the early '90s, Portland was the site of a protracted struggle against neo-Nazi skinheads. While the Portland Police Bureau played some role in suppressing racist activity, more of their attention went toward disrupting the work of *anti-racist* activists, especially anti-racist skinheads. And the unit responsible for this work was the Gang Enforcement Team.

In his book *Skinhead Street Gangs*, former Portland cop and Gang Enforcement Team member Loren Christensen explains that: "Antiracist skinheads are not going away. It's important for law enforcement to monitor their activity and know that they are just as much a threat as the racist skins" (63). Christensen's book offers advice for dealing with them, including the use of informants (77-78), convincing landlords to issue evictions (79), gathering information from neighbors (163), "'get[ting] in their face' whenever the opportunity presents itself" (185), and raiding their parties (196-199).



greg fuchs

Given this history, gang unit involvement in the campaign against the anarchists is hardly surprising. The GET officers have the necessary skills, the infrastructure, the experience, and apparently, the inclination to carry out an orchestrated program of repression. The anarchist scene, being primarily an informal social grouping, is better suited to disruption by the means used to target gangs than it would be to the classical red squad tactics of surveillance, infiltration, provocation, attempts to discredit the leadership, and the promotion of factionalism and in-fighting. These means, while effective against formal organizations like the Communist Party or the Black Panthers, may be difficult to apply outside of such a setting.

It is possible that the cops may even believe that the loose-knit scene they are targeting actually constitutes a gang. Definitions of “gangs” are notoriously broad, and police in practice rarely restrict their operations to groups which meet the specified criteria, or with individuals who would qualify as gang members. This underscores a point made in my earlier article: a group is criminalized not only when they are explicitly outlawed, or when they operate in ways that violate the law, but also when one’s status as a member of that group is enough to bring a person under suspicion, or counts as evidence against him.

Now consider this: Gang enforcement activities, when directed against political groups, come to target the left as such, and predictably cast a chilling effect on free speech. These same police actions directed against “ethnic gangs” obviously have some of the same effects: police target ethnic and racial, and even whole neighborhoods, for “gang suppression.” In the latter, more typical case, skin color or geographic location are the only “association” necessary to prompt suspicion.

Questionable Confessions

In my earlier article I described a case unfolding 70 miles to the south of Portland, in Eugene, Oregon. At the time, an anarchist named Jeffrey Luers was facing charges related to two fires the previous summer. His friend, Craig Marshall, had accepted a plea bargain, but admitted no guilt. He was sentenced to five and a half years in prison.

Luers has since been convicted and, while the outcome of his case supports my earlier analysis, it did not do so in any way that I might have predicted, and in no way that I would have wished.

Luers was accused of setting fire to some SUVs at the Joe Romania car dealership, and of trying to set fire to a fuel truck at the Tyree Oil Company. While he denies that he was involved in the Tyree inci-

dent, he admitted that he set the fire at the car dealership. In a desperate legal maneuver, his lawyer argued that merely setting the fire was not enough to justify an arson charge; since he had taken precautions to prevent human injury, the proper charge would be Criminal Mischief. The judge didn’t buy it. Luers was convicted of 10 felony counts (Bishop 6/6/01). He was sentenced to 22 years, eight months in prison (Tallmadge and Denson A1).

Now, this would seem to cut the legs out from under my argument. I mean, the guy did it, he admitted he did it, and now he’s going to do the time. One can’t very well complain that he was framed now that he’s confessed.

But such protestations miss the point. I never pled his innocence (After all, how would I know?). What I said was simply that Luers’s treatment had as much to do with his political views as with the evidence against him. And this, I think, has been demonstrated repeatedly.

In the first place, the only reason Luers and Marshall were under suspicion was that they are anarchists. A police detective testified that they were followed on the night of the Romania fire because police recognized Luers from a demonstration earlier in the day (Schwennessen 7D). In other words, it was his political activity — not evidence of an impending crime — which prompted the surveillance leading to their arrests.

Secondly, there is no evidence linking Luers personally to the attempted fire at Tyree Oil. In fact, fingerprints found at the scene don’t match Luers’s or Marshall’s, and police continue to search for the culprit even now that both men are in prison (Tallmadge and Denson A1). Luers’s conviction on those charges relied partly on circumstantial evidence and partly on extrapolation from the other case. The judge defended the verdict by pointing to evidence found in a storage area that Luers — and several other people — had access to. Under the circumstances, Luers’s attorney noted, such a conclusion amounts to a verdict of “guilt by association” (Brooks 6/14/01).

Thirdly, the Lane County prosecutors have a history of handling anarchist cases with special enthusiasm. One former prosecutor told the *Eugene Weekly*: “I had a string of anarchist cases last year — I offered everyone without priors either a (deferred adjudication) or (dismissal of charges), depending on what they did. My supervisor, Caren Tracy (who also prosecuted Luers), withdrew all the offers because she said we didn’t deal with anarchists. I went to the chief deputy, Kent Mortimore, as well as the district attorney, Doug Harcleroad, and they both had meetings with me to explain that in Lane County they draw a

MORE QUESTIONS ...

Further insight into the methods of "justice" may be gained by examining the records concerning Jason Roberts, a young man who was arrested at the March 29 party, interrogated, released without charges, and then called to testify before the Grand Jury that indicted Hapshe and Einertsen. According to the transcripts, Roberts was interrogated by Sergeants Howe and Stradley on April 1, from 4:00 a.m. until 7:28 a.m. Between 4:00 and 4:30, the police repeatedly asked him where he was when officers first arrived at the party. They claimed that witnesses placed him on the front porch just before Sgt. Fort's fabled attack. Three times Roberts insisted that he was upstairs using the bathroom when he was told the police were there. At 4:30 a.m., the investigating detectives turned off the tape without explanation. An hour and a half later, at 6:05 a.m., they turned the tape on again. Roberts suddenly reversed his earlier story, claiming that he was on the front porch after all.

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hard line when it comes to anarchists. They said the judges went along with that, and that was the way it needed to be" (Brooks 6/14/01. Parentheses in original). Given this admission, it seems likely that Luers's case was given priority not according to the severity of the crime, but because of his political views.

Fourthly, the prosecution used the defendants' politics to demonize them in the public view. While the judge insists politics never entered into his deliberations, prosecutorial slander must surely have been a factor in Luers's decisions to forego a jury trial. Luers's lawyer, Brian Barnes, said repeatedly that he didn't think they could find an unbiased jury in Eugene (Bishop 5/31/01).

Lastly, Luers's sentence seems disproportionate to the actual crime, far exceeding the seven-year mandatory minimum. The judge, again, claims that the defendant's politics had absolutely nothing to do with his deliberations. But Michael Dreiling, a University of Oregon sociologist observed: "The exaggerated sentencing that this clearly reflects is a no-tolerance statement for political dissent . . . I'm not convinced that a standard arsonist would receive this" (Tallmadge and Denson A11).

Activists worry that the state is making an example out of Luers, a perspective that Lane County Chief Deputy District Attorney Kent Mortimore essentially endorses: "Our philosophy is that people in this community have a right to be safe, and have a right for their property to be safe . . . If terrorists try to disturb that security, our response is going to be exactly what we saw here today" (Tallmadge and Denson A1, A11).

Hapshe and Einertsen's case ended on a slightly happier note. On September 5, just days before their scheduled trial, both men accepted a plea on assault charges. They were each sentenced to 90 days, divided between time in jail and in a labor camp, as well as three years probation.

What should we make of such confessions?

The *Portland Mercury* poses a parallel question: "Why did the DA take a routine assault charge and for six months aggressively prosecute in as a trumped-up kidnapping?" To this, the paper suggests its own answer: "the decision to prosecute had a broader target in mind; that is, putting a scare on the punks and activists in Northeast Portland" (Thomas 7).

Like Craig Marshall, Hapshe and Einertsen plead guilty in order to avoid the mandatory minimums attached to the most serious charges.

This says a great deal about the problems with mandatory sentencing laws. They're coercive; they encourage people to plead out to lower charges rather than risk a long prison term, essentially soliciting false confessions. "There's a lot of pressure . . . to accept a plea agreement in order to avoid the mandatory sentence, whether or not the individual is guilty" (Bowman 7). Prosecutors naturally use this leverage to their advantage.

Furthermore, mandatory sentencing penalizes defendants for exercising their Constitutional rights. The disparity between Marshall's and Luers's sentences illustrates this. By the prosecutor's account, the two men committed exactly the same crimes, but Marshall is in jail for five and a half years, and Luers for 22 years and eight months. The 17 years difference may be counted as the penalty for demanding a trial.

Conclusion

It may be tempting to adapt Pastor Niemöller's Holocaust era warning to read, "First they came for the anarchists . . ."

But such a temptation must surely be resisted. Two years before the arrest of Hapshe and Einertsen, on August 16, 1998, police cited the presence of "gang members" as their reason for using horses to break up a birthday party in a public park. The crowd at the party was predominately Black. The next day, when many of the same people held a demonstration to protest such harassment, they were attacked by helmeted police firing less-lethal munitions and spraying pepper spray (Farrell and Trujillo A1+).

Anarchists may be under the state's microscope at the moment, but we should remember that the weapons being used against us were not first designed for these purposes. We must keep in mind that actual attacks on radicals remain exceptional, discrete incidents, whereas for other portions of the population, similar attacks — often at the hands of the same agencies, utilizing the same techniques — make up much of the texture of social life.

Anarchists are not the first, or chief, targets of state repression. In fact, shortly after Hapshe and Einertsen were indicted, the Portland police revealed that, by their own numbers, Black people were 2.6 times as likely to be stopped and twice as likely to be searched by police as were white people (Bernstein and Suo A1+). In certain parts of town — including downtown — Black drivers were five times more likely to be pulled over, but no more likely to be ticketed ("Police data show disparity" A3). And of course, at the national level, we've recently seen



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an intense "anti-terrorist" campaign directed against Arabs and Muslims (and less directed racist attacks against a great many people perceived to be Arab or Muslim) (Leonard 9/17/01).

Nor do the tactics used against anarchists represent a significant departure from the usual operations of law enforcement. Gang units, gang lists, pretext stops, continual harassment, indiscriminate attacks on members of the targeted group, "profiling" based on appearance, mandatory minimums, and the ever-present threat of brutality — all of these mechanisms for social control were developed and first employed not against political dissidents but against the Black community and against other people of color. Efforts to end repression must begin by acknowledging this fact, and must take on the larger fight against police brutality and white supremacy. This does not mean opportunistically equating the discrete (that is, exceptional) prosecution of activists with the thoroughly routinized (and standard) oppression of people of color, or naively expecting Black people to come rallying to the defense of white activists. Instead, we may use the occasion of repression to understand the operations of power and then attack — if we are, in fact, radicals — not merely this or that application of power, not only this prosecution, or that arrest, but the entire criminal justice system and the establishment of white supremacy as a whole. ★

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Don't Just Sit There, Do Something!

Colleen McGraw

We are inherently a species of reactionaries. Besides death, change, and taxes, one of the few certainties we all to adhere to is Isaac Newton's Third Law of Motion. For every action, he posited, there is an equal and opposite reaction. Although Newton was speaking explicitly about a physical law of universal mechanics, the same law applies to human beings on a metaphysical level as well. By virtue of our ability to think alone, we human beings are innately subject to rationalize and reason, to oppose, to dissent, to react. Our Neanderthal progenitors were as much rabble-rousers as we today claim to be. Surely Caveman Charlie and Cavewoman Jane did not always agree upon where to hunt for woolly mammoths. Surely too Adam and Eve debated something fierce after Adam decided to taste the forbidden fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. Reaction — it is the way we think, the way we progress, the way we affect change. You say yes, and somebody somewhere will inevitably say no. "All things," said Hegel, "are in themselves contradictory, and it is this principle, more than any other, which expresses the truth, the very essence of things."

The parturition of a new millennium has brought with it a laundry list of deep-seeded grievances that date as far back as history itself can recall. Ranging from mammoth social movements such as environmentalism and anti-globalization to more localized micro-protests like defense of the Eagle Creek forest stand in Oregon, the gamut of counteractions to these festering dissatisfactions is as wide as the list is long. Technology, politics, you name it, and somebody somewhere does not agree with the prevailing model and so refuses to comply to a system that they had no voice in forming. And because we are a breed of social reactionaries, because it is ingrained in the tendons of our soul to rally against those actions that harbor further inequity, because of this, we protest.

History of Social Protest

In the early 16th century a momentous crisis cracked the foundation of Western civilization and, more acutely, Western Christianity. It overturned forever the medieval unity of the faith and accelerated the consolidation of monarchical omnipotence. In 1517, a priest at the University of Wittenberg, Martin Luther, attacked the sale of indulgences and other papal practices in a set of 95 theses and defied papal condemnation. In the tradition of the scholarly disputation of the time, he

posted them in Latin on the door of the castle church. He had also sent the theses to the Archbishop of Mainz who passed them to Rome with a request that Luther be forbidden to preach on this argument. By this time the theses had been translated into German and the current information technology of the time had transformed the situation; they were printed and distributed all throughout Germany.

The outcome: Luther got the debate he sought and gave stimulus to a world-altering age of reconstruction. What is called the Protestant Reformation began as one more contention with religious authority, the calling in question of the papal claims whose formal and theoretical edifice had successfully survived so many challenges. To that extent, it was thoroughly a medieval phenomenon. But that was not to be the whole story of the Reformation and hardly exhausts its social significance. Although the history of humanity is laced with innumerable illustrations of protest, the Protestant Reformation was wholly critical as it detonated a cultural revolution and marks too the start of modern history.

The French Revolution, noted as a radical, comprehensive upheaval of European society and political dominion, has been memorialized as a largely insurrectionary subversive movement by, and for, the people. On May 5, 1789, after the French monarchy attempted to increase taxation and control on internal affairs, the States General (three estates, of nobles, clergy, and commons) met at Versailles to try to establish some constitutional controls. Divisions within the States General led to the formation of a National Assembly by the 'third estate' (commons a.k.a. "power to the people"). Repressive measures by Louis XVI led to the storming

of the Bastille by a Parisian mob in July 1789. In response, the royal family attempted to escape from the control of the Assembly. War with Austria later threatened to undermine the revolution but on August 10, 1792, another Parisian mob stormed the royal palace and the First French Republic was thereby proclaimed.

Change in France soon spawned fierce discussion about what should happen in other countries. Such polemics were bound to reflect the language and circumstances in which they arose. The French Revolution, then, is when Modern Politics began, and the terms Right and Left have been part of our vernacular ever since. Liberals and conservatives came into political existence when the French Revolution provided what appeared to be a touchstone for political standpoints. On one side were republicanism, a wide suffrage, individual rights, free speech, and free publication; on the other were discipline, order, adherence to and the recognition of the social function of hierarchy, and emphasis on duties rather than rights.

Contemporary France has also witnessed ardent protestations by, and for, the people of France. The seeds of revolution have hardly diminished since the spring of 1789 but have instead matured into an outright legacy of French civil remonstrance and insurrection. In the spring of 1968, an extraordinary coalition of the disenfranchised and discontent brought France once again to open and violent revolt. The 1968 revolt in France grew from many uniquely French problems, yet stirred passionate interest throughout the world. Indeed, the French upheaval epitomized for many



an endemic dissatisfaction with society everywhere. Regardless of the political and economic conditions that presided over France, the heart of the turmoil in May of 1968 began with the fervent agitation of French students—and this was an area in which the French were not alone. Many other countries generated dynamic student movements on a variety of scales in the late 1960s. In China, “Red Guards” reacted against the prescribed officialdom of Maosim. In California, the Berkeley campus revolted after a 26-foot “corridor of dissent” at the main gate was closed to political discussions in 1964. Elsewhere, rampant student agitation burgeoned into a global phenomenon. From Egypt to Japan, from Poland to Mexico, students across the globe shared a mutual dissatisfaction with the postwar climate of capitalism and United States military occupation in Southeastern Asia. The students in France, as well as their counterparts elsewhere, shared a common denominator: they were willing to take crucial risks to fight for profound changes in society and government at large. Unsatisfied with merely expressing their frustrations, they were bent on conquering them.

As with the French Revolution and student protest in the 1960s, the annals of history suggest that, in order to be effective, protest must be violent and insurrectionary. The truth of the matter is that non-violent opposition is equally, if not more so, conducive to effective change. Although the practice of passive resistance is no doubt one of antiquity, the term came into human vernacular only in the 19th century, at that time nearly always referring to resistance by colonists and/or natives against the government in power. “Passive resistance was the only weapon to which they trusted,” wrote H.H. Wilson in *British India* (1844). “Passive resistance is the most potent weapon ever wielded by man against oppression,” wrote Benjamin R. Tucker in 1893. But it was not until the organized passive resistance of Mohandas Gandhi and his followers, beginning in 1919, that the term and practice made headlines internationally. Systematic campaigns of civil disobedience continued in India until 1948, when Britain withdrew and India became fully autonomous.

A pacifist, Gandhi led the struggle for Indian independence from Britain by nonviolent cooperation (*satyagraha*, defense of and by truth) from 1915 until his death in 1948. He was several times imprisoned by British authorities and was influential in the independence negotiations of 1947. The first politician to claim an India-wide following, Gandhi’s practice of passive resistance inspired his nation to ally and consequently realize autonomy from British dominion.

Another advocate of victory without violence was Henry David Thoreau, a 19th century naturalist and author. Thoreau stimulated the back-to-nature movement with his influential work *Walden, or Life in the Woods*. (*Civil Disobedience*), his essay advocating peaceful resistance to laws he thought unjust, also had a tremendous impact on a leftist readership that has resonated well into modern day.

Traditional Forms of Protest

Although these classical examples of social demonstration hardly affirm the depth and variety of activism that has helped configure (and consequently reconfigure) our world today, historical record is clearly

indicative of a past that is replete with disruptive actions used to constrain opponents with the goal of appropriating concessions. Popular forms of protests such as petitions, parades, walk-outs, and demonstrations are used to rouse public support for movements. Forms of non-cooperation such as strikes, boycotts, resignations, and civil disobedience are correspondingly instrumental in assisting change. Direct intervention such as sit-ins, nonviolent sabotage, and blockades function too as apt means of re-routing conventional practices. Historically, these attempts to undermine an existing function of society, economy, or ideology, have antecedents in all corners of the globe. Whether violent or non-violent, civil actions against pre-existing institutions are a universal phenomenon.

Traditional Protest Is Not For Everybody

Although we human beings are innately reactionaries, it is a fact too that we are by and large a species of extraordinary psychological diversity. Introvert, extrovert, and all that lies between, our personalities differ and converge in multiple ways. The fact remains that some of us are more suited for traditional forms of agitating than others. No matter how passionate a person may be about a particular cause, it is imperative that he/she find his/her own reactionary voice and not the ill-suited voice of someone else. If direct action or door-to-door petitioning seem overwhelming and confrontational to you, then, by all means, choose an alternative. Do what you can but do it in way that you are simultaneously comfortable and still purposely contributing to effective change.

For my part, I have tried it all — marching, sit-ins, petitioning, blockading — and, to be prosaic, it just ain’t my cup of tea. It is satisfying, it really is, to see your enthusiasm and energy alter the course of a path that would otherwise veer right and into the abysmal realm of the status quo. I know now though, after all those times when I wanted so much to raise my fist with the rest of the rabble rousers and social parvenus, that my fist is best left on the table, that any contribution I am going to make to the nascent revolution will have to come from my own mind, with my own pen and ink. Writing — my passion, my voice; a remedy, a reaction — It is all I have, everything I can give, my most potent voice.

To you who can and do howl with the zeal of an impassioned agitator, rage on I say. Be the voice — agitate. We who are discontent with the prevailing paradigm, we need people like you like we need change. We need the ceaseless fighter who will all but sacrifice her soul to see the fall of the World Bank and similar such institutions. We need you and we thank you. But for those of us who are perhaps too shy, too sensitive, or too weary, there are a variety of other ways in which we too can contribute to change.

Alternative Forms of Protest

While riots, strikes, tree-sits, and hunger strikes are essential components to any effectual social modification, be it revolutionary or not, there are sundry methods of protestation not usually associated as reactionary. Some suggestions:

Music

Write a song, start a band, rap. Bands like Catharsis,

Canada’s punk Propagandhi, and American folk legend Joan Baez, are a few of myriad musicians who have taken their musicianship to a level that successfully encompasses both art and politics. Music, as a form of protest, has the ability to reach an immense fragment of the population. Lyrics, on-stage performances, album jackets—all of these components have the potential to really say *something*. So say it, or sing it— and sing it with style. People will listen.

Letter Writing

The advent of computer-aided technology has all but lost this practice on us. Still though, there is something wholly charming and satisfying about receiving and sending an actual hand written letter. So send a letter, voice your concern, splash your thoughts and passions on the paper. Write anonymously if you must. Newspapers, magazines, neighbors, politicians, government agencies, corporations—all these entities require your input so that they can either alter or reconsider their own practices.

Art

You can think neither too big or too small when it comes to interweaving art and social protest. Think sculpture, sidewalk chalk, street theatre, quilting, collage, prose, and poetry, et. al. Think too ceramics, murals, graffiti, dance, and film. You are a creative being. Channel that creativity into something positive and colorful and political. Heal.

Use the resources already available to you. Your own brain is a good place to start. Ask yourself, what do you really think? What are you unconditionally passionate about and how is it that you can demonstrate this in a way that is both compatible with your personality and revolutionary enough to elicit change in society at large?

Yes, protesting comes in many forms, styles, and volumes. These are just a few suggestions to get the old cranial ball rolling. Think big. Be bold. Don’t worry if you are not the megaphone-shouting agitator. There are other ways to say what it is you believe without actually raising your voice.

Don’t Just Sit There, Do Something

Paraphrasing George Bernard Shaw, Robert Kennedy said, “Some men see things as they are and say why. I dream things that never were and say why not.” Why not write a song about the way of man and the lay of land and why we should not forget that Nature reigns supreme? Why not create a sculpture admonishing the fall of capitalism and the rise again of barter and trade? And why not tell your senator that you disagree with her recent vote regarding oil drilling in Alaska? You are a creative being and yes, yes, you are a reactionary.

I recently read an anonymous quote which stated, “Everywhere the revolutionary, but nowhere the revolution.” Let us see if we can change that. Let us see if we can rise to the occasion and raise enough ruckus (however ostensibly muted it may be) and really effect change. Martin Luther, Gandhi, and the acquiescent majority of the French commons have revealed to us that we can alter extant institutions through multifarious forms of protest. I challenge all of us then, to not just sit here, but do something. ★

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The Decline and

Fall

of Public Broadcasting
an interview with David Barsamian

by Brian Hull





As the night of November 13 fell on Kabul, so did missiles, some of which destroyed the offices of *Al-Jazeera* TV, a network considered to be the "CNN of the Arab world." CBS reports that the U.S. forces that bombed *Al-Jazeera's* offices had no idea they were located there and thought that the building was instead an office for the Al-Qaeda terrorist network. On November 14 the radio program *Democracy Now*, hosted by Amy Goodman, interviewed *Al-Jazeera's* managing editor in Kabul who assured Goodman that the U.S. government knew exactly where their office was. In fact, he said, they had requested and received its location from him numerous times.

So who actually is closer to the truth, CBS or *Democracy Now*? The answer to that question has serious implications about U.S. commitment to freedom of the press beyond its own borders. And it is precisely questions like these that radio journalist, writer, and activist David Barsamian is committed to bringing to the light of day. His weekly radio show *Alternative Radio* thrives on giving the public access to perspectives and information that receive little or no attention in the mainstream media. The hour-long program, founded and directed by Barsamian in 1986, is broadcast locally in Fort Collins on Wednesdays from 6-7 p.m. on 89.1 FM KGNU. The program is also broadcast internationally on more than 125 public radio stations (consult www.alternativeradio.com for a complete program listing). It features such dissident luminaries as Noam Chomsky, who, without Barsamian's forum, would rarely be heard on Colorado's airwaves.

Barsamian is also the national producer of *Making Contact*, another weekly radio program. Though impressive enough by themselves, his endeavors in public radio do not sum up the multi-faceted Barsamian. He is a public speaker of notable repute, and he is also the author of numerous books co-written with the likes of Noam Chomsky, Howard Zinn, and Middle East scholars Eqbal Ahmad and Edward Said. His books cover a huge range of vital issues, including, how the media shapes public opinion, and how the Middle East and the Arab world are often framed in a limited and distorted context. Quite sure that the conversation would be an engaging and timely one, it was with much pleasure that I interviewed Barsamian on November 8 in a bustling Boulder, Colorado coffee shop.

Clamor: *We heard that this week you are releasing a book called The*

Decline & Fall of Public Broadcasting?

David Barsamian: Yes, it's a new book published by South End Press. It describes the increasing commercialization of what was supposed to have been a non-commercial TV and radio network in the U.S. These commercials incidentally are called euphemistically 'underwriting announcements' but they're straight-out commercials. You hear them on National Public Radio as well as the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS). And along with the commercialization has been a sharp shift to the right in terms of the content of the programs. Most of the censorship that occurs at NPR and PBS is one of omission not commission. Stories are left out. Voices are completely occluded from participating in debate. So, for example, you never hear Michel Parenti, or Angela Davis, or Howard Zinn; people that I feature on *Alternative Radio* on a regular basis.

What do you think has changed in PBS and NPR's policy to make them more commercialized? Is it because there was a lack of government funding for public broadcasting?

The funding structure for NPR/PBS has always been problematic. There's never really been a commitment to have a well-funded, secure public radio and TV system in the United States. It was deliberately designed to keep it dependent on Congress for funds. So, like any other entity, TV and radio would have to go to Congress and essentially plead its case for funding. Now it's different in this case because these are media. Media are politically powerful and influential and so Congress has exacted a price for their monies. And that is more coverage of what *they're* doing and less coverage of what people are doing, what grassroots organizations are doing, what NGO's are doing, what ordinary citizens are doing around the country.

Has Congress told them that explicitly?

It's a remarkable system that we have in the United States, because the system of censorship is very subtle. In a dictatorship like Iraq it's not at all opaque as to what's happening. It's quite clear to the citizenry that the news is controlled by the state. Here it's quite different. The news

is controlled by a handful of corporations, who work very closely with their kindred brethren in the state.

Being someone like yourself who's so aware of the efficacy of the mainstream press in disseminating their version of world events, do you ever feel frustrated or overwhelmed or that what you're trying to do is like treading water?

I don't feel that way at all. I get tremendous feedback from listeners all over the country who call, write and send me emails, and say *Alternative Radio* is their electronic umbilical cord. They depend on it. It's the most important program that they listen to on the radio and that they get perspectives and ideas that they don't find anywhere else. And the comments I appreciate the most are the people who say "you know I may not necessarily agree 100 percent with what *Alternative Radio* is producing but I certainly learned a lot and appreciate it being there." And I think that's really important because for a democracy to flourish we need a wide spectrum of opinion. We need an informed citizenry that has a range of views to select from, from A to Z. And what we have today is a range of views from A to B. From GE to GM. So there isn't a lot of diversity and it's interesting that people like Jefferson and Madison, the founding fathers, even at that time, this was 220 years ago, long before media monopolies, recognized how important diverse information was for the vibrancy of a democracy.

So they were advocates of freedom of information?

They favored a wide range of opinion. In theory we all could be media workers. There's nothing stopping you from starting a newspaper or a magazine or a TV network or a radio station except millions of dollars. So market constraints inhibit the ability for people to create their own media. So there's the censorship of the marketplace. And if you do programs or if you try and do something that essentially swims against the tide in a commercial system you won't get commercial support because the people who buy advertising savor the status quo. They don't want to make waves. They want stability. Stability is a code word for no change, because change is considered dangerous. The political system that we have in the US is a plutocracy, it's a 'cashocracy', its \$1/one vote. We have two business parties, with slight differences between the two, Republicrats or Demopublicans. So there isn't a lot of choice. And when it comes to corporate controlled media there's even less choice. There's very little difference between *Time* and *Newsweek* and *US News and World Report*. There's very little difference between ABC, NBC, and CBS and CNN and Fox. Although, I must say CNN and Fox have now moved so far to the right they're tipping over the scale. CNN and Fox are competing between the 'extreme right' and the 'far right'. They are extremely jingoistic, chauvinistic, and militaristic.

What are your views on the causes of the war?

In the commercial media it's been pretty much a monochromatic, one-note samba. "They hate us. Islam breeds hatred. Muslims are fanatics." And you see that straight across the board. There's no discussion of reasons for September 11 and to provide reasons is not to exculpate or excuse or apologize for criminal terrorist acts, it's to provide information. One interesting thing is what we know about the suicide bombers. There were 19 guys, 15 of whom were from Saudi Arabia, the "number one" US ally in the Middle East, and they were middle class people. One guy was in his 40's. Most of them were fairly well educated. That doesn't fit the classic profile of a suicide bomber.

Which is what? Brainwashed?

No, who's usually some teenager in Gaza who has no family, who has no work, who's never been to school, who's illiterate. That's the classic kind of suicide bomber. I think if Americans started to examine why terrorism occurs generally and why this specific act occurred that it would make them feel very uncomfortable. Because it would require Americans to look at certain issues that they're largely shielded from. For example, the United States is the imperial hegemon. It rules the world. It's called a 'superpower'. But we could use a more graphic term: it's an 'imperialist state', and we all benefit from U.S. imperialism—you, I, the people who are reading this article. Americans constitute 4 percent of the world's population and we consume about 40 percent of the world's resources. Just think about that. What effect does that have? The mechanism that allows that to happen is force. It's military might. It's a system of alliances that the U.S. has around the world. So when you have 4 percent of the world consuming about 40 percent of the world's resources you already have a tremendous structure of inequality and globalization, the 'new face of capitalism' has accelerated the gap between rich and poor, between the haves and the have-nots. That has created a tremendous amount of resentment and antipathy toward the haves, that's us, from the have-nots.

There are three other factors that motivated the September 11 attacks, and other attacks. One is unconditional US support for Israel. For 35 years now Israel has been occupying Palestinian land. It's been colonizing that land. It has over 150 settlements; I should call them colonies, not settlements, because that's a euphemism. 150 colonies with 400,000 colonists that have essentially taken land from the Palestinians and have siphoned off the aquifer (the water supply). If you go to see these colonies it's quite striking. I've been there a couple of times. On this side of the street, let's say, you have swimming pools and green lawns and very nicely constructed homes. People would like to live in that kind of atmosphere. And across the street people are living in ramshackle, run down housing with corrugated roofs, and in some case with open sewers, with dirt roads, with no infrastructure, with very limited running water. And that's made possible how? By

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U.S. support, \$5 billion a year and full diplomatic and military support. Israel uses Apache helicopter gun ships that are made in the United States and that are given to Israel under the military aid packages. It uses F-16 fighter jets to bomb Palestinians. All of these things are seen in the Arab world, narrowly, and in the Islamic world generally, as very unfair and unjust and they would like to see the United States be more even-handed in its treatment of the Palestinians.

Two other issues that I should mention are the ongoing U.S. support for sanctions against Iraq, which is now in its 11th year and the ongoing bombing campaign of Iraq. Iraq is bombed on a regular basis. It barely makes the news anymore. The sanctions, which the U.S. enforces, have resulted in the deaths of one million Iraqis. A half a million of these are children under the age of 5. When Madeleine Albright was asked if she thought that the death of 500,000 Iraqi children under the age of five was a high price to pay, she said "it was worth it." So the death of half a million Iraqi kids under the age of five according to Madeleine Albright is worth the price. Now that is seen in the Arab world and in the larger Islamic world and as an act of terrorism. And why is the U.S. insisting on a course of action that has failed? Saddam Hussein is still in power. He's as strong as ever. He drinks champagne and eats caviar every night. He and his henchman around him have enriched themselves under the sanctions regime because they control the black market.

The other factor at work here that has created a lot of antipathy towards the United States is support for dictatorial regimes in Kuwait, Oman and Saudi Arabia. These are not even countries in the sense that we understand countries. These are family run businesses. You know how the Walton's run *Wal-Mart*? That's how the Saud family runs Saudi Arabia. And they franchise different aspects of the state government and economy to different family members. There are about 700 princes that run Saudi Arabia. Kuwait is run by the Sabah family. Why isn't the U.S. supporting democracies? People see a double standard. They see US support for a democracy movement in China but they don't see it in Saudi Arabia or Kuwait. Why not? Those are important questions to ask. They see U.S. support for some UN resolutions but not for others. Why isn't the U.S. supporting UN security resolutions 242 and 339, calling for complete Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territories of the West Bank and the Gaza? It voted for those resolutions.

Getting back to Afghanistan, I remember Colin Powell said in May that there was a humanitarian crisis looming.

It's interesting that you should mention May because that was about the time that the United States gave \$43 million to the Taliban as a reward for their reducing the cultivation of opium, which is the raw ingredient for heroin. So the U.S. was giving money to the Taliban as recently as this past spring.

The humanitarian aid is incredibly cynical. No one can really describe it in any other terms. The Nobel Prize-winning French doctors group called *Medecins Sans Frontiere* (Doctors Without Borders) say that these humanitarian food drops are 'a propaganda operation'. First of all, it's very little and secondly the Afghan countryside is littered with mines and it makes it very dangerous to go out and retrieve the food. Third, the color of the food packets is bright yellow. The color of the cluster bombs is also bright yellow. So when kids see these bright yellow things out in the field somewhere they could just run out and grab them and blow themselves up. Cluster bombs are being used by the United States. These are anti-personnel weapons.

They don't detonate when you drop them?

They fragment and are designed to hurl shrapnel over a wide area of land. It's a very devastating weapon. It doesn't blow up a building or a tank. It's anti-personnel.

Are they left behind or are they dropped?

Many of them don't explode. The failure rate, this is an interesting thing, if someone wanted to look at performance, is high.

I was interested in talking to you about the Patriot Act.

The Patriot Act is very disturbing. And I think that people who call themselves conservatives should be front and center outraged at the provisions in this new legislation. It greatly expands the ability of the state, of law enforcement agencies like the FBI the CIA and police departments to increase surveillance to expand wire tapping, and most ominous of all to be able to keep people under arrest without charges. That's called preventative detention. You could be held by the state on the suspicion that you may be guilty of a crime or that you may be thinking of a crime. You could be held as a material witness. Right now there are over a thousand people being held some of them for close to two months, since the events of September 11. They cannot defend themselves. They don't have access to legal counsel and even if they did the legal counsel wouldn't know how to respond because they don't know what evidence the state has that they're using as justification for holding these people. So that is very Orwellian. This is right out of *1984*. And I think this poses very serious threats to democratic values that we all cherish and hold dear. Now I also want to say that I think that terrorists, people who commit crimes, should be brought to justice. We want to see the people who were responsible—we know that the 19 people who hijacked the planes are dead. But who financed them? Who organized it? Who did the planning? We want to see terrorists brought to justice but is war on the poor Afghan people the way to realize that? Is that a good way we're going to bring the terrorists to justice as Bush proclaims? Are the Afghan civilians that have already been killed in the hundreds responsible for the events of September 11? Of course not.

Do you think this Patriot Act could pose a threat to the anti-war movement?

Yes of course because it would lead to infiltration, it would lead to *agents provocateurs* who would become parts of various NGOs and peace groups and disrupt them.

Just like what was going on during the Vietnam War?

During the 60s and 70s, not just the Vietnam War but the Black Panthers, the Young Lords, the feminist movement, the American Indian Movement: all of them were infiltrated by state security forces and essentially compromised. So that's a tremendous danger and I'm very apprehensive about it. The FBI has always salivated for more power. Law enforcement as an institution always feels it doesn't have enough mechanisms to do its job. This is an institutional impulse. Regardless of the facts of whether they have enough or not. What the so-called representatives of the people have done by the vote of 99-to-1 in the Senate and 360 to 60 in the House is to deliver to the state security apparatuses *carte blanche* to arrest and detain American citizens as well as immigrants as they see fit.

I'd like to end on an optimistic note. What do you feel is a positive result of this current crisis?

It may lead to greater understanding of the imperial role the US plays in the world and may lead to a US foreign policy that is more consistent with the ideals and values that America espouses.

editors' note: Amy Goodman (pictured with Barsamian) authored the introduction to Barsamian's new book and is also the former host of the Pacifica's radio program "Democracy Now!" She was forced off of four of the five networks but can be currently heard on the daily "War and Peace Report" on hundreds of radio and cable tv stations nationwide.



MONKEY OBSCURA

Reporting on Primate Research

The monkey's name was Jaws. To go by the videotape six reporters and I watched in a plain conference room in August 2000, the rhesus monkey was not having a good day.



Philip Dawdy
Basil Childers
Joshua Krause

He was strapped into a rolling chair as a primate technician fit two aluminum bands around his penis. "Come on, big guy," the technician cooed. And then he gave Jaws two jolts of electricity, causing the 20 pound monkey to ejaculate onto a piece of plastic.

Jaws grunted and screeched.

The video had been shot five months earlier and was grainy. But there was no mistaking that the monkey, one of 2,600 or so rhesus monkeys housed at the Oregon Regional Primate Research Center, was not enjoying this business. The center is owned by Oregon Health & Science University and has a worldwide reputation as a basic science romper room where researchers probe the cellular mysteries of reproductive biology, virology and neurology.

As we sat there, Matt Rossell — a former technician at the center — explained how Jaws went through the same procedure known as electro-ejaculation once a week. The procedure was used to gather semen for in vitro fertilization studies. As a reward, Jaws was given a piece of fruit and returned to his cage to await the next episode.

There were other monkeys living the same way at the primate center, Rossell said. Almost a thousand of them were living by themselves indoors in small metal cages (the remainder lived outdoors or in group colonies).

Rossell had called this press conference to make public what he alleged were inhumane conditions at the center, violations of federal law concerning the psychological well-being of research animals, management lapses, and a generally nasty, slipshod attitude toward research animals.

He rolled another six minutes of videotape showing monkeys auto-fellating, banging themselves against cages and generally looking depressed and ill-cared for. The press con-

ference then turned into a squabble between Rossell and the reporters; after all, the young man with the earnest voice and the bowl haircut was kicking at the brickwork of the biotechnology-industrial complex.

As a rule, nothing tweaks mainstream reporters more than someone drubbing the status quo.

Videotape does not lie, I told myself as I sat there. Its context can be edited into something other than its original shape, of course. But the rhesus monkeys with the chestnut eyes and the Thorazine stares were as real as the reporters leaning forward on their chairs and laying into Rossell.

I knew that because eight months earlier, I'd stood inside the cinder block rooms at the primate center and watched monkeys bounce about their cages.

Thirteen miles southwest of Portland, Oregon, past the suburban strip-mall monoculture of Hillsboro, sits the Oregon Regional Primate Research Center. Opened in 1964 and buried deep in a forest of second growth Douglas firs and cedars, it is the oldest of the eight federally funded primate centers. Its initial purpose was to help plug the science gap between the USSR and the USA after the Soviets trounced America in the early days of the space race.

The premise behind using primates as experimental vehicles is that they are us. Chimpanzees share 99 percent of human DNA and are capable of reason, emotion, and language approaching a human scale. Rhesus monkeys have perhaps 95 percent of human DNA; a female rhesus has a 28-day reproductive cycle; rhesus sperm and eggs are biologically similar to humans; their immune systems function much the same as ours; and, minimally trained, they can whip ass at computer games against a 9-year-old human.

All of which makes rhesus monkeys (*M. mulatta*) fine models for reproduction studies, AIDS research, and psychological inquiries.

Non-human primates, as they are technically known, are one-stop shopping for a scientist with an inquisitive mind and a federal research grant.

Over its 40 years, the center has received much attention. Months after the cloned sheep Dolly was born in 1997, one of its scientists nearly cloned a monkey. Two years after that, members of the Animal Liberation Front sent envelopes rigged with razor blades to four center scientists. And in January 2000, Gerald Schatten, another of its scientists, was splashed all over the world media, touted as the man who'd finally cloned a monkey.

The trouble was that he hadn't. Being an investigative reporter with a rudimentary grasp of biology, I'd figured that out after reading his journal article. So one sunny morning I drove out to the center with my newspaper's photographer to look around.

My visit was regulated by a whimsical, gray-haired former priest, the center's public information officer.

He showed me hundreds of monkeys romping about in one-acre outdoor enclosures. The happy outdoor monkeys are the picture the center likes to present to the outside world. Its brochures and website show images of monkeys in matriarchal groups, lovingly bunched together in fields of wildflowers. What the center wants the public to understand is that it takes very good care of its monkeys.

My tour guide then led me into a low cinderblock building, a place visitors are rarely shown. What I saw is what the center, and the primate research industry as a whole, certainly doesn't announce on any brochure or website. Room after room of a dozen or so monkeys in stainless steel cages, one monkey to a cage,

their faces either pressed up against the grates or pulled back into the recesses of the cages themselves. Some are active, others are not. These are the research monkeys. In the cause of scientific progress, they are poked, prodded, bled — and, often, at the conclusion of the studies in which they are subjects, they are killed. The center does not advertise that either.

Fully cognizant of those facts, I walked from room to room. I was not troubled by any of it. These monkeys could have been stuffed animals lining the shelves at Toys 'R' Us. My purpose was to get background material for my story about Schatten.

All of that drummed at me as I listened to the reporters laying into Rossell. Still, it's embarrassing to admit that all of the proper questions didn't sail into my head as I sat there. Could a well-regarded center of learning not take care of its animals? Were monkeys going mad? Was it possible that Rossell had the goods on the center?

I simply knew that something felt out-of-place. After all, I hadn't seen monkeys behave as they were in the videos during my visit. And the electro-ejaculation procedure looked beastly.

But all that came of his exposé was that the local television stations aired some of Rossell's clips as well as his accusations; they included comments from the center and OHSU denying everything. A few days later, *The Oregonian* ran a story in which OHSU claimed that Rossell had been an investigator for PETA prior to working at the center and that he'd hidden that fact from them. That made him a spy and his evidence unreliable.

One afternoon a month later, I slipped a copy of that video into a VHS deck at work. Soon after, I hit the stop button. If what Rossell had videotaped was in fact the truth, then the primate center and OHSU had a lot of explaining to do.

The trouble was getting enough evidence to even begin figuring out what questions to ask. The trouble was also Matt Rossell.

He seemed like an innocent teenager — all rosy muscles, tan skin, fresh from the cornfields of his native Nebraska. But, by October, he'd become frantic and repeatedly bickered with me when we spoke by phone. The prior month, he'd filed an official complaint with the USDA, which had launched an investigation of the center, and he was on edge. Also, I learned that the center had hired a respected primate behaviorist, Carol Shively, to visit the center and issue a report. Meanwhile, each weekend, animal rightists were protesting on the street in front of the primate center.

Still, no one was following up on Rossell's story and this had prompted him to call everything from the *New York Times* on down. He needed someone to believe him. All

I could offer was that his video had convinced me that it would be interesting to test the truth of his claims.

In November 2000, I sent the primate center a public records request, seeking copies of officials' emails and letters as well as five years worth of minutes of an obscure scientific review panel called the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee.

Each animal research facility in the United States is required to have an IACUC. Staffed almost exclusively by its own scientists, the committee is charged with ensuring that federal law concerning research animals is followed. In short, it's supposed to make sure that scientists don't put animals through what is considered excessive pain and psychological distress — unless the excess is justified in the researcher's protocol.

From the records I obtained, I soon determined that Rossell was at least partly right.

A memorandum established that the center's head veterinarian had resigned and a manager had been reassigned in the wake of an OHSU investigation. And in two IACUC meetings soon after Rossell went public, center scientists openly questioned the care of monkeys in a few research projects. As a result, one project was briefly halted. Another project was terminated.

This was serious. In the prior five years, not once had IACUC members clamped down on, much less criticized, any center scientist's research. If Rossell's allegations were true, then the IACUC should have stepped in long before a round of public outcry and a few stories on television news prodded them into action.

Were they hiding something? I wondered.

Buried in an IACUC document, one scientist noted that Carol Shively, the outside consultant, had completed her evaluation of the center and was "not impressed." I knew that was scientific code for "We have a problem."

Soon after, I requested a copy of Shively's report as well as medical records for 37 monkeys. My request for Shively's report was denied.

Under the Animal Welfare Act, research facilities are supposed to accommodate the "psychological well-being" of non-human primates. How that well-being is to be measured or tended to isn't spelled out in either the act or USDA regulations. Well over 10,000 primates are housed at American research facilities. They are our evolutionary cousins and, psychologically, are highly advanced. It would stand to reason that the act would spell out just how much psychological non well-being scientists may subject primates to.

I mention this because Rossell's central claim is that everything at the primate center — the single cage housing, the experiments, the lack of social contact — factored into the monkeys' well-being.

Records and documents are usually dull reading; the medical records I received in January 2001 were not. Going back into the early 1990s, they detailed the case histories of 24 monkeys in a nutritional experiment and 13 monkeys who'd been subjected to the electro-ejaculation procedure.

After combing through those records, I determined that there were 49 instances in which the 13 electro-ejaculation monkeys had



Records and documents are usually dull reading; the medical records I received in January 2001 were not. Going back into the early 1990s, they detailed the case histories of 24 monkeys in a nutritional experiment and 13 monkeys who'd been subjected to the electro-ejaculation procedure.



engaged in self-injurious behavior, as the documents termed it. The monkeys were biting themselves, banging their heads against cages, one biting his own genitals, another drinking his own urine.

The other monkeys were worse. Primate center medical records showed 236 instances of self-injurious behavior, mostly concentrated between 1998 and 2000. Five of the monkeys had bitten themselves so severely that they had fingers amputated; two of the monkeys had double amputations. One of the monkeys had ripped into its lower leg so deeply that it severed a vein; the monkey was later euthanized. Another three received constant treatments with anti-depressants and Naltrexone, a drug commonly prescribed for heroin addicts.

Soon after learning these facts, the center was cleared of all of Rossell's allegations by the USDA. I was puzzled.

Several primate experts around the United States, including ones at other primate centers, confirmed what I'd seen in the records as a sign of abnormal behavior — even for monkeys living in captivity. But they wouldn't tell me why the monkeys were injuring themselves.

I continued to make requests for the Shively report. By this time, OHSU had one of its lawyers involved. My requests were denied.

Frustrated, I called Carol Shively. She's a professor of pathology and psychology at Wake Forest University's medical school in Winston-Salem, N.C. During our interview, she was critical of the electro-ejaculation procedure she'd seen during her two days at the primate center.

"It traumatizes the animal," she said. "That represents an insult to the animal that resulted in behavioral problems like an animal chewing on itself. I've been around primate centers for almost 20 years and seen a lot, but I was shaken and upset."

Nor did Shively care for the attitude of the primate center's associate director toward the semen-gathering procedure.

"He said he'd never seen the procedure but that he'd heard that the monkeys found it pleasurable," she said. "I had to bite my tongue to keep from saying he ought to try it himself."

Meanwhile, OHSU kept denying my requests for Shively's report, until on March 7, 2001, the university relented and faxed me a copy.

Couched in the cool language of science, Shively's narrative was still hot and, to the best of my knowledge, was the first time someone

within the primate research field had so deeply criticized a primate center.

Shively wrote that research "at the facility involve[d] hardship to the experimental animals." She concluded that the center housed "behaviorally aberrant" monkeys.

Shively argued that the monkeys were aberrant because they were housed alone and for creatures "dependent upon their social relationships for their physical and psychological well-being," single-cage housing was disastrous.

Then came the bombshell.

"The awake electro-ejaculation procedure observed by me while visiting the primate center did not appear to be humane and should be terminated immediately," wrote Dr. Shively.

She sounded a bit like Matt Rossell.

The same day that I received the report, I had an appointment to meet with the director of the primate center. Within hours, the center had cancelled the meeting and refused to reschedule.

Over the next two weeks, I contacted OHSU board members, members of Oregon's congressional delegation and USDA officials. I wanted to know what each intended to do about the situation at the primate center. Board members ditched my calls. US Rep. Earl Blumenauer (D-Portland) would not address the report, but at least he said that Congress was grappling with alternatives to animal experimentation.

One USDA official said the Shively report was sufficient cause for the agency to review, once again, how the primate center collected monkey semen.

On March 23, *Willamette Week*, where I am a staff reporter, published an article detailing my findings. It contained no comments from the primate center or OHSU; both still refused to talk or to answer emailed questions. The response in Portland was intense; *WW* received more letters to the editor than it had for any article in over a decade. To judge by the emails I received, the article was also well read on the Internet.

But I had expected the story to be picked up nationally. After all the Shively report was unprecedented; and, my article had independently and factually established that some research monkeys were acutely suffering while being housed indoors in small cages, 24 hours a day with no sunlight or direct interaction with other monkeys. I never received a single phone call from another reporter.

In my article, I hadn't said that animal research was wrong, that the primate center was doing bad science and that all the research animals at the center were eating themselves alive. I may as well have.

A week after the article appeared, OHSU began to attack me by letter and through a whispering campaign. I was an animal rightist, the rumor mill went, complete with a card in my wallet asking that no medical procedures developed through animal research ever be used on me.

I'm not an animal rightist. I do however believe in open inquiry of the inner workings of large institutions. That I bumped into a story that ran counter to the received religion of scientific progress is not my fault. I would have only been at fault if I had not gone where the facts led me.

That Oregon Health & Science University and the Oregon Regional Primate Research center — both of which can lay claim to being excellent scientific institutions — have trouble with open inquiry when it is applied to how they care for their research vehicles is sad. Still, to its credit, the primate center last summer began a multi-million dollar program to build social housing facilities for several hundred of its monkeys.

In December, after being banned from the center for nine months, I drove out to Hillsboro, turned right and wound through the stand of Douglas firs and cedars. The new housing, essentially cages the size of a small greenhouse, seemed about as good a deal as research monkeys are likely to get. I also wanted to see the changes the center made to the electro-ejaculation procedure.

You see, ORPRC now gives valium to its electro-ejaculation monkeys, to calm them while their penises are jolted with electricity. How calm that might be, I really wanted to see. ★

What the Fuck Are You Saying?

How the Left has Failed to Communicate its Message to a Mass Audience

Scott Puckett



“We want to talk right down to earth in a language that everybody here can easily understand.”

-Malcolm X

“While jargon is a common shorthand for communicating to like-minded people, it can be stultifying and stupefying for the uninitiated.”

-Steven Heller

For some unknown reason, most leftist communications (whether written or spoken) are so complicated that they are, at best, virtually unintelligible. Jargon-laden, awkward phrasing – by any measure, leftist communications are just bad. This academic language hasn’t made it easy for people to understand, much less support, liberal causes. As numerous conservative politicians have shown us, it’s easy for people to support a Contract With America or a War On Terrorism, even if they may not fully understand what those words suggest. It’s more difficult to get people to organize in opposition to the concept of globalization (describe it as potential lost jobs for the American worker and watch how long it takes dockworkers get behind the cause). And this illustrates the primary failure of the Left – the absolute failure of its communications and messages to reach a wider audience.

In order to help make the Left relevant again, we must develop a new, common sense approach to communications. Call it a marketing or branding strategy if you like (“New and improved Left! Now with 20 percent more intelligibility!”). Since mainstream leftist ideology typically focuses on equal rights and protection under the law, a living wage, sustainable growth and the like, it shouldn’t be *that* difficult to get blue-collar workers behind these causes – they are the people who are most affected by these issues and who are most likely to fight for them. However, it seems that the working class views leftist ideology with suspicion, and with good reason – for the most part, leftism never came down from the Ivory Tower to work second shift on the factory line. Leftism stayed in the white-collar world where its academic theories rubbed tweed-covered elbows with management.

*Defining a Communicative Event,
or, What Happens When You Open Your Mouth*

Academics who write about non-scientific subjects use a lot of words – they might as well get paid by the ton. Since sociologists and sociolinguists have studied what occurs in communication most extensively, much of the writing on the subject is difficult to wade through.

A communicative event¹ is a fancy way to describe having a con-

versation or reading a book. There’s a topic of conversation and usually someone (a speaker or an author) voices an opinion. However, in order for communication to occur, everyone who is involved must understand what’s going on. For example, a reader must be literate and speak the language that the author used. To be effective, communication must focus on the listener or reader. The speaker or author must take political leanings, educational background, gender, race and other factors into account to anticipate reactions and tailor the message to have the most effect.

How to Communicate: A Brief Lesson

The above factors will determine the appropriate register² – that is, the language you use. After all, it’s just common sense that, to take two examples, college professors and trash collectors talk differently. In any case, speaking as plainly as possible ensures that everyone can understand you. While you may use academic language while talking to a fellow academic, using such language with someone who didn’t graduate from high school (but still feels just as cheated by the system as you do) will result in nothing but feelings of inferiority, bitterness, and resentment.

Unfortunately, most leftists seem to ignore this common sense approach to communication and load essays with words like praxis, hegemony, and paradigm. It seems that leftists assume that everyone talks like they do. That’s an optimistic view. The pessimist might argue that leftists use this language intentionally to leave less educated people out of the dialogue entirely.³

The solution is simple – talk in a language that everyone can easily understand so that you don’t harm leftist causes by confusing people who have a vested interest in those issues but may lack the academic collegiate background necessary to wade through the theory. Or, if you can’t manage to do that, don’t talk at all. At least you won’t make anyone feel stupid or uneducated if you keep quiet.

We Regret To Inform You That No One Gives A Shit About Your Privilege

Most leftist writing absolutely fails to communicate to a wider audience on every level. In some cases, it doesn’t even communicate to the Left (especially if it doesn’t use alternate spellings, frequent references to prejudices, and constant acknowledgments of other people’s pain). To be as blunt as I possibly can, it seems like a godawful racket of whining. It sounds like an orchestra of two-year-olds, all of whom are throwing temper tantrums simultaneously. It is the sound of people failing to do much at all except talk.

There are randomized text generators that essentially throw text together based on certain rules. The best of these⁴ generates text which

is virtually indistinguishable from most academic leftism. Here are a few examples – one from an actual article submitted to a magazine, the rest randomly generated. Try to tell them apart:

1. “Baudrillard’s critique of subtextual discourse implies that sexuality serves to marginalize the underprivileged, given that culture is interchangeable with reality. It could be said that the subject is interpolated into a textual Marxism that includes truth as a totality.”
2. “Indeed, the heterogeneity of interests at stake at such protests (i.e., neo-liberalism, or a freedom that is limited exclusively to one of the market) presents itself as a necessary precondition for the construction of a democratic movement, yet there is nothing in and of such a heterogeneity which guarantees a democratic politics.”
3. “If one examines capitalist narrative, one is faced with a choice: either accept constructivist postcultural theory or conclude that discourse comes from the collective unconscious. The subject is interpolated into a socialist realism that includes consciousness as a paradox. Thus, capitalist narrative suggests that culture is used to marginalize minorities.”

Given up yet? The second excerpt was written by a person. The rest are computer generated. As a test, I asked people to pick which one was real. No one in my control group got the answer right. The problem is that a computer script can generate language that mimics leftist writing so effectively that people can’t tell the difference between the script’s output and actual writing. By following simple rules, a computer can create these grammatically and, in many cases, semantically correct essays on the fly. The logic may seem circular and the syntax may seem so tortured that shooting it in the head would be a mercy, but these passages aren’t that different from the average leftist paper on ... well, whatever. And Paul Fussell would identify this as bad language.⁵

Many people use big words to make themselves or their ideas sound important (or to obscure the meaning and make it sound pleasant or desirable). It may also be the case that people use big words to sound more important and make their opinions seem more significant.⁶ But that could then mean that the Left is essentially a clique and people are scrambling for status in a movement that is theoretically devoid of status or class ...

Let’s not worry about that now though. The key point here is that leftist communications tend to feature big words when more plain-spoken language is available.⁷ This failure to communicate yields confusion and – just to make sure this is firmly in mind – continues to exclude people who, due to social and economic circumstances, would likely be most receptive to these messages.

But really – isn’t it more important to seem intelligent to your peers than it is to communicate across arbitrary social, economic, academic and political boundaries? Isn’t it more appealing to use convoluted grammar, jargon and toss around theory that you haven’t learned how to put into practice yet?

Theory – Practice = Bullshit

This is where it gets sticky – putting these ideas into practice. For your convenience, here’s a summary, broken down into bullet points:

- **KISS – Keep It Simple, Stupid.** Sure, maybe it’s a slightly insulting acronym, but no more so than some of the poorly written progressive articles and books that I’ve read. Drop the jargon. Drop the academics. Talk and write in a language that everyone can understand. If you don’t, you make readers turn the page. And that’s the best case scenario.
 - Think about who you’re talking to. Shift registers when appropriate.
 - If you can’t manage to keep it simple and consider your audience, keep quiet. At least you won’t do any inadvertent damage.
- Above all else, keep this in mind – the language we use shapes how we think and act⁸ – in short, how we deal with the world. Consider how people who may not have an academic background will respond to your words. Will you describe the world to them in terms that confuse them, thus affirming (or reaffirming) linguistic/social inferiority (which will also put you on the side of elitists who only want power for themselves) or will you describe the world in simple terms that everyone can understand, thus letting people know that they can and must play an active role in determining the outcomes of their lives? Your answer should be simple. ★

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¹ For more information, see D. Hymes’ “Toward Ethnographies of Communication: The Analysis of Communicative Events.” It is far more exhaustive in its explanation and analysis of these points.

² A register is a mode of communication that is appropriate to a situation and audience; you might not use slang with a professor or profanity with your parents while you might do so with friends. The language and way you speak in each situation is a register or functional variety. Shifting registers may also involve changing dialects, if a speaker happens to be bidialectal. (Chaika 82)

³ “If it is plausible that ideology will in general serve as a mask for self-interest, then it is a natural presumption that intellectuals, in interpreting history or formulating policy, will tend to adopt an elitist position ... and emphasize [e] rather than the necessity for supervision by those who possess the knowledge and understanding that is required (so they claim) to manage society and control social change.” (Chomsky 83)

⁴ <http://www.elsewhere.org/cgi-bin/postmodern>

⁵ “There must be in the language, as there is not in, say, *fuck*, an impulse to deceive, to shade the unpleasant or promote the ordinary to the desirable or wonderful, to elevate the worthless by a hearty laying-on of the pretentious.” (Fussell 101)

⁶ As Fussell suggests, “the quest for individual social significance is unremitting, and if you’ve not earned it, you can affect it by the means chosen by most Americans, verbal pomposity.” (Fussell 103)

⁷ Fussell alternately calls this tendency syllable augmentation (103) and syllable multiplication (106).

⁸ Edward Sapir and Benjamin Lee Whorf’s research effectively proved that, as Whorf wrote, “an accepted pattern of using words is often prior to certain lines of thinking and forms of behavior ...” (Cleary 79)

Fela Anikulapo Kuti

V.I.P. – *Vagabonds In Power*
MCA Records, 2000

One in the long line of Fela reissues to appear in recent years, this two-song excerpt from the 1978 Berlin Jazz Festival marks a pivotal point in the history of one of Africa's most influential and controversial musicians. Having risen to an unprecedented height of international renown for an African artist, 1978 found Fela teetering on the pinnacle of his political and musical journey. He had recently been banned from performing in Ghana after a riot broke out at a concert in Accra and the year before, Nigerian soldiers had destroyed his self-declared independent state, the "Kalakuta Republic" – a violent raid that was also responsible for the death of his mother. Apart from being a giant leap back onto the international scene after more than a year of such tragedy, the show in Berlin provided Fela with much needed funds. The money from the festival would later provide him with the financial backing for his campaign to become the President of Nigeria – a campaign that was quickly blocked by the Nigerian authorities. Thus, this recording stands as an aural snapshot of a moment of deep transition in Fela's career. The physical foundations of his musical empire had been jolted and he was about to enter a new phase in which his music and his politics were more closely tied than ever before.

Lyrical, both songs on the disc are directed at the corruption of Nigerian authorities. In "V.I.P.," Fela criticizes Nigerian politicians for ignoring the poverty, hunger and unemployment of the people in favor of catering to whims of theft and talking "nonsense." "Authority Stealing" compares petty street crime to the crimes of government officials – asserting that the criminal politicians receive no punishment for their acts, while the street criminals receive lengthy jail sentences. These songs touch on pieces of the major theme in Fela's work as a political musician. Like his counterparts in other African countries, his music is propelled by his criticisms of social institutions – most specifically his critiques of the Nigerian government itself. With this reissue of Fela's headlining performance at the Jazz Festival in Berlin, and indeed with each of the recent Fela reissues, the historical portrait of the father of Afrobeat becomes clearer and his impact on the course of modern music and politics becomes ever more evident.

- Hal Hixson

Lagbaja

We Before Me
IndieDisc, 2001

"Simply said, society blooms when each of its members learns to place the group's interests above his individual interest. We before Me."

- From the album liner notes

Lagbaja is an artist who is submerged in meaningful mystery. In Yoruba, the word *lagbaja* literally means "somebody, anybody, nobody-in-particular," a name that focuses the audience on the ideas behind



the music rather than the personality of the musician. In addition to this nominal distancing from individual identity, Lagbaja also always performs with his face covered – thus, physically disguising his identity while making his persona available for all. With these identity obscuring techniques, Lagbaja at once symbolizes the relevance of his message to peoples of Africa while at the same time showing the tendency of the West to condescend toward or even forget African countries and cultures in the cycles and considerations of international events. Coming from a faceless and nameless critic, the poignant concepts that underlie Lagbaja's music are allowed to drift through the masses, carried by their unstoppable rhythms and transcendent melodies.

We Before Me is a compilation of songs gleaned from a trilogy of albums released by Lagbaja in 2000. The musical form in Lagbaja's work bears the definite imprint of Afrobeat, the musical style created by Nigerian superstar Fela Anikulapo Kuti decades ago, but it also contains traces of highlife, juju and more traditional African music such as Bata drumming. Lagbaja's music also incorporates rhythms and melodies inspired by Western genres such as rock, funk and jazz while continuing to push the boundaries of these traditions by using electronic beats and samples. With all of these influences and histories brewing in his musical pot, Lagbaja has truly created a sonic stew that achieves what only the best in music can – a successful call on the past and present combined with a visionary eye toward the future.

In his lyrics, Lagbaja carries the torch of other African musical social critics while tempering his politics with profound musings on philosophical and metaphysical questions, but while he may take on serious issues such as the tenability of modern media, the content is always couched in popular phrasing – Lagbaja is consistent in his use of Yoruba and Pidgin English, the languages spoken most frequently by the population of south-western Nigeria.

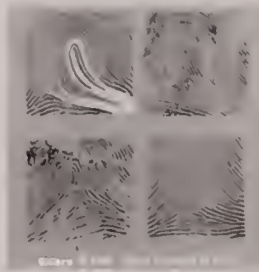
So, Lagbaja finds a place in his music where he can speak to concerns of the people of his nation while still addressing larger social and political dynamics, and in turn, he bridges the boundary, as many great artists do, between the local and the global – between the individual and society – between Me and We.

-Hal Hixson

Elders of Zion

Dawn Refuses To Rise
Incidental Music
www.incidentalmusic.com

"A soundtrack for the revolution" would be one way to describe *Dawn Refuses To Rise*, a new album by the Elders of Zion. The Elders use alternately energetic, moody, mellow and trippy electronic dance beats as a canvas for eclectic sound samples from revolutionary struggles and people under fire across the decades and around the world. There are French Maoists discussing revolutionary organizing, taken from Jean Luc Godard's 1967 film "La Chinoise"; an Australian libertarian explaining Marxist eschatology in 1960; a Yom Kippur prayer from a



Moscow synagogue; Israeli children fighting over toys; a punk show in Ontario in the 1950s; a speech by activist leader Mario Savio at Berkeley in 1965; an SDS member speaking during the takeover of Harvard's University Hall in 1969; a caller to a talk show hosted by Ram Dass in 1970; and field recordings from the protests against the IMF, DNC and RNC over the past few years: protesters singing "this is what democracy looks like"; police radios calling for reinforcements and the sound of marching feet and firing tear gas canisters; medics calling for water.

In "What's Your Badge Number?," a demonstrator verging on the cliché with his earnest, memorized sound bites says, "My name is Vision, I came from California to protest here ... I am here to fight a system that puts capital first ... I am being open and honest with you. You hit me on the head with your club. I want to know your badge number." The chaotic sounds of protesters being beaten, cops running and tear gas being fired become almost surreal and dreamy over a mellow, slightly jazzy beat.

The sound loops on "Future Avant-Garde Society," by contrast, are industrial, driving and relentless – like an electronic version of the protesters' bucket drums. After the talk show caller rants that "We know the best noisemakers aren't necessarily the best peacemakers," the track ends with a robotic voice intoning that "This movement created by Communists will destroy capitalism ... a classless society will be born."

-Kari Lydersen

Fin Fang Foom

Texture, Structure And The Condition Of Moods
Lovitt Records

Fin Fang Foom is a protégé of groundbreaking bands Rein Sanction, Bob Evans, and Bitch Magnet. Throughout the 90's, these bands were pioneers experimenting with melody, halting and dissonant guitar work, moving sheets of crunchy mid-range bass, and bombastic yet creative drumming. Together they led a post-punk rock movement that came to be known as emocore. As a debut record, *Texture, Structure And The Condition Of Moods* carves a strong niche for Fin Fang Foom. They don't sound like their heroes instead they allow personal tastes to breathe with authenticity. The heavy subtleties that fans of the genre have come to appreciate are represented with very few glitches.

The common obstacle of this genre is the absolute necessity for strong vocals. More often than not male bands are given unearned credit on this point by passing off disrupting off-key singing as stylistically unique. "Of Weddings And Funerals," the third track on *Texture, Structure And The Condition Of Moods* is the proving ground for bassist and singer Eddie Sanchez. The song undulates like a tide pool of wounded colors and Sanchez not only keeps up, but also establishes warm fluidity while piano, drums, guitar, and bass rotate feverishly beneath.

True to the genre, Fin Fang Foom indeed value



startling musical arrangement. "Deception" is an exhausting gyration of time structure, only the fatigue is a key ingredient as the song captures the cycle of emotional push and pull, confusion and comprehension. The math rock element is the right for the vibe and their tasteful use of it indicates that Fin Fang Foom are much more than peddlers of supererogatory musical calisthenics.

One should consider *Texture, Structure And The Condition Of Moods* as a series of movements in one piece, similar to what is found in classical music. This is the quality that Fin Fang Foom has expertly extracted from the aforementioned masters. The ingenuity of the record lies in subconsciously linking the simple opposites of similarity and difference. Sound and style are familiar in each song but are not repetitive because an explorative nature makes for unending texture; minimal and reflective work well for "Blue Holes." and forceful proclamations are sometimes called for, as in "The Fool and the Feign." It only works because Fin Fang Foom possesses good musical chops and harbors no delusions. *Texture, Structure And The Condition Of Moods* is good not because it is doing something different but because it is a unique and quality exposition of an established genre.

-Tess. Lotta

Various Artists

Home Alive Compilation II - Flying Side Kick
Broken Rekids

Flying Side Kick is the second compilation record from Home Alive, a Seattle based non-profit. The organization, formed in 1993, responds to the violence faced by urban communities. It offers, at a minimum, free self-defense classes but has created an anti-violence movement within art and activist communities. Armed with the bold mission to provide education about how bigotry, sexism, classism and homophobia create violence, Home Alive stresses community as the key factor in making the changes that are necessary to eradicate oppression and violence. Getting this point across while retaining musical integrity is a tough balance to achieve for a DIY organization looking to fund raise through a compilation record. Relying on big name acts that throw in half-assed covers or B-side studio takes is tempting and more often listeners end up with few collectible tracks and tons of gratuitous wanking. Thankfully, Home Alive invested in the freshness of mostly indie artists.

Post punk darlings The Gossip jet out of the starting gate with "I Want It (To Write)," a trashy, blues-core melody thick with Beth's spirited vocals. The Pinkos, lesliwood and Amy Ray and The Butchies cover the political statement with a rush of hook-oriented rock anthems while The Black Halos, Sub Pop's promising answer to The Clash, boost the intensity with "Worry Doll." The Need rate best in show with a stunning version of Metallica's "Frayed Ends of Sanity." Ingenious lo-fi outfit, Carissa's Weird, hush the pace with "Where Are You Now?" and by mid-disc Carrie Akre



shifts the current with pop ballad "Wishing You Well." Although there are no clunkers in the remainder of the 17 tracks, Sanford Arms gets a bit mopey with "Orange," an acoustic guitar track weighted by vocal processing.

Flying Side Kick has something for every pop music fan and, as a messenger of Home Alive's mission, it proves the bold statement nestled within the CD liner notes: "Art is a tool, a self defense strategy, a survival skill, a way to envision liberation and bring communities together. Art and music have the power to move people, express emotion, create social change. Art saves lives."

-Tess. Lotta

Polysics

Hey Bob
Asian Man Records
asianmanrecords.com



When I came across this disc in the review box at Clamor HQ, I knew I was going to be in for a treat. What was the tip off? Well, it could have been the brightly colored packaging replete with Japanese characters or the generous use of exclamation points (7 on the cover alone). Most likely it was the phrase "Tokyo New Wave Mutant" printed above the band name on the cover. Though I was the one to bring the CD home, Polysics delivered the goods on *Hey Bob*. Lo-fi electronics explode over sequenced ska beats, with liberal doses of reverbed-out surf guitars. Imagine Devo's tour bus crashing into Twin-Tone's warehouse. The result is exactly what you expect, no, demand from Japanese pop: often innovative, sometimes confusing and always refreshing.

Standout tracks include the "Wipeout"-inspired "Hotstuff" with a refrain that is maddeningly addictive (I was singing along without understanding the words – and that's not to say that they aren't singing in English), "Nice," with its clunky rhythm and vocals that switch off between Kayo's sweet, natural voice and her vocoded machine-speak and the strutting rhythm of "Monsoon" makes you want to beep along with the synth and snap your fingers to the mid-tempo beat.

Overall, plenty of rawking guitar, analog synths, vocoder and a wholly unpretentious approach to songwriting make the Polysics a band Devo should be proud to be thanked by. Make way! Tokyo New Wave Mutants Polysics are here! A fresh sound for waxy ears, check it out.

-David Stokamer

Secret Life of Machines/Crash Smash Explode split 12"

Bifocal Media
www.bifocalmedia.com

Since there are a total of nine songs on this disc (pressed on rather light, but beautiful marbled lavender vinyl) and no indication of what speed to play it at, I put it on the player and set the speed for 33 1/3 rpm.

Crash Smash Explode (CSX) sound like not quite droney but definitely plodding noise-rock, complete with the kind of desperate sounding vocals that give the tunes

some urgency despite the slow pace. "Cash Money." probably my favorite track, comes with some really huge analog electronics (with lyrics like "dah nuh nuh nuh" its hard to not sing along) and otherwise it's pretty standard noisy rock. Then I switched gears up to 45 ... the production sounds much clearer, the vocals are of a slightly higher pitch and the tempos are indeed more upbeat. Still, aside from the aforementioned track, not especially interesting.

Secret Life of Machines are the winners here with their 4-song contribution to this split. I found their slightly more mathy sound made this side a bit more compelling. The guitar work is somewhat technical, but not in a wanky way. Sonic Youth, Glenn Branca and Blastula all come to mind – repetitive riffs build into a wall of sound. The screamed vocals add another layer of grit and the thin sound of the synth that runs throughout adds a cold spooky quality to the record. Noisy, atmospheric and somewhat disturbing, this side actually works quite nicely at both 33 and 45 rpm.

In retrospect, this record probably SHOULD be played at 45 rpm, but as with Swans, Godflesh and even the Chipmunks (if you have a 16 speed on your player), it's your call; such is the TRUE magic of vinyl.

-David Stokamer

Foetus

Blow
Thirsty Ear
www.foetus.org

This is the remix album of Flow. Flow itself was a superlative album from Foetus, but the efforts provided by Phylr, Ursula 1000, Franz Treichler (The Young Gods) and more ends up with ultra-effective post-industrial beat music. Following Gash and the stifling business relationship with Sony was 6 years of chemical and alcohol suicide that ended with J.G. Thirlwell, a.k.a. Foetus, made some right stages and got into that creative flow state that brought out Flow and that triumphant, rebirth brilliance shines through on Blow, a high water mark in the Foetus discography.

-Thomas Schulte

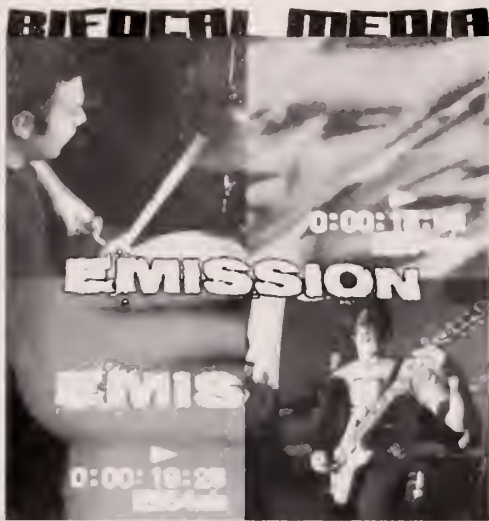
Willard Grant Conspiracy and Telefunk

In the Fishtank
Konkurrent/Touch and Go

It was Telefunk's association with Willard Grant Conspiracy singer Robert Fisher that finally allowed Telefunk to get their much-sought Konkurrent recording session by involving Willard Grant Conspiracy on this *In the Fishtank* chapter. The 6-song recording is built around fin de siecle songs such as *Dig a Hole in the Meadow* and the traditional 1869 hymn *Near the Cross*. Each group suggested three of the antique songs, but the delivery is consistent. Telefunk takes their electronica into the whispering background and allows the Willard Grant Conspiracy acoustic approach to handle the melodies. Melancholy and instrumentally rich, this is an exquisitely successful pairing based on gentle and respectful treatment of the chosen material.

-Thomas Schulte





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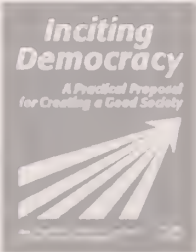
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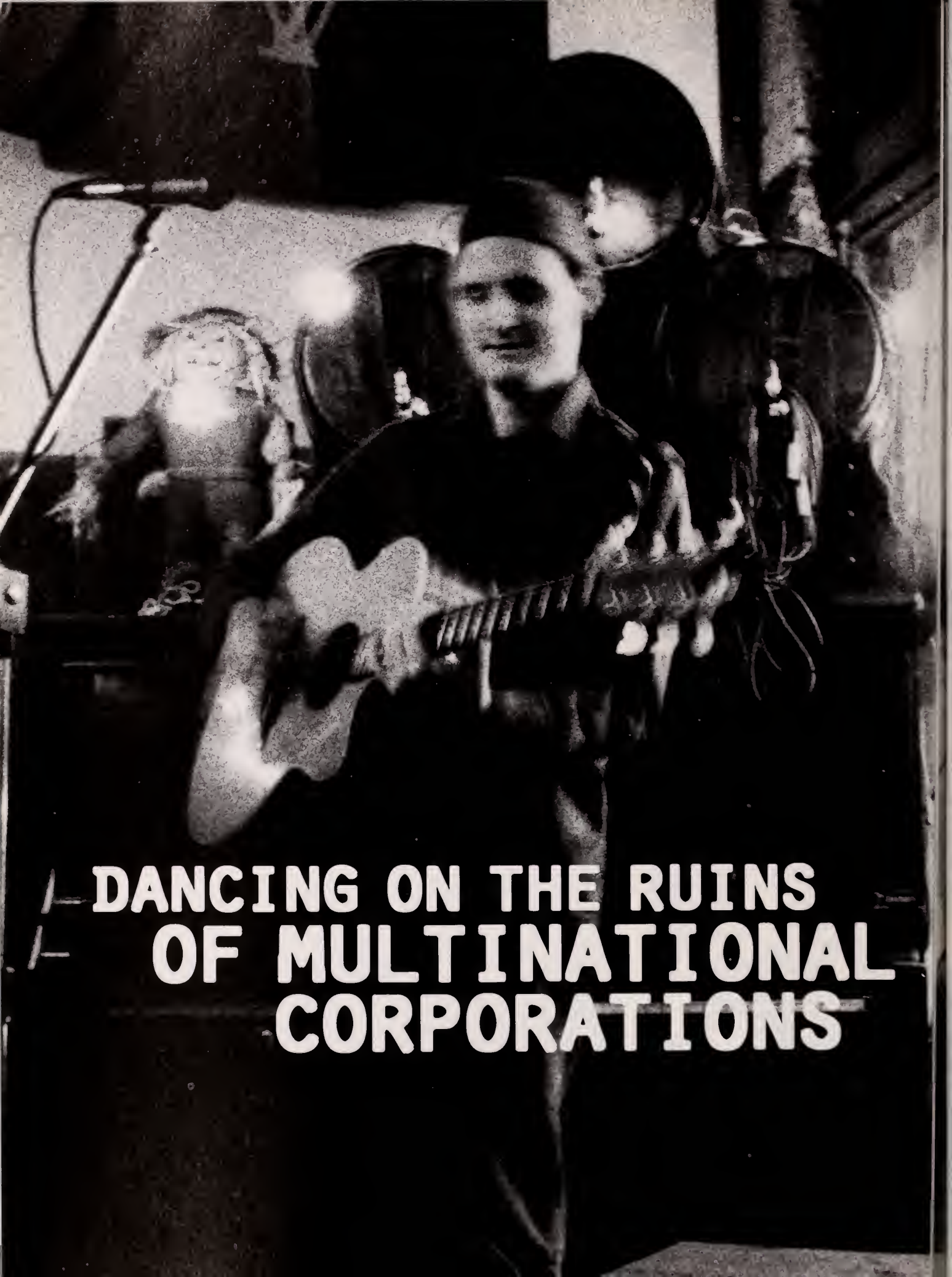
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**DANCING ON THE RUINS
OF MULTINATIONAL
CORPORATIONS**

by cat hemlock • photo david warnack

AN INTERVIEW WITH FOLK MUSICIAN CASEY NEILL

I discovered Casey Neill when I was living in Scotland this summer because his first album, Riff Raff (now out of print), was constantly blaring from the stereo at the protest site I lived on. So, I looked him up whilst passing through his hometown of Portland. His latest album, Portland West, is available on Appleseed Records.

CLAMOR: *How did you start off as a singer, and how did you get involved in the protest folk movement?*

Casey: Well, I was living in Olympia, WA, in '88 and '89 I guess and there was a lot of music going on, a lot of activism, and here in the Northwest, the ancient forest protection movement was really active; it's still going on now but back then there was a lot more cutting, a lot more response to it at the time. So, I'd been playing guitar and writing songs since I was a kid, but none of the songs were ever really good because I didn't have anything to say! So then as I got involved as an activist it started working its way into the songs. I started playing them round camp fires and people liked them.

Do you see your music and music in general as a tool for promoting social change and making people think about things?

Well, yes and no. It's certainly a way to make people think about things, no matter what it is. Though I guess you could make an argument that instrumental music makes people think about things too! But to me, it's more of a way to get people to feel things, and certainly instrumental music does that. So that's a primary attitude I have about music, it has to have an emotional core to it. To me, songs of a political nature have to have that to draw people in, connect them to things that are happening in the world. Also, giving voice to things that people might not hear; that's my job.

I think making people feel things is really important. In the activist movement at the moment there is less political rhetoric in terms of, for example, Marxist theory. It's more about making people feel things at a basic level - direct action is very much about acting out your emotions as well as what's going on inside your head. So I think it's really good to have people who are making people feel things more.

In terms of imagination, there seems to be a lot of that going on in activism, and it's what I want to do in music too. My main critique of

mainstream culture - and this may sound like I'm belittling it, belittling the seriousness of things - is that fundamentally it's boring. And so anything that counters that to me is a beautiful thing, whether it seems to be overtly political or not. And as far as the songs I write, when I started, the main voice I had was through political songs, and I wrote a lot of songs that I would say were dogmatic, full of rhetoric, and I sort of learned how not to do that. I've learned how to write songs in the process and now I'm totally obsessed with love songs, classic stuff, Sinatra. Songs like that I used to think were banal and now I see the craft in it.

Do you think it's important for artists to be interested in issues of exploitation and cruelty and what's going on around them in terms of what they're trying to express through their music and what they're trying to make people think about and feel?

Well, absolutely. If you're not paying attention, then your creative work is going to suffer; because those things are very personal too. There are two main ways to go about it, and in some ways I've transitioned from one to the other. One being a political musician who goes out there on the front lines all the time and basically acts as a cheerleader. At one point as an activist, I realized that the music was having an effect on people and it was the best thing I could do, in terms of my contribution. I was a horrible organizer, so I started doing it full time. And then as I became a musician, I was doing it as work and really working on the craft, not only the writing, but the playing, as well as playing a lot of traditional music too. So there's the cheerleader role and the 'artiste' role - which might be vain, but that's sort of what I'm doing. But at the same time, if you're not aware of the way the world is then it's just self-indulgent pap. Why subject other people to it?

I think in terms of being an artist, a creator - it's supposed to be about your emotions and connecting with people. So, if that's what you want to do so you should be aware of oppression and how that's affecting people and hurting people and basically fucking up their lives. I think it's really important for creative people to do that, because to me their role is supposed to be about caring about humans and expressing human spirit and human freedom, love and passion.

I've sort of always had that feeling; and people always talk about how I'm preaching at people, preaching at the converted and things like

that. But I don't like it when people tell me what to do. Whether it's a musician or not, I don't take it any better! But if it draws you into that place where you can relate to it, then as a result my standards for what a good song is that does that has raised considerably. So I write a lot less overtly political songs only because in terms of what I think is a good song, I'm always raising the value of what I think it is. To me, the stories are the best ones, the ones where you follow the thread of a person. There are two I've written recently; one is on the live album that my trio just came out with, about Hayes Williams who was wrongly imprisoned in Angola Penitentiary.

What's the story behind that song?

It's a true story. I heard about it, it's one of those stories that somehow came my way and I had to do a bunch of research about it, read about it and then just charted the events in the song. And on one hand it's nothing that I've ever experienced but I've tried to find the thread of the story, experience it emotionally but it's one of those stories that happens every day and it's not someone that is celebrated as a movement martyr or anything like that. It's just this story of a guy who spent thirty years in jail for something he didn't do, in one of the most horrific prison systems in America. There's a great documentary out called *The Farm* about Angola, it's harrowing. And the other song I've written recently is about the street kids in Portland, which is a very large community of homeless youth in Portland. A lot of them are crust punk kids on the street, a lot of them are junkies, a lot of them are hustling in one way or another. To me, in this society, in America; especially after the last ten years when the prosperity is out of control, and you can criticize what that's at the expense of endlessly, but it's here. So the fact that anyone is having to reach out for a meal or not have a roof on their head is obscene. And I know a lot of people who live lives like that or have lived lives like that.

There's a song off your first album called 'Flaming Arrows' which is about indigenous struggles; is there a background to that?

That song was written about and inspired by an activist called Rod Coronado, who's a Yaqui that's done a lot of animal rights work and environmental rights work. The song is a spiritual song of rage, that's the philosophy behind it.

It's a really powerful song. What kind of indigenous issues are going on in the Northwest?

There are always a lot because it's one of the places where those communities are strongest. The main one in Portland was a campaign called Enola Hill, which was a sacred area that was logged, there was a campaign in the mid-nineties to block that. There's still a lot of first nation activists in the region, working on issues of cultural appropriation; getting sports teams to change racist images - just getting people to understand these issues when they crop up. A very interesting one was happening in Neah bay up in Washington, on the peninsula, with the Makah nation: they wanted to whale. A lot of environmental groups wanted to stop them; it was one of those issues that was filled with so much grey area, I found myself coming down on both sides. So much of life to me, and in terms of what I try to get across in the music, is acknowledging these contradictions. I don't feel like a very advanced person politically, in terms of theory; but I just have basic theories like I think that when there's this much prosperity and money in society, everybody should be eating. That just seems so fundamental that it shouldn't even be politics. But I struggle with these things like everyone else, and it's trying to acknowledge that in the art. Part of it is not dumbing people down, telling people how it is. It's about painting a picture, saying there's this happening, and this, and there's all this in between.

One of my favorite bands is the New Model Army, from Bradford, UK. And they are constantly acknowledging these dichotomies.

It's a difficult one because in this society, there is so much that is evil, that is unethical, that it would be impossible to move without making some kind of contradiction. And I get angry that the system is like this, that we can't live completely according to our ideals, there's always going to be a compromise to be faced.

I think that on one hand those contradictions are not just here in this society, they are fundamental human nature. But on the other hand, because we live in this society, it forces choices like that, and to me it's just a personal thing. Sometimes it's hard enough just to deal with your own life so if something gets someone through, then I'm not going to begrudge them that, unless they're abusive.

I know that at least for me, I choose a lifestyle where I don't have much money, but at the end of the day I come from a middle-class background, so if things get really bad then my parents would help me. I've got some kind of safety net, so it's easy for me to fall into the trap of being self-righteous about not working because I have the choice. But if you don't have the choice, if you were brought up in a very poor environment and know what that's like from an early age then you might want to work, to have a good job that pays well, especially if you have a family to support.

I don't like the feeling of telling people what to do or how to live, and there is that tendency within communities where people are involved in the activist scene and a lot of people then go along with that. That sense of rage is valid but there's a danger. Anger is a powerful medicine, but people can become righteous and they're condemning people across the board and they're becoming mean. Which to me is not the point at all. And it reaches a point where you could, say, take the fundamentalist Christian right and hold up a mirror, reverse all the values and that's what you've become, you have all the same tactics. It's fucking scary! And some people argue it's just soldier mentality; I think that's bullshit!

You get that to some extent in the punk community, particularly the straightedge movement where everyone seems to outdo each other to be the most straightedge, the most punk. And it's just stupid, it's fascist almost. The punk scene is incredibly insular and at times, up it's own arse. I used to be more involved in the punk scene in the UK and one of the reasons I'm not anymore is because of this kind of close-minded mentality.

Getting out of that is why I am where I am musically. I want to make music that undermines that, music that - as much as it comes from a certain community - is for everyone. People expect you to do this or that, and so many situations are going to be exclusive in one way or another. I learned a lot about it when I was working on a project that was a tribute to Pete Seeger a few years ago. It was put out on the label I work with, which is a political label which does mostly folk stuff. It had huge rock stars on it, and people from the folk community who are virtually unknown, and friends of Pete's who worked with him in the 40's. Through working on the project, I got involved in that community a bit and got to hang out with Pete some and talk to him about a lot of stuff. He went up in front of the House Committee for Un-American Activities - which drew up the black list that destroyed the career of Paul Robeson and a lot of people in Hollywood that had subversive ideals. So there was Pete, sitting in front of Congress being interrogated in this witch hunt kind of way and his responses were so amazing. He was asked things like, "Have you played this song, of a communist nature," and he would reply by saying, "Well, I play all kinds of

songs, I know many songs. Congressman, from your home county of Harlen, or from the mountains outside the town you grew up in." Or, "But did you sing at this Mayday rally on this date?" "Well, I won't tell you where or when I've sung but I will tell you that I've sung for Rockafellers, and striking workers, and I've sung for these people and those people and I'll sing for anyone who wants to hear, god damn it!" To me, the integrity involved in that is tremendous. And he was lucky because the folk revival came along after that and he based his work on more than traditional music so his career wasn't destroyed like others' were. He's carried himself incredibly in his own life and now he's 82

and he still get up at six in the morning and chops wood for two hours. He's amazing! From that I learned a lot about the importance of taking people as people and really trying to use music to bring people together. ★

Casey Neill Discography:

Riff Raff (out of print); Casey Neill; Skree, Portland West; Where have all the flowers gone (Pete Seeger Tribute Album) - all available on Appleseed Records: www.appleseedrec.com

POND: Air Portugal II

Out front, a row of bottles in brown bags had already collected, huddled against the wall. A woman swayed and danced in awkward faux martial art sway on the enormous screen set in front of the Pond Gallery's window, the space behind and around her altering between an acid-inspired array of colors, giving the storefront the appearance of a giant television set. The wash of voices, electronic beeps, clinks, crashes, and slight undertone of music coagulated and entered into the street as one united, muffled block of sound. Passers-by stopped and watched the show from the outside for a while; the silhouettes of the people inside appeared and then vanished from the opaque net of the video screen.

A full year after its initial run as part of the London Art Biennale, the second showing of the Air Portugal exhibit opened at San Francisco's Pond Gallery on November 16 amidst a barrage of sound and imagery. The show had first opened at the invitation of David Medalla (of Fluxus fame), where it was displayed in a church basement as part of the nebulous Biennale's two-month gathering of artists and art-aficionados. The original exhibitors of Air Portugal teamed up with digital artists in the Bay area for a second showing, this time at San Francisco's Pond gallery. A small, year-old gallery and meeting place on the edge of Mission District, Pond has stepped in recently to take on the combined responsibilities of gallery, activist enclave, and comfortable hangout, and it seemed the perfect place for the two communities of artists to meet—along with anyone else who happened to drop by. Billed as 'a conversation between cutting edge new media artists from Lisbon and the Bay Area,' the mixture of aggressively competing sounds and digital sights did seem like an animated discussion of sorts—or maybe a muted argument—over the possibilities of digital technologies and their cultural (and physical) implications.

The artists' works are divided by nationality, with the Portuguese controlling the center and front window of the gallery, and the Americans scattered against the remaining walls. A DVD projector displays the work of the Portuguese artists, one after the other, against a large screen in front of Pond's enormous store-front window, while all around it, the other work beeps, buzzes, speaks, and competes for viewers' attention. Much of the work shown is concerned with experimenting with and simultaneously criticizing new technologies, each artist exploring the themes in their own way. A palm sized monitor against the opposite wall displays Scott Pagano's 'Landscape no. 2', a fractured video of travel along a desolate and indistinguishable highway, alternating between forward and reverse movement. Reminiscent of an interminably dull road trip caught on looping video, the piece suggests the sort of mundane aesthetics of surveillance video and also

invokes and critiques the internet 'highway' as well as a kind of directionless, purposeless travel.

Sue Dean's 'still.not.still' echoes the playful critique of new media evident in Pagano's 'Landscape no. 2'. In her piece, frozen photographs are sequenced to simulate a first person stumbling through urban terrain, freezing every few minutes and capturing an outline of the haphazard cityscape before continuing on. Several of these freeze frame moments are hung on the wall as photographs, like obscured spontaneous snapshots of banal city life.

In Christopher Musgrave's piece, one peers through a microscope into the colorful digital nanolife of a computer screen as competing stories on the Taliban, presumably from a recent newspaper, scroll across the surface. The viewer alternates between being able to read the authoritative texts on world politics and seeing the microscopic, pixilated miasma from which they're formed. Seed's complex project is similarly interested in the hidden mechanics of technology: an EKG monitor hooked to the leaf of a plant allows the natural rhythm of vegetative metabolism to determine which images appear on screen and at what frequency.

The Portuguese artists may have been given short shrift in this show, as all of their work appears sequentially against a single screen. Due to a lack of promised funding from the Institute of Contemporary Art in Lisbon, the artists were forced to find a more economical means of transporting and showing their work. Still, they are no less eclectic in their comments on and uses of the digital format. In Pedro Cabral Santo's piece, for instance (by far the longest shown), a trinity of well-known American Superheroes (Batman, Robin, and Superman) talk shit about one another and about the European cities they've recently visited via a scrolling text monologue.

Sickened by their hero status in the US, the three whine about the problems they have as overworked and misunderstood American Ubermensches to their analyst/viewers. The overall effect suggests an imperialist myopia and dominance through technology—a conceited monologue of the powerful to their perceived devotees. As the heroes whine on, we're forced to watch their monologues scroll past in amusement that increasingly becomes boredom and disgust. The notion that one nation/class/culture's interests tend to dominate the media is nothing new, but the monologues (which are as reminiscent of MTV's Real World 'confessions' and talking-head newscasters as they

are of fictional American heroes) imparts a sinister psychological colonialism at work. Forced to watch, at least superficially identify with, the characters on screen, the viewer becomes acutely aware of their neurotic egoism, and of the frustratingly one-sided diatribe their concerns have become.

Similarly, Joao Simoes's piece suggests a sort of unacknowledged dominance at work in the very circuitry of digital machines. The original piece will never be known exactly (at least not in this show), as it was intentionally taped in the European favored PAL format to be broken down and re-realized by American projectors, which are usually programmed to read only US-favored NTSC format. In this way, the machinery offers its own digital interpretation of Simoes's piece: a vapid gray landscape striped with diagonal black pillars, which is interesting in its own static, stylized way. Only a few blinking pixels testify to the existence of the original piece.

The images are eye-catching—even beatific; the concerns about possibilities of new media that these artists raise are, on the other hand, troubling. The pieces



equal to a more of a series of playful experiments with different uses of new technologies intermixed with reminders of the hidden dangers, cultural prejudices, and limitations inherent in the technologies themselves. Many of the pieces in Air Portugal seemingly criticize and—at the same time— aestheticize digital culture. San Francisco artist Phoenix Perry's confessional 'The Shadow of Digital Living,' tells a tragic story of one woman's embrace of and fall from the stereotypical young technocrat lifestyle. One moment she's on the cutting edge of cyberculture—a Donna Haraway-styled cyborg free from the constraints of corporeality. The next she finds herself crippled—unable even to brush her teeth. Images of a tangled circuitry of hair—the leitmotif of the narration— dangle before the camera. It's the traditional pop-star/ junkie story of an immediate rise and fall from glory. In this case, though, it's not alcohol or horse that brings the inevitable downfall, but an over-reliance on technology—with all its concomitant disease: carpal tunnel, eye-strain, burnout, and a number of yet-unnamed stress and illness that the meat undergoes as the mind is busy being connected. In some ways, her adaptation of this modern folk tale seems to sum up many of the other works' giddy fascination with, and fear of, the new postmodern magic.

— Eric Zass

POINT AND SHOOT: Toxic Emissions From the Dream Factory

Jonathan Culp

Fellow filmgoers, HOLLYWOOD STILL SUCKS. That's a no-brainer, right? All capitalist production models suck, right? However, just as capitalists produced my bike, my apartment and my favorite ice cream, they also facilitated most of my favorite movies. In fact, even rads like Jean-Luc Godard — whose retrospective at Cinematheque Ontario this fall put me on the subject — find themselves negotiating with the money boys for all those fancy cameras and strips of celluloid.

So, before we get too highfalutin about the supremacy of no-budget, grassroots video, let's acknowledge that filmmakers of sound mind have been negotiating autonomous zones out of this industry since day one. Let's recognize that the production values and saturation outreach that big money can buy are actual advantages in terms of reaching an audience. And let's admit that, in terms of finding an aesthetic that could challenge Hollywood's war on the brain, we still have a ways to go.

Godard's stuff is essential to these concerns. Here's this cranky Maoist with a hard-on for textual insertions and high art/film theorist references, with virtually no change in MO as he lurches from tiny 'art' films to Brigitte Bardot/Jane Fonda international coproductions. For ten years he managed to make films that were groundbreaking, politically daring, and often enormously entertaining.

La Chinoise seems like a good random example. It's almost all people in a room exchanging slogans, yet it's one of his zippiest, most watchable films. I can't vouch for the politics — they seem kind of elitist, rhetorical. But, thank you Art, the point is moot.

Mostly, the characters expound their own (or their class/type's) views; when Godard himself has something to say, he writes it on the wall, inserts a vignette or an aside. He even includes an ecstatic scene where a real live revolutionary theorist takes his heroine down a peg — like the McLuhan scene in *Annie Hall* taken a generous step further.

A word to the wise: not long thereafter, Godard renounced his beloved sixties output and proceeded to make many politically stringent, collectively created films and videos, most of which — if you can believe what you read, since they're impossible to find — suck worse than Hollywood.

Having revived my Cinematheque membership for this programme, I stuck around to check out a less familiar cineaste: Kinji Fukasaku, one of these guys hyped by Quentin Tarantino and his ilk. Where Godard loves to appropriate and mess with genre conventions, Fukasaku came up inside Japan's *yakuza* gangster genre, so he was presumably working within the form. But boy, does he stretch it.

While it's hard to ID the transgressions when you don't know the tradition, generally Fukasaku seems to take a typical gang war plot and insert the sleaziest, dumbest, moodiest fuckup he could fabricate as the 'hero.' The hilarious part is the way this plays off of the *yakuza* clichés of loyalty and respect — the bosses end up pacifying the freak even as he sells them out, insults them, kills them. Meanwhile, our hero goes around eating his cremated wives' bones or rescuing severed fingers from chickens. The three films I saw were so smart and so funny that I'm tempted to rationalize the part where the hooker falls in love with the pimp who raped her.

The retrospective then jumps 20 years to give us *Battle Royale* (2000), which strikes me as one of the best films I've ever seen. Having been brought up on George A. Romero, I've always been sensitive to the subversive potential of the pulp action flick. *Battle Royale*'s premise does this tradition proud: in order to

discourage massive student strikes, the Japanese government sends a class of grade nine students to an evacuated island, where they are forced to kill each other.

The social formations that get dissected in this movie evoke military, ideological and teen-angst motifs expertly and mercilessly. It runs two hours but feels about half that; it's a dream of gore-drenched fun. Yet, for all the alienation devices and wild satire, I found this film emotionally overwhelming. It does not betray its subject, which is kids killing each other. It resensitizes us to the brutality behind both authoritarian government and escapist entertainment. Not one fucking moment too soon. Maybe that's why it's first run in Toronto lasted exactly two days.

Many bits of business from *Battle Royale* were eerily reminiscent of *Freeworld*, which Pat Harrison sent my way from Vancouver. It's another post-apocalyptic comedy depicting guerrilla warfare and national decay. The main difference is that Harrison seems to *mourn* his nation.

This film rests on the sci-fi idea that Canada's problems lie with America rather than the whole stupid nation-state business, and the dialogue it uses to put those ideas across is pretty sketchy: Oh, you Canadians! Oh, you Americans! The film doesn't really achieve any emotional affect, but it does look great, and it has truly brilliant slapstick timing, which makes up for a lot of ideology.

Later, at a birthday party, my friend Bennett queues up his own vid, *The Percepta Experience*. It's an absolutely brilliant cut-up of a motivational speaker, exposing his crippled soul as he talks in manic circles for fifteen minutes. This is so simple, but it's expertly structured, with one lone, show-stopping special effect in the third quarter, and it gives up an endless supply of in-joke catch phrases. I did not say he beats HIS wife! The train is leaving the station!

The apparently celebrated *The Target Shoots First* addresses the same creeping corporatism, documenting Chris Wilcha's period of employ at Columbia House Music. I did really want to like this. Assuming the atrocious location sound is my dub's fault, though, the big problem here is the intellectual tone: chronic confusion passing for 'balanced' insight. The music industry is liable to subversion just like the film industry, and it is interesting to peek inside the office, but not so interesting that I need a montage of baby pictures or an Aerosmith interview so insultingly stupid that even Aerosmith knows it. And like my pal Siue points out, the bad guys are still making money off Wilcha, subversion or no.

Bennett to the rescue again — on December 9 he presented Toronto's first 'Punk Movie Night!' Peter Stuart and Adam Small's *Another State of Mind* documents a 1982 Social Distortion/Youth Brigade tour, and it actually held my attention for 70 minutes; that's really something. Once again though, the sound just sucked — it didn't even seem to be mixed, the ambience regularly tramples important interview clips. Then came *Fugazi Instrument*, which is just TOO FUCKING LONG. Obviously smitten with the band, Jem Cohen mulches gorgeous concert and experimental footage with 'funny' home movies and one too many standing-in-line montages. Even the music misses the mark — what's with all the instrumentals? Result: one endless, well, punk video.

Oh, what the hell — it took Hollywood a couple decades to cough up a Griffith. Maybe we can reinvent film narrative too — and without pimping for the KKK! We can dream...

PUNK MOVIE NIGHT!
At KYLES, 466 Bathurst St. just South of College
Sun. Dec. 9
Doors at 6
8:00 FUGAZI INSTRUMENT by Jem Cohen
Beautiful documentary using ten years of footage
6:30 ANOTHER STATE OF MIND (1982) by Peter Stuart and Adam Small
featuring SOCIAL DISTORTION TOUR documentary
YOUTH BRIGADE and MINOR THREAT
Admission is FREE
bring \$ if you want a vegan meal
more info (416) 690-7625

Honky

by Dalton Conley

Vintage Books/Random House, 2000

Though it is billed as a book about race, "Honky," a recent memoir by New York social scientist Dalton Conley, seems just as much about personal mythology and narrative, about the chain of anecdotes, subjectively remembered and interpreted, that create our own definition of who we are.

For Conley, key tales in this chain include the time he kidnapped a baby to be his sister; the time he was held at knifepoint on the baseball diamond; the time his friend was shot and paralyzed on New Year's Day; the time he and a friend nearly burned down the friend's apartment.

However, looking back on his childhood with a scientist's eye, Conley refined the conceptual thread that had been gnawing at him throughout his young life. This thread is the analysis of race, its blending and elusive definitions, and the way it ultimately shapes attitudes, experiences and even destiny.

Conley had more exposure to the idea of race than most children, growing up as one of the only white kids in New York public housing projects populated by Black and Puerto Rican families. His parents were artists whose low income and desire to break societal molds led them to apply for housing in the then-fairly new projects.

Conley describes his struggles to fit in and understand the world with almost uncomfortable honesty mixed with a wry, hilarious sense of humor.

Living in a kaleidoscopic jumble of various racial and class groupings, Conley gradually became aware of the effects that both have on one's life, and he realized that regardless of class, as a white person he did have options, privileges and power that the Puerto Rican and Black kids from his neighborhood would never have — options and privileges that they might not even know they were missing.

-Kari Lydersen

Irish on the Inside: In Search of the Soul of Irish America

by Tom Hayden

Verso, 2001

White people are a-historical.

White people came into existence when Europeans learned "through amnesia, denial, mob violence and the luxuries of privilege" to fully disconnect themselves from the realities of people of color.

"If Irish Americans identify with the 10 percent of the world which is white, Anglo-American and consumes half the global resources, we have chosen the wrong side of history and justice." (Hayden, 285)

Two and a half centuries after the British first invaded and occupied Ireland, the "Great Hunger" of the 1840s drove 2 million Irish to America. Hundreds of thousands of Irish peasants were forced to emigrate by colonial landlords who would rather pay to ship them away than wait for a starving populace to pay rent.

The Irish came in ships horrifyingly similar to other British-owned transatlantic vessels that carried stolen Africans to the new world in chains. A great number of them were dead or near-dead on arrival.

Assimilation into America was their tomb, a burial no more dignified or graceful than the ditches dug throughout the Irish countryside to do away with the teeming dead of the Famine.

This is a history not so far from the railroads, wars, smallpox blankets, reservations, "Indian schools" and Trails of Tears that decimated 98 percent of the indigenous population of this land. And it is a history not so distant from the

Honky



Japanese internment camps, or the universities, technology companies, textile factories, restaurants, taxicabs, sugar, tobacco, and cotton plantations that house modern-day Asian, African, Indian, Latino, Arab, Eastern European and Caribbean immigrants in America.

By telling the history of the Irish in America, and by keeping alive the centuries old struggle against British rule over Ireland, we can begin to undo the deadly notion among the Irish (and all Europeans) that we can, should, or must identify as White people. All the lies and gimmicks of assimilation aside, we (the Irish) always have been — and most certainly will be in a liberated future inextricably linked to the majority of the world's people who are not white and who have suffered, struggled against, and began rising above European (and quite often British) colonization.

"When I heard David Trimble [Loyalist First Minister of Northern Ireland] pontificating on the need for Sinn Fein [the Irish nationalist party] to be 'house trained, before being allowed into peace negotiations,' I heard the echo of my master's voice down through the ages and realized one good reason to be Irish: someone should occasionally go into the Big House and shit on the master's rug." (Hayden, 270)

Tom Hayden's *Irish on the Inside* is a beginning for the undoing of assimilation and amnesia, and the (re)creation of an anti-colonial Irish identity.

Hayden puts these political and historical ideas in a personal framework by tying together the way in which the Famine caused a sharp rise in self-hating anti-sex Catholicism and Guinness beer to his own experience as a suburban American child who was sent to a reactionary Catholic school and grew up into his father's tradition of alcoholism.

But, as Hayden makes clear, this is not the only possible path for immigrants in America, and most certainly not the only one embraced by the Irish. He draws out historical examples such as the United Irishmen who were one of many underground armed cells who came together in the 1790s to rise against British occupation and whose presence in America was one of the primary reasons for the 1798 Alien and Sedition acts (similar to the present day repressive legislation known as the Patriot Act).

There were the Molly Maguires, a militant peasant organization that, transplanted to the US, manifested in groups of coal miners that dressed as women, assassinated bosses, and generally sabotaged the coal mining industry during the 1870s.

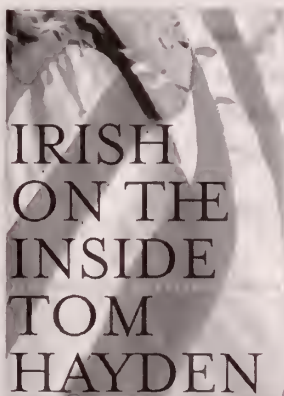
Of course, the most prominent revolutionary Irish struggle is that of the Nationalists in what is known as "Northern Ireland" (the colonial "statelet" occupied by the British military and Royal Police force since 1921). The struggle for a united Ireland goes against not only the Queen's army, but also the Loyalist paramilitaries, who are strikingly similar to the Ku Klux Klan. In the 17th century, Brits and Scots were given free plots of Irish land on the condition that they build fortresses and arm themselves against the natives. The loyalists are direct descendants of the Ulster planter class.

Hayden explicitly calls for Irish-descended people in America to both support the Nationalists and to find lessons for the rebirth of their own identity within their struggle. It is in the Nationalist communities that we find tangible efforts to keep a distinct and liberated Irish identity alive. For example, the Falls Rd. of West Belfast has murals which depict a revolutionary solidarity with the Cubans, Palestinians, Basque, American Blacks, and others struggling for national self-determination and an Irish cultural center where people are re-learning the Gaelic language.

Tom Hayden, a big-name Students for a Democratic Society member turned California state legislator, advocates a curious brand of what you might call "radical liberalism." While never opposing the Irish Republican Army's tactics of armed self-defense and agitation against the British, his lengthy description of the peace process belies his bias towards the more reformist political methods of Sinn Fein. And this curious pro-revolutionary liberalism shows itself also in the occasional sentence calling for something like a "more fair capitalism," or an understanding that America (unlike N. Ireland) is "democratic."

Nonetheless, *Irish on the Inside* is a genuine, diligent, and quite powerful call for a radical break among the Irish in America. Hayden cogently advocates for a full re-evaluation of race in America as we move demographically (and hopefully in all realms of everyday life) towards a non-white society.

For those of us of Irish descent who have already joined in the international



revolutionary struggle, *Irish on the Inside* is a valuable starting point to re-ground ourselves as people with a history, a language, a culture, and a liberation struggle to learn from and be proud of.

Without this grounding, we will remain forever locked in our status as traitors struggling to purge ourselves of the privileges and sicknesses of whiteness.
-Billy Keniston

Walker Evans: Cuba

Walker Evans
J. Paul Getty Museum Publications, 2001

How times have changed. Not that long ago, the romanticization of Cuba by people from the United States was solely the work of the left. Disaffected intellectuals once gathered for struggle sessions in smoky coffeehouses after viewing revolutionary Cuban films like *Memories of Underdevelopment* (1968). But in the post-Cold War world, it is now pre-Castro markers of Cuban culture that circulate in US culture. Gone from undergraduate dorm rooms are the posters of Che Guevara; campuses now resound with the tunes of the Buena Vista Social Club. Travel photographers drape over the poverty of contemporary Havana with a gauze of retro envy as they train their sights on all those 1950s Buicks. The martini crowd puffs smuggled Cuban cigars at fashionable restaurants like New York's Asia de Cuba, counting the days until Fidel's demise opens the Malecon to the almighty tourist dollar. Simply put, late-century tyrants who oppress in the name of the people are out, but the mid-century dictatorships that served the interests of corporate capital and the North American leisure class are seriously cool.

Walker Evans wouldn't have wanted it this way. In the spring of 1933, the thirty-year-old American photographer shipped out for Havana to document the brutal repression of dictator Gerardo Machado. A selection of Evans's photographs were published later that year in *The Crime of Cuba*, an expose of the Machado regime written by radical journalist Carleton Beals. Now the J. Paul Getty Museum in Los Angeles has published the complete portfolio in a lavish volume surely destined for the coffee tables of twenty-first-century Banana Republicans.

In his contribution to the catalogue, essayist Andrei Codrescu reminds us that Walker Evans was not a radical left-wing artist like so many of his 1930s cultural comrades. Evans never subordinated his art to his political passions, Codrescu repeatedly reassures us; he bellittles Beals for laying out in his book the factual details of economic and political oppression under the Machado regime while praising Evans for taking arty photographs of wagon wheels. Codrescu opens up Evans's work the way one might unscrew a bottle of soda over a sink: so slowly that its contents will not explode, so carefully that all the sparkle is gone.

The point, easily overlooked, is that Evans gets the question of art and politics just about right. He was not a journalist on a fact-finding mission — he left the explicit documentation of Machado's political atrocities to other photographers. And at times he gave in too easily to the romantic allure of 1930s Cuba. Evans traveled to Cuba soon after leaving France, and in some of his photographs, he makes Havana into a somewhat sweatier version of Paris. But the work expresses the political urgency of Cuban life, indirectly. Evans captures the sounds and rhythms of urban street life in photographs like *Havana Street*, where a milling crowd is arranged into a jazzy visual improvisation. He captures the city's tensions as well: the interchange between buyer and seller in *Havana Street Vendors* conveys a dusty surface of defeat, a whiff of fearful dependence, and a silent undercurrent of anger. Codrescu is half right: Evans never let his politics get in the way of his art. But that's because he never tried to separate them.

In the hands of the Getty Museum, Andrei Codrescu, and the Banana Republicans, Evans's delicate balance is erased. The images in *Walker Evans: Cuba* too easily glamorize a bitter moment in Cuban history and foster indulgent fantasies of authoritarian chic — exactly what Evans did not intend to accomplish by



going to Cuba in 1933. The publication of these photographs is invaluable to anyone interested in Walker Evans's photography or Cuban history and culture. But must all the political danger in these photographs be lost, drowned out by the sounds of Ibrahim Ferrer and the clink of ice in a glass of Cuba Libre?
-Christopher Capozzola

ZINES

independent press reviews by Eric Zass

three a.m. #7, Brainscan #14, journalsong 4

three am
2916 Stanton
Berkeley, CA 94702
Brainscan Zine
PO Box 14332
Portland, OR 97293
journalsong
PO Box 3444
Portland, OR 97208

When you get right down to it, it only takes the right combination of things — cut, scribbled, torn, typed, scrawled, and glued together — to make a worthwhile zine. All of the artists behind these three have that uncanny ability to match their design style with terse, gritty, heartfelt writing. And in this cut and paste menage a trois divided between three unique zines, they complement one another extremely well. Each is its own variety of journal — narrated in scraps of stories, in pictures, in broken bits of ideas threaded together and photocopied into an artifact you'll feel slightly nervous about carrying around in your back pocket.

Inside the Test 2

PO Box 185
Northampton, PA 18067-9998

Dark, blotchy block lettering, thickly-inked photocopied photographs, stapled and wrapped in a black ribbon should be enough to ward off any giddy go-lucky reader from this zine, but for those who seek a bit of angst every now and again, this one is filled with that sort of heavy journal-esque writing that blends macabre soul-searching with fragments of dreams, stories and personal philosophy.

glue #3

www.geocities.com/gluezine

A mini-zine small enough to get lost in your pocket, glue is filled with dozens of DIY ideas on how to create and decorate your own set of bed and bathroom goods with stuff that you probably have laying around on your floor anyway. Lampshades, pillowcases, desk sets, rugs, CD holders — three or four ideas, with directions on each of the 20 pages inside. The only problem is that the text is shrunk small enough to create serious eyestrain. Magnifying glass not included.

six by five, vol. one num. one

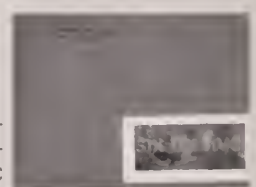
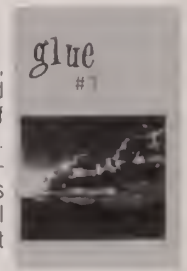
Joshua Dumas
1307 West Albion #2
Chicago, IL 60626

This is a small, handmade envelope containing cuts and pieces of photographs, short short fiction, sketches and other beautiful bits of artistic detritus. It may not qualify as a zine per se but it does a wonderful job in getting the creative ideas flowing and goes a good way in satisfying the artsy short attention span.

You Could See The Sea

Melissa Klein/Inkling
3288 21st St. PMB #79
San Francisco, CA 94110

This zine is made up of a single conversation between a mother and her daughter although most of it, aside from a brief preamble, consists of a mother's monologue about receiving news of the death of a former lover she hadn't seen for 30 years. The author's extremely well-crafted writing style and ear for dialogue make you sink into her mother's story. An interesting alternative to the glut of Q&A interview zines out there at the moment.



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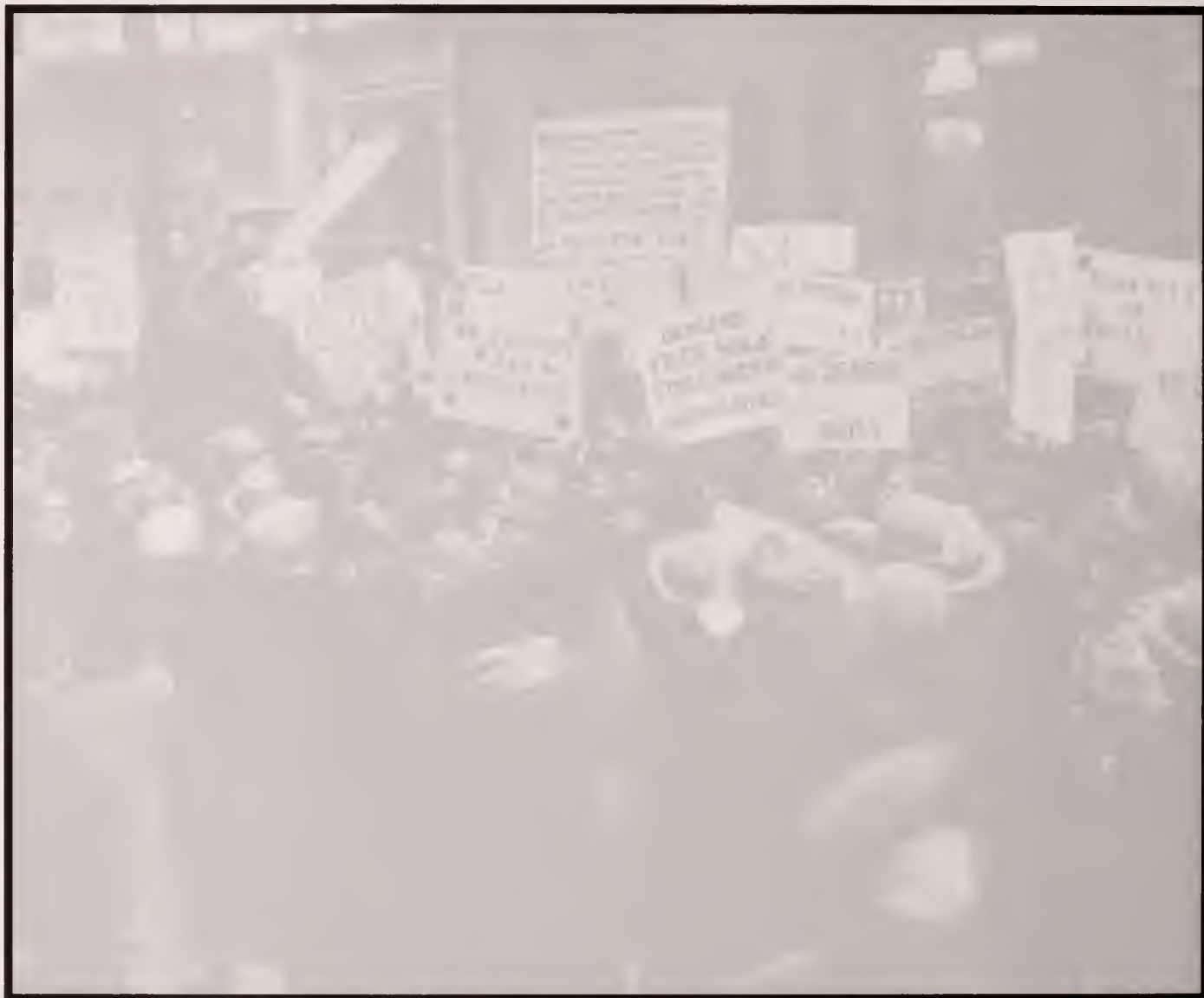
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WORKING CLASS



Activism in the American Labor Movement

by Pavlito Geshos

HEROES

The 1970s

In the early to mid 1970s, a wave of leftist radicals, veteran activists of the anti-Vietnam War movement, decided that it was time to move away from the college campus as a focus for radical agitation and action, and "move to industry" to establish a "proletarian orientation." Maoists, Trotskyists, and a wide range of leftist, social democrats got factory jobs and optimistically raised class struggle issues in the midst of an economic crisis (the great 'stagflation' of the mid 1970s). Their theory was that economic hard times would radicalize American workers, shifting workers' worldview to the political left. The goal was to make the trade unions into vehicles for broad social changes in the American society.

In the 1960s and 1970s, the American labor movement had been polarized by the 'black power' movements in the early 1970s. With the African-American workers as the vanguard, wildcat strikes in the automobile industry defied both management and the collaborationist UAW leaders. This racially charged labor radicalization seemed to mirror the general radicalization in the American society. In the early 1970s, the "Dodge Revolutionary Union Movement" (DRUM) in Detroit and the 'work-to-the-rule' (known as 'the schmoozle') slowdowns at the Lordstown, Ohio Chevy Vega plant (1972) challenged the power of the UAW bureaucracy. The union leaders reacted violently to regain exclusive control over the strike weapon. The famous "Mack Attack" where UAW President Doug Fraser led over one thousand union goons to smash through picket lines and beat up wildcat strikers at the Mack Avenue Dodge Plant (August 16, 1973) was the first wave of repression against the 'working class' heroes of the 1970s. On an individual level, the transplanted leftists in the UAW were often publicly beaten at union meetings or at the plant gates of their factories. The American workers did not radicalize to the political left, but remained committed to the same 'patriotic unionism' that enabled the great purges of militant, leftist unionists in the 1950s.

Yet the general momentum of the American labor movement actually seemed strong and positive as the 1970s came to a close. There was a very effective UAW strike against Ford Motor Company (1976).

There was the historical Mineworkers' Strike of 1977 where the United Mineworkers of America stood up to President Jimmy Carter and defied the Taft-Hartly Law. There was the famous Greyhound bus drivers strike in 1978. All of these strikes inspired a general sense of worker solidarity with great outpourings of food, blankets and money as physical proof of a generalized support for unions in struggle. There were large strike-support rallies and caravans of material aid rolled to the strikers on the picket lines. There was widespread support for farmworker unions as Caesar Chavez (UFW) and Baldemar Velasquez (FLOC) led effective boycotts to establish recognition of these farmworker unions. Even in popular culture there were films that spotlighted real working class heroes, such as *Silkwood* and *Norma Rae*.

In the 1970s, there also were active union-reform movements, some that hoped to literally unseat the established collaborationist bureaucracies in the labor unions. There was the reform movement led by Ed Sadlowski in the Steelworkers' Union. There was the famous United National Caucus led by Pete Kelly in the UAW. Last, but certainly not least, there was/is the Teamsters for a Democratic Union (TDU). All of these reform movements struggled to bring real democracy to the American Labor Movement and overturn the collaborationist union bureaucracies. Each of these movements were filled with "working class heroes," either as transplanted leftists or as sincere rank-and-file workers who wanted real democracy and reform of their labor unions. Yet none of these reform movements would actually reach the pinnacle of power in any labor union. (Only TDU would come close by backing the reform candidate, Ron Carey, in the Teamsters union in the 1990s).

The 1980s

The idea that leftists (socialists, communists and social democrats) could easily re-enter and influence the American Labor Movement essentially ended in November 1979 when a group called the Racist United Front (an alliance of the KKK and American Nazi Party organized by US government agents of the BATF) shot down five members of the

Communist Workers Party (CWP). The KKK-Nazi shooters killed CWP members in broad daylight, on national television, in Greensboro, North Carolina on November 4, 1979. Most of the CWP martyrs were active union organizers. The CWP, rather than take the role of 'transplanted leftists' inside established unions, began a campaign to *organize the unorganized* poultry packinghouse workers in the American South. Of course the KKK played a role in terrorizing workers against the idea of joining or forming unions. The CWP union organizers knew that the KKK had to be confronted before any union organizing drives could be successful. The CWP's "Death to the Klan" rally turned into a real orgy of death, their own.

The KKKers and Nazis who shot down unarmed people at a peaceful rally, were all found to be legally innocent of murder. The court established that these murderers had a patriotic right to kill communists. The Greensboro murders had a chilling effect on the entire 'transplanted left' inside the labor movement. It was obvious that committed activists inside the labor movement were not just going to be roughed up at union meetings. In the unfolding era of the 1980s they could be shot, in public places, by far right reactionaries, with the blessing and collaboration of the state and federal agencies.

Few people in the labor movement realized that Greensboro heralded a new era of official anti-unionism (as well as anti-communism) until the famous confrontation between the PATCO air-traffic controllers union and the Ronald Reagan administration. After PATCO, the era of generalized wage concessions and welfare cutbacks had begun. First, Chrysler workers in the US and Canada were forced to accept wage cuts to prop-up their employer in 1979. By 1982 the 'wage concession' dynamic hit almost all sectors of the working class. Even grocery store workers were expected to 'give back' money out of their paychecks.

After Reagan crushed the PATCO strike, capitalists enjoyed a blizzard of free money, raiding the paychecks and pensions of their employees who were told that they had to accept cuts or else. It was the PATCO strike in 1980, the direct confrontation of a union against the heavy hand of the US government that proved to be the decisive battle that would characterize the dynamics of labor history in the USA for decades to come. The inciting image of PATCO president, Steven Wallick, being led away by FBI agents in chains and leg irons (for the so-called crime of leading an illegal strike), enraged all good union members in both the US and Canada. There were calls for a nationwide general strike, but the cowardly, collaborationist union leaders of the major unions never led a general strike.

There was no unified labor response to official union busting by the US government. All the while, the major unions (as well as the

Reagan administration) spoke of support for the Solidarity union movement in Poland. Furthermore, the American unions (AFL-CIO) collaborated with the US CIA to establish anti-Communist unions in Central America through the American Institute for Free Labor Development (AIFELD). American workers made jokes about the fact that Ronald Reagan supported a worker's right to join a union, *as long as the worker went to Poland to join the Solidarity union*. The 1980s were a recapitulation of the McCarthyite tactics of the 1950s. Leftist views and tactics would not be tolerated in the American unions. The message of Reaganism was clear, if the American unions wanted to continue to exist and remain recognized by corporate powers, the unions must be agents of anti-communism as well as transmission belts for the nationwide corporate policy of wage concessions.

Profits and investment dollars for re-tooling American industry with robots would come out of workers' paychecks. Concession contracts that were voted down by union members would be voted on again and again until the concession contract was passed by a diminishing number of votes (as anti-concession workers refused to even vote for a second or third time). Autoworkers in the US and Canada were told that concessions would guarantee 'job security'. Yet concessions were used to pay for robots that eliminated union jobs. Not only would millions of American union jobs be lost in the 1980s, there would be widespread union-busting combined with a lack of expanded union organizing. By the mid-1980s all concession contracts also included provisions for extending the workweek. By 1985, the forty-hour workweek was essentially gone. The standard workweek would be six days per week at nine or ten hours per day.

There were incidents of resistance against the union busting of the 1980s and there were even a few victories. The

great "battle of AP Parts" in Toledo, Ohio in the spring of 1984 seemed to be a hopeful revival of militant struggle against union busting. Thousands of union members from many unions in Toledo, physically battled cops, scabs and goons at the AP Parts muffler factory but union leaders refused to use the tactic of 'plant takeover' to win the strike at AP Parts. The police used video cameras to tape and later to identify unionists who fought at AP Parts. Union militants were arrested at their homes, hours or days after the tape recording of disorderly riot behavior at the AP Parts plant gates. In the end the strike at AP Parts was betrayed by a frightened union leadership and workers at AP Parts lost jobs, wages and retirement benefits.

The Hormel Meatpackers strike in 1985 was also another willful refusal to use effective 'plant takeover' tactics (which the Solidarity union always used in Poland) in spite of the fact that it was an occupation strike in the 1930's, which established the union at Hormel in the



To most American workers, union dues are 'fees for service', as one might pay an attorney for legal representation ... The outgrowth of this prevailing sentiment is that the union member is passive, uninvolved and uninterested in union business until the realities of 'give-back' contracts hit home.

first place. The leftists in the union movement, who advocated the same radical tactics that proved to be effective in the 1930's, went unheeded. Instead, unions would obey court injunctions to limit the size of picket lines (so scabs could freely come and go) and take well-behaved protest delegations to corporate board meetings.

Union workers in the 1980s wanted to fight back against concessions and union busting yet they feared to be seen as 'radicals'. In fact, the workers saw themselves as middle class citizens who only needed to present their case to the public to win victories. Except for isolated cases (Ravenswood Steelworkers' Lockout 1991 and Pittston Coal Miners' Strike 1989), these 'polite' strike tactics simply did not work. Leftist activists in the unions who often made forecasts that proved to come true (about ineffective strike tactics and concessions) still could not attract a significant, generalized, political base in the union locals. Leftists were simply not allowed to be perceived as correct, even when events proved the leftists to be completely correct. Workers were simply not ready to abandon faith in the 'soft tactics' of the union leadership. Furthermore, workers could not accept the worldview that would be implied if they recognized that leftist radicals were correct about tactics, court injunctions and concessions contracts.

In this time period, autoworkers did not radicalize to the political left but rather entrenched to the political right. Autoworkers' rage at losing jobs and wages was deflected by racism. The UAW leadership explained 'the great job elimination recession' of 1982-84 as being caused by Japanese competition. Rather than explain recessions as inherent in the capitalist system, a racist scapegoat was offered. Autoworkers dutifully fell in line with the official UAW 'yellow-peril' campaign. Most Labor Day parades featured laid-off autoworkers bashing a Japanese car as it rolled down the streets on a flatbed truck. The UAW lobbied for 'content' laws, demanding that cars sold in America must contain 90 percent American made parts. In effect, union tactics were designed to deflect workers rage rather than channel it into effective modes of struggle.

The 1990s

The 1990s witnessed the wholesale export of many union jobs to the low "exotic" wage-rates of the underdeveloped world through NAFTA and super-NAFTA type trade agreements. Only where 'job export' and capital flight was impractical/impossible were there confrontations with the unions. The total defeat of the UAW in the 1992 Caterpillar strike, combined with several defeated airline strikes, led to a generalized perception that *strikes always lose*. The threat of plant closings with jobs exported to low wage nations became a credible damper on strike activity in an era when it seemed that strikes could not ever be victorious when capitalists could simply move factories to low-wage nations. However, to an informed observer, it appears that the union leadership did not want to do what it took to win strikes anymore. The UAW failed to use the same broad, effective tactics that the CAW (Canadian Auto Workers, who split from the UAW) used in the GM-CAMI strike the same year in 1992. Furthermore, in the airline strikes, the AFL-CIO rebuked local community support for the airline strikes when pro-union community activists used large car caravans to shut down the airport in Denver, Colorado in the 1989 Eastern Airlines strike. Shutting down airports to win airline strikes was not allowed by the union leadership. The 'strike to lose' strategy of the union leadership continued until the famous newspaper strike in Detroit in the late 1990s. Mass mobilizations to stop the delivery trucks from taking scab papers to newsstands were never used. Instead, ineffective boycott strategies made winning the newspaper strike impossible by 1999.

Gone were the days of the great industry-wide strikes of the 1970s. The UAW now chose non-confrontational 'selective strikes' on individual factories or stamping plants, as was the case with the GM stamp-

ing strikes of 1997-98 in Flint, Michigan. Not until the Teamsters Strike against UPS in 1998, would there be a broad effort to completely shut down a company with a significant market share of an entire industry or economic sector. The aftermath of the UPS strike, of course, was a direct intervention by the US government to punish the Ron Carey leadership for conducting an effective nationwide shutdown of UPS. Carey was falsely accused of using Teamster funds for his own election campaign. Carey was prosecuted (but not convicted) and essentially, the Teamsters were returned to the status of 'vertical union' ('vertical unions' were first established in Mussolini's Fascist Italy) under the direct oversight of the US Labor Department, now controlled by the new Hoffa leadership.

In the late 1990s great battles over other 'non-exportable' American jobs began to rage at the waterfront, as unionized dockworker jobs were assaulted by both job-eliminating technology and imported scab labor. Mechanized cargo containers and low-wage foreign workers (billeted right at the shoreline) would be used in an attempt to crush the radicalized ILA union (International Longshoremen's Association). Once again, effective union tactics to win labor battles would invite the full wrath of the state. It is significant that the first major labor battle of the 21st century would invite massive police repression. In January 2000, over six hundred state police (highway patrolmen) would violently attack ILA Local 1422's mass picket line against scabs in Charleston, South Carolina. Five dockworkers, including the Local 1422's president, Ken Riley, were arrested for 'felonious rioting' for the crime of building an effective mass picket line against scab-herding to unload ships at the waterfront.

The call to "Free the Charleston 5" had recently become the celebrated cause of the progressive American labor movement. For these are some of the 'working class heroes' of our modern time and I am happy to announce the frame up of these heroes has failed due to an effective, nationwide defense campaign. If you have never heard of the "Charleston 5," or their story, then you are not in touch with the unfolding, progressive, American Labor Movement.

21st Century

In terms of modern labor history, the 21st Century began in November 1999 with the broad coalition of environmentalists, anarchists and concerned unionists who protested the World Trade Organization



meeting in Seattle Washington. Despite how *The Battle in Seattle* appears to us now, the protest against the WTO, was supposed to be a non-confrontational and largely symbolic act of resistance for the unions. For the high level union leaders, a labor mobilization in Seattle would provide, what they thought was, a safe political steam valve for the statement of growing outrage within the ranks of the labor movement. The unions could protest the WTO and deflect union members' discontent away from corporations and away from the Democratic Party, which helped to create the WTO. After all, the WTO would not be scheduled to meet again in the USA for another 135 years. A protest against the WTO appeared to be a one shot event, with no protracted struggle that the unions would have to commit to. In Seattle, what appeared to be a new coalition of labor activists, environmentalists and anti-capitalist radicals would unravel by the April 16, 2000 mobilization against the IMF and World Bank in Washington DC. The labor unions would pull away from united mobilizations and build separate rallies at the A16 event. Instead of joining with the main slogans and demands, the unions played the "race card" once again, calling for a block against 'permanent most favored nation trading status' for the People's Republic of China. The so-called grand alliance of "Teamsters and Turtles" (Unionists and Environmentalists) quickly evaporated into hollow lip service with no real substance or mobilization offered by the unions. It was obvious that the collaborationist American union leaders wanted to appear to be *posturing to the political left*, while actually *caving-in to the political right*.

Yet the "summit hoping" movement against the transnational superagencies of global capitalism continued and grew beyond anything that the American union leaders expected. This movement still attracted young workers, worldwide, and reached a decisive boiling point at the G8 summit in Genoa, Italy. One hundred thousand people converged last summer on Genoa to protest the G8 summit. On July 20, 2001, a young anarchist (Carlo Giuliani, son of an Italian union official) was murdered in Genoa by Italian 'carabinieri' policemen. What began in Seattle as a largely symbolic protest, had now become an intolerable threat to the globalized 'wage-crushing' strategies and 'environment-hostile' policies of capitalism. State violence against one element of the movement (the anarchists) was once again unleashed. Agonizing debates within the 'summit hoping movement' continued over the "direct action" tactics as a way to isolate anarchists and blame the victim for the crime. In truth, there is no doubt that global capitalism intends to meet mass mobilizations with state violence, be that mobilization on a picket line in Charleston, South Carolina, or at a street action in Genoa, Italy or anywhere else.

But what are the prospects for the future, in light of the rightward political shift in popular sentiments after the September 11 terror attacks? Where do we look for and find our new wave of progressive 'working class heroes' in America? Will popular culture ever again recognize union labor struggles in mainstream films (beyond a few sanitized cartoon treatments, as seen with *Chicken Run*)?

Summary and Prospectus:

Without a doubt, the leftist theory of a generalized radicalization of American workers in the face of 'hard times' never materialized.

The fact that strike tactics that were once seen as mainstream (such as shutting down the entire Ford Motor Company) are now taboo indicates the vulnerability of capitalism.



Appeals to racist scapegoating and super-patriotism combined with thug violence and state repression did, however, materialize — as jobs, wages and leisure time for the American working class have been eroded over the past thirty years. American workers, in general, have chosen a *path of least resistance*, swallowing decades of 'give-backs' promoted by collaborationist union leaderships. Furthermore, most workers are now afflicted with the idea that "*strikes always lose*." Whenever American workers and their unions were forced to fight, they usually chose to avoid proven-and-effective strike tactics, such as plant takeovers and mass mobilizations, in fear of appearing to be too radical. In general, American workers want to appear to be good, patriotic citizens and most really have no traditional union consciousness at

all. In fact, even for workers who have long been union members, there is no concept of class or union solidarity. To most American workers, union dues are fees for service, as one might pay an attorney for legal representation. One pays his/her dues and the union representatives take care of the problems. The outgrowth of this prevailing sentiment is that the union member is passive, uninvolved and uninterested in union business until the realities of 'give-back' contracts hit home. The track record of wage concessions, long workweeks and job eliminations for union members leaves no real incentive for unorganized workers to form/join a union of their own either.

In a very real sense, for the American workers, there is no middle ground between '*total submission to*' or '*total rebellion against*' the alliance of state, corporate and collaborationist-union forces arrayed against them. This means, in general, the mass of the American workers will probably cling to the patriotic political lines of their authority figures right up until the instant that they are ready to overthrow those authority figures. Perhaps the militant and defiant strike of Accuride autoworkers in Henderson, Kentucky, is a preview of the future for the American Labor Movement. In this strike, UAW Local 2036 has continually rejected sell-out contracts that the top UAW leadership in Detroit has pushed on Local 2036 members. Progressive UAW members have demonstrated against their own collaborationist union leadership at *UAW Solidarity House* over the Accuride strike (January 2002). The UAW wants to cut off strike pay and decertify Local 2036 unless the Accuride workers accept defeat and go back to work. This rank-and-file resistance at Local 2036 is impressive, but the resistance must spread to other UAW locals. In reality, it would take massive self-organization of rank-and-file workers to stand up to (and defeat) this pro-capitalist alliance of state, corporate and collaborationist union leaders. Such a massive and rapid self-organization, on the scale of the great Solidarity movement in Poland, is not impossible but neither is it probable within the context of the patriotic hysteria of the times. This means that any reform movements inside the collaborationist unions, without such a massive self-organization, are most probably doomed to failure as well. But this does not mean that all is lost for the progressive American labor movement.

While it is true that massive, industry-wide or corporate-wide strikes (as seen in the 1970s) may be a thing of the past, it still poses the question of why this is so. The fact that strike tactics that were once seen as mainstream (such as shutting down the entire Ford Motor Company) are now taboo indicates the vulnerability of capitalism. In

an environment where American workers are expected to totally submit to a combination of 21st century technology combined with repressive 19th century working conditions and labor policies, the dynamics of such a massive strike could get out of the control of the union leaderships. The longstanding grievances and submerged bitterness of the American worker may not be derailable toward 'slant-eyed' scapegoats from Asia anymore. There is a real risk that a massive labor struggle over wages, hours and working conditions could evolve into an open 'political struggle' beyond the wildest dreams of the transplanted leftists of the 1970's. Furthermore, the wave of wildcat strikes that both the American capitalist system and the collaborationist unions endured in the 1960's and 1970's are no longer endurable under the present conditions. This means that even the tiniest wildcat strike is more potent today than it ever was in the past. A cascading wave of such tiny wildcat strikes, at bottleneck points of production, spreading from one factory to another, even over the most basic trade union issues, is very threatening to the alliance of state, corporate and collaborationist union forces. It is a simple fact that in a work environment

where fear is used to command total submission, a simple act of successful resistance, even by a small number of workers, is often magnified into mythic proportions.

For we are in an era where real labor leaders are not 'on top' of bloated union bureaucracies but rather 'out front' of progressive struggles both in the streets and on the shop floor. We are in an era where well-organized wildcat strikes by committed union militants can literally stop the wheels of lean production. We are in an era where community activists and unemployed workers can successfully intervene to support and win struggles by real working class heroes (as with the shutdown of the Denver airport in 1989). You won't see today's working class heroes on TV or in popular films. However, you will see them in the anti-war movement, in the anti-globalization demonstrations and, if you are lucky, you will read about them on the Internet and follow the success of their latest 'bottleneck wildcat strike' as it shuts down a factory or seaport. In fact, if you really look for today's working class heroes . . . they will find you! ★

Middle Class Dominance, and the Negation of Class Struggle



by Joe Levasseur
Sunshine

"For long periods the High seem to be securely in power, but sooner or later there always comes a moment when they lose either their belief in themselves or their capacity to govern efficiently, or both. They are then overthrown by the Middle, who enlist the Low on their side by pretending to them that they are fighting for liberty and justice. As soon as they have reached their objective, the Middle thrust the Low back into their old position of servitude, and themselves become the High."

-George Orwell, 1984

Historically, anarchism is a working class movement, one with working class principals and a working class analysis of the existing systems of domination. More recently in the anti-globalization movement of the early 21st century and late 1990s, it has become dominated with an abundance of middle class ideas and thought patterns which completely undermine revolutionary class struggle. It is up to the members of the lowered and oppressed classes in society, to reclaim their movement and renew it in the tradition of the working class (by this phrase, I include everyone within a lower income bracket, who did not voluntarily choose to be in their current situation).

In the tradition of the animal rights, no nukes, and hippie movements, the anti-globalization and anarchist movements have largely come to be dominated by middle class values. Within these movements you see a common tendency to live up to the same standards that have always been attributed to the middle class. Many of the actions of middle class activist groups only seek to keep their status in society, and lack any real insight to revolutionary struggles as well. For example, just look at which groups get to play "good protester" at demonstrations. It's always some group with money and respectable looking people like NOW, the Sierra Club, or a church group. This

only reflects society's impression that poor and working people are what's wrong with the world. The groups who don't seek to live up to this image of "good protesters" or "model citizens" are often targeted by authorities and scapegoated by the more mainstream groups and the media.

Often times, we see anarchists and other left wing revolutionaries attacked for their more militant positions and views that conflict with "respectable" middle class goals. This is what earns the title of "bad protesters." At many demonstrations, the more middle class oriented groups often work with the police and fail to cause any serious disruption in their attempt to appear respectable. Some groups, such as the Anti-Defamation League, have even gone to the extent of surveilling their more radical counterparts in Anti-Racist Action and giving that information to authorities and rival neo-nazi groups.

We also see a dominant tendency with many organizations and individuals to reproduce the role of middle management. In other words, to direct everyone else around and act as spokespersons for protests and the general anti-capitalist movement. In the aftermath of Seattle we saw a huge argument in the anti-globalization movement, as many mainstream reformist groups were appalled at the property destruction caused by a small but militant group of black bloc anarchists. Well after the cops had been firing tear gas and rubber bullets into the large crowds of protesters, people were still running up to the black bloc and shouting things like "This is a peaceful protest!" "You're ruining this for everyone!" We saw many people publicly denounce the actions of militant protesters as well and claim that a peaceful protest was ruined.

In this case, the mainstream activist groups felt they had the authority to decide what was right for the protest and to claim that others ruined the protest. Whether it be to gain respect for the group, or personal media spotlight, these actions follow both the common capitalist and Marxist-vanguardist idea that the

masses of people can't be left to themselves and need some kind of authoritarian leadership. In turn, this is just a duplication of the traditional middle class role of "the management" brought into activism.

In the anti-globalization movement and in anarchism as well, we see an importance put on the boycott of certain products. As lame as it sounds, boycotting has become almost a central means of resistance to capitalism.

The idea of the boycott has manifested itself in two different forms that have both been widely accepted by anarchists. The first was brought to us and is championed by Ralph Nader and the Green party. This idea, being that if a corporation is evil and commits some act of genocide or environmental destruction (as corporations often do) you don't buy the product. This goes on until all corporations are good, environmentally friendly, and respectable just like Ben & Jerry's ice cream was before it got bought out. The

dollar is the ultimate tool of power in this form of protest.

Plain and simple the fact is that it is not individual corporations that are the problem; it is the whole capitalist system that is the problem.

This idea ignores the basic and simple fact that as long as the capitalists are there to steal our labor for wages and charge us

for the basic necessities of life (health care, food, shelter, etc), then all capitalists are doing something terrible. It is naive to think that capitalism can be reformed, and many anarchists (who have read their Kropotkin and should know better) will never compromise on the boycott issue. Also, as anti-capitalists we should have better strategies of protest than using the dollar as a weapon. Although it probably would be better to buy a book from an anarchist infoshop than to buy it from Borders,

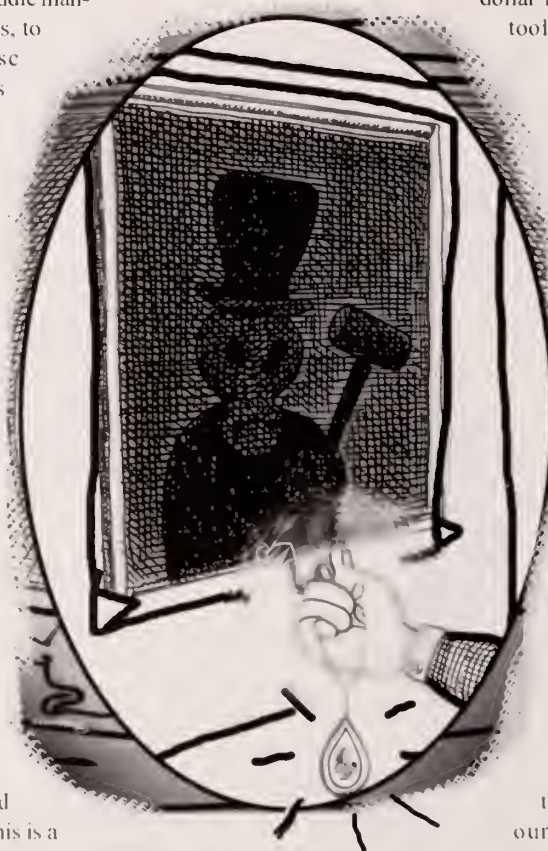
the reason we are anti-capitalists in the first place is because not all of us have the money to boycott with.

The other half of this backward tactic is to be a non-consumer and completely boycott everything and to buy as little as possible. Although going about this path could help you save your money, capitalism will not simply go away if it is ignored by a minority counter culture. Even people who have traditionally lived in isolated parts of the world and were entirely self-sufficient have had their land taken away by corporations or banks and have been forced to live in the capitalist system. Borrowing examples from the mid 1800s in the United States, The International Monetary Fund's structural adjustment programs have turned most small farms in the third world into cash crop farms by driving the farmers into debt, and forcing them to sell their land to multinationals. The capitalist system is everywhere and it affects everyone, no matter how hard you try to avoid it.

Simply surviving off of theft and trash picking does not offer a solution to the many problems forced upon us by living in a capitalist economy. What are people supposed to do if they don't live near a dumpster that provides food? What are people supposed to do if they can't risk getting caught shoplifting because they are on parole, or going through a custody battle for their children? Not everyone in the world can benefit off American waste. What we have here is a dependency on over consumption and capitalism, two of the very things that we are trying to destroy. This offers no proposal for the future, and is not a revolutionary anti-capitalist action. At best, dumpster diving and shoplifting (in the way we see ourselves utilizing them) are neutral actions that neither help capitalism, nor hurt it.

One day in a post-revolutionary society, there will be no dumpsters filled with bagels and doughnuts. We need to stop wasting our time here and focus on a sustainable, realistic alternatives that people can relate to. If we don't have this, then we will inevitably lose ground to the right wing in a time of crisis. Building a revolution is about building a new society, not dumpster diving.

Probably the most disgusting, demeaning, and misguided aspect of middle class activism is the prominent fetishization of poverty. We've all laughed at the newspaper-selling Leninists with their wet dreams of a proletarian uprising, but I would like to go into a different type of poverty romance that has been accepted widely among so-called anarchists, and is highly promoted by the Crimethinc collective. Crimethinc is a network of collectives that center mainly around the underground punk rock scene, and focus on propaganda and lifestyle as a means of activism and resistance.



Their many publications include a newspaper entitled "The Harbinger" and two books, *Days of War, Nights of Love* and *Evasion*.

All one needs to do is read the back cover of *Evasion*, to see contemporary romanticization of poverty. The quote reads "unemployment, poverty, homelessness, if you're not having fun, you're not doing it right." It must never have occurred to these folks that most people don't choose to be poor. Poverty may be a fun summer vacation for many kids with wealthy parents, but for those of us who grew up in it and face it on a daily basis, it's not. Speaking from my own personal experience, I can assure you that it is not fun to be in debt when you have no way of paying it off. It is not fun to know that I can be kicked out of my squatted house at any time, and it is certainly not fun to know that if I get seriously injured, I might not get treatment due to the fact that I have no health insurance. This kind of thinking has no place in revolutionary politics.

If one can say that poverty is supposed to be fun and that if poverty is causing you misery, then you're not going about being poor

the right way, then you are attempting to invalidate the class struggle. The statement here suggests that the negative results of capitalism are great, romantic, and "fun" things to be had, thereby contradicting what hundreds of years of revolutionary observations, theory, and actions have proved. In the above-mentioned quote, Crimethinc basically states that capitalism and all its negative effects are okay. By placing the fault of one's own misery due to social conditions on the victim, Crimethinc actually shows more solidarity with social Darwinists than they do with other anti-capitalist revolutionaries.

Another poem by Crimethinc that has been reprinted and over printed on many posters and in many zines states that "(the revolution) is an alternate universe that coexists with this one and you can step into it any time you like." This quote is nothing but spacy new age rhetoric that has no base in reality. What is all this revolutionary effort for if we can just change our outlook on things and be perfectly satisfied? Will the problems of society and dynamics of oppression and exploitation just

go away if we ignore them? Of course not. The problems of society will follow us wherever we go and we need to get organized and face the problems brought upon us by living in an authoritarian, capitalist society. Ignorance is no solution.

The middle class domination of the anarchist movement extends far beyond Crimethinc and any of the other groups mentioned. These middle class analyses of the world's problems offer no solution to the current situation what so ever. The first people to call themselves anarchists started a movement that continued for generations, until we were almost completely destroyed by communist and fascist regimes. Middle class movements like the hippies quickly fizzled out after one generation. As anarchists, it is up to us to make sure our movement is maintained in the interest of the working class and other oppressed classes or else face irrelevancy. If we do not have a solid and accurate class analysis, then we will be once again left to the history books. ★

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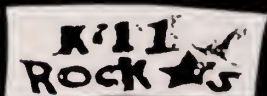
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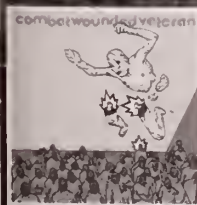
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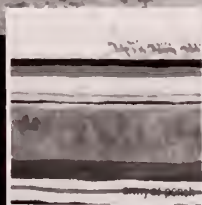
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A RADICAL FAILURE TO COMMUNICATE?



Anarchist movements challenge the uneven distribution and misuse of power. They also privilege direct, participatory democracy for all people in all spheres of their lives. Why then, have there been so many obstacles to building sustained, mass-based movements between anarchists and other progressives in North America?

Matthew Williams offers some suggestions ...

Even before the terrorist attacks on September 11, anarchists and other radicals had a difficult time communicating our ideas effectively, both to liberals within social justice movements and to people still immersed in the political mainstream. The first draft of this essay was written before September 11, and it still reflects some of the optimism of those times. The prospects for reformists, never mind radicals, look grimmer now. In this essay, I will be exploring how anarchists hinder the communication of — and ways we might better convey — our critique of authority, hierarchy and domination and our arguments for direct, participatory democracy in all spheres of life. I will look at the effect of both protests themselves and the mainstream media's coverage of protests and the wider issues raised by them.

The underlying problem with anarchists' failure to communicate is that we do not take into account the different frames of reference various people have. We have our own cultures — our own systems of meaning and worldview — that in many points diverge from those of even progressive liberals, never mind the diverse groups that I will, for convenience's sake, lump together as "mainstream." Too often we frame our messages in ways that are meaningful only to us and make no effort to create a shared ground of meaning with others, making it harder for them to understand our message.

Most people associate anarchism with terrorism or chaos. Main-



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stream media coverage, with its emphasis on things like the property destruction (which is equated with violence) doesn't help any. Most average people will probably assume that the anarchists are out to cause chaos or violence, nothing more. Now more than ever, these are associations we must work to avoid.

Even many activists have only a vague sense of what anarchists stand for. They may realize that we are at protests for serious political reasons, but still think anarchists just want to throw any type of formal organization out the window — completely unaware that the whole spokescouncil/affinity group structure used so effectively in recent protests evolved from organizational forms first developed by anarchists during the Spanish Civil War in the 1930s.

Anarchists often end up reinforcing popular negative stereotypes. Take something very simple — the way anarchists in the Black Bloc (and many anarchists are not Black Blockers) dress and the symbols they use. To most people, a black flag or a circle-A mean nothing. Add to this, everyone in a Black Bloc is dressed in black, most are wearing masks, and they are marching together *en masse*. To most people who know nothing about anarchism — particularly those who associate the word with terrorism or chaos — this is going to look threatening. There may certainly be legitimate reasons for wearing masks, such as hiding your identity from the cops to protect yourself from later harassment.

For many liberal and mainstream people who don't grasp the extent of police brutality, however, what the masks convey is that these people must be up to no good, otherwise they wouldn't be hiding their identity.

Let's turn to a more complex example of the difficulties involved in bridging the cultural gap by examining property destruction. The example that will immediately come to most people's minds is the property destruction in Seattle. Others have made the point that this played right into the mainstream press's hands and allowed them to depict the police riot as a justified response to protester violence (for debates on this, see <http://www.zmag.org/trashing.htm>; *Kick It Over*, Spring 2000; and *The Fifth Estate*, Spring 2000).

One of the few attempts to give a serious justification for property destruction came from the Acme Collective, who said that, "When we smash a window, we aim to destroy the veneer of legitimacy that surrounds private property rights. At the same time, we exorcise that set of violent and destructive social relationships which has been imbued in almost everything around us" (<http://www.zmag.org/acme.htm>). Although it is unclear, the authors seem to believe that their actions somehow undid the deeply ingrained belief in the sanctity of private property most people in American society have — that they freed people's minds.

It takes a lot more than smashing windows to change people's basic worldviews — and for mainstream Americans (or even progressive liberals) the sanctity of private property is part of that worldview. These beliefs usually run so deep that they are not even consciously held — people understand them at a gut level as part of the natural order of things. They see private property as, quite simply, normal — not a system that has evolved under certain historical circumstances. Smashing windows is not going to deconstruct such deeply held, unconscious beliefs — generally it will only offend people by provoking a visceral repulsion as it runs headlong into these beliefs.

If we are going to take militant actions, one of the things we need to consider is how they will resonate with the people we want to get involved in our movement. We also have to weigh things like the political climate or public support for a cause. There may be times when any sort of direct action is counterproductive — after September 11, even most Black Blockers have temporarily backed off and restricted themselves to marches.

We also need to remember that most people will be getting information on an action through the distorting lens of the mainstream press. This makes the style in which the action is done vitally important. A bunch of young punks running down the street smashing fast food restaurant windows is going to create a much different impression than a group of small farmers (like José Bové and the Confédération Paysanne) smashing those same windows in a calm manner that conveys peaceful intentions. It is not enough to say that we have no intention of harming living beings — we have to clearly show that through the atmosphere of the action. Otherwise the mainstream media will have an easy time painting the whole thing as a bunch of irresponsible kids rioting for kicks.

We can trust the mainstream press to always blow protester violence out of all proportion (including treating property destruction as violence) while downplaying police violence. We should try to give them as little material to work with as possible. Obviously, if property destruction is problematic, street-fighting is even more so. Most people (sometimes even poor people of color) see police as defenders of public order, not agents of oppression and will tend to side with them unless there is clear evidence of police brutality.

Of course, the militancy of Black Bloc anarchists' actions has gotten anarchists some mainstream press coverage. But does this really do anything to spread anarchist ideas? The mainstream press is enemy territory — whatever you say, they can take out of context, spin anyway they want, or simply botch reporting on because they just don't get it. Anarchists, at best, get to convey their ideas in a few soundbites. For instance, in the wake of Seattle an article on anarchist squatters said, "While they accepted the term anarchist, some suggested that 'anti-authoritarian' or 'humanist' better expressed their basic belief that all governments and corporations are bad and should be drastically curtailed if not abolished" ("Dark Parallels with Anarchist Outbreaks in Oregon," *New York Times*, 12/03/99, p. 12). Obviously, anarchism doesn't lend itself to soundbites.

Even if it did, for both reporters and their audience, anarchist ideas will still be truly hard to grasp because they are so alien to their own experience and worldview. For most people, organization necessarily implies hierarchy and authority. Many sociologists define organization

in terms of hierarchy. Which leaves all forms of anarchic organization — such as the traditional structures of many Native American tribes, Quaker congregations, feminist collectives, and the Direct Action Network — either out of the picture altogether or as anomalies to be explained away. Even more than private property, ideas of hierarchy are so pervasive and deep rooted in our culture that most people accept them — without even a passing thought — as normal and natural. For those suffering from this deeply ingrained worldview, anarchy will often be literally incomprehensible. It will take far more than a few soundbites in the sea of negative mainstream press coverage to make our message heard.

We have to take a look at where people are coming from and start there, making the effort to bridge the communication gap, because we are the ones with the wish to do so. Talk of things like "socialism" and "anarchism" will cause most people to automatically shut out your message — because they think you mean "Leninism" or "terrorism and chaos." To most people, "abolishing capitalism" will seem absurd — again, the dominant culture conditions us to accept it as the natural order of things. People might be open to the idea

of reforms, but most will take the failure of the Soviet Union to be proof of either the impossibility or the dangers of alternatives. As for "abolishing the state" or "abolishing government" — for most people, the state or government is one and the same thing as social organization, and abolishing them an invitation to chaos. Radicalizing people is usually a slow, difficult process.

We need to look at ways to talk to liberal and mainstream folks about anarchism and other radical ideologies in terms that they can relate to. This does not mean we should cater to the corporate press — they will never be our allies (individual reporters who try to do so will probably be fired). We will need to rely on the alternative press, teach-ins, and word of mouth through networks like unions and progressive churches to get our ideas out. However, most people's first impressions will come from the corporate press — and the less they are prejudiced against us by the press, the easier it will be for us to communicate with them. Beyond that, there is the task of finding common ground — areas where our frames of meaning overlap.

A good example of an attempt to find such common ground is an event that some anarchists in Boston organized for election night 2000 — the Rally for Direct Democracy. Using giant puppets, street theater, radical cheerleaders and a generally festive atmosphere, the organizers tried to reach out to people who probably had little or no exposure to radical ideas before. The street theater contained no talk of "anarchism" or "abolishing capitalism," but instead "direct democracy" and "making decisions in our communities". Words like "democracy" and "community" will generally resonate positively with mainstream people. Sure, the concept of community-based direct democracy might water down anarchist ideas, but this is necessary if we are going to have anything remotely resembling a common reference point with our audience. As it was, I think most people who saw our march and the street theater were more puzzled than anything else.

It may well be necessary to first get mainstream people involved in social justice movements, then work to expose them to radical ideas.



People's worldviews generally do not change radically overnight but by a slow process of evolution. When people first join social justice movements, they usually still have faith in the electoral system and won't necessarily grasp the need for nonviolent direct action, never mind replacing the electoral system itself. The best approach may be not to start in with a full-blown radical critique, but a more moderate one that people can connect with, get them involved in a movement, and as they see more of the situation expose them to more radical ideas.

Despite my criticisms of it, one positive thing the Black Bloc has done is to create a clear anarchist presence at protests. However, what if instead of Black Blocs we had theatrical Direct Democracy Blocs at protests? This street theater could engage other protesters by entertaining them — and street theater is a much better way of communicating complicated ideas than simplistic banners and chants. The way police at A16 and R2K targeted giant puppets for destruction should tell us something about their ability to communicate our messages even through a hostile corporate press — and the fear this provokes in the establishment.

When appropriate, such street theater could be paired with the White Overall tactics pioneered by the Italian left-libertarian group Ya Basta! Armored in padded white overalls, helmets and plastic shields, they can more or less wade through lines of attacking police, taking actions to a new level of militancy while remaining nonviolent. They developed these tactics when they realized that street fights with the cops were undermining support for their movement. Part of the White Overalls' tactic for making it clear that it is the police that are violent is to make themselves look ridiculous, dressing up like the Michelin tire man and sticking out like "a cow in a lobby." They are experimenting with methods of action that are simultaneously militant yet non-threatening to the "average" mainstream person (see <http://www.ainfos.ca/>

[00/nov/ainfos00196.html](http://www.ainfos.ca/01/nov/ainfos00196.html) and <http://www.ainfos.ca/01/jul/ainfos00650.html>).

In a workshop on Creative Resistance (at the New England Global Action Network Conference on November 12, 2000), David Solnit, one of the founders of the anarchist street theater group Art and Revolution, said that many moderate groups used to worry when they knew anarchists were coming to their demonstrations. Since Art and Revolution began experimenting with creative forms of protest relying on street theater and giant puppets, now not only do groups like the United Farm Workers and Jubilee 2000 want them to come to their protests, they want Art and Revolution to help them *plan* the protests so they are as creative and participatory as possible. Successful outreach means more than high visibility and successful communication. It means remaining engaged with the liberal elements of social justice movements — radicals are still a minority. For instance, most activists want to put constraints on corporate power ("corporate accountability"), not abolish it. If we cut ourselves off from reformist groups, we cut ourselves off from most other activists. We need to work closely with such campaigns and as some people inevitably become more and more frustrated with a total lack of corporate accountability, help them see the inherent flaws of capitalism.

Now more than ever, we need to communicate in such a way that it is clear that anarchism is not about terrorism but democracy and freedom. If we are to succeed in this though, we need to be aware of the different frames of meaning we are working with—what slogans do we use, what images do we invoke, what ideals do we speak of? How do they resonate with reformists or those sectors of the mainstream we want to reach? There are no easy answers to these and other questions, but if we wish to survive and grow as a movement, we must wrestle with them. ★

Activism from the Streets to Ohio's Scholar Centers: What is the Role of the State?

Dave Focareta, Murray Siskind, Kate Sopko

Many believe the halls of academia are where activists go to die, some going up in a quick flash of college protest, others slowly bleeding out their energy in words and lectures strung together toward tenure. These conflicted personalities stuck between the bureaucratic intellectual parameters of universities and street-activism's oozy life-line are close to automatic: those who try to be both scholar and flame-thrower never have an easy way.

At November's second annual Ohio Progressive Scholars Conference at Oberlin College, the room felt like a long sigh. Sixty academics, activists, and alternative journalists from all over the state sat in a dramatically raked lecture hall like they were waiting for the projector to start spinning, and even then there was relief. To know for once no one had to defend themselves or their politics, that those sitting nearby faced similar questions.

For instance, how do you do real community work and build real trust when you've got one semester's funding to interact with the community's people? How do you explain to a research board that your "objectivity" is not compromised when you attend birthday parties of the same people you observe transitioning from welfare to work? How do you encourage students to critically analyze the institution that teaches them and pays you? How do you present data academia would relegate to a dusty bookshelf, but you intend to stir up public policy? How do you do research from a place of privilege without becoming the colonizer peering into the colonized? How do you rock the boat without falling out?

As the day went on, these questions piled higher, and answers were often piecemeal. What people did agree on is there's no need for isolation. In fact, networks of researchers who already put their sweat into issues activists and the public receive little education on (largely due to an irrepressibly corporate mass media) could revitalize every front of the movement. Case in point: we ripped the safety net out from under poor people with welfare reform in 1996. This policy was based on a stereotype rather than on plentiful empirical research showing poverty is not a matter of personal preference. It was overly simplified reasoning. "If we make poverty really awful, people won't want to be poor." We can unify our resolve to combat such vague ideas with

research already being done, revealing these ideas as more and more threadbare.

Researchers need a place to do what they do best: get into the nitty-gritty details of why a hard-won policy is being held up by administrative in-fighting or lack of funding; or map out the demographics of who's undernourished in the state of Ohio; or track trends in how taxes are distributed to social programs versus diminished by corporate tax breaks. These are often such overwhelming questions to progressive organizations they don't follow the complex trails to some kind of conclusion, and because of that our arguments and campaigns suffer severe blows from those who do know.

But this potential for mutual benefit is still mostly potential. Those in attendance recognized the tremendous lack of solid venues for information exchange between the Ivory Tower and the streets, and are now building new ones. The Progressive Scholars Network is staying in communication. Many in the group have formed the Ohio Scholars Bureau, making themselves available as experts in their fields (from welfare, to wages, to the prison system, to civil liberties) for policy-makers, the media, and active grassroots groups. (The Bureau can be found at <http://www.policymattersohio.org/psnmedia.html>). Policy Matters Ohio, a statewide research institute that co-sponsored the conference, also intends to release some of the Network's research in short form, so that more of us can get our hands on solid data. And, of course, the Network wants to vigilantly support alternative press and add to policy debates in the op-ed sections of major daily papers, so that people know more voices exist than just Proctor and Gamble's PR department.

So as a six-hour conference disbanded, the air was a little clearer, and it seemed almost everyone went home thinking about tomorrow, not next year.

The Progressive Scholars Network listserv is managed through Policy Matters Ohio, a progressive policy research institute based in Cleveland. Contact Kate at ksopko@policymattersohio.org for more information on the Network and its goals. For full reports on Ohio public policy issues—from unemployment to school vouchers—visit the Policy Matters website at www.policymattersohio.org.

Diversity of Tactics and Democracy

George Lakey

This fall, while working with activists in Europe, I had the chance to hang out with young people from Otpor, the resistance movement that brought down dictator Slobodan Milosevic in Serbia in October 2000. These Otpor activists were aged 19-23, typical ages in the movement. They taught people twice their age some powerful lessons about how to overthrow a dictatorship, including how to keep going despite years of arrests and beatings.

Some of the young people who started Otpor in 1999 had already been doing direct action in 1996 in the student pro-democracy movement. There they learned a hard fact: as the demonstrations grew, the government paid infiltrators to pretend to be activists and do property destruction and street fighting.

The government's tactic was brilliant because it scared away potentially hundreds of thousands who were getting ready to join the movement, and gave the moral high ground back to government.

Refusing to be discouraged, those who made a fresh start in 1999 made a critical decision: in order to win, Otpor would establish a policy of nonviolence. The stakes were too high, they reasoned, to have the luxury of everyone doing their thing. Milosevic was desperate and surrounded with thugs who had no scruples. Only a policy of nonviolence could avoid the mistakes of 1996.

I was impressed by the fast learning curve. Most movements have a learning curve that enables them to benefit from their experience but Otpor confronted a very hard lesson and quickly changed their policy of tolerance for diversity of tactics. Maybe their youth gave them an advantage in flexibility.

Was Milosevic's tactic unusual?

So many powerholders have used the tactic of what the French call "agents provocateur" that it is virtually predictable. Not only do the "bad guy" authoritarians like Milosevic do it, liberal democratic governments do it as well. The British did it to try to stop the anti-colonial struggle in India—paid agents worked to turn the movement violent. The U.S. government did it to try to stop the civil rights movement and the anti-Vietnam war movement, just to name two occasions.

Why do governments dislike nonviolent mass movements so much? What is it about people's power that makes governments so eager to point the movement toward street fighting and attacks on police, or at least defensive violence and smashing property?

Governments have found over the years that it works for them. They know they need legitimacy to stay in power over time and movement violence gives them that legitimacy—what is often called "the moral high ground." They also need fear to stay in power and movement vio-

lence increases the fear in the body politic. They work overtime to divide the movement and movement violence is a great divider. And, perhaps most importantly, they desperately want to prevent new allies from joining the movement and a frequent outcome of movement violence—even property destruction—is that potential allies stay away in droves.

Pro-democracy feeling among Serbs had been building through the 1990s but it was usually expressed in a cautious way, channeled by politicians who didn't move boldly enough for the radical students. The students who formed Otpor understood that they couldn't possibly bring down Milosevic by themselves. They chose a strategy that would catalyze more cautious mainstream elements into action.

Otpor strategy took the government's fearmongering into account by making fun of it. "ROLLING STONES COMING TO BELGRADE" screamed the headline of the flyers they illegally distributed; when people eagerly read the flyers they found a list of all the reasons the Rolling Stones *wouldn't* be coming to Belgrade, reasons that had to do with the dictatorship!

The police frequently raided the main Otpor office and took away boxes of leaflets and their computer. Sensing an opportunity, Otpor put out the word publicly that it was moving back in. Otpor activists showed up with a bunch of moving boxes and the alternative media. Police arrested them immediately, tore open the boxes and found them ... empty!

Otpor's young people knew that fear freezes people rather than motivates them to act intelligently, so they refused to cooperate with the fear game. In fact, since police beatings were routine, both on the street and in the jails, Otpor coined the slogan, "It only hurts if you're scared." I asked one of my Otpor friends who had been beaten, "Is it true?" "Of course," he said, and smiled. "Well ... it's true that it hurts more if you're scared."

One frequent Otpor tactic was to remember the badge number of an officer who beat them, find out his name and address, and then go to his house and sit in front of it with signs such as: "Why do you beat the children? Are you so weak that you beat up young people?"

The young activists signaled to potential and cautious allies a message of courage rather than fearfulness by doing nonviolent direct action again and again and again. Their numbers grew; by the time of the election, they claimed 80,000 members and, after the election, young people literally stood in line to join the movement. They maintained their agreement not to use violence even in defense; they felt the stakes were too high. They very badly wanted to win and for that they needed not only the young people but also to move their more cautious pro-democracy elders.

That was also their understanding of what democracy means: to get the maximum number of people standing up for themselves.

But isn't "diversity of tactics" more democratic?

Some very committed and courageous activists on this side of the Atlantic are arguing for a policy of diversity of tactics here so that protesters with different styles can all come to the same city to do their actions. "Diversity of tactics" implies that some protesters may choose to do actions that will be interpreted by the majority of people as "violent," like property destruction, attacks on police vehicles, fighting back if provoked by the police and so on, while other protesters are operating with clear nonviolent guidelines. Sometimes advocates of diversity of tactics propose outlining zones for different activities so one style of action doesn't bring undue immediate risk to those pursuing another style.

Isn't a movement strategy that encourages diversity of tactics more democratic than a clear policy of strategic nonviolent direct action? Isn't it more democratic to encourage everyone to do their thing, rather than create an agreement that leaves some kinds of action out?

It's understandable that some activists are proposing this, because in North America we don't have dictatorship; diversity of tactics is not so life threatening as in Yugoslavia under Milosevic. Unlike Otpor, we can afford to experiment with property destruction, street fighting and the like, and most of us don't really expect major governmental repression to result.

But here we are in privileged North America! Immediately the contradiction hits us: not all of us are privileged. Some groups are much more at risk than others. Young white middle- and owning-class men may feel invulnerable, so why not smash windows or throw Molotov cocktails? That's not the reality for most of us. Most people have deep life experience of repression: people of color, women, sexual minorities, blue collar workers. Many people have good grounds for feeling less safe.

In light of that, it's all the more impressive that the mass movements in North America have been mostly composed of the oppressed, rather than the privileged, and we have in fact taken enormous risks. What does it take to get us into sustained risk-taking through direct action?

Let's take the civil rights movement of the U.S. Deep South. After lives full of suffering, black people were willing to risk pain and death from the Klan and the police in order to occupy what the public saw as the moral high ground and win victories. They were not willing to get hurt and killed in order to occupy the perceived moral low ground and lose, which, in my view, would have been the outcome of a violent civil rights movement.

The Need for Tactical Assistance: A Call for Help

by Wade Rathke

The oldest cliché of our vast peoples' movement over the last generation or more has got to be that there are so many tasks to be done, that there is a job for everyone – and that means for you too, brothers and sisters! The problem with this particular cliché is that it speaks in the roar of a terrible truth. Believe it or not, mass membership organizations like labor unions and ACORN (the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now), with tens of thousands and sometimes millions of members, badly need help right now. Some of the help has to do with things they can *not* do for legal, political, or financial reasons and some of the help has to do with things for which *you* may have particular and important skills.

So, you sit here reading this on the fly between one job and another, home and school, heaven and hell, and you say, hey, bullshit, no way! Every ad for an "activist" is just looking for a canvasser; all of these groups are just gangs with their own cliques – another secret handshake high school behind a storefront window. So you say, what does it matter what I have to say, what I think, or whatever – I'll

just do my thing, my way, and live my life out of the mainstream; so to heck with 'em all – they're all the same anyway. And, hey, there you are living your life like it's a statement that someone can hear, hooking up with folks who think the same way, and hoping if we move together it will all matter someday.

Here's my plea: let's build a bridge in the sky that links our worlds together while allowing us to stay autonomous and anonymous.

First why, and then, how.

The power of the state is in fact fairly awesome. For example, there is an entire litany of laws whose virtual purpose is to prevent the effectiveness of

I remember talking with a student of mine in the 1960s, a black middle-class militant new to the cause, about the political uses of violence. She got a chance to do field work among poor African-Americans in North Philadelphia and after a few months came to see me. "I got turned around," she said. "What happened?" I asked. "Every time I brought up the possibility of a little tactical violence," she said, "the response I got was: 'Are you crazy? Are you trying to get us killed?'"

In Philadelphia, the strategy chosen by the direct action leaders for protesting the Republican National Convention was diversity of tactics. The city government responded illegally and repressively. I talked with an organizer of a poor people's organization in Philadelphia about the group's reaction. This is an organization largely of color which repeatedly uses "street heat" – civil disobedience, occupations, and the like in a disciplined way. The members, I learned, felt contempt for the protesters. Instead of experiencing solidarity and sympathy with the bruises the young people were getting (which is what young protesters in the civil rights movement got), these potential allies were alienated. To these poor and working class people, very experienced in direct action and confrontation, diversity of tactics seemed senseless and self-indulgent.

What, then, does "democracy" mean in this North American context? Does it mean choosing a strategy that excludes most oppressed people

because only the privileged can believe in it? Does democracy mean choosing a strategy of, by and for the privileged?

To me, a strategy isn't democratic if it intrinsically alienates the majority of oppressed people and shuts the door to their participation. A strategy isn't democratic if it drives away the working class when they have every reason to participate and want to. A strategy isn't democratic if it urges people who are already belittled by the culture to take the perceived moral low ground.

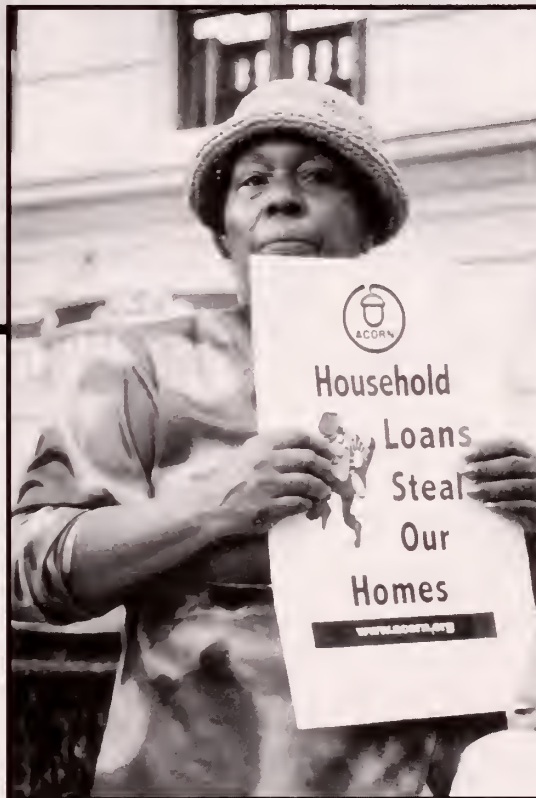
How about democracy inside the movement, among the activists?

What excites me about democracy is dialogue and debate: the collective exploration of ideas and views without shutting people down. I'm hearing from various parts of North America a trend to use "diversity of tactics" to shut down debate and refuse to explore pros and cons of strat-

unions. One can assume as a rule of thumb that many of the most effective tactics of labor over the last 50 years have been legislated out of existence: no secondary boycotts, no hot cargo agreements, no sit down strikes, and so on. Injunctions can restrict mass picketing. Back to work orders from courts and other fines can quickly cost striking unions millions of dollars. Want to organize janitors? The building owner may call the tune for the cleaning contractor, but to picket the owner is a secondary boycott. Want to refuse to handle non-union auto parts so you can organize the parts industry? No can do, that's hot cargo. Unions have assets and breaking the law means

that assets can be eliminated in the flick of a court order.

Mass-based community organizations face many of the same constraints.



david swanson

egies and tactics!

I enjoyed the public debate between author Ward Churchill and myself at the University of Colorado because we tried to model principled dialogue about important political differences.

That's when diversity serves democracy: when differences are actively explored.

I'm disappointed when I hear of places where groupthink takes over, of circles of activists where conformity is enforced, where radical thought police prevent learning from successful direct action movements of our sisters and brothers.

When I look outside my immediate circle of comrades and take in this amazing project of changing the world, of saving the planet, of ending empire, I end up with this conclusion:

Diversity of opinion serves democracy; "diversity of tactics" undermines democracy and our chance to win. ★

Right now ACORN is being enjoined by courts in San Diego because utility executives wanted to fight back at the constant actions. Landlords in New York City are suing ACORN for almost \$20 million because of tenant organizing and refusal to accept substandard conditions. A predatory lender sued ACORN in Baltimore because they felt actions and bad publicity were costing them money. Household Finance, in response to a long ACORN campaign against predatory lending, was quick to have their attorneys threatening to sue for ACORN sit-ins in their local offices. The beat goes on and on.

So, the "why" is easy to follow: progressive forces need help when we run into concrete barriers and high walls that can not be scaled without endangering the very existence of mass-based progressive institutions.

Simply stated, we need to have allies – real allies – who have the independent capacity and ability to act autonomously against common enemies.

Such allies would seem to operate best on the individual or "cell" model that we hear about so frequently these days and saw demonstrated so clearly in the now legendary WTO protests several years ago in Seattle. But this hardly matters because increasingly the examples of "how" are also numerous.

Look at the work being done on campuses like Northwestern, Harvard, and others on the issue of living wages for food service and janitorial workers. This is good work and, importantly, it's taking the fight for living wages to a place where unions have been stopped by the natural limitations of collective bargaining due to the inequitable imbalance of power at the bargaining table. These independent efforts are able to transcend standard labor legalisms and confront head on the moral and political issues of oppressive wage scales.

Consider another example in the world of cyberspace. It is endlessly fascinating to read about "hacker communities." I find it totally and completely mystifying however that such elephantine energy produces such mousy results. This is like a car driven over cliffs

rather than down highways where travel could have real meaning. A "love" virus will do a zillion dollars worth of damages all over the world, yet we are increasingly plagued by mega-corporations and their e-commerce which thwart the popular and progressive will. This seems to be a true virus for which there is a known antidote, yet our enemies grow unabated. Predatory lending companies exploiting poor and working families would seem to be excellent examples. Why don't their websites have problems day in and day out until these companies reform their behavior? It's beyond me, but I can't believe it's beyond everyone.

Seems too rough? Then how about a softer and gentler side of this same question: for unions to organize firms, the first precondition for success is having a list – a good list – with names, addresses, and phone numbers. Something like a payroll list. All payroll lists are on computer in

these days and times. There is in fact a certain skill and art to "dumpster diving" by organizers to locate and find these lists. But, once again, idle hands are the devil's helpers. Wouldn't it be better for someone with these skills to pluck the lists from big hotels, hospitals, industrial plants, and other unorganized targets and send them physically or electronically "over the transom" to unions and their organizing staffs who will know how to take it from there?

Clearly I suffer from too active an imagination than is good for me, but it never hurts to dream of the power that might come in building alliances of allied forces, which could rewrite the terms of engagement for unions and community organizations dealing with major corporate interests. Hey, there are thousands of community groups and local unions that could use a simple hand in building a website, surfing for information, and bridging the technical divide that is growing alarmingly, which brings me back to my original point that in fact – cliché or not – there are in fact, right now, an enormous number of tasks that need to be done to build progressive capacity, and we need YOU to get to work NOW!

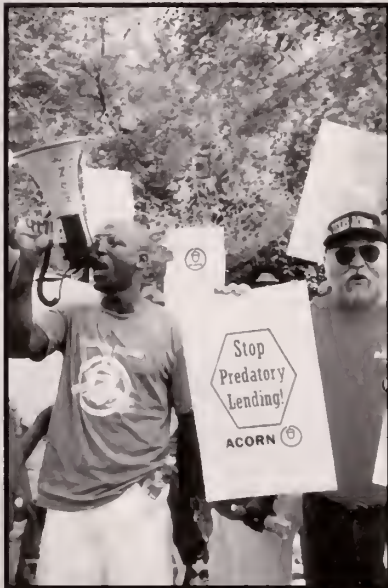
It is fascinating to think of how much more powerful we could be if we could harness all of these disparate pieces, not necessarily

together, but at least aimed in the same direction. There is an interesting outfit called @rtmark operating out of various web addresses, which adds another dimension to the humble call from mass organizations for more tactical assistance. These energetic elves fasten themselves to specific campaigns and create a menu of hassle and mayhem to be directed at these corporate targets. Subscribers can lend support – financially – to certain actions which may range from post-it notes being put on clothes in stores warning customers of the evil that lurks beyond, all the way to more forceful demonstrations of outrage in a largely quiet, non-violent, but powerful and physical way.

Equally important given the consolidation of communication and the monopoly of media is the need to "spread the word" to all of the various tribes, so that people holding their own council will have the information allowing them to finally act. We need the notion of "each one, tell one" to spread to zines where simple notes can bring amplification to important people's struggles. We need people to call into non-commercial and, yes, now I've said it, even commercial radio stations with something more than a song request, but in fact with information within the sound of the airwaves about union busters, about predatory lenders, about companies paying unfair wages, and on and on.

In returning to simple principles on which to launch dramatic enterprises, we need to relearn the value of never letting our "flag hit the dirt" or never leaving the "wounded behind enemy lines." These were not values just in the movies or TV. These values came from different traditions of struggle with their separate rules of engagement. Among the progressive forces we have become too used to criticism, rather than activism. When a campaign is failing against overwhelming odds or when a community organization is sued or a labor union is enjoined, we need a new tradition among our forces where people – each and every one – know then that it is time to step forward in their own way and pick up the fight. The professors can analyze it all later, but in the roar of battle against great odds, we need everyone to find a way to be warriors now in the people's struggle.

These are some small ideas that could reverberate in a thousand rooms now silent, but we need all of you to answer the call and find a way to take up the cause while we still have an opportunity to win. We can not all be organizers, but we can all carry weight and it's time to see each and everyone of us start to shoulder the load now. ★



David Swanson

Combating White Privilege in the Anti-Globalization Movement

by Sonja Sivesind

The anti-globalization movement has been vibrant in communities and organizations of color in the US and around the world for hundreds of years, and yet white supremacy was rampant in the movement against the WTO ministerial meetings in Seattle. In other words, racism is alive and well in social justice organizing, and the WTO was no exception.

Much has been written about the successes of the WTO actions. As well, there has been a great deal written by activists of color about the problems of the WTO organizing, the exclusion and racism within the movement. The purpose of this article is to name racist actions that occurred during WTO organizing with the intention of stopping such supremacy and creating a stronger movement, to show that these are not isolated incidents and to name the precedent that we have set while learning from our mistakes.

White supremacy was evident in many ways during the pre and post WTO organizing; in arguments leading up to the mobilization on November 30, 1999; in goals, strategies, and descriptions of accomplishments; and in how groups and organizations were and continue to be set up. Some examples follow: white organizers and activists believe that racism doesn't concern them; white people think racism doesn't have anything to do with globalization; white people take credit for organizing that people of color initiated and carried out; and white people actively prevented conversations about race and racism from happening leading up to the WTO. And the list continues as there were no structures in organizations to deal with the racism in the groups or individuals; people of color who are not doing direct action are not considered part of the real movement; and people of color organizations are finding little support from white people. Racism continually is a serious reason why coalitions do not go further: movements are not building, and people of color and anti-racist whites are leaving in droves, for good reason; and the organizing for Seattle was not multi-racial from the inception. As a result of all this, the 50,000 people who turned out in the streets during the week of November 30, 1999, were pre-

dominantly white, and white supremacist ways of organizing have been perpetuated across the country in the name of Seattle.

During this time leading up to Seattle, organizers nationwide (both white and of color), made concerted efforts to talk about racism, to plan anti-racist training, and to bring up issues of privilege. These efforts were usually in vain, given the too-often negative reactions from the leadership as well as the general lack of support from the movement surrounding them. If we are truly interested in working in a genuine anti-globalization movement, we must challenge white supremacy in all of our organizing structures.

I was active in initiating the Direct Action Network in February, 1999. Later, I worked in Seattle for a month before and after the ministerial meetings, mostly with a cluster of affinity groups planning for a few specific actions during the week of November 30, 1999.

I am a white woman who spent last year traveling across the US and Canada, interviewing grassroots groups doing radical political work, specifically anti-oppressive work, on a wide range of issues including environmental justice, prisons, popular education, and art as social change. Throughout all the interviews I conducted in the Southwest, Midwest, Eastern Canada, and the East Coast, The WTO is always brought up. We — everyone who was involved in some level in organizing and participating in Seattle — changed things.

Through interviewing over 50 organizations in 20 states, I found that across the country racism is imbedded deeply in social justice organizations. We must learn from this recurring reality so that we can radically change it. This article is rooted in the premise that it is the responsibility of white people to undo racism. In not actively recognizing and confronting white supremacy in all levels of our lives, including organizing, we are perpetuating the very racism that keeps the WTO and systems of oppression in power.

We can't waste time on this

Organizing that reflected an anti-racist analysis was never made a

"We can't waste time on this;" "it is too close to the action date - if we talk about racism, we won't talk about the other things we have to discuss;" "can we start the meeting?" and "let's just use this agenda and talk about this later."



priority in pre-WTO organizing. In Seattle, throughout the month of September 1999, whenever anyone tried to start discussions about race at meetings, they were continually shot down. Racism was either deflected as "not an agenda item," or put at the bottom of the agenda and always tabled for lack of time. In October, 1999, a Seattle organizer was facilitating a Direct Action Network meeting. He placed racism at the top of the agenda. His intent was to ask questions and start a dialogue. Does the group recognize that everyone at the table is white? Why don't people of color come back to meetings? Before the meeting, he set up the agenda, and others at the meeting took the subject of racism off altogether. Another organizer, a leader in DAN, told him that "unless you are going to do a workshop, you can't talk about this." A ten-minute confrontation followed surrounding issues of power, racism, and who had been making decisions for the entire group. Other people joined in the fight, supporting the person who had taken the agenda item off. Their arguments included:

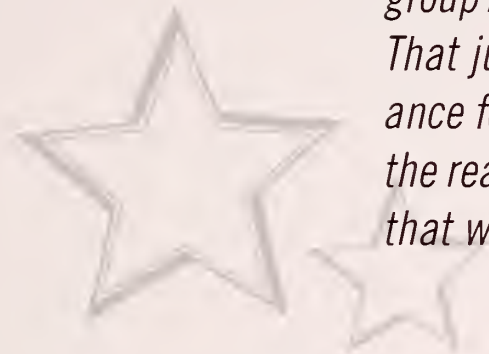
"We can't waste time on this;" "it is too close to the action date — if we talk about racism, we won't talk about the other things we have to discuss;" "can we start the meeting?" and "let's just use this agenda and talk about this later."

It ended with the facilitator refusing to facilitate the altered agenda and the subject of racism not being addressed. This is just one example of the leadership of DAN being unwilling to recognize, address, and struggle with the issue of white privilege and racism. In other cities white folks were also trying to address issues of racism, and were confronted with resistant and even hostile organizers refusing to engage in these discussions.

In Olympia, racism was named repeatedly in DAN meetings. In September, 1999, several people of color brought up the fact that the group was predominantly white. The defensive response from white people included statements like: "we don't have time to deal with this" and "let's move on to the next agenda item." That was the last meeting that any people of color attended in Olympia.

Racism was continually brought up in meetings by talking about outreach and the lack of community based involvement. According to local organizer Jennica Born, many activists in Olympia felt that "bringing up or dealing with racism was a divisive tool that was keeping us from getting the 'real work' done. People felt that it was a burden to deal with such a subject as racism when 'direct concerns' like outreach materials and budgets needed to be produced."

Finally, a training was organized by white leadership in October, 1999. The goal was to encourage people in the group to consider their own internal white supremacy and to raise a consciousness amongst people in the group about racism and oppression as a whole. Thirty people participated in the training, which helped create a space where people were able to learn with less tension than previous settings.



You can't expect people of color to join your group because you say you want to be diverse. That just doesn't make it. The Southern Alliance for Economic Justice couldn't own up to the reality that they'd created an environment that was not inviting to people of color.

The training wasn't effective at instilling an anti-racist practice in white organizers. The training was seen as a momentary, band-aid solution, rather than as a step towards integrating anti-racism into a more holistic way of challenging globalization. Instances of racism continued. For example, in an affinity group setting, people of color brought up concerns about a plan to have white people dressed as slaves carrying a slave ship to be used as a stage for their action plan on November 30, 1999. The people of color were later attacked for challenging issues of racism and received little support from the broader DAN activist community.

Racism exists in many parts of this example. Throughout the proposed skit, racism was minimized and made theatrical; white people didn't acknowledge how they'd benefited from slavery anywhere in the skit; and the negative responses to the concerns raised perpetuated racism as the challenges from folks of color were not dealt with.

This is unacceptable. As white people, we need to learn what it means to be an ally to people of color. We need to provide tangible support when issues of racism are raised in our meetings and work spaces, and we need to be calling one another on racist behavior.

Our meetings are open

In Tucson, Arizona, a small group of white environmental activists were preparing for the WTO meetings. They called themselves the Sonoran Justice Alliance and wrote a statement - a general resolution in opposition to rapid globalization. They circulated the statement around email lists, and people and organizations signed on. They took that statement to Seattle to show that many groups in Tucson opposed the WTO. This group of activists were seen as a clique by many community organizers around town. I talked with several organizers of color who were well connected in the activist scene in Tucson. They were interested in attending the SJA meetings, but either the meetings were held as part of Earth First! meetings, or people didn't know when they were happening, or learned of them too late to be involved. If Earth First! is a predominantly white organization that you are not a part of, it is an alienating setting for a coalition meeting. When folks did find out about their meetings, many people of color didn't feel comfortable with how they were run. Organizers of color who knew the folks in SJA tried to call them on it, naming the exclusionary way meetings were being organized. But they were met with defensive answers of "our meetings are open." A white organizer with SJA said to an organizer of color bringing up the issue of inclusivity, "what do you want, a red carpet rolled out for you?" White people feel comfortable in white-led spaces, when white culture is the norm and outreach is done to our white friends and we see white faces all around us. Making an effort to change leadership structures, meeting processes or locations, to allow

people of color to feel included and a valued part of the group, is hardly a red carpet. White people have been rolling out their own red carpets for each other for five centuries.

A problem named by many of the people I interviewed across the country, was how white people take credit and take over. In Seattle, the Tucson group did a lot of press work and were covered extensively in the Tucson media. The statement that they had brought became a "coalition" and those in Seattle named themselves as representatives of 40 to 50 groups. Tucson organizer Jen Allen explained, "people just signed on to a statement. They didn't agree to be in a coalition and say you four or five people are our spokespeople." Meanwhile in Tucson, strong actual coalitions were being struggled for between labor and social justice activists. The group Southern Alliance for Economic Justice had been doing a lot with the machinists to build a working coalition and a real alliance. When the SJA folks returned from Seattle, they took credit for this alliance and disregarded all the hard work that had gone into building these relationships.

The ongoing work that organizations of color had been doing for years was not acknowledged or respected. This example is tied to a history of white-led progressive organizations claiming sole responsibility for success they were not involved in creating.

In Tucson, the conversations around race and racism had to be extremely basic, because most of the white activists had never worked on issues of white privilege, white supremacy, and our role as white people in perpetuating these institutions. Organizers of color who continually attempted to work with white people were forced to educate and hold the hands of white activists who refused to deal with their own privilege and racism. Jen Allen explained,

You can't expect people of color to join your group because you say you want to be diverse. That just doesn't make it. The SJA couldn't own up to the reality that they'd created an environment that was not inviting to people of color.

Allen was left to feel like she was bursting the bubble of enthusiasm for those who were new to activism because of their participation in the actions in Seattle.

By asking questions about racism, "what does it mean to organize?" "what is a coalition?" and by calling SJA out on their misrepresentation of the groups who'd signed the statement and for taking credit on the work done in Tucson, Allen was taking risks and making every effort to strengthen the work of the group. But, she said, "I felt a little bad, like I was holding back their momentum." As white activists fighting against capitalist globalization, we must see momentum hinging on all of these questions. It is not the responsibility of people of color to continue educating us about what needs to happen, how we need to deal with our shit. We must be the ones initiating these conversations



and actions on every level and at every stage of our organizing. Addressing all of these components and questions are crucial if we are to actually reach success.

These examples show that in some cities, racism was discussed within pre-WTO organizing. However, the majority of white people involved at all levels were resistant to these issues being raised. Anti-racist praxis* could not be developed when discussions around racism were stopped, when white people continued with racist actions, and when people of color were alienated because of white people's racism.

How different would the actions of Seattle have looked if anti-racism had been incorporated from the beginning? What kinds of coalitions could have been created? The racism that existed during pre-WTO organizing did not end there. It lives on and manifestations appear in many ways across the country.

This isn't radical

In most all cities I have traveled through, seasoned organizers, both white and of color, were enthusiastic about the surge of energy the WTO inspired. They were also wary of the "know it all" attitude that came with the boom in participation. Consider how powerful it could be if this energy from white activists could be channeled into learning from communities of color who have been organizing on this land for 509 years. By focusing on understanding how our liberation is linked, and how white people can effectively organize in their own communities in solidarity with the work of people of color, our movements have immense potential to grow and strengthen.

In Olympia, an affinity group with members active in the initial conference calls of DAN, and all of whom were involved in leadership throughout the entire week of N30, had serious concerns about the comments they heard Seattle leadership making about the future of DAN post-WTO. They felt that people were not interested in evaluating or reflecting what had occurred throughout the whole organizing process, and instead were simply pushing forward to make a bigger but not necessarily better organization. They felt responsibility for the direction thus far of DAN because of their leadership roles, and wanted to affect the future of DAN possibly becoming an organization. They had concerns about this idea, and felt a conversation would not be effective, so they wrote a public letter and delivered it to DAN leadership in Seattle in mid-December. They write:

We wrote this letter out of respect for the accomplishments and process of the Direct Action Network, but we must claim our concern that the group process is exclusive and not sustainable. ...Some major problems

•The group is aimed towards a particular class background, ethnicity, and political philosophy.

• People of color were actively alienated from the organizing process and from the Convergence space itself...It was the experience of those among us who had been active participants in DAN organizing that dialogues regarding exclusivity and process were placed as a low priority. If the Direct Action Network wishes to be a fundamentally anti-oppressive organization it must be willing to stop and examine practices within the organizing which are oppressive in nature.

The responses received from this letter clarify the priorities of DAN leadership. Carolyn Cooley, one of the writers of the letter explains what happened.

When two of us from the Sleazy Cowboys attempted to raise our affinity groups concerns about problems of unaddressed racism, hierarchy, etc. within DAN with several key organizers, we met total dismissal...People seemed to stop listening as soon as they heard the words "race" and "oppression." They gave us a "yeah, yeah, yeah - we've heard it all before" response.

The response, or lack of response, showed a serious disinterest in even discussing these issues. According to Jennica Born, of the Sleazy Cowboy affinity group, the reaction proved just how established the foundations of a racist mentality were. If these leaders were not going to listen to five fellow white organizers who they respected — who were friends and co-workers — then there was clearly a disinterest in addressing racism. The letter had meant to spark public discussion about the need for evaluation, but the initial disturbing responses the group received caused them to lose faith that such an evaluation would occur.

The letter was passed out at a meeting in Olympia. The feelings expressed to the group were that the Sleazy Cowboys were too antagonistic, hostile, and forceful. They were using methods that were too confrontational. This is ironic coming from a group that claims to strive for direct confrontation at every level. These activists were focused on doing direct action at the forced relocation site of the Diné people in Arizona on February 1st, and they didn't want to be bothered with these issues of racism and evaluation.

In Seattle, post WTO, new people were enthusiastically joining DAN. A group of four local organizers got together to draft a proposal for an anti-racism training for DAN. They had seen the growing need for such a training through their work leading up to the WTO. The horrible response to the Sleazy Cowboy letter only added fuel to their fire for the necessity of this work. With so many new people, it seemed an especially crucial time for this to happen. It would give people a common language to use, an understanding of what racism is, and how to define it.

The proposal was framed in the idea that anti-racist work IS direct action. This was to speak to the prevailing attitude that people wanted to continue directly and physically challenging the system. There was

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still money in the DAN accounts, so their proposal included DAN paying experienced facilitators for the proposed workshop.

They were given three minutes to make their proposal to a group of 50 people. The entire meeting resonated with a push, push, push, sentiment. Future actions were the focal point, as they planned for shutting down Microsoft in February 2000. Therefore they claimed to have little time for any other agenda items. No consensus on the proposal was ever reached. The reactions were not supportive. "do whatever." "what's anti-racism?" "we're not racist." "lets get on to the real work." "this is a waste of time and money." "why won't anyone do this training for free?" "we don't want to pay for your therapy." "this isn't radical." Clearly a crowd not responsive to the idea of prioritizing anti-racist praxis.

Needless to say, the training didn't happen. Only one of the four people who made the proposal continued to work with DAN. In February, 2000, the person who had presented the proposal was confronted by other white DAN activists at a public space. He was told that racism was not the issue, and that he didn't understand what was going on. He was called an infiltrator and a nazi, told he needed therapy, and threatened with physical violence. They said they would take care of him if he didn't drop the racism issue. Some of the folks active in this confrontation continued to hold leadership positions in what used to be Seattle DAN.

In Tucson, local activists have been dealing with the post-WTO phenomenon of an influx of people, jazzed by their role in shutting down the WTO and now wanting to be involved in politics. While this sentiment is encouraging, as it is great to have more people involved, it unfortunately is playing itself out in negative ways. Mostly young, white, new activists are returning to cities like Tucson and Minneapolis (and most every city across the country) and entering into the organizing community in a detrimental fashion. They come in with the attitude that they know it all, they are the most radical, and they are at the forefront of this new movement (little do they realize that it is new only for them).

A respectful way to enter that space would be to attend meetings and listen. That would allow newer white activists to begin to understand what local community organizers have been working on for decades (and in some cases centuries); to learn what strategies are being employed and why; and how communities are working with their own constituencies. Instead, these spaces are being entered with a "holier than thou" attitude. Because a particular type of direct action involving street demonstrations, blockades, and arrest scenarios, was used with success on N30, it has become the supreme definition of radical, and many white people are all of a sudden claiming direct action to be a Seattle phenomenon. The assumption is that local communities (such as groups doing cross border work with Chicano and Mexican families since colonization) don't employ multi-layered strategies, are not radical, and do not have lessons to share. At a demonstration in Tucson at the National Law Center for InterAmerican Trade, where a wide section





of the community was represented at the planned protest, a local white DAN leader attempted to rile people up and escalate the demo by storming the building. Paying no mind to the organizers strategies of creating a safe place for the children, union members, religious folks, and the overall coalition of people they had organized the event for, this DAN activist exclaimed to the group, "are you guys activists or slacktivists?" He carried with him the ever familiar attitude that if you are not doing direct action, you are not pushing the envelope and are not engaging in valid tactics.

We know what we are doing

Because the white leadership of the growing movement of direct action and anti-globalization is not prioritizing anti-racist praxis, and is in fact actively working against it, recent organizing efforts inspired by the WTO are perpetuating racism. There is renewed interest in direct action as a tactic and general enthusiasm for organizing, birthed out of the energy and success of Seattle. Unfortunately, with the lack of anti-racist praxis, many potential coalitions are being overlooked or destroyed; ongoing organizing efforts in communities of color are being disrespected and devalued; white supremacy continues to hold up the systems we fight against; and we are continuing to measure the success of our actions in limited ways.

An interview with Gabriel Sayegh, a member of the security team at the convergence space in LA at the Democratic National Convention in August, 2000, pointed out that racism was dealt with much more intentionally in LA than in Seattle. Sayegh explained that those involved in organizing for LA were predominantly people of color. From the beginning of the planning, anti-racism was a constant focal point of local organizing. Demonstrations were planned by community organizers in communities affected by the policies they were protesting. The events of LA would have happened regardless if white people from out of town joined them or not. Therefore, when white organizers descended upon LA starting in June, 2000, with the attitude that "these people don't know how to organize a big action," and "we know what we are doing," the damage was massive. People of color who were once involved, refused to come to the convergence space or the spokes council meetings. Existing coalitions were delegitimized. Local leadership was alienated and devalued. An outsider-insider dynamic was created and exacerbated.

These white people from out of town left soon after the actions without evaluating or receiving feedback that would inform their next decisions. They were on their way to serve as "experts" for the next mass action, while local LA groups were left to rebuild trust within their damaged coalitions.

This mass action style of organizing is limiting our potential for success. As white people, we need to start at the beginning and ac-

knowledge racism as a critical problem in society, institutions, and groups; we must begin to value the daily actions of interrupting racism; to look within ourselves and confront our own racism; to organize and participate in trainings and workshops to begin the process of attacking these systems of oppression; to use our access to resources to support the ongoing work of organizations of color, and to organize our own communities to fight globalization and white supremacy. As white people we need to acknowledge our own role and the role of our group(s) in perpetuating racism; to take personal responsibility for unlearning racism, to take responsibility for our organizations to work on anti-racism goals within an anti-racist structure; to take responsibility for understanding and supporting organizing issues of concern to local organizers and communities of color; to share and take leadership from organizations and organizers of color; to build community between white anti-racist organizers, and to challenge white supremacy at every level, personal and political.

The actions in Seattle offer great potential. How can white people help make this an authentic, diverse, truly radical movement or coalition of movements? There are white anti-racist organizers who are listening to what organizers of color have been saying for years. People are going against the grain and challenging racism. We need more white people supporting and participating in this necessary work. Until there is a commitment to anti-racist praxis in our organizing, then true coalition, liberation, and victory will remain unattainable. We must take inspiration from those who struggle against racism and white supremacy, and join them in the fight. ★

*praxis as defined by Paulo Freire's teachings — Praxis comprises a cycle of action-reflection-action: central to liberatory education.

this article was written for the new book *Interruption on the politics and practices of white anti racist activists*.

For order information, contact: interruption@graffiti.net

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Reclaiming the Streets of Argentina



Next Stop: the World

by Kari Lydersen
Nicolas Pousthomis
via www.indymedia.org

In Prague, Washington D.C., and Ottawa in the past two years, tens of thousands of activists from all over the world have flocked to the meetings of the International Monetary Fund to use blockades, street theater, and smashed windows to show their opposition to the International Monetary Fund's "austerity" plans imposed on developing countries around the world.

Many of the people who took to the streets of Argentina the week before Christmas could never afford a plane ticket to these destinations. But their collective assault on the IMF made a statement perhaps much stronger than shutting down a meeting ever could. In Argentina, "professional" protesters who had honed their techniques in Seattle, Prague, and Washington D.C., joined thousands of "regular" people — housewives, farmers, taxi drivers, factory workers, teachers, even scores of middle-class white collar professionals and business owners — to say "no more" to the dictates of the IMF and the world market.

Once upon a time, Argentina was known as one of the more fortunate Latin American countries, with the third largest economy in Latin America, rich natural resources and miles of coastline, a healthy gross national product, and in Buenos Aires one of the wealthiest and most cosmopolitan cities in the southern hemisphere. But things came crashing down over the past decade, as fallout from the Asian economic crisis, the corruption of former president Carlos Menem's (and previous) govern-

ments, and the price of adhering to world market mandates took their toll.

Argentina has been a classic case of the IMF and multinational investment community's answer to economic woe: introduce severe austerity measures, privatize and cut social services, cut taxes, and kowtow to free trade. This formula has come under criticism around the globe, causing widespread misery and fear in places ranging from Turkey to Ecuador to Jamaica.

In Argentina, people wouldn't have it.

For several days in mid-December, tens of thousands of people swarmed the streets of Buenos Aires and at least 20 other cities and towns throughout the country, breaking windows, looting, banging pots and pans, blocking traffic, screaming, crying, and generally shouting out their opposition to the government of President Fernando de la Rúa and the policies of the IMF. At least two banks and one U.S. fast food chain were burned down. There were at least 27 fatalities, including elderly men who had heart attacks or were trampled during the protests, and people shot by business owners defending themselves against looters. And it is doubtless that numerous people were killed and injured by police, though media reports of this were scant. Argentina's Indymedia site reported at least seven dead at the hands of brutal police — "they used bullets, gas, hydrants, horses and dogs against us, and they don't distinguish between old and young, women and men, and

simple citizens in the street."

De la Rúa tried to salvage his leadership by pleading with the opposition Peronist party, which dominates Congress, to join him in a coalition government. But, not surprisingly, the Peronists would rather wait their turn than taint themselves with de la Rúa's debacle, and the offer was refused. On December 20, de la Rúa resigned, and people celebrated in the streets.

But while de la Rúa and his underlings were seen as the culprits for the economic disaster, the IMF and the rest of the "old boys club" dictating global economic policy are viewed by many as the real creators of the policies and conditions Argentines were striking out against.

Protesters decried the IMF and de la Rúa's complicity in carrying out IMF policies that, rather than helping them, seemed to be making well-off people poor and poor people even poorer.

De la Rúa started to fall from grace not long after taking power in December 1999. He was elected during a recession that had been going on for at least two years, and inherited a growing debt, now the biggest in the world at \$132 billion. He turned to the IMF for a way out, trying to impose bare bones budget cuts and slashing the salaries and pensions of public employees. In July he gutted state salaries and pensions by up to 13 percent.

These measures enraged everyone from workers to municipal staff to business owners, including the crumbling, once-wealthy

middle class. On December 1, de la Rúa instituted draconian limits on cash withdrawals, after Argentines withdrew \$1.3 billion from banks in November alone. The limits, intended to prevent runs on the bank as people feared their money would be drastically devalued or seized by the government, meant that business owners couldn't touch enough of their own cash to do business and people were left without access to their daily needs. People scrambled to extract their money from the banks and put it into real estate, stocks, even jewelry. In mid-December unemployment hit a high of 18.3 percent, and unions called for a general strike.

On December 5, the IMF declined to release \$1.3 billion in aid to Argentina until even harsher austerity measures were imposed, and on December 17 the government introduced the 2002 budget with additional spending cuts of 20 percent. On December 19, the country declared a state of emergency to stop the protests, where looting was rampant and police were firing water cannons and tear gas liberally at protesters.

On December 20, economy minister Domingo Cavallo and most of the remaining Cabinet members joined de la Rúa in resigning. Cavallo was lauded 10 years ago when he curbed hyperinflation by pegging the Argentine peso to the U.S. dollar one to one, a move that made foreign investment more stable and seemed to pave the way for dollarization of the type passed in Ecuador last year.

At an IMF meeting in Washington D.C. in June 1999, speakers expressed excitement at then-president Menem's overtures toward dollarization, and discussed dollarization as a wholesale strategy for all of Latin America. (By dollarization, they meant the adoption of another country's currency, be it the U.S. dollar, euro, or yen.)

"Remarkable and perhaps historic" is how Harvard economics professor Jeffrey Frankel described Menem's January 1999 announcement about possible dollarization.

"This is really a new idea, that a country as large and independent as Argentina might seriously consider giving up the peso and adopting the dollar not just in the private sector but as official, legal tender," noted Frankel. Frankel went on to say that while interesting, the prospect of widespread dollarization in Latin America would "probably not be well-advised at this point in history." Frankel suggested instead pegging local currencies to the dollar, as Argentina already had.

The one-to-one pegging didn't turn out so well after all, as countries like Brazil were able to be more competitive on the international market by devaluing their currency.

In the days after de la Rúa's fall, Peronist Ramon Puerta was appointed for a brief reign, in which he appointed Peronist Adolfo Rodríguez Saa as the interim president and

called for democratic elections on Mar. 3. Cavallo, who may have fled to Uruguay, was being sought to face possible illegal arms trafficking charges, and it was also rumored de la Rúa could face criminal charges. Devaluation of the peso was dismissed as a possibility, a move that could lead to a new round of protests. In a last minute visit to the presidential palace on Dec. 21, de la Rúa also removed the hated state of emergency that he had imposed on Dec. 19 to control the protests.

While the scope of the protests and the number of fatalities in Argentina this winter were noteworthy, the events that made international headlines in December were really just the latest in a series of the same in Latin America.

In the early months of 2000 in Cochabamba, Bolivia, nearly 100 people were injured in protests against the World Bank-driven privatization of water, which doubled people's water bills and decreased water sanitation. The protests successfully reversed the privatization plan, with the city shut down for a week by half a million people in the streets.

Also in the spring of 2000, thousands of student strikers at the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM) in Mexico City took over the school and created an autonomous council, resulting in the partial reversal of planned tuition hikes.

In January 2000, thousands of indigenous people in Ecuador ousted the president in protest against his dollarization plans and, even after dollarization was passed, strikes against privatization, dollarization, and social security cuts continued.

In Honduras, over the last few years, peasants have seized hundreds of acres in land reclamations, staging sit-ins and occupations to take the land that is rightfully theirs.

In Chiapas, Guerrero, and Oaxaca in southern Mexico, protests have blocked roads to prevent foreign logging and oil exploration. In Colombia, not only leftist guerrillas but masses of peasants have also protested foreign oil excavation.

In November, hundreds of indigenous Peruvians held protests in mining areas in the highlands, denouncing the environmental damage wreaked by the industry and the fact that while it brings in \$3.3 billion a year, the peasants who live in the mineral-rich areas live in abject poverty.

And even in Venezuela, where leftist President Hugo Chavez has been a thorn in the side of globalization, largely middle class people took to the streets this fall to protest about labor issues and a sagging economy.

Though struggles over land, the distribution of wealth and resources have raged in Latin America since the days of colonialism, these recent organic, grassroots protests are all part of a linked movement against a relatively new enemy — an encroaching global economy

ruled by multinational corporations and international trade bodies (the IMF, World Bank, World Trade Organization, Organization of American States). As a land rich in natural resources and full of potential cheap labor, with generally corrupt governments loyal to the U.S. and trade interests, Latin America is especially fertile ground for exploitation by global capital. Only time will tell whether the government that succeeds de la Rúa will be just another right hand man for the IMF, or if passionate, widespread protest will engender true independence and reforms. And Argentina is just the start. The outcomes of this same drama, which is bound to be played out in various other Latin American countries in the next few years, will ultimately have irreversible economic, environmental, and social effects for not only Latin America but the whole world.

"De la Rúa and Domingo Cavallo prioritize the interests of international capital in place of the interests of the Argentine people," said an article posted on the Argentine Indymedia site by Leo Sosa, in Spanish. "We have said, 'Ya basta!' ['Enough!']... This is what we demand: a new project for the country, a new model of work, education, health, social protection and overall a life of dignity for all the people of the world who love and live on this Argentine soil."

Shortly after Puerta took the reins, another wave of protests erupted due to his failure to lift the limits on cash withdrawals or refuse IMF demands. Puerta resigned after losing support from his own party, leaving majority leader of the lower house of Congress Eduardo Camano in power. But Camano did not want the task and immediately called a special session of Congress to elect a new president.

So the New Year started off with Argentina's fifth president in two weeks, when Congress elected veteran Peronist Senator Eduardo Duhalde to finish out de la Rúa's term, until elections in December 2003. Duhalde moved substantially to the left, preaching against capitalism and making moves to restore some of the country's past protectionist policies. Congress approved devaluation of the peso, already at 30 percent in mid-January, unhinging it from the dollar. Though many agreed this was the only route at this point, the devaluation nonetheless instantly gutted people's savings. Duhalde did institute measures so banks would bear more of the brunt of the devaluation than the general public. It remains to be seen whether or not other Latin American countries will "voluntarily" move in the anti-globalization direction as Duhalde did, under duress, or if it will take an Argentina-style collapse to bring about such results. ★

Mumia Abu-Jamal
175 Progress Drive
Alternative Tentacles
www.alternativetentacles.com

There are few among us in the activist crowd who have never heard the name Mumia Abu-Jamal, but even for those who have, especially those of us new to the game, Mumia can be an abstraction, a voiceless, even faceless name. Sure we can read about his history, but it brings us none closer to him. Enter *175 Progress Drive*, a CD compilation named after the address of Mumia's residence for the past 20 years, his jail cell. The CD is powerful. Not in defense of Mumia, however. Its power comes from Mumia's strong voice and character only evident through his bold statements.

But because it is primarily spoken word, you may or may not want to take in the CD in its entirety — it is not something to play in the background. Piece by piece, the interviews and essays can stand alone, but together the CD flows from one thought to the next, growing into a critique of modern society. His thoughts run the whole gamut from the legal system to education to senior health care to rap music. Some interviews were recorded before his sentence but some come straight from Mumia's lips behind prison bars. His words come through strong, clear and elegant — never whiny or strained, despite his current situation.

Sometimes, however, Mumia's words feel clipped short. The CD promises rare interviews with Hugh Masekela and Bob Marley but they barely reach a minute and a half long with the bulk of that taken by Mumia setting up for the interview.

Worse than the short interviews are the three musical interludes on the CD. They do work well to break up monotony but tend to sound more like clichéd tribute songs with praise of Mumia's struggle. Perhaps the worst example of this is the spoken word monologue of Assata Shakur who makes a desperate plea to help save Mumia. Her words are redundant, for Mumia's words stand for themselves. When you realize the source of these honest and true words is being put to death, you realize just how horrendous the situation truly is.

—Jonathan Schnapp

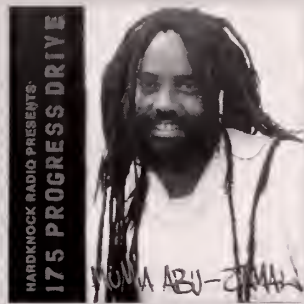
Noam Chomsky
9-11
New York: Seven Stories Press,
2001. 125 pp. \$8.95.

Right-wing thought cops such as David Horowitz have accused distinguished intellectual and activist Noam Chomsky of un-American critiques of Bush's war on Afghanistan. Horowitz's critique does not center on his belief in Chomsky's untruthfulness but rather on the extremist view that favors repressing dissent. Other supposedly "left wing" opinion-makers such as Christopher Hitchens, whose support for Bush's war is

founded on, as he put it, a legitimate defense of "our culture," have toed this line. Despite these attacks, Chomsky remains a crucial voice in the peace camp.

9-11, a collection of several edited interviews dating from September 19th to October 15th, provides Chomsky's usual expertise on the history of US foreign policy and its habit of war and support of violence in places like Central America, Lebanon, Sudan, Indonesia, Yugoslavia, Iraq, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Turkey, etc. over the last two decades. It will prove indispensable for activists and future historians of this current crisis.

In this slim volume, Chomsky debunks three essential myths of Bush's war



cultivated by his administration and by the corporate media. First, we are encouraged to believe that Bush must do and is doing something quite different than ever before. Second, it is generally argued that terrorist attacks by Muslim extremists arose because of their "jealousy" of "our" economic and political "successes" and because of "our" confused and sinful religious views. This leads to the third and most problematic myth which suggests that this conflict is a struggle between Christianity and Islam, between "civilization" and "barbarism."

These self-serving platitudes and superficial analyses, Chomsky argues, obscure the historical roots of terrorism and, if perpetuated, will inevitably fail to provide a framework to solve violent conflict. Chomsky points out that the US government has generally conceded that its usual policy of interventionism and militarism has unswervingly resulted in increased terrorist attacks on US or allied targets.

The four presidential administrations of these last twenty years have variously nominated their foreign policies as the war on "international terrorism" (Reagan's term to legitimize his attacks on "soft targets" in Nicaragua, use of car-bomb assassination methods in Lebanon, unprovoked invasion of Grenada, etc.), a "stand against aggression" (Bush I's characterization of his defense of the aggressive and repressive Kuwaiti oil state and his legitimization of deliberate atrocities in Panama), "humanitarian intervention" (Clinton's policy of continuing the war on Iraq, bombing Sudan's largest of two medicine-producing factories, and his decision to create the refugee crisis in Yugoslavia by bombing military, diplomatic, and civilian targets), and now we have Bush's "new war on terrorism."

All of these policy groupings entailed attacks on poor countries with few technologically advanced forms of defense, impoverished populations, and, except for Yugoslavia, were countries predominantly populated by non-white people. All of these policy makers have tacitly admitted to consciously planning the wide suffering of civilian populations through starvation, disease, imprisonment, and displacement. Further, almost every case has seen the alignment of the US military forces with terrorist organizations or repressive governments. So much for Bush's claim to something new and different.

Also, throughout these two decades the US has sided variously for and against Muslim factions or states, for or against Christian-backed forces, as well as for Zionist elements in Israel. Thus, it is impossible to accurately characterize the current conflict as one between the two great religions or "civilizations," Chomsky argues.

As to the argument offered by the war-makers that radical Muslims are "jealous of our economic and political system," Chomsky's analysis remains thin. Though he correctly suggests that Bin Laden's concern for economic issues does not figure strongly into his worldview and points to the economic élites who financed, backed, and composed Al' Qaeda, Chomsky does not do much with this line of questions. Clearly, he is correctly avoiding the blatantly false trap laid for him by the ultra-right who would love for him to identify Bin Laden and Al' Qaeda with anti-globalization protesters who just within that last two years have suffered under violent and deadly police-terrorist attacks in Seattle, Quebec, and Genoa.

My sole critique of Chomsky's valuable contribution is that he tends to collapse the wide differences along class, racial, gender, and national lines within the US into a broad, and perhaps politically disabling identification with US rulers. He uses terms such as "we," "our," and "us" to characterize the foreign policy designed by ultra-right, corporate elites with hidden economic and political goals. In my view, this mistake made by many on the left concedes far too much to the right in terms of the possibilities of non-élite struggles against the Bush administration. Perhaps many on the left use this kind of rhetoric to guilt US residents and citizens into opposing atrocities enacted by their rulers, but it seems to ignore the potentiality of US working class and people's movements to unite with people other than their own rulers. This rhetoric asserts virtually no solidarity with the victims of US bombings or with exploited and oppressed peoples in the US.

Still, I highly recommend this book for the valuable intervention it makes at a time when right-wing cranks prefer to obliterate opposition in order to lend unqualified support for Bush's ultra-right agenda against people here and abroad. Chomsky, once again, delivers a systematic denunciation of the "masters of war."

—Joel Wendland



Noam Chomsky

An American Addiction: Drugs Guerrillas. Counterinsurgency: US Intervention In Columbia

AK Press/Alternative Tentacles Records

www.akpress.org

www.alternativetentacles.com

If you are reading this magazine, the chances are that you are somewhat familiar with Noam Chomsky and his brand of sociopolitical criticism. This disc, recorded May 12, 2000, at the Roxbury Community College in Boston, MA, is an informative and insightful dissertation on US involvement in Columbia, the war on drugs and US imperialism complete with all the trimmings (US funded oppression, UN impotence, the arms trade, etc.).

Chomsky delivers his well thought out critique in an easy to follow manner and backs it up with statistics and historical facts. What was George Bush's involvement in the laundering of drug money through Miami banks in the 80's? What country gets the most military aid from the US and why? Get the disc.

The one complaint I have about this disc is that it's depressing as hell. The material (as Chomsky eloquently exposes US government evils), the delivery (very matter-of fact) and the fact that to hear this kind of political critique you have to get a CD from a punk-rock record label rather than reading it in your local newspaper or turning on the news. Yes, we are fucked.

-David Stokamer

Randy Schutt

INCITING DEMOCRACY:

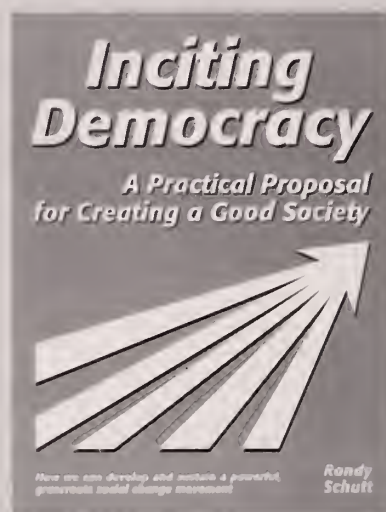
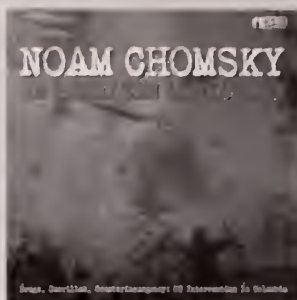
A Practical Proposal for Creating A Good Society

Cleveland, OH: Spring Forward Press. 294 pp. \$23.95.

Few readers expect an analysis of social and political issues by an author who is not steeped in abstraction and theory per se. Yet it is possible to imagine an engineer's practical mind (one of the author's attributes) spawning systematic proposals for a radical transformation of society. In fact, this book, resembling rather a handy manual for practicing something – democracy, in this case – ventures in both social theory and the design of a project that aims at no less than bringing about what the author calls a "good" society. The latter, more precisely, means a set of social, political, and economic structures whose underlying ethic is a balanced mix of justice, equality, and compassion.

Before embarking on his proposal, the author seeks to reassure the reader (and possibly himself) of the feasibility of his program. Extrapolating from significant past social improvements (i.e. abolition of slavery, women's and civil rights, etc.), and despite the conservative ascendancy of the 80's, he reasons that fundamental change is still possible if progressive activists remain inspired and alert enough to push for it. The prospect of a just society, he claims, is also consistent with a generally accepted goodness of the human being that is expressed in the (qualified) universal desire to fulfill vital needs and gain respect, joy, and love. Contrary to the idea of society's function being a continuous competition over resources, human nature can be seen as yearning for the improvement of human life and of society in general.

But what precisely are the elements of a good society and why haven't we achieved them yet? In addressing the first question, the author appeals to consensus, rather than external authority, regarding the sort of normative values to



be honored in the society. He finds that societal responsiveness to its members should be the basic element informing the rest of the society's characteristics. This responsiveness, deriving from "an amalgam of everyone's best ideas," demonstrates, in both theory and practice, how democratic consent constitutes the foremost social and political value and the driving force in instituting this society. All other elements, emerging from a consensual Golden Rule, focus on values of liberty, equality and justice in allocating societal and natural resources.

The author also discusses the primary obstacles to the emergence of a good society. Schutt analyzes the function and goals of the wealthy capitalist elite and its supportive political and military leaders/structures in maintaining control over society's resources. To this end, conservative efforts to resist societal democratization and empowerment focus on manipulating people's cultural and emotional conditioning, promoting ignorance of crucial skills and knowledge, and constructing an economic environment in which individuals are unable to devote time and effort to organizing for social change.

The conservative assault on democracy and society cannot be confronted without a social revolution of sorts, which the author presents as a concerted effort to affect both individuals and larger social structures through nonviolent transformation. He then discusses (in great detail) a strategy for social change that combines theoretical clarity and coherence with dynamic praxis that focuses on progressive activism. Special areas of action are those of activists' education, their emotional and social support, and development of their movement.

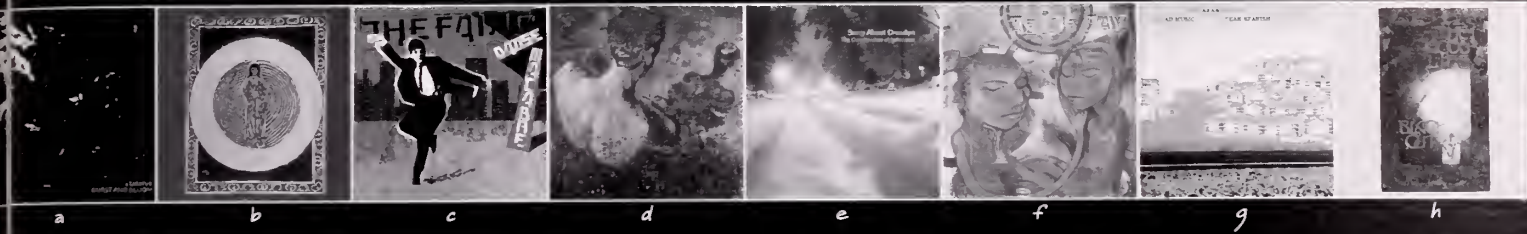
Through the remaining half of the work, the author offers his own version of "social revolution" – an educational program, addressed to dedicated activists, which he calls the Vernal Project. Although he goes into great detail explaining the project's function, goals, and feasibility, he grants that his is one of other possible schemes, and may even take alternative forms in the hands of other activists. Alternative programs, however, must satisfy certain fundamental criteria such as wide-ranging education, growth of the movement, and consistency with the ideals of the good society.

Designed as a year-long course of various study processes to be implemented in 50 centers nationwide, the Vernal Project aims at bolstering the knowledge and skills necessary for the work of social change, creating new progressive communities, and strengthening their endurance and ties. The system is based on a bottom-up approach to management and work, as they are implemented by activists educating and supporting other activists. Most importantly, the Vernal curriculum involves students' participation in functions (i.e. debating issues, decision-making, etc.) that ordinarily citizens delegate to representatives. Hence, Vernal activists learn to experience direct democracy by handling power at the fundamental level of governance. When, many years later, great numbers of Vernal-educated and empowered people will have raised society's political and social awareness, the project's next step is to claim power for the people through conventional and peaceful methods. Its final goal is to ensure the development of progressive institutions, and the diffusion of the resulting social change throughout society.

The strength of this work is based on a deeply democratic understanding of politics conceived primarily in an ethical sense. This understanding accepts, and also entails, that people should reflectively institute their society according to values and norms they consensually agree on, without the need for a right-or-wrong morality suggested by an authority other than themselves. What emerges is a responsible and independent society, able to be self-reflexive and self-reflective: in other words, not only is it self-instituting (all societies are), but it knows it as well. It is this political foundation that will determine societal ethics, which the author takes to be the ethics of the "good," whether this is manifested in human nature or in the fair distribution of wealth.

Seeking the attention of grassroots activists, but also accessible to lay readers, this book is highly educational for its abundance of information, numerous easy-to-focus tables, and abundant notes and references at the end of each chapter. Although the work becomes somewhat repetitive at times, it nonetheless offers an incisive social critique and its progressive suggestions in a refreshing air of optimism. Likewise, the acknowledged sizeable difficulties lying in the course of the social change process do not negate the faith – or even the certitude – that a good society is always possible.

-Vassiliki Leontis



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another world is possible

conversations in a time of terror

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