

ANARCHY a journal of DESIRE ARMED

Number 15

DISARM AUTHORITY! ARM YOUR DESIRES!

Winter 1988

**neither god
nor master**

**Ken Knabb, Fred
Woodworth, Jay Kinney
and Lev Chernyi on
Anarchy & Religion**

News in Review

Edited by Lev Chernyi

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BUILDING THE MASTER RACE; Israel searches for the final solution to the Arab problem

[Author's note: The following article might be highly offensive to some people of Jewish ancestry. Too bad, I'm finding it highly offensive to hear so many people trying to rationalize the racist and ultimately Nazi-esque policies of the state of Israel.]

"They are dogs. They have no business in our country. Let them get out or take the consequences."

"They breed like animals. If we do not remove them from our borders now, they will overwhelm our culture and our values by their sheer numbers."

"They are not to be trusted. As long as they are present among us, they will pollute all our efforts to build a nation and a people."

These are sentiments being voiced by many good and decent Israelis who are concerned that their efforts to build a homeland for God's chosen people are being thwarted by the presence of an inferior race.

"Israel needs *Lebensraum*" (room to live), they say, echoing the words of a German leader of the past. "We must solve this Arab problem so that Israel can fulfill its great destiny."

Despite Israel's sincere efforts to bring the blessings of civilization to them, the Arabs have persisted in their diabolical religious practices that reportedly include drinking the blood of newborn Jewish babies and plotting with international bankers to undermine the Israeli economy. Worse than that, they have refused to submit to voluntary sterilization and continue to have obscene numbers of babies which they can not possibly care for, and therefore, obviously plan to use to drain the resources of already overburdened Israeli taxpayers.

The Jewish people have always been known, and with good reason, as a humanitarian race, but there are limits even to our benevolence. We are forced to confront some plain facts, one of which is that Arabs, while superficially appearing to resemble us, are not possessed of the same degree of human worth as we, the chosen people are. If, therefore, we perceive them as a cancer in our midst, we must not be hindered by false sentimentality in our efforts to root them out.

We are not heartless people, and any such cleansing of our land should take place as humanely as possible. But it should also be as efficient as possible. The current practice of daily beating and shooting of a few Arabs at random is lacking on both accounts, and what's more, creates a bad impression in the media. Our public image has begun to diminish so badly that some Jew-hating radicals in our parent-country, the United States, are even proposing that Congress make some reductions in the measly eight million dollars a day that the tight-fisted Americans begrudgingly spare us.

We propose, therefore, a "final solution" to this nagging Arab problem. The mechanics of such a solution

are already in place; much of our Arab population currently lives in the camps that we have generously provided for them, and other Arab areas can be easily cordoned off into walled ghettos. Arabs who presently live outside such areas should be required to wear some sort of identifying mark, an armband for example; it would also be wise to require that they be tattooed with a registration number so that they can be kept track of until such time as they also can be resettled.

Eventually, we must face the somewhat unpleasant reality that there is simply not enough room in our "camps" to house all of our Arab population, especially if they continue to breed in such excessive numbers. Forced sterilization of women of childbearing age is obviously required, but beyond that, some population reduction measures must be undertaken. Granted, the use of refugee camps by the Israeli Air Force for bombing practice has been of some help, but the number of casualties produced is clearly not justified by the costs, both in terms of public relations and the necessity of repairing damage to the camp's physical

facilities.

The best method would be a neat and relatively painless system of mass extermination--large-scale gas chambers, for example. This might be politically difficult to implement, of course, due to objections raised by various bleeding hearts who recall that in the not too distant past Jews themselves were the victims of such a program. More palatable alternatives might include using large numbers of Arabs to work (without protective garments) in our nuclear weapons industry, or in using them in much-needed medical research (in conjunction with which, our biological warfare experts could conceivably develop an AIDS-like virus that attacks only Arabs).

Admittedly, such subjects are not pleasant, but they must be dealt with. Israel is a divinely ordained state, and its people are a divinely ordained master race. We have a responsibility to ourselves, to future generations, and to God himself to insure that our great Fatherland flourishes in accordance with His Will. Destiny calls! Tomorrow belongs to us! **Israel Uber Alles!!** --Reprinted from **Look-out!**, POB 1000, Laytonville, CA. 95454



Photo by Mikel Zhan

An Avid interview with Zippy!

The following interview took place after a rally by Zippy supporters at the **Columbia Daily Tribune** building in downtown Columbia. The rally was protesting the **Tribune's** decision to delete Zippy from its comics pages.

Avid: "Zippy, how do you feel about being dropped from the **Columbia Daily Tribune** comic page?"

Zippy: "It frees my time for bonsai and Missouri ham curing."

Avid: "But aren't you upset that you finished last in the **Tribune** comics readers poll?"

Zippy: "I'm on permanent assignment to vacation from the mid-Mo. public eye!"

Avid: "Is there anything to which you would attribute your lack of popularity?"

Zippy: "Video viewing is no longer distracted by thought! Evangelical vice is much more au courant!"

Avid: "Would you do anything different if you had it all to do over?"

Zippy: "I would paint myself orange with black stripes, grow long whiskers, overeat, and find an owner and a little dumb dog friend to abuse over and over and over..."

Avid: "Well, Zippy, is there anything you would like to leave with our mid-Missouri readers?"

Zippy: "The Columbia press no longer has Zippy to kick around!"

Edited by Lev Chernyi

News in Review

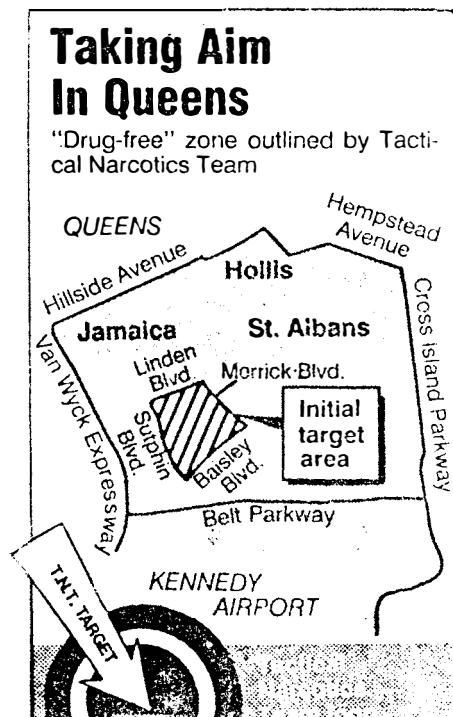
Drug scare & police state in Jamaica

Jamaica Queens is not always a pretty place. Although to the north there are working-class houses, and then the estates where Trump and Cuomo live [a "developer" and the NYC mayor respectively], the majority of the neighborhood--the largest in New York--consists of poor housing, rows of burnt-out and abandoned buildings, and swamp land. Jamaica is full of blacks (predominantly Africans & Haitians) and (mostly illegal) aliens. Most say that Jamaica is the largest African city in America.

Jamaica is also the home of the most AIDS cases in the states, and probably in the world. Drugs exist in all forms, but the biggest is alcohol. Prostitution is big, especially out of the welfare hotels. Illegal aliens live as many as 30 or 40 to a household.

Jamaica has been a center of controversy because it is the center of the black revolutionary movement. The underground economy flourishes and most (especially the illegals) live outside the predominant system (although, many of the illegals settle for slave-like jobs). Recently, there has been a growingly hostile black people's movement, mostly in response to the years of violence in neighboring Howard Beach & Ozone Park, homes of the mafia. There has been lots of media attention on the "Days of Outrage" protests. Lastly, Jamaica was our bright hope for a squatter's movement. But the pressure's on.

Police repression in Jamaica has been heavy on the illegals and the revolutionaries. A man from Ghana was framed for espionage. Radical centers are aided, set on fire and so



forth. Every time something happens, the police and media justify the events by bringing out drugs and by playing up Jamaica's reputation as a place where you don't go.

But in reality, the drug problem is pretty mild compared to other places. Drugs have been the big excuse to go into Jamaica and police it (mostly by white, "stun-gun" cops). And although there is violence (most people are armed), it is nothing compared to the police brutality. This brutality is mostly against illegals. They can't report police violence. They're often killed without any of the fanfare of the three people who

were killed on the Upper East Side of Manhattan (millionaire town). A couple of years ago, a man came forward to show how he was tortured by police with stun guns for hours. After his expose at the 106th precinct, almost two hundred blacks came forward with the same tell-tale marks on their bodies.

The other day, a cop finally got blown away here. Who knows what the actual circumstances were. They were staking out a crack house. It's been headline news for a week. I can't walk down the street; it's barricaded by cops. All of the empty houses will be raided; because of this squatters will be rounded up in droves. They'll say that all people living in abandoned houses are running crack houses or shooting galleries. These super-racist cops will be made heroes by the media while they round up the illegals, arrest the revolutionaries, and torch the abandoned buildings.

Today there were riots. People were rounded-up. I got out of here. I'm going to stay north for awhile. Unfortunately, the nice working class section is just as dangerous. There gangs walk with guns rolled up in newspapers. A couple weeks ago, on the bus, one guy had a gun, another passenger a switchblade, and the driver had a gun--and we all had weapons on each other because the one guy dropped his switchblade (he was a white kid from Flushing, where lots of KKK people live). The other day some guys drove their car up on the sidewalk and tried to run me down.

The whites (who are coincidentally mostly first generation immigrants) justify their weapons and aggression on the thought that the blacks are gonna come north and mug them. The blacks are equally afraid of the redneck whites, and often form gangs to counter it all. And so, while the KKK recruits members, some blacks form revolutionary groups, some go into gangs; some whites form citizen's groups which are nothing more than amateur police forces...and racial tension is carried on.

Jamaica, New York is just one place; the same thing is happening in other cities around the world. We seek a solution here that doesn't just sustain it all. Protection is needed, and we wonder when aggression is actually a wise thing. The danger comes from all levels; from the black population of the city, from the white population in the neighboring communities, from the city which organizes raids (Ben Ward, New York's token black police chief--nobody can figure out his qualifications--lives in the northern part of Jamaica and wants to protect the real estate value of his house), from the citizen's groups and the official police and so on. And if that all doesn't get you, the toxic water and TB will.

The question of violence is especially big right now. Given the situation, what would ya'll do? (I don't want to move and I don't want to live in the police state, and I don't want to be the only white woman safe in these parts). I'd like to open the discussion on the topics of racism, street violence and urban problems. Anybody?

The Fulltimes
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★★★★★
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BASED ON THE ORIGINAL STORY BY J. GOEBBELS

FULL METAL JACK-OFF

GOOD GERMAN PRODUCTIONS PRESENTS
A GIPPERGATE FILM RELEASE

Radical News in Review

Edited by Lev Chernyi

Give chance a piece

On September 5th, 1987 an event occurred which may signal a breakthrough for the North American anti-war movement. Forty yards of railroad track and ties serving Concord Naval Weapons Station (CNWS) in Port Chicago, California were torn up by hundreds of protesters during and after a rally at Clyde Park, adjacent to the CNWS, inland up the Delta east of San Francisco Bay.

The rally had been called in response to the callous maiming of ex-Air Force captain and anti-war pacifist Brian Willson, who had been run over the previous Tuesday by a munitions train as he knelt on the tracks to protest the shipment of munitions to war zones in the Pacific and, especially, to Central America.

The Concord Naval Weapons Station is the only west-coast munitions trans-shipment point. Kathy Bodovitz, reporting in the *San Francisco Chronicle*, writes that as of now in "peacetime," roughly 100,000 tons of munitions arrive by train and truck and leave by ship each year. During the worst of the U.S. war against Vietnam, 100,000 tons of munitions might have left the facility per month!

Missiles and bombs of all kinds pass through here (and are selectively tested) before being sent on for use in war situations. Today, about 80% of the munitions arrive by truck, the rest by train. There are about 100 miles of track within the boundaries of the CNWS, with a brief 200 yards of it passing over county-controlled property and the Port Chicago highway. That short stretch of track was plenty, as it turned out.

Just another liberal rally?

I had come with a few friends, fully expecting to be bored to tears and depressed at the sights and sounds of crowds excited by the speechifying of the likes of Daniel Ellsberg, Jesse Jackson and Joan Baez. Nevertheless, we decided we could go, meet with friends, express some sympathy for Willson, and some more disgust with the military, and find out what's what. There were even rumors....

The fact was that a number of people--anarchists, workers, veterans, homeless people, commies, students and community activists (or any combination thereof)--had come prepared with tools and/or the willingness to attempt to dismantle the tracks on county property. At about 1:30 PM, a meeting was convened outside the rally site to discuss and co-ordinate the direct anti-war action.

The liberal-pacifist organizers of the rally, Nuremburg Actions, were informed of the preparations and immediately sent a few leaders over to insist that our "violent" action not take place. One of the rally's organizers wishing to see the action blocked was Holly Rauen, who had just gone through the trauma of seeing her husband, Brian, run down and nearly killed. The "non-violent revolutionaries" argued that the destruction of property was "violent" and, therefore, counter to pacifist principles proscribing all forms of violence. Responses addressed the fact that, far from being violent, destruction of this property is a real

defense of life--is actually **anti-violence**, in that the machinery of violence against others is stopped.

The pacifists then announced that, since they had called the rally and did not want the action to take place, it should not take place. The reply was that demonstrations are not commodities owned by any group.

The issue of "defenseless children" was also raised, with arguments that our action would "provoke" police attack. People clearly pointed out that the action was physically quite separate from the rally site, and that people were informed and could thus avoid unchosen involvement. Nonetheless, it always seems strange

talking, lifting, tugging, hauling, and laughing. But by then it was too late.

During the next three hours, over a thousand folks of all ages, shapes, colors, and sizes cheered in support, brought food and drink, sang songs and played music ("I've been workin' on the railroad!"). They uprooted rail spikes, unbolted tracks and plates, removed rails, dug out and removed the wooden ties. One friend of mine noted how, with every announcement by the rally organizers that they had nothing to do with the tearing-up of the tracks, more people came to check it out and participate. This even included some who described themselves as pacifists.



Police stay out as masked protesters rip up 300 feet of rails.

that pacifists make the argument that **we** somehow provoke cops to violence against us. Why don't pacifists instead argue with the police against their use of violence?

When all else failed, there was the almost inevitable turn to plain old Christian guilt-tripping: a griever, shouting and finally tearful Holly Rauen took Brian Willson's willingness for martyrdom, his severed legs, his sacrifice and held them up before the group like the crucified Christ as a means to demand subordination to the "non-violent" principles which he chose to follow. We would be "disrespecting" him and displaying callous disregard for his victimization if we tore up the tracks upon which he had been injured. Fortunately, his suffering on the tracks did matter, and was one intense reason why many people decided to tear up the tracks--whether he liked it or not.

Surprise, surprise, surprise!

So, a short time later, as Jesse Jackson was halfway through his preach, a group of 10 people, shielded by a few dozen more, constructed a plywood death-train on a section of rails near where Willson had been hit and began to dismantle the tracks. Soon, following Jackson's speech, hundreds of people joined in. Over on the base itself, a huge "cherry-picker" was raised to a height of 150 feet or so, for the authorities to get a better view of us as more and more people gathered around--

By 5:30 PM perhaps two dozen sections of track, 40 or so railroad ties and dozens upon dozens of bolts and plates had been stacked or scattered around the demolition site. A 40-yard section of the railroad which carries munitions had been dismantled and made impassable.

Throughout the afternoon there was a nagging fear of attack by the surrounding "peace officers," whose occasional troop movements sent many of us scattering, only to regroup again. Perhaps the most ridiculous part of the day were efforts by several pacifists to play morality cops by sitting down on top of rails being removed, so as to "stop the violence."

Otherwise, the afternoon sailed by as a sometimes uproarious celebration. The free cooperation, the sharing of expertise, elbow-grease and extra effort was infused with a positively libertine and libertarian good spirit. In a pleasant, if very brief way, we made anarchy in action--the very opposite of chaos. There was no promulgation of compulsions, no pay, no bosses, no slaves--because it was really something that we wanted to do and that needed to be done. Some people probably never felt so good and excited about getting sweaty and dirty for free.

On another level, of course, we were just lucky. The decision of the cops and Marines to not move in and disperse the activities appears to have had two main reasons.

First was their undoubted surprise

at the action, itself, and the quick, willing and happy participation by hundreds of people. They could have broken it up, regardless, but they didn't seem to have the people available to interfere successfully without a high degree of brute force--both because of our numbers and because they were aware we would resist.

They would have moved into a large crowd holding crowbars, tire-irons, hammers, and lots of metal bolts, only after having first struggled through the encircling supporters. In fact, at one point, protesters--most of them in wheelchairs--blockaded and forced back a line of CHP cruisers whose drivers were trying to move in and interrupt the "work-site."

Secondly, the unhappy victimization of Willson, which was largely responsible for drawing 5,000 to 6,000 people to the rally, along with the significant national media presence, seems to have further counter-balanced the urge of Contra Costa County and the Navy to "defend property." The forces of "law and order" restrained themselves as the price they had to pay in order to appear responsible and respectable.

What's next?

It isn't likely that there will be many more opportunities to derail the U.S. war machine in such public and festive circumstances again. In the days following the destruction of the tracks, the loss of the rail-line brought on increased hauling by trucks, which were protested by pacifists from behind walls of Marines on either side of the roadway. One report even told of how the protesters appreciated the courtesy of the Marines who were out there "for the protection of the protesters."

On September 10, five days after our work, wage slaves had reconstructed the torn-up section of railroad at a cost of something like \$10,000.

If sabotage of the military's infrastructure is to continue, it will for now necessarily continue as more or less clandestine actions. Anti-war sabotage of military property has been on-going in Europe, especially West Germany, for many years now. In this they have reclaimed an element of past radical working class and anarchist struggle (An example of this largely unknown history can be seen in the article "John Olday, Artist and Fighter for Social Revolution," appearing in the *Angry Workers Bulletin* #2 [c/o 2140 Shattuck Ave., POB 2200, Berkeley, CA. 94704]).

In the U.S., this perspective on sabotage is shared already by some activists. On the day after Willson was hit, for example, some men at a protest rally broke into and messed up the ROTC's Callaghan Hall on the U.C.-Berkeley campus. Similarly, a week earlier, a group of women stormed into and trashed the armed forces recruiting office near downtown Oakland, leaving before the cops got there. Without a doubt, the idea of anti-war direct action in the United States has been provided impetus by the laudable use of anti-property sabotage tactics by people connected with animal rights and eco-defense

Edited by Lev Chernyi

Alternative Media Review

JAVA VI; Columbia's journal of alternative culture

To their credit the folks who put out **Java** haven't given up in their attempts to communicate with the generally inert mass of humanity which (at least theoretically) somehow fills the buildings of Columbia with its presence. While most residents of our fair city may, like populations elsewhere, appear closer to brain death than to any real appreciation for the hints of radical culture available in **Java**'s pages, at least a small



minority of social misfits, subcultural artists, punks and a few other fringe readers keep it afloat.

The idea behind **Java** is to "create and recreate a vehicle through which unrecognized but quality visual and written art work (especially, but not wholly local) can be made available to the public at a reasonable price." There's no argument that this is exactly what's been done so far, with the latest issue a 24-page effort with a glossy black and white cover illustrated with photos by Julita Latimore of Columbia, and costing an even dollar at the Columbia Community Grocery (1100 Locust St.) and a few other spots around town. It's also available for \$1.00 postpaid from **JAVA**, c/o What's This?, 223 N. Ninth St., Columbia, MO. 65201.

Though the quality is still uneven, there are plenty of local efforts included, along with a few interesting contributions from foreigners from places like Boston and Philadelphia--with the latter city represented by the tender comix of Luna Ticks, whose work also appears occasionally in **Anarchy**.

This issue of **Java** even includes a short article on the politics of the University of Missouri's investments in South Africa--an addition which gives the magazine a little polemical weight to throw around with the otherwise less linear messages of the prose poems, poetry and graphic art. Such an interleaving of radical politics and culture could lead the way for more powerfully interpenetrating efforts in future issues. --L.C.

Obsolete leftism; Z(ETA) MAGAZINE

January 1988 marked the birth of yet another alternative political journal. With an ambitious plan to create a major magazine overnight, a couple of South End Press founders, Lydia Sargent and Michael Albert, have translated an initial investment of \$25,000 into a 98-page monthly rag called **Zeta Magazine** (Z for short).

The name, like the magazine itself, conveys the impression of a vague radicalism. Memories of Costa-Gavras's movie by the same name are evoked--the letter "Z" was banned during the Greek Colonel's dictatorship, along with the peace movement, long hair on men, strikes, Sophocles, Sartre, rock music and the new math. However, as in the case of Costa-Gavras's film itself, the implied radicalism of the magazine seems to be

pretty superficial.

Zeta Magazine bills itself as "an independent political magazine of critical thinking on political, cultural, social and economic life in the United States; that sees race, sex, class, and political dimensions of personal life as fundamental in understanding and trying to improve contemporary circumstances; and that creatively works to assist activist efforts to obtain a better future." In other words, **Z** looks like just another mixed up, liberal-reformist periodical.

The key to understanding **Z**'s purpose and likely direction is the review (pp. 53-4) of the recently published book, **Liberating Theory**, included in the first issue. **Liberating Theory** was authored by seven people, six of whom feature prominently in

groups.

For us, anti-property sabotage is, nonetheless, essentially defensive, a delaying tactic, no matter how disruptive to the uses of the particular physical structures. Their reasonable relationship to constructive anti-capitalist social alternatives to this system of violence and exploitation is implied, but only implied. Sabotage has been a tactic exercised much more in wars **between** those in struggle for authoritarian power within society, than it has been in war by those of us rebelling **against** power.

That does not make sabotage any

less legitimate. Sabotage is a rational response to the facts and relationships of the present oppressive situation. What is demanded, however, are real resolutions of the underlying inter-related dilemmas of oppressive, unequal social relationships and neurotic, repressive psychic patterns. The vitality of anti-war direct actions are only dissipated, if we subjugate ourselves to conventional reformist and single-issue politics.

War against aboriginal, non-capitalist and working class peoples, statist militarization and war between competing powers are unavoidable



Drawing by Brian Moss (from JAVA VI, p.16.)

the first issue of **Z**, including the magazine's two founders, Sargent and Albert. According to Jeremy Brecher's review, "The authors reject terms like socialism and anarchism for their vision and call rather for a 'humanist' society defined as one which maximizes the fulfillment of human potential. It would be based on the trinity of diversity, solidarity, and egalitarian self-management..."

They criticize what they call the "monism" of Marxists, feminists, nationalists, and anarchists--what they see as the tendency of these movements to blame all social problems on the sphere of life they focus their own critiques on. And they call for an alternative formulation they call "'complementary holism,' to help such diverse movements act in solidarity yet retain their autonomy."

This lowest-common-denominator style of leftist-humanism is reminiscent of all the other synthetic/eclectic attempts to unify selected contemporary opposition and resistance

movements. Like new ageism and the Greens, it lacks the necessary theoretical coherence which might give some bite to its analyses. It represents just one more attempt to water down the effective critiques developed by genuine opposition currents so that they can be safely included in a mushy coalition politics which inevitably drifts straight towards the Democratic Party, as witness the scattered positive references to Jesse Jackson's presidential bid already in this first issue of **Z**.

There is no possible way to reconcile anarchy with electoralism, nationalism with anti-authoritarianism, militant liberalism with genuine radicalism. One or the other side of such dichotomies must always be sacrificed, and whenever there are vacillations you can always bet which side it will be!

Despite some good writers (including a couple of the authors of **Liberating Theory**, Noam Chomsky and Holly Sklar) this magazine is likely to be one long drawn out disappointment. Without any coherent overall perspective, it will sell out to an increasingly amorphous coalition politics, already foreshadowed by the heavy orientation of its writers towards social democratic academicism, self-indulgent intellectualism, and obsolete leftism. Like the message given by its uninspired graphic design and boring look, **Z** is just asking to be ignored by anyone seriously interested in radical social change.

Single issues are \$3.00; subscriptions are \$24.00/year from **Zeta Magazine**, 150 West Canton St., Boston, MA. 02118. --L.C.

and fundamental to the successful continuity of authoritarian--particularly crisis-ridden--capitalist civilizations. Sensible and constructive fulfillment of the intent of anti-war sabotage subsists in the creation of social self-organization, the purpose being consequential mutual aid and direct social action against domination in every facet of our lives. We initiate the passage to libertarian, communistic and ecological society together for each of us. That is the single issue, whatever our special and decisive personal interests may move us to emphasize. --Anonymous Eunonymous

International Anarchist News

Edited by Lev Chernyi

The anarchist scene

This column is an attempt to help our readers keep up on some of the myriad projects, publications, and gatherings throughout the diverse and dispersed anarchist scene in North America. If you have an event or project to announce, let us know about it and we'll try to include it here....

A new **Wimmin's Prisoner Survival Network** has been formed in Toronto (c/o Anarchist Black Cross, POB 6326 Station A, Toronto, Ontario M5W 1P7, Canada). The group is "aware of the ongoing work of many groups on behalf of wimmin prisoners, we are looking to compile these efforts in hopes of establishing a much stronger unified network of support, on the basis of an anarchy-feminist reality."...

Life of Crime (published by Elissa Rashkin, POB 20375, NYC, NY. 10025) has initiated its own "prisoner assistance/exchange project." For more information write, or send an SASE for the latest copy of **Life of Crime**....

Left Bank Distribution is sponsoring a "Books-to-prisoners" project and requests donations of books and money to cover postage to prisoners. Left Bank has two bookstores, issues mail-order catalogues, publishes books, pamphlets, posters and cards in addition to their books-to-prisoners project. Help support Left Bank's efforts—donations and inquiries can be made to Left Bank Distribution, 5241 University Way NE, Seattle, WA. 98105...

Freedom Collective (POB 203, Fremantle, 6160, Western Australia) has requested that anarchists protest the Australian bicentenary as "200 years of genocide and racial oppression. For years the aboriginal people were classed as flora and fauna, being killed at random as recently as the fifties." The bicentenary lasts all year, an ideal opportunity for demonstrating opposition to Australian nationalism and racism at such places as Australian embassies, Qantas Airlines, Fosters beer distributors, etc....

Red Raven (POB 9028, San Diego, CA. 92109) is an anti-authoritarian graphic arts collective. For \$1.00 Red Raven will send out 5 different 8.5 X 11 inch "posters," or 10 for \$2.00. Samples sent to **Anarchy** include images of Emma Goldman, Peter Kropotkin, Albert Parsons, anarchist graffiti and (I believe) Randolph Bourne's quote, "War is the health of the state."...

The **Autonomy Centre** (337 W. Pender #202, 2nd Floor) opens February 6th in Vancouver, B.C. The centre is "funded and organized by a group of anarchists/-anti-authoritarians" who are putting together a reference section of books and periodicals, and who will also sell literature. Films will be shown, discussions and skill-sharing workshops held, etc. The centre will also function as a drop-in space for anyone interested in anti-authoritarian ideas and perspectives. There are as yet no regular hours, so call before you show up. Phone: 688-6778....

Bevy of Anarchist-Feminists (BOA), c/o Librairie Alternative, 2035 St.-Laurent, Montreal, Quebec H2X 2T3, Canada) has so far published one issue (which we have not seen), and are looking for more women to contribute their "herstories...., poetry, graphics, writings, anarchist-feminist discussion, photography, images, collage, or whatever." The organizers refuse an editorial role and will print everything they receive. They are looking for contributions in order to help them continue to distribute **BOA** for free....

ANARCHY; a journal of Desire Armed, has a new address (c/o Columbia

Anarchist League, POB 1446, Columbia, MO. 65205-1446) due to our outgrowing our older and much smaller box. We'd appreciate it if those publications exchanging with us would promptly note the change on their mailing lists....

The **Institute for Social Ecology** (POB 89, Plainfield, VT. 05667) has announced plans for its "Summer Semester" to be held on the campus of Goddard College in Plainfield, Vermont. The Summer Semester "explores people's relationship to the natural world from a holistic perspective. The Institute offers an interdisciplinary curriculum which focusses on studies in Bioregional Agriculture, Alternative Technology, Eco-Feminism, Nature Philosophy, Community and Holistic Health, Ecological Anthropology, Community Development, Ecology and Spirituality, and Green Politics....

The **Anarchist Archives Project** (POB 1323, Cambridge, MA. 02238) has well over 3,000 issues of some 240 periodicals, close to 400 books, and a large number of pamphlets and other items, both in English and other languages, on the subject of anarchism....

The continental anarchist gathering in Minneapolis last year inspired the creation of **MAYDAY; A Continental Newsletter for the Anarchist Movement** (Editors: Mayday, POB 536, Decatur, Georgia 30031-0536; Publisher [mailing list, donations]: Mayday c/o Gabriela, POB 3266, El Segundo, CA. 90245-8366). Mayday publishes brief reports of events, analysis of events, and notes from Anarchist Network meetings....

Vermont Quixote and the **Anarchist Information Service** (GPO Box 842, NYC, NY. 10001) provide a clearinghouse for anarchist groups and events. Relevant material is xeroxed and sent to interested individuals....

A listing of groups involved in the prison struggle (for distribution to prisoners and groups) is being compiled by the **Toronto Anarchist Black Cross** (POB 6326, Station A, Toronto, Ontario M5W 1P7, Canada). In addition, a list of publications which prisoners may receive for free or at little cost is being compiled by the **Anti-Authoritarian News Network** (POB 915, Station F, Toronto, Ontario M4Y 2N9, Canada)....

Left Bank Distribution (5241 University Way NE, Seattle, WA. 98105) has just published a new collection of John Zerzan's essays, **Elements of Refusal**. It "is the first comprehensive collection of John Zerzan's writings--and long overdue. No less than as they appeared, these essays are provocative and important.... **Elements of Refusal** spells it all out. Here it is axiomatic that art, language, time, industrialism, number, technology, work and other aspects of our social lives--all hailed as the liberators of humanity--are, in fact, the co-conspirators of domestication and domination" [from the publisher's description]. You can order copies direct from Left Bank for \$8.95 plus handling (\$1.50 1st copy, \$.50 each additional one).

The **Evergreen Alliance**, a Detroit-based federation of individuals devoted to stopping the Detroit trash incinerator, has put out a call for a Regional and International Mobilization to Save the Great Lakes, May 13-16th. The weekend of activities has been organized to focus attention on the systematic destruction of the Great Lakes bioregion. It will include a demonstration which will march past the Detroit incinerator now under construction and a rally at the Wayne State University campus. A conference and forum the following day will serve to educate participants with workshops and speakers. A direct action contingent will utilize civil dis-

Toronto anarchist gathering

According to its organizers, an anarchist "Survival Gathering" was originally planned for the end of this spring (June 17-20th) in Toronto, Ontario. We have finally (long after our enquiries) obtained confirmation from Toronto, that the gathering has been moved to this summer, July 1-4th. The "Survival Gathering" name is being retained despite criticisms from some who feel that it may imply passivity, overly-individual solutions, or a connection with right-wing survivalists. The organizers in Toronto explain that for them "survival is active, not passive, collective and not individual. Survival has nothing to do with right-wing survivalism and everything to do with a coming together of various anti-authoritarian movements. We can ensure our collective survival in a vital sense and that of the Earth only through revolutionary change."

A planning meeting held in September indicated interest and support both locally and from across the continent, with about sixty people participating. The planning meeting indicated that the anarchist movement is currently filled with contradictions and differences which need to be allowed expression. The organizers anticipate that "people will be coming to the gathering with different ideas, expectations and values. We want to

allow people to come together to build closer affinity with like-minded people, but also to allow for dialogue with those who differ. To this end there will be both structured workshops and forums, as well as opportunities for spontaneous events and happenings. This will be a continental anarchist conference, but we also want to interest people from the wider political community here in Toronto who share many anti-authoritarian values and methods but do not see themselves explicitly as anarchists."

A "Day of Action" is planned, along with a cultural evening, a poster show, a day of music and celebration in a park. If you have posters you would like displayed, send them ahead of time. Proposals for theatre or performance pieces are also welcome.

The Toronto organizers need help with fundraising to cover their costs. They are currently taking orders for silk-screened posters (\$3) and T-shirts (\$10) to help raise money. General contributions of \$5-\$10 or more are also being solicited from anyone who would like to support the gathering.

For more detailed information write:

Survival Gathering
POB 435, Station P
Toronto, Ontario
M5S 2S9 Canada



Current Sustaining contributors

Sustaining contributors subscribe at a rate of \$30 to \$60 per 6 issues in order to provide extra assistance to the production of **Anarchy**. Their contributions are much appreciated.

A.M.	
T.O.	L.C.
D.A.	D.D.

ANARCHY notes

Thanks to all our new subscribers, and especial thanks to those who have made special contributions--notably \$25 from one of our few sustaining contributors for the last few issues, Crazy Al of the Farmingdale Anarchists, and a \$50 donation from the latest Detroit anarchist/anti-authoritarian gathering held on November 22. As always, extra contributions like this make all the difference in the world to the financial viability of projects like **Anarchy**. For those who might wonder, the printing bill alone for the last issue was over \$1400, not a paltry sum.

The idea of **locally** organized annual (or quarterly, etc.) gatherings in order to exchange ideas, socialize and raise a little money for anti-authoritarian publications ought to be imitated throughout North America. Given the small size of the anarchist movement here, it is important to provide more openings for those new to anti-authoritarian perspectives and activities to participate without needing to make any sort of high level commitments. And given the generally low level of support shown for anarchist publications by North

American anarchists, it could only help to organize a simple way for people to put small contributions together in order for them to amount to collectively sizable contributions to the anarchist press and other projects. This is one way for local individuals and groups to help support and encourage the growth of local contacts and participation while at the same time strengthening the anarchist press in general.

With the publication of this issue, **Anarchy** is embarking upon a subscription drive--something we've never done before. We're also, regrettably, doubling our subscription rates, which haven't changed since the time when we published a little 4-page streetsheet instead of a 20plus-page tabloid. We don't think \$6.00/6 issues is too much to ask for what this paper has now become. And we think it will be quite a deal for what we remain to become in the future. We hope that every anarchist who reads this will take the risk and subscribe. We aim to prove our worth to you. Please give us that chance!

At this time we estimate that it will take about 2,000 subscribers for us to "break-even" on production costs for the paper. If we can achieve this modest goal, we will be able to concentrate our efforts on improving

obedience to blockade the trash incinerator on Monday, May 16th. For more information, the **Evergreen Alliance** can be contacted at POB 02455, Detroit, MI. 48202.

International Anarchist News

Edited by Lev Chernyi

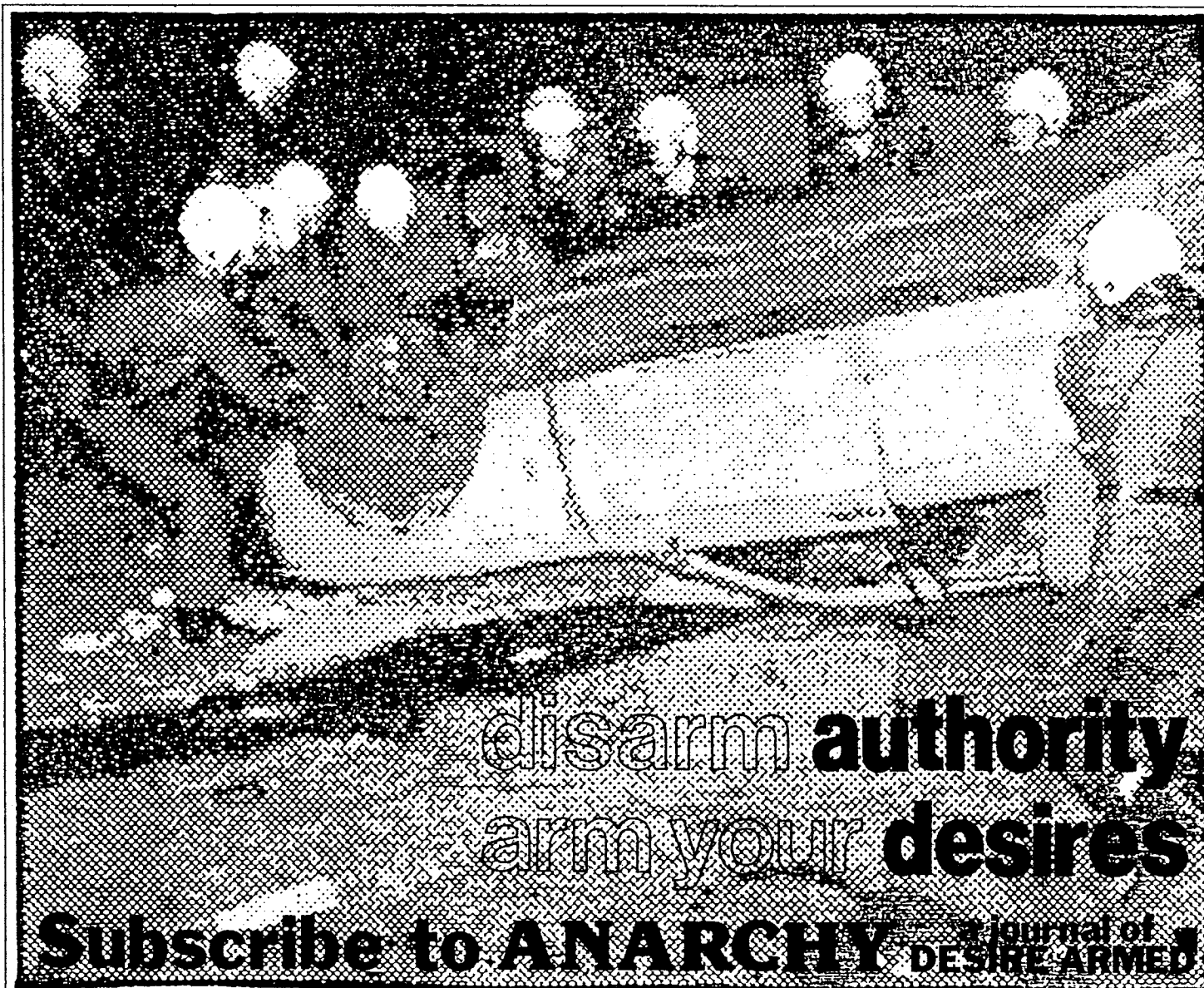
its quality, enlarging its size, and increasing our frequency of publication. So far we've learned alot about what it takes to put together a paper like this, but there is still much to be learned and a long way for us to grow. As **Black Flag** out of London occasionally still trumpets, "On to the anarchist daily!" Should we be aiming for anything less?

Another way for those who are really serious about their support for the anarchist press to show it, is to become a sustaining contributor to **Anarchy** (or at least to your favorite paper if it be another). We ask that sustainers contribute \$5 to \$10 per issue, which adds up to a rate of \$30 to \$60 for six issues. We will begin the practice of listing our current sustaining contributors with this issue. And as can be readily seen, our list has already mushroomed to a truly impressive level of five with this issue! All sarcasm aside, the contributions we receive above and beyond the support involved in subscribing, are truly heartening. They help us to really believe that we're doing something right—whatever that might be!

During production of this issue, we have formed an editorial advisory group in order to increase collective participation in editorial decision-making, widening it so that everyone who helps with the paper can have some voice in its direction. We also hope to eventually widen the sharing of the workload, and have worked out a structure for those who want to commit themselves to taking responsibility for coordinating large areas of production and distribution. However, at present there are just too many other demands made on participants' time and energy for these coordinating responsibilities to have been assumed yet. So, if anyone who shares the fundamentally anti-ideological perspective of this project is interested in becoming involved, drop us a line and let us know who you are and what you'd be interested in doing.

Readers, let us know what you like and dislike about **Anarchy**, so that we can continue to improve it, making it both more visually interesting and more informative, more challenging and more fun.

As can be easily ascertained, this issue focusses on the critique and supercession of religion and spirituality. We hope it will stimulate a continuing discussion of this vital topic. The next issue (#16) will focus on sexuality and pornography. And in the following issue we'd like to focus on an evaluation and critique of the North American anarchist/revolutionary movement. We'd like to have this issue available for distribution at the Toronto "survival gathering" in July. We highly encourage your contributions to this upcoming issue—whether in the form of critical essays, historical accounts, evaluations and chronologies, descriptions of personal experiences (e.g. your first exposure to anarchist ideas and activities, encounters with specific people, groups, projects, or events), scenarios concerning where the movement could go from here, or contributions to the discussion of potential strategies and the development of a more coherent anti-ideological tendency. We believe this is an important time to consider where we've come from and where we are aiming our efforts.



ANARCHY is the ONLY major anti-ideological journal in North America that says NO to ALL religion, all moralism, all political ideology—NO to the nation-state, no to God, no to nationalism, no to militarism and hierarchy. We don't want to leave out anything. Nothing is sacred, least of all anarchism.

ANARCHY defends what little integrity is still possessed by the modern alienated individual. ANARCHY defends and encourages attempts to create and maintain genuine community, not for the sake of repressive ulterior motives—money, God, morality—but solely for the sake of the pleasures we may find there. And most fundamentally, ANARCHY defends the integrity of our desires. For if our own most intimate and inalienable desires cannot be trusted, we might as well hang it all up right now.

At this time our publication schedule remains irregular (we are currently aiming at publishing bimonthly), but we sell no advertising, have no paid staff, and finance this journal entirely through donations and subscriptions. We are now embarking on a subscription drive which we hope will enable ANARCHY to be more self-supporting. The more successful we are with this drive, the

more often we will be able to publish, and the greater the quality of our paper will be. We estimate that 2,000 subscribers are all that it will take for us to "break-even" and be able to pay for all production costs without having to reach into our own pockets quite so often. From there, we can work on enlarging ANARCHY and increasing our frequency of publication even more.

If you like what you see in ANARCHY, or even if it makes your blood boil, please consider subscribing. If you're already an anarchist, realize that the only way that the anarchist press will ever be able to grow is from a base of support provided by those who already understand and accept the promise of the anarchist vision. If, on the other hand, you take issue with our stances or our style, ANARCHY maintains one of the most open letters columns you'll find anywhere. We are committed to maintaining a dialogue with our readers, whether they are supporters or not. And while our responses may not pull any punches, we are open to both the rational and emotional appeals of our critics. You may not always like what we have to say, but we sure won't stop you from telling us and our readers why!

YES, please sign me up for ANARCHY.

Here's...

- ☐ \$6.00/6 issues at the regular individual rate
- ☐ \$9/6 issues delivered in plain brown envelopes
- ☐ \$12/6 issues at the library/institutional rate
- ☐ U.S.\$12/6 issues surface mail to other continents
- ☐ U.S.\$24/6 issues airmail to other continents
- ☐ Here's a contribution of _____
- ☐ \$30 or ☐ \$60/6 issues sustainer rate

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Anarchist Media Review

Edited by Lev Chernyi

Propping up the cities

A review of Murray Bookchin's THE RISE OF URBANIZATION AND THE DECLINE OF CITIZENSHIP

by John Zerzan

The Rise of Urbanization and the Decline of Citizenship, by Murray Bookchin (Sierra Club Books, 730 Polk St., San Francisco, CA. 94109, 1987) \$22.95 hardcover.

As he's been doing for about fifteen years, Bookchin argues in this work for the formation of citizen's councils and popular municipal self-management groups to save the cities from the mismanagement of professional politicians and bureaucrats. Bankrupt of history and method, his rescue mission consists in advancing the totally non-anarchist (and illogical) thesis that increased participation in local politics points the way to the collapse of the state. We must, he counsels, slowly enlarge and expand the "existing institutions" and "try to democratize the republic." It is a tedious, even somewhat embarrassing review chore, as if such a book can be taken seriously from any remotely anti-authoritarian perspective.

He tries to make his pure reformism palatable by such devices as the false antinomies urbanization vs. cities, representation vs. sovereignty, and politics vs. statecraft, and unsupportable assertions, like referring to politics as having once been the "activity of an entire community." Another device is to ignore the real history of urban life, as if illusory; he resorts at times to putting such terms as "elected" representatives, "voters" and "taxpayers" in quotes as though the terms really don't, somehow, correspond to reality. Open the book at random and you will find similar absurdities and evasions.

Another key element does involve the historical record—but only to put historical banalities into new and unrecognizable shapes. The polis of classical Athens, for example, has long been Bookchin's model for a revitalization of urban politics. But unfortunately, as everyone knows, Athenian "democracy" of a few males presided over a harshly differentiated class structure. That it rested upon slavery and the suppression of women? Murray deftly passes over this, too, with a quick parenthetical aside conceding a few Greek "shortcomings"! Likewise with his revered New England town meetings, another beacon for a renewed city politics. Never mind the scores of monographs which admit (unlike, say, some old junior high school texts) that in those town meetings the same hierarchy and domination obtained as elsewhere in society.

Bookchin also tries, by the way, to give a rosy hue to cities at their origin, the better, I suppose, to argue for their continuance. Cities arose part and parcel with civilization, however, their temples and palaces reflecting the relatively sudden emergence of work, war, religion, and slavery. Villages, with their surviving element of the heterogenous and autonomous, their neighborly intimacy, were replaced by a large, unitary urbanism; consent and custom (rapidly ebbing along with the erasure of

hunter-gatherer life), were supplanted by the authoritarian control of a dominant minority and its new coercive instruments.

And if his grasp of history is faulty (to put it generously), it is what is missing altogether that renders his book terminally pathetic. Nowhere does he find fault with the most fundamental dimension of modern living, that of wage-labor and the commodity. Nor does he deal with the important present-day features

of that dimension: the productionist destruction of nature, the power of transnational corporations, Information Age computer mediation and quantification, the enormous soporific, homogenizing and intrusive reach of the media, to name a few forces that strain to achieve a perfectly routinized, emptied, flattened-out, commodified ethos, and which submerge city life. To ignore the content of modern domination while advancing the cause of involvement in city politics is to give a faltering system precisely what it needs the most: participation of the disaffected.

While people turn off increasingly to representation and work, new schemes to "democratize" these fundamentally alienating modes must be promoted. Bookchin, in a parallel to

the legitimizing of work via workers' councils, works for the legitimation of both politics and cities via citizens' councils. Massified society, with its ever-greater division of labor and standardizations, realizes itself in cities while destroying our very sense of place.

What is radical, what is healthy in trying to prop up cities any more than work? How much preferable a visionary discourse in the direction of wholeness and freedom, where the closest shape to "urban" might be shifting, mobile gatherings or celebrations, reconstituted at whim, where representation and work are unknown degradations. The only "politics" I want to engage in definitely does not consist in being a model citizen a la Murray Bookchin. —John Zerzan

Anarchist periodical reviews

by Lev Chernyi

This column will attempt to keep up with the large volume of publications which exchange with *Anarchy*, or at least those which have some relevance to anarchist movements and theories. If you publish an anarchist periodical (or at least one which you think would be of interest to anarchists) which you'd like to see mentioned here, we invite you to exchange publications with *Anarchy*, POB 380, Columbia, MO. 65205. If you already exchange with us, but don't see your publication reviewed here, please have patience.

POLITICAL PRISONERS IN THE U.S. is the theme of the November, 1987 issue (#3) of *Life of Crime* (c/o Rashkin, POB 20375, New York, NY 10025). Short articles include "Why write about political prisoners?" "Political prisoners in the United States," and "An appeal for help." Also included is poetry and a couple short magazine reviews. *Life of Crime* is free, just send a 22 cent stamp for postage.

THE INDEPENDENT GREEN PUBLICATION, *Green Action*, based in Arizona, has slowed its publication schedule, now aiming to publish every 2-3 months, rather than 10 times/year. The current issue, Winter 1988 (Vol. 5, No. 1), includes a front-page article which uncritically pushes an "ozone treatment for AIDS" as a new "cure." The publication has apparently opted for an authoritarian/political party strategy, with one section devoted to green electoralism, a short report from a New Mexico Green Party member who works for the Nicaraguan energy ministry, and a plea for the creation of an Arizona Green Party. The only article even slightly equivocal on this issue is one by Brian Tokar (author of *The Green Alternative*, a 174-page book available from this publication for \$6.85 postpaid) on bioregionalism in New England. Subscriptions to *Green Action* are \$20.00 for 10 issues from POB 37, Tempe, Arizona 85281.

THE WINTER, 1987 ISSUE #29 of *Reclaiming Newsletter* features short articles on the Lesbian and Gay Freedom March of October '87, on the lack of a "father god" in the pantheon of pagan gods, on the male dominance at some pagan meetings, on the Stop First Strike March against Lockheed in October, and on witchcraft as pantheism rather than monotheism. The newsletter attempts to unify pagan "spirituality" and "politics" with occasional hints of libertarian perspectives to be found in the resulting dialogue. There's no party line here, but the result isn't exactly anarchist, either. Subscriptions are \$6.00 to \$25.00 (sliding scale) for one year. Write to *Reclaiming*, POB 14404,

San Francisco, CA. 94114. They want \$2.00 for a sample copy.

ISSUE NO. 26 (DECEMBER, 1987) of *Synthesis*, a newsletter and journal for social ecology, deep ecology, bio-regionalism, ecofeminism, and the green movement features a sort of lowest common denominator ecologism. This mimeographed, 22-page issue includes reports of meetings (Kansas City Committees of Correspondence [Greens], Southern California Green Assembly, Amherst Green Gathering, Sixth Assembly of the Fourth World), an edited version of the article by Brian Tokar mentioned above appearing in *Green Action*, several short periodical and book reviews, as well as excerpts from Murray Bookchin's, *Fifth Estate's* and *Alien Nation's* recent criticisms of deep ecology and Earth First! *Synthesis* continues to evolve (or devolve as the case may be) from its originally socialist positions. For a short time it flirted with anarchist ideas, but these seem to have been dumped. Its annoying editorial policies continue to allow only approved criticisms to be included in its pages, while others are censored under the categories of "personal attacks," etc.

I am especially sensitive to this editorial practice because, when *Synthesis* published David Haenke's (of New Life Farm) unscrupulous libels of the anarchist movement in a past issue without comment, they subsequently refused to publish a rejoinder from me (or even to answer my letter). In case you're wondering, Haenke claimed that the anarchist movement has engaged in "genocide" and now engages in "ecocide." Though, of course, there is no way he could ever supply evidence of these baseless accusations, since none exists. We suggest that any anarchists who come into contact with Haenke (who is active in organizing bioregional groups—Ozark Area Community Congress, North American Bioregional Congress, Committees of Correspondence [Greens]) demand that he cease his libels of the anarchist movement and retract those already made.

Synthesis is now considering using a more high-tech approach to its publishing, a change that could only improve its readability, attractiveness, and thus, its influence. Individual subscription rates are \$3.75/5 issues (U.S.) and \$5/5 issues (outside U.S.).

POPULAR REALITY (POB 3402, Ann Arbor, MI. 48106) has ceased publication of its "bad boy" diatribes (with its last issue, #19) in favor of becoming an "adventure catalogue!"—whatever that means. There's nothing available here that can't be found elsewhere (except for a new Baboon Dooley comic book), but apparently the catalog is free so

it's worth writing for if you're not familiar with *Popreal's* brand of "social nihilism."

EDITORS JACK AND FELICE COHEN-JOPPA are continuing the important job of chronicling the fortunes of anti-nuclear resistance in issue #51 (January 5, 1987) of *The Nuclear Resister* (POB 43383, Tucson, AZ 85733). Although unfortunately limited to supporting only "nonviolent" resisters, they do an admirably comprehensive job of this. You need to see this (usually 8-page) tabloid to appreciate its coverage. The current issue includes an ongoing discussion of the tactic of disarmament direct-action with intent to escape arrest. Everyone writing seems opposed to the idea, not a surprising outcome for a forum with an avowedly "non-violent" ideology. Subscriptions are \$15/10 issues (U.S.), \$18U.S. for Canada and \$25 foreign.

THE SLICK, COLORFUL COVERS of *The Animals' Agenda* (POB 6809, Syracuse, NY 13217) betray a thoroughly mainstream approach in this "animal rights" magazine. Featuring ads for shampoos and make-up made without animal products, its narrowly single-issue approach is unrelenting. As a result it is a thoroughly mixed bag including some excellent coverage (for example, Lynn Jacob's article, "Amazing Graze; How the livestock industry is ruining the American west" in the current issue, Jan/Feb. 1988), along with dogmatically vegetarian arguments, moralistic condemnations of all hunting and animal slaughtering, and an almost total lack of understanding of the overall social/economic/political bases of animal abuse. Subscriptions are \$18/-

ANARCHY CONTACT NETWORK?

In future issues of *Anarchy* we will publish a listing of addresses of groups and individuals who would like to see the growth and development of a post-situationist, anti-ideological revolutionary tendency. The list will help enable those participating to make regional contacts and intercommunication links. If you'd like to see your address added to this listing please write:

Anarchy c/o C.A.L.

POB 1446

Columbia, MO. 65205-1446

Edited by Lev Chernyi

Anarchist Media Review

Feyerabend's AGAINST METHOD

by Larry Giddings

Against Method, by Paul Feyerabend (published by NLB, 1978, \$6.75pb).

Paul Feyerabend has dedicated his book, **Against Method; Outline of an Anarchistic Theory of Knowledge** to his friend and "fellow anarchist," Imre Lakatos, who died before the planned completion of the book. It is one side of an argument in which Feyerabend was to criticize rationalism, and Lakatos was to have defended it.

Feyerabend begins his criticism of rationalism in the first paragraph of the book by proposing an epistemological "anarchism" as an antidote: The following essay is writ-

ten in the conviction that **anarchism**, while perhaps not the most attractive political philosophy, is certainly excellent medicine for **epistemology**, and for the **philosophy of science**.(p.17)

He gives an analysis of the historical basis for this contention, using both political and historical examples. And he discusses the role of accident and purposeful rule and method breaking as the progenitors of liberation and discovery, though he tells us in a footnote: "I hope that having read the pamphlet the reader will remember me as a flippant Dadaist and **not** as a serious anarchist."(p. 21)

Using the history of atomism from antiquity to Niels Bohr and the

development of the Copernican Revolution as examples among others, Feyerabend argues that science can often advance counter-inductively. In fact, he maintains that:

There is no idea, however ancient and absurd that is not capable of improving our knowledge. The whole history of thought is absorbed into science and is used for improving every single theory. Nor is political interference rejected. It may be needed to overcome the chauvinism of science that resists alternatives to the status quo.(p.47)

Adopting the historical development of science as his point of orientation and as the cornerstone of this argument, he claims that the contradictory developments of various theories, and the methodologies which generate

them, are often proof of growth. Much of Feyerabend's argument here centers on the example of the astronomer Galileo and his struggles with the orthodoxy of his day. Galileo was confronted with a lack of existing terminology, methodology, conceptual constructs and perceptual skills. His innovative use of the telescope created conflicts within the scientific community of his day. And, of course, his work brought him into major conflicts with Christian dogma. Yet, Feyerabend consistently defends the potential value of all perspectives. He contends that the epistemological anarchist:

may approach the religious anarchist in his opposition to science and the material world, he may outdo any Nobel Prize winner in his vigorous defence of scientific purity. He has no objection to regarding the fabric of the world as described by science and revealed by his senses as a chimera that either conceals a deeper and, perhaps, spiritual reality, or is a mere web of dreams that reveals, and conceals, nothing.(p.189-90)

Employing examples from Greek history and the "spatio-temporal" logic of Neolithic tribes, Feyerabend attempts to describe the building blocks of understanding that underlie scientific knowledge. He ascribes great importance to the developmental aspects of language, since language isn't merely a neutral instrument to be used for objective description. Its "grammar contains a cosmology...which influences thought, behavior, perception."(p.223)

He criticizes the historical dogmatism and rigidity of a scientific methodology which has suppressed all other traditions. The peculiarly narrow development of western science is directly related to the suppression of other tribes, religions, and intellectual methodologies by Christianity. Slowly, he states, non-western, non-Judeo-Christian manners of perception and scientific investigation are being rediscovered. He presents China's reversion to oriental medicine, acupuncture, herbalism, etc. after the revolution as an example. Rejecting some of the dogmas of western science, the Chinese have proven the efficacy of ancient practices. Stone age astronomy, Polynesian sea travel and Incan brain surgery are other practices which cannot be explained away by western rationalists.

Instead of elevating science to an unapproachable, mechanistic "authority of big-shots hiding behind a non-existing methodology..."(p.309), science and education should be separate, in the same way religion and schools are separated. By learning, examining, probing many theories and paradigms a more truthful objectivity can be experienced by a growing individual.

To develop a more fully representative science, as well as a more flexible society, Feyerabend insists that "it is up to the citizens of a free society to either accept the chauvinism of science...or to overcome it by the counterforce of public action."(p.307)

Though Feyerabend makes a direct, inverse connection between a scientific, rationalist society and the creative expression of the individual, he stops at the laboratory door. A structural change in society falls outside his critique.

year (10 issues), or send \$2.50 for a single issue.

GROUND ZERO IS AN ANARCHO-PUNK-ZINE coming out of Virginia (POB 711, Salem, VA 24153). The current issue (#2, Winter '88) features a short interview with Chris Gunderson of Back Room Anarchist Books in Minneapolis, record reviews, and reprints of ads and leaflets from a potpourri of anarchist, pacifist anti-apartheid, liberal, and other groups. No price is listed. Send a 39-cent stamp for postage.

I RECENTLY RECEIVED two issues of **Green Perspectives** (POB 111, Burlington, VT. 05402), #3 and double issue #4/5, in a roundabout way from a friend in California. The first is undated, while issue #4/5 was published in Summer, 1987. Each issue features a single essay with "Ecofeminism and deep ecology: Unresolvable Conflict?" by Janet Biehl in #3 and "Social ecology vs. deep ecology" by Murray Bookchin in #4/5. While the two issues bring up interesting questions and accurate criticisms regarding the many obvious deficits of deep ecology, both authors seem to strain a little much at times in their attempts to make some of their more tenuous criticisms stick.

For instance Biehl in her essay makes an awful lot out of a statement, attributed to Devall and Session's book on deep ecology, that "The central insight of deep ecology is the idea that we can make no firm ontological divide...between the human and the non-human realms..." She goes on to seemingly confuse the meaning of "ontological" (a technical word in philosophical discourse meaning "relating to being") here by ignoring the limited

meaning such a statement would hold in conventional philosophical discourse. Instead, she expands its meaning beyond reason to suggest that the statement may imply that "all is the same in nature," as though differences of less than ontological significance couldn't remain quite real. Of course, this may be what deep ecologists really intend (I doubt it, though I haven't read the book), but Biehl does not make this at all clear in her essay. I am left feeling somewhat sympathetic with Devall and Sessions because they seem to be misrepresented at times in her essay.

Bookchin's essay, while its criticisms are more coherent (a section entitled "The 'Deep' Malthusians" is especially well done), is guilty of some questionable hyperbole and some tiringly repetitive verbal abuse of its own. (His essay, "Thinking ecologically," reviewed elsewhere in this issue is much better written.) However, if you're interested in following the arguments of the major combatants in the debates over the trajectory of radical ecological theory, these essays are required reading. Send \$1.00 for each issue.

PAGANS FOR PEACE (POB 6531, Station A, Toronto, Ontario M5W 1X4 Canada) continues to be published 13 times a year by Sam Wagar. The latest issue, #33 (Vol. 3, #7, January 1988 a.d.a.), is mildly interesting as usual. This 10-page issue features a discussion of the three calendar cycles of the Wiccan ritual year--seasonal sabbats (Samhain, Candlemas, Beltaine, Lammass), solar sabbats (the solstices and equinoxes), and the lunar cycle. Also included are an appeal for the Convocation of Earth Religions to End Starvation (C.E.R.E.S.), a short confessional on being a "Jewish witch," and a short disclaimer dissociating paganism from new ageism. Subscriptions are \$15.

THE FALL 1987 SPECIAL ISSUE OF **FIFTH ESTATE** (POB 02548, Detroit, MI. 48202) is devoted almost entirely to an important essay, "How Deep is Deep Ecology; A Challenge to Radical Environmentalism," by George Bradford. Everyone at all interested in the current shape of the ecological-industrial crisis and its still-emerging opposition should read this issue of **Fifth Estate**. It contains an extremely well-done critique of the most important deficiencies of radical environmentalism, with specific emphasis on its neo-Malthusianism, ahistorical perspectives, and anti-liberatory postures on social issues. At the center of criticism here is the little oligarchy which speaks for Earth First! (the organization/movement) through its control of **Earth First!** (the journal), while attempting to deny its intentions of controlling both the terms and limits of debate and action within this "movement." The special issue of **Fifth Estate**



is available for \$.75 plus postage, while subscriptions (well worth the price for unquestionably the best paper published in North America for many years) are currently \$5.00/year for this quarterly.

THE NOVEMBER/SAMHAIN ISSUE OF **EARTH FIRST!** (POB 5871, Tucson, AZ. 85703) contains the usual fair to excellent articles on direct action protests, endangered species news (Grizzly and Black Bears in this issue), the decimation of the world's forests (and particularly rain forests), etc. Yet the group of people who put out the paper are giving no ground in their defense of all that is worst and worthless in their outlook(s). They are maintaining the pretence that **EF!** is merely "an independently owned newspaper within the broad Earth First! movement," and not its "official" paper. However, as it is the only real media voice of the "movement," this subterfuge wears pretty thin. Of note in this regard is Dave Foreman's "Whither Earth First!?" in which he sets down the ideological limits to Earth First!'s correct line of thought. Despite his insistence that he has "no desire to dictate what **EF!** is," he continues to "invite" those who disagree with him to get out. Also notable, are Foreman's call to oppose the "sanctuary movement" (he'd rather see the people die in the third world where they "belong"), R. Wills Flowers's futile attempt to mount a defense against Murray Bookchin's criticisms of Foreman and deep ecology, and Chim Blea's red-baiting denunciation of "the current Redgreen pogrom" (as if anything more than public criticism were involved). And finally (notable most for its unexpectedness given the general lack of integrity shown by the other articles mentioned), there is a (rather selectively edited) reprint of a pamphlet critical of Earth First!'s internal suppression of literature distribution by anarchist **EF!**ers, its bully-boy tactics in this regard, leader-worshiping (total intolerance for any criticism of sacred Edward Abbey), etc. This very interesting pamphlet, "Alien-Nation," is available from POB 10122, Olympia, WA. 98502). Sample issues of **Earth First!** are available for \$2.00 each.



Collected by Erich Scheurmann
Illustrations by Joost Swarte
Translated by Martin Beumer

Editor's note: The Papalagi (with the 'g' pronounced as an 'h', or so I was told by the original English publishers, Real Free Press in Amsterdam) is a collection of speeches written by the South Pacific chief Tuiavii of Tiavea, and intended for his people. They first appeared in a German edition sometime in the early twenties, in a translation by his friend Eric Scheurmann. A translation was published in Dutch in 1929, from which the English translation was then made in 1971. As becomes quickly apparent when one reads it, *The Papalagi* is a sort of critical reverse anthropology in which white, European civilization is thoroughly dissected and evaluated with the puzzled contempt that it so well deserves from a "primitive" perspective.

The Papalagi have a strangely confused way of thinking. They always rack their brains to extract more profits or rights from things. And their consideration is not for humanity, but for one single person only. And that single person is themselves.

When somebody says: "My head belongs to me and to nobody but me," he is very right and nobody can speak up against it. Up to this point, Papalagi and me share our views. But when he continues: "That palm tree is mine," only because that tree happens to grow in front of his hut, then he behaves as if he made the palm tree grow himself. But that palm tree belongs to nobody. To nobody! It is God's hand, reaching out to us from the soil. God has many hands. Every tree, every blade of grass, the sea, the sky and the clouds that float by, they are all God's hands. We may use them for our pleasure, but we may never say: "God's hand is my hand." But that is what the Papalagi do now.

In our language "lau" means "mine," but it also means "yours." It's almost the same thing. But in the language of the Papalagi, it is hard to find two words that differ so much in meaning as "mine" and "yours." Mine means that something belongs entirely to me. Yours means belonging entirely to somebody else. That's why the Papalagi calls everything that stands close to his house "mine." Nobody is entitled to it but him. When you visit a Papalagi and see something there, a tree or a fruit, wood or water or a pile of dirt, there is always someone around to say: "It's mine, and don't let me catch you taking it from my property!" When you still touch something, he will start screaming and call you a thief! That is the worst curse he knows. And only because you dared to touch the other man's "his." His friend and the servants to the chief will come running, they will put you in chains and throw you in the gloomiest *pfui-pfui* (prison) and people will despise you for the rest of your life.

Now to avoid people touching things that somebody else declared his, a law is set up to declare what is his and what is mine. And there are people in Europe that spend their whole life paying attention that the law isn't broken, that nothing will be taken away from the Papalagi that he has declared to be his. In that manner, the Papalagi want to make the impression that they have a real right to those things, as if God has given his things away for always. As if the palm trees, the flowers, the trees, the sea, the air

THE PAPALAGI

SPEECHES BY
TUIAVII OF TIAVEA
A SAMOAN CHIEF



THE PAPALAGI MADE GOD POOR

and the clouds are really his property.

The Papalagi are in need of laws guarding their "mine," because otherwise, the people with little or no mine at all would take it away from them. Because if there are people that claim a lot for themselves, there are always a lot of others left standing empty-handed. Not everybody knows the tricks and hidden signs by which you can gather a lot of mine and also a kind of courage is needed, that has little or nothing to

do with what we call honor. And it may very well be possible, that those Papalagi who stand with empty hands, because they didn't want to rob and insult God, are the best of their tribe. But many Papalagi like that do not exist.

Most of them rob God without even a trace of shame. They don't know any better. They are not aware of any wrongdoing, everybody does it and nobody sees any harm done or feels bad about it. Many also receive their pile of mine at birth, from their fathers. And God has almost nothing left, because the people have taken it and transformed it into mine and yours. His sun, intended for all of us, cannot be divided evenly anymore, because one demands more than the other. In the nice open spaces where the sun shines in all its splendor, only a few people are sitting, while a whole crowd of others try to catch a pale ray of light sitting in the shadows. God cannot rejoice with all his heart, because he isn't the *alii sili* (ruler) in his own house anymore. The Papalagi deny him by saying that everything is theirs. But to that insight they never come, no matter how hard they think.

On the contrary, they consider their deeds fair and honest. But in God's eyes, they are unfair and dishonest.

When they would make use of their common sense, they would certainly understand that nothing we cannot hold, belongs to us and that,

when the going gets rough we cannot hold on to anything. Then also he would start realizing that God made his house so big, because he wanted there to be place for everybody and happiness also. And it certainly would be big enough for everybody, so they could all find a sunny spot, a small share of happiness, a few palm trees and certainly a spot for his two feet to stand on, just as God wanted and desired it to be. How could God ever forget one of his own children?

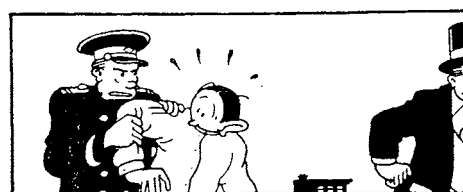
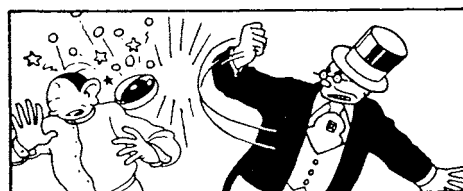
But still, there are many feverishly looking for that tiny, little spot that God has reserved for them.

Because the Papalagi don't want to listen to God's word and start making laws of their own, God sends them many things that threaten their property. He sends heat and rain to destroy his mine, it ages, crumbles, and rots away. God gives storm and fire power over their mine also. And worst of all he introduces fear in the hearts of the Papalagi. Fear is the main thing he has acquired. A Papalagi's sleep is never quiet, because he has to be on the alert all the time, so the things he has amassed in the daytime are not stolen from him during the night. His hands and senses have to be busy holding on to his property, all the time. And all through the day, his mine pesters him and laughs in his face, shouts at him because it is stolen from God, it tortures him and gives him a lot of misery.

But God inflicted a heavier punishment than fear on the Papalagi. He gave them the struggle between those that have little or nothing at all, and those who have a lot. That struggle is hot and violent and rages day and night. It is a struggle that everybody suffers from and is chewing up the joy of living. Those that have a lot should give some of it away, but they don't want to. The have-nots also want their share, but they get nothing. Seldom also they are warriors of God. They consist mainly of people that came too late when the loot was being divided, or of those that were too clumsy or didn't have the opportunity to grab something. That they are robbing God, enters nobody's mind. And only rarely does an old, wise man stand up, and urges people to put everything back into God's hands.

Brothers! What is your opinion of a man who has a big house, big enough to lodge an entire Samoan village, and who doesn't permit a traveller to spend the night under his roof? What do you think of a man who holds an entire bunch of bananas in his hands and who is unwilling to give even a single fruit to the starving man who pleads for it. I can see the anger flaring up in your eyes and the contempt coming to your lips. Know then, that the Papalagi act this way every hour, every day. Even if he has a hundred mats, he won't give away a single one to his brother who has none. No, he even blames his brother for having none. Even if his hut is stuffed to the roof with food, so much that he and his *aiga* (family) cannot eat it in years, he will not even go look for his brothers who have nothing to eat and look pale and hungry. And there are many pale and hungry Papalagi.

The palm tree, upon ripening, sheds leaves and fruit. The Papalagi live like palm trees that hold on to their fruit and leaves and say: "They are mine." People are not allowed to



eat anything from it! How could a tree like that ever bear new fruit? The palm trees are wiser than the Papalagi.

Amongst us also there are those that have more than others and we honor the chief, who has many mats and pigs. But that honor only applies to his person and not to his mats and pigs, because we gave those to him ourselves, to show our happiness and to honor his great wisdom and courage. But the Papalagi honor their brothers, because of their many pigs and mats and their wisdom is never considered. A Papalagi without pigs or mats is seldom or never honored.

As the pigs and mats do not walk to the poor and needy all by themselves, the Papalagi see no reason why they should bring them to their brothers themselves. Because for his brother he has no respect, only for mats and pigs and those he would rather keep to himself. When he would love and honor his brother, and not live in conflict about the mine and yours, then he would bring him mats so as to share and enjoy his big mine together. Then he would share his own mat, instead of chasing him out into the dark night.

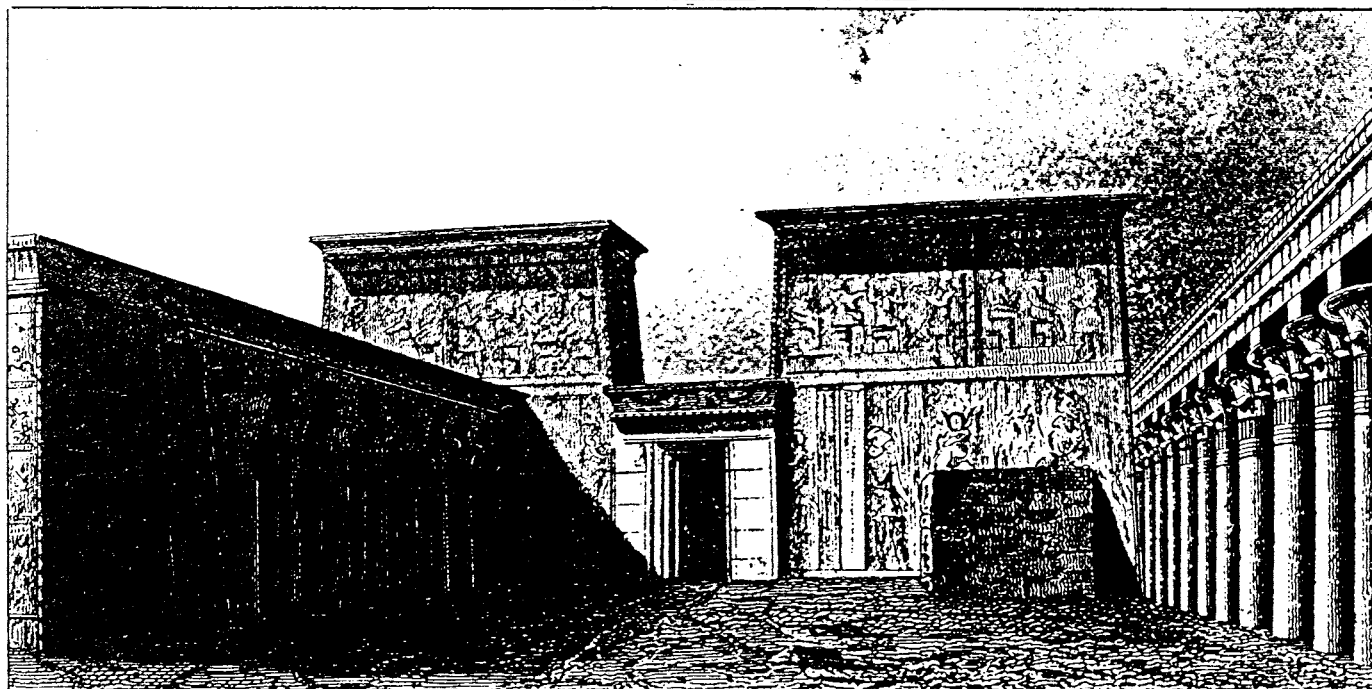
But the Papalagi don't realize that God has given us palm trees, bananas and our precious taro, the birds in the forest and all the fish in the sea, for everybody's enjoyment and happiness. And not only for a few, while the rest can suffer hardships and need. Those that are blessed by God with full hands, should share with their brothers, otherwise the fruits in their hands will rot away. Because God extends his multitude of hands to everybody, he doesn't want one to have much more than the other, or somebody saying: "I'm standing in the sunshine and you must stand in the shadow." We all belong in the sunshine.

When God keeps everything in his just hands, there are no struggles and there is no need. Now the smart Papalagi want to make us believe that nothing belongs to God! Whatever you can grab with your hands belongs to you! But let's close our ears for such foolish talk and stick to common sense: everything belongs to God.

Translator's Note: Everybody familiar with the fact that the Samoans live in a total shared-property society will understand Tuiavili's contempt for our laws of property. The concept of "mine" and "thine" is simply unknown to them. During all my travels, the natives have always shared their hut, mat and food and everything with me, without even a second thought. The first words of greeting spoken by a village chief would be often: "Everything that's mine, belongs to you." The concept of "theft" also was unknown to the islanders. Everything belongs to everybody. And everything belongs to God.



THE PAPALAGI will be continued in our next issue with "The Great Spirit is Stronger than Machines."



Between Concept and Reality Continued

tation of the world, and that this dualism is incompatible with anarchist theory. In dividing the world into two realms of existence (the natural and the supernatural, or the spiritual and the material, or the sacred and the profane, etc.) religion at the same time denies that any more fundamental unity exists. In this sense the adoption of a religious perspective on the world involves an *a priori* decision to split the world down the center and then interpret everything in terms of the two abstract, opposing categories one "believes" in. Because one's experience constantly changes while these categories remain rigidly constant, the categories as absolute concepts can come to seem more real than the experiences they are used to interpret. In other words they become reified.

The fact that this metaphysical dualism originates as a product of human intellect is forgotten. And the process of religious alienation completes itself as the absolute concepts become increasingly dense and concretized. More and more projections of the qualities of one's self and one's world are incorporated into them and they appear increasingly autonomous and make increasing demands upon their believers, particularly when they reach the stage of personification (as "God" & "Satan" or their equivalents).

The entire process of reification is in some ways equivalent to substituting a false for a true premise in a syllogism. No matter how hard religious believers try to be logical, their reasoning always remains distorted as a result of their distorted premises. As Jay put it in another context (in a letter to me), this type of fundamental semantic misinterpretation of reality "is akin to programming a 'logic-bomb' into a computer's operating software," and leads to self-destructive conclusions on a multitude of levels. For example, self-flagellation or self-immolation only become possible when people have first convinced themselves that they are not "really" their own bodies, that their own flesh is "evil," or etc.

Critical theory

But what does all this have to do with anarchy? It should be obvious that if people cannot think

clearly or reason logically then they will likely be crippled in their abilities to live, work and play with each other outside of an imposed system of authoritarian control. As long as a veil of ideological mystification obscures our common world and prevents us from seeing and understanding our relation to each other we will remain lost in its darkness. Reification is not a monopoly of religion, but the concept of God is the archetypal reification from which all other ideologies take their form. As such it is an essential link in the chain of control which binds us. And cutting this link one way or another is an unavoidable step on the road to anarchy.

The alternative to reification is dialectical or critical theory--the equivalent of systematic unbelief in absolute concepts. This alternative begins with a refusal to violate the fundamental unity of our world and our experience: it is consistently holistic rather than dualistic. Further, it involves an acute appreciation of the role and limits or language in human understanding. It refuses to invest any concept with absolute truth, value, or claim to ultimate reality because no concept can ever fully capture any part of the seamless reality of the world of human experience. From a dialectical perspective concepts always remain concepts, nothing more and nothing less. And these concepts can never be more than abstract approximations of the reality we experience. Because all concepts can be only finite approximations, any conceptual dualities must always remain finite and relative, and never become absolutes.

Despite the fact that at its core religion involves a disabling misinterpretation of experience, it is not an "absolute" evil. As Jay argues, religion as a whole is much more complex and harder to pin down. The various religious beliefs run the gamut from harmful, to worthless, to relatively benign systems of illusion. Even the most harmful of religions usually preserve at least some valuable insights despite themselves. The problem as ever is to separate the wheat from the chaff, and this must inevitably involve a rejection of the core of religion, its reification.

Finite metaphors

Once the religious core is eliminated, we are left with only finite and relative conceptual systems within a world whose ultimate unity has been rediscovered. Within this now atheist perspective the categories associated with religion can regain their original and true meanings as finite metaphors rather than realities in themselves. This selective rejection of reification will leave the more benign religious traditions relatively intact, but it will devastate the more malignant. And it is only in this sense (of religious belief systems that have been reduced to finite conceptual systems) that Jay's impassioned defense of people's ability to use whatever "belief system" they wish to really becomes understandable to me. As long as the concepts usually associated with religion are employed in such a way that any reification is both consciously avoided and explicitly denied, anarchists and atheists should have no reason to get unduly excited by their use. Specific concepts and metaphors in themselves do not cause problems. It is the *form* of their use--whether it is dialectical or ideological--that is of real importance.

Ultimately, an enlightened atheist position will not attempt to deny any aspect of people's experience, it will only provide a means for people to interpret their experiences without resort to absolutes. Our aim as anarchists and atheists should never be the substitution of one *form* of positive belief (in Science, Reason, or Humanity for example) for religious belief. It must be the phenomenological and dialectical acceptance that a multitude of finite conceptual systems are potentially valid in their appropriate contexts, that there are as many ways of interpreting the world as there are individual human perspectives, and that any belief in concepts of absolute truth, value, or reality will always prove illusory. As Ken Knabb has aptly put it in his pamphlet, **The Realization and Suppression of Religion**, "The revolutionary movement must oppose religion, but not in preferring to it a vulgar amorality or philistine common sense. It must take its stand on the other side of religion. Not less than it but more."

Ken Knabb has published his own journal, **BUREAU OF PUBLIC SECRETS**, and several pamphlets, including **REMARKS ON CONTRADICTION AND ITS FAILURE** and **DOUBLE REFLECTION**. These are available from the Bureau of Public Secrets, POB 1044, Berkeley, CA. 94701. He has also edited and translated the excellent **SITUATIONIST INTERNATIONAL ANTHOLOGY**, copies of which are available for \$9.05 postpaid from C.A.L., POB 1446, Columbia, MO. 65205-1446, and on consignment at the Columbia Community Grocery, 1100 Locust Street in Columbia.

Introductory note

THE REALIZATION AND SUPPRESSION OF RELIGION was first published in March, 1977. Unfortunately, its message has rarely been heard (or if heard, then not absorbed) by those who could most immediately benefit from it. I refer here to those most influenced and inspired by the Situationist International, yet who have performed so poorly the task of communicating the spirit of their vision in North America.

For the rest of us, the language of Knabb's essay must be allowed to filter through our perspectives as outsiders to the situationist project. To let his terminology or his viewpoint as a situationist insider deter us from reading and understanding what is most worthwhile in this work would be a huge loss for all of us. While I am hardly in agreement with everything he has to say, I still consider that every single one of the major points Ken Knabb makes here can be fruitfully considered and digested. He does not waste words. He refuses most of the more self-defeating postures adopted by other situationists. And he has something genuinely worthwhile to say to us about, not only religion, but more importantly, our lives.

For those who have not yet encountered the Situationist International in particular or the situationist project in general, the Situationist International was formed in 1957 by a few avant-garde groups in Europe. In the words of Ken Knabb in his introduction to **THE SITUATIONIST INTERNATIONAL ANTHOLOGY**, "over the next decade the S.I. developed an increasingly incisive and coherent critique of modern society and of its bureaucratic pseudo-opposition, and its new methods of agitation were influential in leading up to the May 1968 revolt in France. Since then—although the S.I. itself was dissolved in 1972—situationist theses and tactics have been taken up by radical currents in dozens of countries all over the world."

Now, as much as ever, an understanding of the situationist project remains an essential part of understanding the possibilities and prospects for any genuine revolutionary movement today. --Lev Chernyi

Religion undoubtedly surpasses every other human activity in sheer quantity and variety of bullshit. If one considers in addition its role as accomplice of class domination throughout history, it is little wonder that it has brought upon itself the contempt and hatred of ever increasing numbers of people, in particular of revolutionaries.

The situationists recommenced the radical critique of religion, which had been abandoned by the Left, and extended it to its modern, secularized forms--the spectacle, sacrificial loyalty to leaders or ideology, etc. But their holding to a one-sided, undialectical position on religion has reflected and reinforced certain defects in the situationist movement. Developing out of the perspective that to be superceded, art must be both realized and suppressed, situationist theory failed to see that an analogous position was called for regarding religion.

Religion is the alienated expression of the qualitative, the "fantastic realization of man." The revolutionary movement must oppose religion, but not in preferring to it a vulgar amorality or philistine common sense. It must take its stand on the other side of religion. Not less than it but more.

When religion is treated by the situationists, it is usually brought in only in its most superficial, spectacular aspects, as a straw dog to be contemptuously refuted by those incapable of refuting anything else. Exceptionally, they may vaguely accept a Boehme or a Brotherhood of the Free Spirit into their pantheon of "greats" because they are mentioned favorably by the S.I. But never anything that would challenge them personally. Issues deserving examination and debate are ignored because they have been monopolized by religion or happen to be couched in partially religious terms. Some may sense the inadequacy of such a dismissal, but are not sure how else to operate on such a taboo terrain and so they too say nothing or fall back on banalities. For people who want to "supercede all cultural acquisitions" and realize the "total man," the situationists are often surprisingly ignorant of the most elementary features of religion.

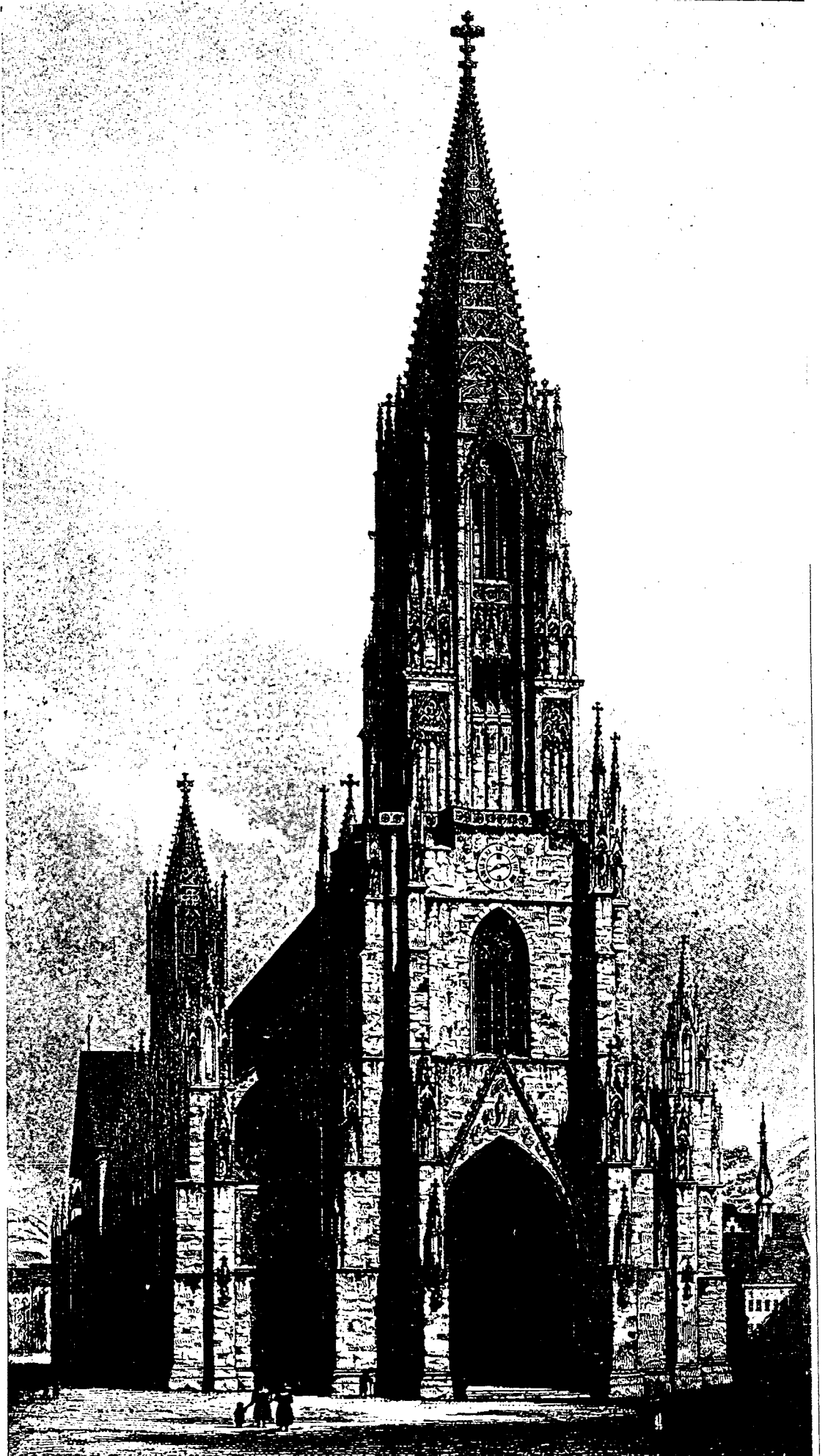
It is not a matter of adding in a dose of religion to round out our perspective, to create a situationism "with a human face." One does not humanize a tool, a critical method. (The notion of "humanizing Marxism" only reveals the ideological nature of the Marxism in question.) It is a matter of examining the blind spots and dogmatic rigidities that have developed out of a largely justifiable critical assault on religion. It is precisely when a theoretical position has been victorious that it becomes

both possible and necessary to criticize it with more vigor. The rough formula that was provocative in an earlier context becomes a basis for new ideologies. A qualitative advance is often accompanied by an apparently paradoxical retardation.

It is not enough to explain religion by its social role or historical deve-

lopment. The content that is expressed in religious forms must be discovered. Because revolutionaries haven't really come to terms with religion, it continually returns to haunt them. Because the critique of it has remained abstract, superficial, vulgar materialist, religion continually engenders new forms of itself, even among those

The Realization and



"Religion is the alienated expression of the qualitative, the 'fantastic realization of man.' The revolutionary movement must oppose religion, but not in preferring to it a vulgar amorality or philistine common sense. It must take its stand on the other side of religion. Not less than it but more."

who were previously against it for all the correct "materialistic" reasons. The situationists can complacently observe that "all the Churches are decomposing" and not notice that we are also witnessing, precisely in the most industrially advanced countries, the proliferation of thousands of religions and neoreligions. Every new

perience of the revolutionary movement. The basis of the critique of "sacrifice," for example, is not that one should be egoistic in principle--that it is a bad thing to be altruistic, etc.--but stems from observation of the tendency of sacrifice and sacrificial ideology to be important factors in the maintaining of hierarchy and

cause that demands sacrifice of one's "better self"--one's integrity, honesty, magnanimity.

In emphasizing exclusively the immediate enjoyments to be found in revolutionary activity--out of naive enthusiasm or with the aim of political or sexual seduction--the situationists have set themselves up for the com-

A note on the word "philistine"

The word "philistine," which appears in this essay a couple times, is commonly used to denote the smug or uncultured. But many English-speaking people are unfamiliar with the origins of its current usage. This usage grew out of the denigration of the inhabitants of Philistia (better known today as Palestine) by a Judeo-Christian culture which quite unfoundedly considered itself superior. It should be remembered that unless the term is used to refer to Philistia or its inhabitants (Palestine or the Palestinians) it can be, and often is, considered insulting and prejudicial by Palestinians, other Arabs, and their friends.

Suppression of Religion by Ken Knabb

religious manifestation is a mark of the failure of radical theory to express the hidden, authentic meaning that is sought through those forms.

Religion includes many unlike and contradictory phenomena. Besides its purely apologetic aspects, it provides aesthetically appealing rituals; moral challenge; forms of contemplation that "recenter" one; organizing principles for one's life; communion rarely found in the secular world; etc. In exploding this agglomeration, the bourgeois revolution did not destroy religion but it served to some extent to separate out its diverse aspects. Elements of religion that were originally practical are thrown back on their own and required to be so once more or disappear.

The neoreligious trips and techniques are legion: modifications or combinations of traditional religions; therapies psychological and psycho-physical; self-help programs; contemplative techniques; psychedelics; activities taken up as "ways of life;" communitarian experiments.... Having been demystified, rationalized, commodified, these practices are to a certain extent taken up on the basis of their use value rather than being imposed as part of a monopolizing institutionalized system. The uses involved are, to be sure, widely varied, often escapist or trivial; and many of the old superstitions and mystifications remain even without the social rationale that formerly reinforced them. But this popular experimentation is not only a reflection of social decomposition, it is a major positive factor in the present revolutionary movement, the widespread expression of people trying to take their lives in their own hands. Situationist theory has oscillated between the vision of totally alienated people bursting out one fine day with the release of all their repressed rage and creativity, and that of microsocieties of revolutionaries already living according to the most radical exigencies. It has failed sufficiently to deal with the more ambiguous experiments on the margins between recuperation and radicality where contradictions are expressed and worked out; leaving them to the recuperation which apparently confirms its position. It is not a question of being more tolerant with these experiences, but of examining and criticizing them more thoroughly rather than contemptuously dismissing them.

As we develop a more radical, a more substantial critique of religion, we can envisage interventions on religious terrains analogous to those of the early S.I. on artistic and intellectual terrains; attacking, for example, a neoreligion for not going far enough on its own terms, for not being, so to speak, "religious" enough, and not only from the classical "materialist" perspectives.

It is often forgotten that revolutionary theory is not based on preference or principle but on the ex-

exploitation. It is merely a happy historical accident that there is a tendency for present revolutionary activity to be interesting and enjoyable; that being a tool of political manipulation is not only unpleasant but also unstrategic. The situationists were right to point out and affirm the playful aspect of radical struggles or the radical aspect of playful, apparently meaningless actions (vandalism, etc.). But the coincidence of these and other observations has led many people to the appealing if not quite logical conclusion that revolutionary activity is by definition pleasurable; or even that pleasure is by definition revolutionary. The problem is rather how to confront those situations where immediate pleasure does not automatically coincide with revolutionary needs: seeking ways to bring the two sides together (affective detournement) but not dissimulating the contradictions when this is not possible.

The same situationists who point out the stupidity of that leftism that reduces workers' struggles to purely economic issues, in their turn reduce revolution to purely "egoistic" issues when they insist that people are--or at least should be--only struggling "for themselves," "for the pleasure of it," etc. Their exhortations to "refuse sacrifice" substitute for any analysis or lead to false analyses. To denounce Maoism, for example, merely for its being based on "sacrifice" does not speak to the healthy, generous communitarian sentiments whose recuperation is at the source of much of Maoism's appeal. What is counter-revolutionary about Maoism is not sacrifice in itself, but the type of sacrifice and the use to which it is put. People have not only been willing, when necessary, to endure poverty, prison and other pains for revolution, they have often even done so joyously, foregoing material comfort as being relatively secondary, finding deeper satisfaction in the knowledge of the effectiveness and beauty of their acts. There are victories that are not visible to everyone, moments when one can see that one has "already won" a battle even though things may superficially seem the same as before.

It is necessary to distinguish between a principled devotion to a cause, which may involve some sacrifice of one's narrower egoistic interests, and degradation before a

plaints of those people who reject it on that basis, being disappointed in their expectations of entertainment.

It is understandable why anti-sacrifice has been such an uncriticized pillar of situationist ideology. First, it provides an excellent defense against accounting to oneself or others: one can justify many failings by simply saying that one wasn't passionately moved to do this or that. Secondly, the person who is a revolutionary solely for his own pleasure would presumably be indifferent or even counterrevolutionary when that happened to be more convenient; hence he is compelled, in order to prevent this embarrassing corollary from being noted, to postulate that revolutionary activity is always automatically pleasurable.

The very success of the S.I. contributed toward the apparent justification of an anachronistic pose deriving from the historical accident of its origins (out of the French cultural avant-garde, etc.) and even perhaps from the personalities of some of its determinative members. The aggressive situationist tone reflects the recentering of revolution in the real single individual engaged in a project that leaves nothing outside of itself. In contrast with the militant, the situationist is naturally quick to react against manipulation. Though such an attitude is

"The situationists can complacently observe that "all the Churches are decomposing" and not notice that we are also witnessing, precisely in the most industrially advanced countries, the proliferation of thousands of religions and neoreligions. Every new religious manifestation is a mark of the failure of radical theory to express the hidden, authentic meaning that is sought through those forms."

quite the contrary of elitist, it is easily capable of becoming so in relation to those who lack this autonomy or self-respect. Having experienced the excitement of taking his history into his own hands (or at least having identified with those who have), he arrives at an impatience and contempt for the prevailing sheepishness. It is but a step from this quite understandable feeling to the development of a neoaristocratic pose. This pose is not always a mark of the proverbial "hierarchical aspirations;" rather, frustrated by the difficulty of noticeably affecting the dominant society, the situationist

finds it difficult to isolate and therefore avoid it, since accusations of "arrogance," "elitism," etc., are often mistakenly aimed at precisely the most trenchant aspects of situationist practice. It is hard not to feel superior upon having some pseudocritique addressed to you that you've heard and refuted a hundred times before. Moreover, a false modesty may be misleading. There are some things you can't let pass. Although a revolutionary should not think that he (or his group) is essential to the movement and is therefore to be defended by any means, he must defend his actions insofar as he feels that they reflect important aspects of that movement. It is not a matter of secretly storing up modesty and other virtues that God will see and ultimately reward, but of participating in a global movement whose very essence is communication.

The situationist scene, providing a favorable field of play for vanity and in-group games, has attracted

Continued on next page

"Critical theory does not present a fixed, "objective" truth. It is an assault, a formulation abstracted, simplified and pushed to the extreme. The principle is, "If the shoe fits, wear it:" people are compelled to ask themselves to what extent the critique rings true and what they are going to do about it."

The Realization and Suppression of Religion by Ken Knabb continued

many people with very little to do with the revolutionary project; people who in other circumstances would have been fops, dandies, social intriguers, cultural dilettantes, hangers-on. It is true that the situationist movement has reacted against many of these elements with a vigor that was perhaps unexpected to them, and which has discouraged many others from thinking they could disport themselves there with impunity. But this has often been not because of their pretentious role, but because they did not maintain that role credibly enough.

Conversely, the situationist scene has tended to repel other in many ways serious individuals who felt this pretentious egoism to be an anachronism far removed from any revolution they would have been interested in. Seeing this pretentiousness apparently linked with the situationists' trenchant radicality, many people facilely rejected both at once, choosing other pursuits which, while more limited, at least avoided this repugnant posturing. The movement that counted on the radical appeal of antirole, antisacrificial activity ended up repelling people who had no desire to sacrifice themselves to the reactionary situationist role.

The egoist situationist has a rather philistine conception of human liberation. His egoism is only the inversion of self-abasement. He advocates "play" in a juvenile sense, as if the mere breaking of restrictions were automatically productive of pleasure. In evoking the child, he is sympathizing not only with his rebelliousness but also with his impatience and irresponsibility. His criticism of "romantic love" stems not only from a perception of its illusions and neurotic possessiveness, but also from a simple ignorance of love and its possibilities. It isn't so much the alienated human community that bothers him as the things that prevent him from participating in it. What he really dreams of, behind the situationist verbiage, is a cybernetized spectacular society that would cater to his whims in more sophisticated ways. He is still a consumer, and a very conspicuous one, in his frantic insistence on "pleasure without limit," the gratification of an "infinite multiplication of desires." If he dislikes "passivity" it is not so much that being forced into it restricts his creative impulses as that he is an addict of nervous activity and doesn't know what to do with himself if he is not surrounded with lots of distractions. Of contemplation as moment of activity, or of solitude as moment of dialogue, he knows nothing. For all his talk about "autonomy," he lacks the courage to act without caring what others will think of him. It is not his life that he takes seriously, but his ego.

Critical theory does not present a fixed, "objective" truth. It is an assault, a formulation abstracted, simplified and pushed to the extreme. The principle is, "If the shoe fits, wear it:" people are compelled to ask themselves to what extent the critique rings true and what they are going to do about it. Those who wish to evade the problem will complain about the critique as being

"The fact that one can scarcely use a word like 'goodness' without sounding corny is a measure of the alienation of this society and its opposition. The notions of the 'virtues' are too ambiguous to be used without having been criticized and precised, but so are their opposites. Ethical concepts must not be left to the enemy without a fight; they must be contested."

unfairly one-sided, not presenting the whole picture. Conversely, the dialectically ignorant revolutionary who wishes to affirm his extremism will confirm the critique (as long as it's not against him) as being an objective, balanced assessment.

Much revolutionary theoretical nonsense stems from the fact that in a milieu where "radicality" is the basis of prestige, one has an interest in making ever more extremist affirmations and in avoiding anything that might be taken to reflect a weakening of one's intransigence toward the official bad things. Thus the situationists will look rather favorably on playful or erotic aspirations ("it's only necessary that they follow out their most radical implications," etc.) while dismissing moral aspirations with insults, although the ones are no more ambiguous than the others.

In exaggerated reaction against the general complicity of morality with the ruling society, situationists frequently identify with their enemies' image of them and flaunt their own "immorality" or "criminality." Such an identification is not only infantile, it is virtually meaningless these days when an irresponsible libertinism is one of the most widely accepted and extolled ways of life (though the reality usually lags far behind the image). It was the bourgeoisie that was denounced in the **Communist Manifesto** for having "left remaining no other nexus between man and man than naked self-interest." If we are to use the works of Sade--that very picture of human alienation--or a Machiavelli, it is not as guidebooks for conducting our relations, but as unusually candid self-expressions of bourgeois society.

The egoist, antimoralist ideology has undoubtedly contributed to the quantity of bad faith and pointlessly acrimonious breaks in the situationist milieu. To be sure, situationists are often quite nice people; but this is virtually in spite of their whole ideological environment. I've seen situationists become embarrassed and practically apologize for having done some kind act ("It was not sacrifice ..."). Whatever spontaneous goodness they have lacks its theory. Basic ethical vocabulary is inverted, confused and forgotten.

The fact that one can scarcely use a word like "goodness" without sounding corny is a measure of the alienation of this society and its opposition. The notions of the "virtues" are too ambiguous to be used without having been criticized and precised, but so are their opposites. Ethical concepts must not be left to

the enemy without a fight; they must be contested.

Much of what makes people dissatisfied with their lives is their own moral poverty. They are encouraged on every side to be mean, petty, vindictive, spiteful, cowardly, covetous, jealous, dishonest, stingy, etc. That this pressure from the system removes much of the blame for these vices does not make it any less unpleasant to be possessed by them. An important reason for the spread of religious movements has been that they speak to this moral inquietude, inspiring people to a certain ethical practice that provides them with the peace of a good conscience, the satisfaction of saying what they believe and acting on it (that unity of thought and practice for which they are termed "fanatics").

The revolutionary movement, too, should be able to speak to this moral inquietude, not in offering a comfortably fixed set of rules for behavior, but in showing that the revolutionary project is the present focus of meaning, the terrain of the most coherent expression of compassion; a terrain where individuals must have the courage to make the best choices they can and follow them through, without repressing their bad consequences but avoiding useless guilt.

The compassionate act is not in itself revolutionary, but it is a momentary supercession of commodified social relations. It is not the goal but it is of the same nature as the goal. It must avow its own limitedness. When it becomes satisfied with itself, it has lost its compassion.

What is the point of lyrical evocations of eventual revenge on bureaucrats, capitalists, cops, priests, sociologists, etc.? They serve to compensate for the lack of substance of a text and usually don't even seriously reflect the sentiments of the author. It is an old banality of strategy that if the enemy knows that he will inevitably be killed anyway, he will fight to the end rather than surrender. It is not of course a question of being nonviolent, any more than violent, on principle. Those who violently defend this system bring violence on themselves. Actually it is remarkable how magnanimous proletarian revolutions usually are. Vengeance is usually limited to a few spontaneous attacks against torturers, police or members of the hierarchy who have been notoriously responsible for cruel acts, and quickly subsides. It is necessary to distinguish between defense of popular "excesses" and advocacy of them as essential tactics. The revolutionary movement

has no interest in vengeance; nor in interfering with it.

It is well known that Taoism and Zen have inspired many aspects of the oriental martial arts: supercession of ego consciousness, so as to avoid anxiety that would interfere with lucid action; nonresistance, so as to turn the opponent's force against him rather than confront it directly; relaxed concentration, so as not to waste energy but to bring all one's force into sharp focus at the moment of impact. It is likely that religious experience can be drawn on in analogous fashion to enrich tactically that ultimate martial art which is modern revolutionary theoretico-practice. However, proletarian revolution has little in common with classical war, being less a matter of two similar forces directly confronting each other than of one overwhelming majority moving to become conscious of what it could be any time it realized it. In the more advanced countries the success of a movement has generally depended more on its radicality, and therefore its contagiousness, than on the number of weapons it could commandeer. (If the movement is widespread enough, the army will come over, etc.; if it isn't, weapons alone will not suffice, unless it be to bring about a minority coup d'etat.)

It is necessary to reexamine the experiences of nonviolent religious or humanistic radical movements. Their defects are numerous and evident: Their abstract affirmation of "humanity" is an affirmation of alienated humanity. Their abstract faith in man's good will leads to reliance on moral influencing of rulers and on promotion of mutual "understanding" rather than radical comprehension. Their appeal to transcendent moral laws reinforces the ability of the system to do the same. Their victories gained by wielding the economy as a weapon are at the same time victories for the economy. Their nonviolent struggles still rely on the threat of force, they only avoid being the direct agents of it, shifting its use to "public opinion" and thus usually in the final analysis to the State. Their exemplary acts often become merely symbolic gestures allowing all sides to go on as before, but with tensions relaxed, consciences eased by having "spoken out," "been true to one's principles." Identifying with Gandhi or Martin Luther King, the spectator has a rationalization for despising others who attack alienation less magnanimously; and for doing nothing himself because, well-intentioned men being found on both sides, the situation is to "complex." These and other defects have been exposed in theory and have exposed themselves in practice for a long time. It is no longer a question of tempering the rulers' power hunger, cruelty or corruption with ethical admonishments, but of suppressing the system in which such abuses can exist.

Nevertheless, these movements have at times achieved remarkable successes. Beginning from a few exemplary interventions, they have spread like wildfire and profoundly discredited the dominant system and ideology. At their best they have used--and often originated--quite radical tactics, counting on the contagious spread of truth, of the qualitative, as their fundamental weapon. Their practice of community puts other radical milieus to shame, and they have often been more explicit about their goals and the difficulties in attaining them than have more

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"advanced" movements.

The situationists have adopted a spectacular view of revolutionary history in fixating on its most visible, direct, "advanced" moments. Often these moments owed much of their momentum to the long preparatory influence of quieter, subtler currents.

Often they were "advanced" merely because accidental external circumstances forced them into radical forms and acts. Often they failed because they did not know very well what they were doing or what they wanted.

Revolutionary as well as religious

"In contrast, the revolutionary who welcomes criticism has a greater tactical flexibility. Confronted with a critique of himself, he may 'aggressively' seize on its weakest points, refuting it by demonstrating its contradictions and hidden assumptions; or he may take a 'nonresisting' stance and seize on its strongest points as a point of departure, transforming the criticism by accepting it in a profounder context than it was intended."

movements have always tended to give rise to a moral division of labor. Unrealistic, quasi-terroristic demands intimidate the masses to the point that they adore rather than emulate the propagators and gladly leave full participation to those with the qualities and dedication apparently necessary for it. The revolutionary must strive to demystify the apparent extraordinariness of whatever merits he may have, while guarding against feeling or seeming superior because of his conspicuous modesty. He must be not so much admirable as exemplary.

Ongoing radical criticism has been a key factor in the situationists' subversive power; but their egoism has prevented them from pushing this tactic to the limit. Surrounded by all the verbiage about "radical subjectivity" and "masters without slaves," the situationist does not learn to be self-critical. He concentrates exclusively on the errors of others, and his facility in this defensive method reinforces his "tranquil" role. Failing to welcome criticism of himself, he cripples his activity; and when some critique finally does penetrate because of its practical consequences, he may be so traumatized as to abandon revolutionary activity altogether, retaining of his experience only a grudge against his critics.

In contrast, the revolutionary who welcomes criticism has a greater tactical flexibility. Confronted with a critique of himself, he may "aggressively" seize on its weakest points, refuting it by demonstrating its contradictions and hidden assumptions; or he may take a "nonresisting" stance and seize on its strongest points as a point of departure, transforming the criticism by accepting it in a profounder context than it was intended. Even if the balance of "correctness" is overwhelmingly on his side, he may choose to concentrate on some rather subtle error of his own instead of harping on more obvious ones of others. He does not criticize the most criticizable, but the most essential. He uses himself as a means of approaching more general questions. Embarrassing himself, he embarrasses others. The more concretely and radically a mistake is exposed, the harder it is for others to avoid similar confrontations with themselves. Even those who are at first gleeful at the apparent fall of an enemy into some sort of masochistic exhibitionism soon find their victory to be a hollow one. By sacrificing his image the revolutionary undercuts the images of others, whether the effect is to expose them or to shame them. His strategy differs from that of "subverting one's enemies with love" not necessarily in having less love, but in having more coherence in its expression. He may be cruel with a role or ideology while loving the person caught in it. If people are brought to a profound, perhaps traumatic, confrontation with themselves, he cares little that they momentarily think that he is a nasty person who only does these things out of maliciousness. He wishes to provoke others into participation, even if only by drawing them into a public attack on him.

We need to develop a new style, a style that keeps the trenchancy of the situationists but with a magnanimity and humility that leaves aside their uninteresting ego games. Pettiness is always counterrevolutionary. Begin with yourself, comrade, but don't end there.

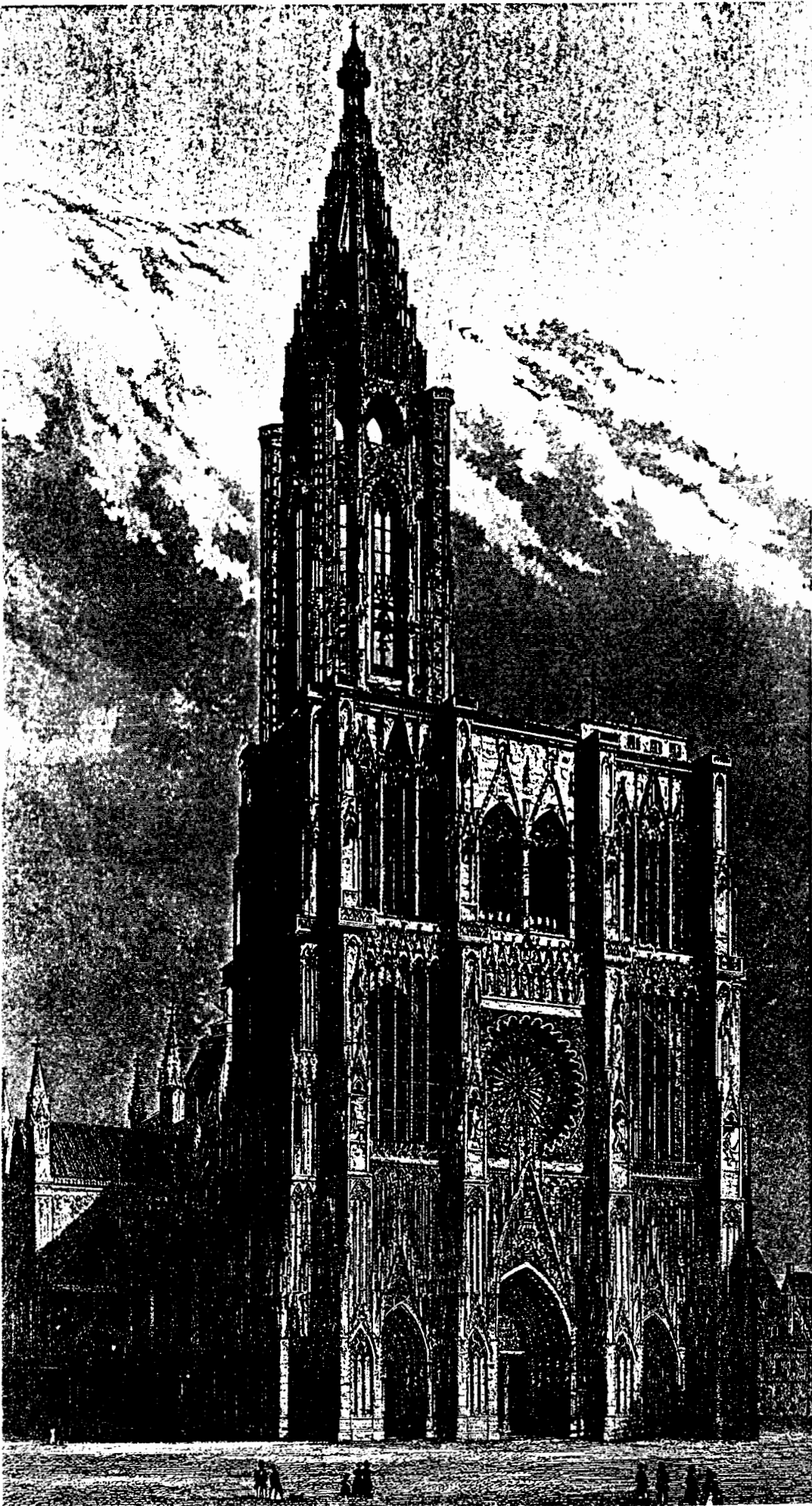
Appendix

Kenneth Rexroth's *Communalism: From Its Origins to the Twentieth Century* (Seabury, 1974) contains a pithy exposition of ways in which the dialectic of religion has continually given rise to tendencies that have been thorns in the side of dominant society and religious orthodoxy, particularly in the form here of millenarian movements and intentional communities. Although Rexroth's anecdotal style often serves to concisely illustrate a point, much of his gossip about the foibles and delusions of the communalists, though amusing, obscures essential issues that he has not dealt with rigorously enough. He considers the communalist movements largely on their own terms—the nature of their communal life, the pitfalls they ran into, how long they endured. He is concerned more with whether the dominant society managed to destroy them than with whether they managed to make any dent in it. And indeed in many cases whatever subversive effect they had was only incidental. Many of the religious currents that exerted a more consciously radical force in social struggles, such as Gandhism or the Quakers in the antislavery movement, did not of course take a communalist form and so are not treated here.

In the period following the defeat of the first proletarian assault, when most intellectuals debased themselves before Stalinism, reaction or intentional historical ignorance, Rexroth was one of the few to maintain a certain integrity and intelligence. He continued to denounce the system from a profound if not coherently revolutionary perspective. In the "left wing" of culture, he criticized many aspects of the separation of culture and daily life, but without following this out to the most radical conclusion of explicitly and coherently attacking the separation as such. Since the society represses creativity, he imagines the "creative act" as being the means of a subtle subversion by the qualitative; but he conceives this creative expression largely in artistic, cultural terms. ("I write poetry to seduce women and overthrow the capitalist system.")

Rexroth has certainly had a determinative influence on a number of people—me, for one. But this influence, though healthy in many respects, has unfortunately not tended very much toward a lucid revolutionary theoretico-practice. He has failed to recognize many of the characteristics and expressions of the modern revolution, through lumping them too facily with the failure of the old proletarian assault. Lacking a revolution, his social analyses range from perceptive insights to pathetic liberal complaining. He falls back on the notion of an "alternative society:" individuals quietly practicing authentic community in the interstices of the doomed society; on the theory that even if this offers little chance of averting thermonuclear or ecological apocalypse, it's the most satisfying way to conduct your life while you're waiting for it. The proliferation of such individuals holding to radically different values is a practical rejection of commodity ideology, a living critique of the spectacle effect. It is one of the possible bases of the modern revolution. But these individuals must grasp the historical mediations through which these values could be realized. Otherwise they tend to devolve into a vulgar complacency as to their superiority to those who don't make such a break, and take pride in their irreconcilability to the system as they are integrated into it.

I highly recommend Rexroth's essay on Martin Buber in *Bird in the Bush* (New Directions, 1959).



"We need to develop a new style, a style that keeps the trenchancy of the situationists but with a magnanimity and humility that leaves aside their uninteresting ego games."

Introductory note

The relation of anarchy to religion has been disputed for as long as the anarchist movement has existed. Michael Bakunin's pyrotechnic denunciations of God and religion in the last century were nearly contemporary with Leo Tolstoy's anarchic Christianity. The often uncompromising atheism of the Spanish anarchist revolutionaries (who had to face all the pressures of a Catholic state religion allied with the Spanish fascists) can be contrasted with some of the more religious of the U.S. pacifist anarchists like Ammon Hennoc, and Dorothy Day with her Catholic Worker Movement.

Nonetheless, it cannot be denied that historically the religious strands of thought and action which have sought to penetrate the anarchist movement have always and nearly everywhere been in the minority when they haven't simply been non-existent. And to this day it would seem fairly obvious that most anarchists worldwide remain atheists, with many still claiming, as does Fred Woodworth in his opening essay here, that a very special relationship exists between atheism and anarchy.

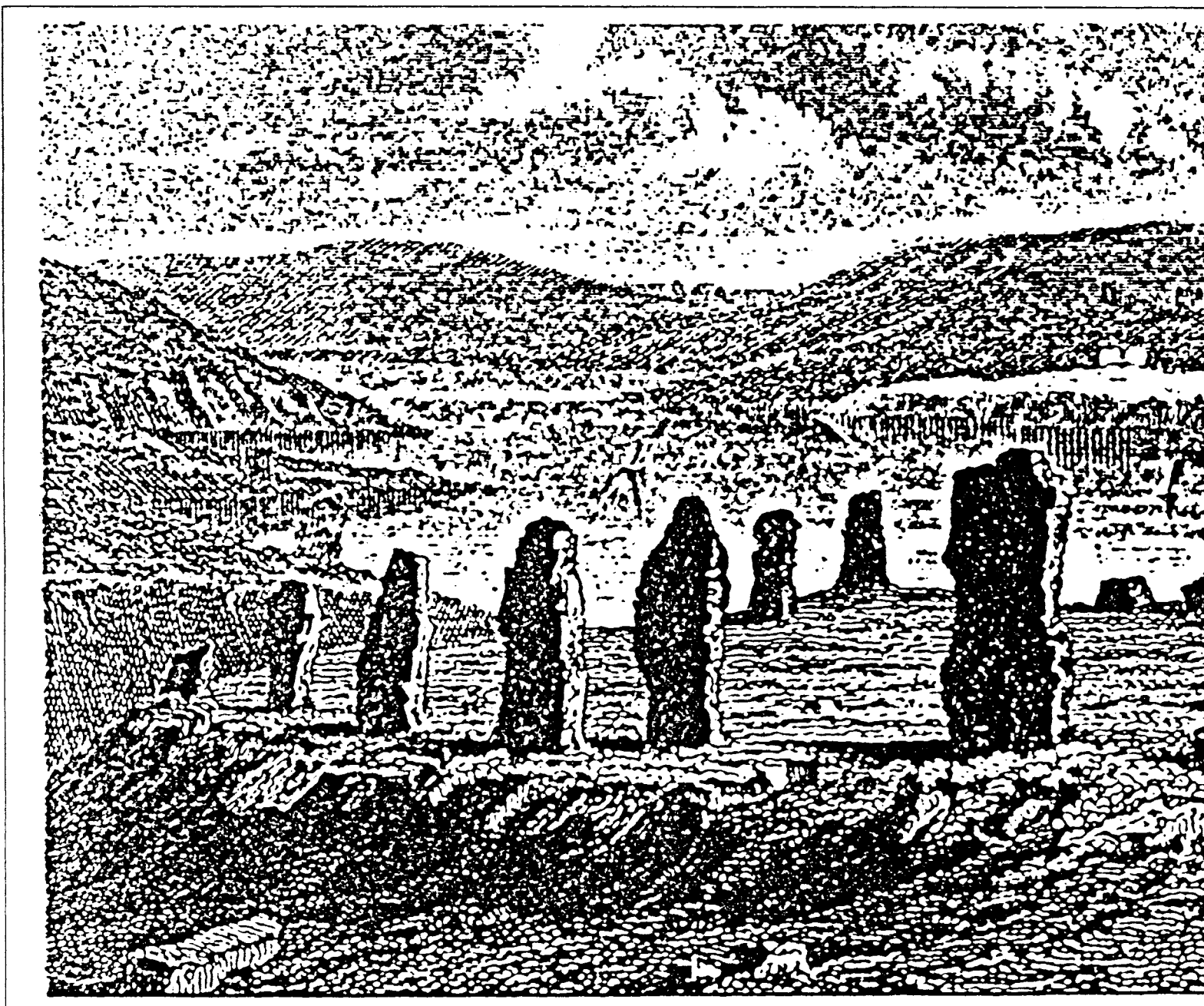
Yet, as Jay Kinney attempts to indicate in his essays which follow, there is a very real sense in which many of the struggles between atheism and religion seem to resemble the skirmishes of two lumbering battleships squared off with their big guns firing, but for some reason always missing any of their most vital targets. There is a real sense in which all the usual arguments made from both sides of the divide have only proved their impotence, if not their irrelevance. For too long the religion-vs.-atheism debate has been stuck in a nearly frozen embrace of mutually ineffectual critique, each side trying to knock over the other's illusions while at the same time desperately trying to preserve its own behind defenses of dogma, narrow-mindedness and fear of the unknown.

It's time we moved beyond such bankrupt posturing. It's time we embarked on our own voyages of genuine self-reflection and self-discovery in order to at last find what lies over the horizons which have been too long concealed by these mutual evasions. For just as the "Cold War" between "Democratic Capitalism" and "Marxist Socialism/Communism" serves to collusively hide the real struggles between authority and anarchy, the lumbering religious and atheist orthodoxies hide the genuine struggles between frozen, reified, ideological thought and our impulses to live freely and fully.

For those with the curiosity and courage to explore this new terrain the rewards are potentially immense. For those too afraid to step out from behind their dogmatic defenses and impenetrable evasions of communication, the arguments within will remain only misunderstood threats to business as usual.

The essays reprinted here originally appeared in the now-defunct anarchist newspaper, *STRIKE!* The letters are all reproduced here for the first time in print. For those who think this dialogue may be too

Anarchy & Reli



Anarchism or Religion

by Fred Woodworth

To my way of thinking, the strangest question some anarchists ever ask is, "Don't I have the right to believe in religion if I want?" You sure do! Any time the anarchist movement turns into a Thought Police I will get the hell out at a speed the Einstein equations never heard of.

Nevertheless, I happen to oppose religion. Historically, it's never done

long and involved, reading just the essays will prove valuable. But for those who want to get the whole story, at least as far as it has as yet unfolded, reading the letters which parallel the essays should fill in many of the gaps left by the necessary brevity of the essays. Through using a parallel layout style I have tried to roughly correlate the time frame in which the essays and letters were written—a time frame with many overlaps and few discrete sequences. Readers are invited to continue this dialogue in the letters columns of our upcoming issues.

much but serve as food for nationalism and wars, a sort of dietary supplement of the state. Religion's "holy books"—the so-called Bible, the Koran, and the Book of Mormon, to name the most famous ones—are gibbering lunacy as ethics, and extreme authoritarianism as politics. As writing, they are staggering in their crudity, although I'm aware that some persons claim to see great beauty in them (personally, I catch no sight of it); and they require that their "real meaning" be explained by intermediaries between the supposed god and mankind—priests—who make up a class of patronizing and exploiting elitists.

My reasons for opposing religion also are, quite simply, that I don't think there's anything in it—there is no "god," and therefore all activities of worship and so on are utterly purposeless. Anyone who wishes to pray or conduct any other religious ritual, as long as he or she does not perform human or animal sacrifice, or carry out any other invasive act, is just as free as the birds to do it. By the same token, should any anarchist come

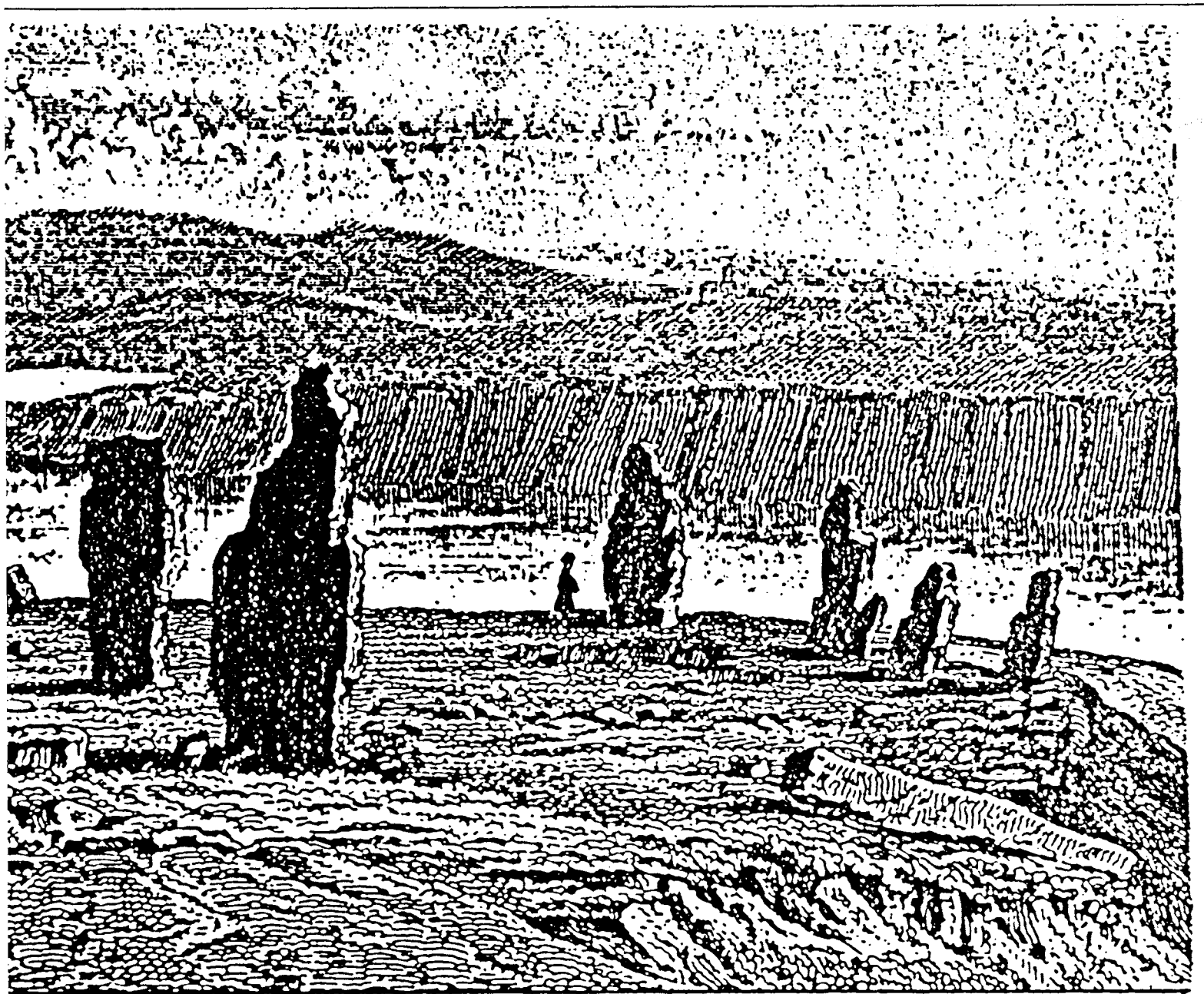
up to me and ask, "But am I not free to believe in the necessity of government if I wish?" I'd likewise have to respond, "You sure are!"

Now, though, given that the freedom to believe or "right" to believe in whatever you wish is not at issue among believers in no-coercion--anarchism--let's look at the real question here: What do we do AS ANARCHISTS? Clearly, just as anybody has a right to believe anything, anarchists have a right to think any way they please. It certainly is not appropriate, however, for anarchists to claim that they believe in statism, because then there's no reason for them to be calling themselves anarchists in the first place. Religion is, and always has been, on an equal footing with government in the oppressing of human beings, so what are the consequences of "believing" in some variety of it, and of acting upon this belief?

Consequences

The consequences are two-fold,
Continued on page 18

gion; a dialogue



Religion and Anarchism

by Jay Kinney

There's a historical tradition, especially in Catholic countries where the hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church has usually sided with the repressive state, linking libertarian politics with opposition to religion. Familiar examples include Durruti's group shooting priests in Spain, Bakunin's scorn for religion, the situationists' purple prose on the subject (...the ignoble slag of religion, above all Christian mythology...—Vaneigem), and most recently the broadsides against God and religion in the anarchist journal **The Match!** Thus any anarchists with long-standing grudges against the nun who whacked their knuckles with a ruler in parochial school, or hatred for the Moral Majority, can point to an illustrious pantheon of exemplary revolutionaries whose trigger-fingers itched as strongly for priestly blood as for that of government functionaries.

However, there is an equally authentic thread running through history of individuals and groups whose autonomous politics were

inextricably linked to explicit religious beliefs. Millenarian sects such as the Brethren of the Free Spirit (who, according to historian Norman Cohn, "in the late Middle Ages... conserved, as part of their creed of total emancipation, the only thoroughly revolutionary social doctrine that existed"), later hell-raisers like the Ranters, 19th century Utopian communities like Oneida, individuals like Thoreau and Tolstoy, and the current Catholic Worker movement all spring to mind. Murray Bookchin treats some of these groups at length in his recent work **The Ecology of Freedom**.

Clearly, the libertarian impulse down through time has encompassed both the iconic and the iconoclast, both spiritual enthusiasts and hardcore atheists. This fact is particularly relevant at present when assessing the resurgence of religion into politics and politics into religion. It's my belief that the across-the-board rejection of religion and spirituality as being invariably authoritarian, oppressive, misguided nonsense, is an inappropriate response for anarchists, and possibly a self-destructive

one as well.

Perhaps this can best be illustrated by describing an event that occurred while I was writing this essay in late February, 1984. This was a public presentation in San Francisco by poet Gary Snyder and ecological/community activist Lee Swenson entitled "Buddhism, Anarchism, and Political Economy." Despite the events out-of-the-way location at Fort Mason, its \$5 price, and its lack of publicity, the sizeable room was full with at least 300 people, maybe more.

Passionate Case

Both Snyder and Swenson made a passionate case for paying serious attention to anarchist thought, for defending other life forms and the planet itself against civilization's destructive side, and for learning from non-hierarchical spiritual traditions (animism, Buddhism, native cultures). Readings were recommended on these topics with special emphasis on Paul Goodman, Murray Bookchin, and Karl Polanyi. This was, in short, the best attended and most inter-

esting presentation on anarchism in the bay area in my memory.

Curious then that I didn't see any faces there of the two dozen or so anarchists who are usually most visible under black flags at demonstrations, or hanging out at the local anarchist bookstore. Perhaps they were there and I overlooked them, but I think not. My hunch is that location, admission charge and slim publicity aside, many of them wouldn't have turned up because Buddhism was included in the evening's title--and good anarchists aren't going to lay out hard cash to go hear some talk on mushy religious garbage.

This was their loss because they missed a night of intriguing cross-fertilization, akin in many respects to a good issue of **The Fifth Estate**, and the inspiration of seeing several hundred people paying careful attention to a reasoned presentation of anarchist thought.

Another example. A while back I was at a party talking to a longtime antiauthoritarian when he mentioned his ambivalent participation in a pagan/feminist ritual one night on a local beach. Though uncomfortable by the fact, he admitted being deeply affected by the ritual, while he hastened to add that he didn't necessarily believe in paganism much less more conventional forms of religion. Long used to the ideology of anti-ideology he was wary of getting too attracted to something which smacked of politically incorrect superstition.

Proper anarchism

I mention just these two cases, but there are plenty more where those who hold to narrow definitions of proper anarchism or antiauthoritarianism are in danger of not only isolating themselves from interested others, but also risking serious alienation from their deepest needs and desires. Let's examine these dangers briefly.

The question of sectarianism among anarchists is an old one--so old, in fact, that it has an independent life of its own as a popular cliché. The phenomenon stems in part from many anarchist's insistence on a doctrinal purity that often boils down to "agree with my version of anarchism or suffer my wrath." This makes for some spectacular infighting and deliciously sarcastic polemics; it also drives away anyone with a whit of common sense.

Doctrinal purism is especially tragic when it is invoked on issues that are properly matters of individual conscience. Take, for instance, anarchists who choose to intimately link vegetarianism, Reichian sexual psychology, or anti-porn sentiments to their libertarian politics. No one will deny that matters of diet, sex, or reading matter have political dimensions worth discussing, but they remain matters of individual choice. The same goes for spiritual beliefs and practices.

If I choose to believe that an all-encompassing sentient consciousness both pervades and transcends material reality, and that it is best symbolized by a god, a goddess, or even an enormous fire hydrant covered with blinking eyeballs, that is my business and no one else's. If

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Anarchism or Religion

Continued

psychological and exemplary. Who can say which is the worst? The result of believing anything for which no evidence exists is fatally perverting to the thought process. Once anyone plunges off the cliff into these torrents, he or she is invariably swept off to a realm in which confusion washes through every idea. The religious believer is, first and foremost among all things, tied to the concept of Ultimate Authority--a notion that, when it also inhabits a mind that pretends to OPPOSE authority, creates serious cross-purposes.

The other consequence is the one that diverges from the area of individual belief and takes shape as action in the real world. The religionist appears to be driven to act upon his or her beliefs, and when these find expression in social movements they are unmistakable. Religion in the minds of some individual participants in a movement, apparently, CANNOT keep still; it has to come out as activities that color the whole. Think of a drop of poison added to a glass of pure water--the effect is to pollute the whole cup. And yet a drop of pure water added to a glass of poison has no effect at all. A little religion in a social movement invariably corrupts the whole into a religionized mass, complete with candlelight vigils, priests exhorting the sheep with bullhorns, etc. The press and public have their eyes inexorably drawn to these abject happenings, and the substance of the movement either vanishes or is absorbed so that it may as well not have ever been at all.

A classic example of religious infection of a social movement was the United Farm Workers of California, led by Cesar Chavez. While anarchists accept no leaders, the model presented by other movements is still instructive, and we therefore ought to notice what effect religion had in those ranks. Before long, priests were conducting "mass" at demonstrations; prayers were lifted to imaginary beings; whatever progress was made against the employing classes was negated by the imputation of the Catholic Church's having had a hand in it. In the final analysis, any net effect was a transference of authority from employing class to the hierarchy and public prestige of the Church.

Question

The question of compromise has always been one that has bothered opponents of the state. For many years, in the U.S. at least, debate over political action raged: should we ally ourselves with persons who believed in electoral action? The arguments took the same old form: It gives us public credibility; It gives us publicity we wouldn't otherwise get; It attracts people to our cause; Besides, don't I have the right to believe in electing candidates if I wish? The result was the so-called Libertarian Party, which, through swerving off onto the free-way of compromise, has whizzed so far in only ten years--so far that it now seems like a variant on the Reaganite Republicans, and is com-

pletely devoid of anarchistic significance.

As far as I'm concerned, the lesson is plain: We don't need a kind of "public credibility" that comes from the masking of our true nature of total anti-authoritarianism. We don't want the phony



"publicity" that accrues from that. The adherents it brings into our ranks--are they more likely to show loyalty to the high ideal of human freedom...or to the "Bible"? Which leaves us with that last statement again: don't individuals have the right to believe any way they want? And, once again, they sure do. And does that mean that we MUST be associated with them? If so, where is our own freedom to engage in libertarian action that spits in the eye of the so-called "god"?

The fact is that there is an irreconcilable opposition between the ideas of anarchism and the ideas of religion, and any "compromise" between two such ideas is sure to be fatal to one of them, and almost always to the more logically consistent one.

Sometimes principles are more clearly seen when analogies can be brought to bear in them; this often lifts the semantic fog and dispels confusion. So, by way of my own "what if?", I pose the following situation: Somebody comes forward out of some horrifying tradition--say, Naziism. This person professes to be an anarchist. He brushes aside our objections; urges us most sincerely to look at the works of Hitler. When we howl in dismay and point to hideous defects and monstrous enactments of the philosophy in real life, our would-be ally shrugs his shoulders: "Look, you have to take the GOOD parts in Hitler's writings; there's some good in

everything!"

Liberal Tendency

This is the liberal tendency that can never do anything but waver. It's the mental low-horsepower that holds everything in the world to be "opinion"--and all equally valid. Because it wants to "look for the good" in intellectual or political tendencies, it never can reject any-

with guitars, or earnest young ministers decrying nuclear weapons.

I think that a feeling of dignity ought to prohibit us from having the slightest thing to do with religion in any form. Even the astronomers, a group not particularly noted for any adherence to socially progressive ideas, have retaliated for several hundred years of oppression by churches, by refusing to name any body in space after any Christian

thing and can never see that the general spirit of some movements has been just plain horrifying. Christianity--the religion dominant in our present society--has had a history that is simply FILLED with examples of disregard of individual liberty, equality of men and women,

personage. Will women, who have been systematically deprived of equality in society by this religion, and also by Islam and other religions, now blandly forgive it and join the chorus of demonstrators for "equal rights" as they smile and sing religious songs at protest events led

"The result of believing anything for which no evidence exists is fatally perverting to the thought process. Once anyone plunges off the cliff into these torrents, he or she is invariably swept off to a realm in which confusion washes through every idea."

and the dignity of all races of people. The religion has exhibited over a period of almost two thousand years, not just over a decade or two like Naziism, a fanatical hatred of sexual pleasure, a self-righteous desire to impose itself on anyone and everyone through law, and a total, intense suppression of criticism and questioning of itself.

How can anyone with any shred of love for freedom call himself or herself part of THAT tradition?

Religion is a terrible and opportunistic thing. The fact is that something in it will always attempt to seize on anything in the world that can lever it into an even more secure position of dominance. If the spirit of the time is for slavery, then it is for slavery; if the tendency evolves toward fascism, it is fascistic. And true to form when protest is the hallmark of an age, the churches turn into abodes of singing nuns

by Christians? How ignominious!

Anarchism, as an extreme minority of thought, is fragile already. It can only make itself stronger by BEING ITSELF--it will shatter to pieces if it persists in "compromising" with all sorts of modern representatives of historically grotesque political tendencies, in the liberal daydream of accommodation to diversity.

An anarchist movement allied with religious persons may as well be one allied with landlords, capitalists, police and the state itself. In that case, my burning question is, Why bother?

Fred Woodworth is a Tucson, Arizona printer, writer and publisher of numerous pamphlets. His magazine, THE MATCH!, (POB 3488, Tucson, AZ. 85722), has disseminated anarchist ideas since the 1960's, and his writings have appeared in numerous other political and popular journals.

Religion and Anarchism

Continued

you choose to believe otherwise that is **your** business. This seems such an elementary principle of freedom that I feel a bit foolish having to even mention it. But it bears repeating time and again because it is so easily forgotten.

Bakunin and Proudhon

Anarchist touchstones like Bakunin and Proudhon are poor models in this regard because in reacting against the oppressive Church of their day they fell into mirroring its dogmatism in reverse. A statement such as Bakunin's that "the very nature and essence of every religious system... impoverishment, enslavement, and annihilation of humanity for the benefit of divinity" is a dazzling rhetorical generality--always good for a rise--but patently untrue in any number of instances.

However the point of this essay isn't to argue the relative merits of religious beliefs as opposed to atheist convictions--for one's perception of God's existence or nonexistence remains a private matter, unprovable to another. Rather, my point is that libertarian impulses have often coexisted with spiritual beliefs, and that the presence of large numbers of overtly religious people in the present peace movement(s) is an encouraging, not a discouraging sign.

Picking fights with believers over the issue of their faiths is not only self-defeating (no one responds positively to a frontal assault) but a sign of skewed priorities as well. If someone stops to help you fix your flat tire, you don't insist on telling them off for being a Christian before accepting their help--especially if the reason they stopped in the first place was **because** of Christian compassion.

North America in 1984 is not France at the time of the French Revolution nor Spain in 1936, and we are not faced with a nearly monolithic alliance between church and state. Once one gets away from the relatively small circles of urban intellectuals and subcultural clusters who have no use for church, one discovers that the mainstream (i.e. the majority) of society still goes to church (either regularly or irregularly), yet that church membership is split among hundreds of denominations, sects, orders and synods. For tens of millions of Americans their church is their individualized social circle, extended family, PAC, and spiritual salve, all rolled into one. Their church is as close as many people come to a sense of community and that is no small feat these days.

Libertarian causes

I'm not suggesting that anarchists join churches **en masse** as means to advance the libertarian cause among the masses--that would be as vanguardist and self-defeating as the Leninist attempts to move into the factories in the early 70's. But I am noting that if a spiritually-based affinity group has the guts to practice civil disobedience at a nuclear installation they deserve our respect and support, not our jeers because

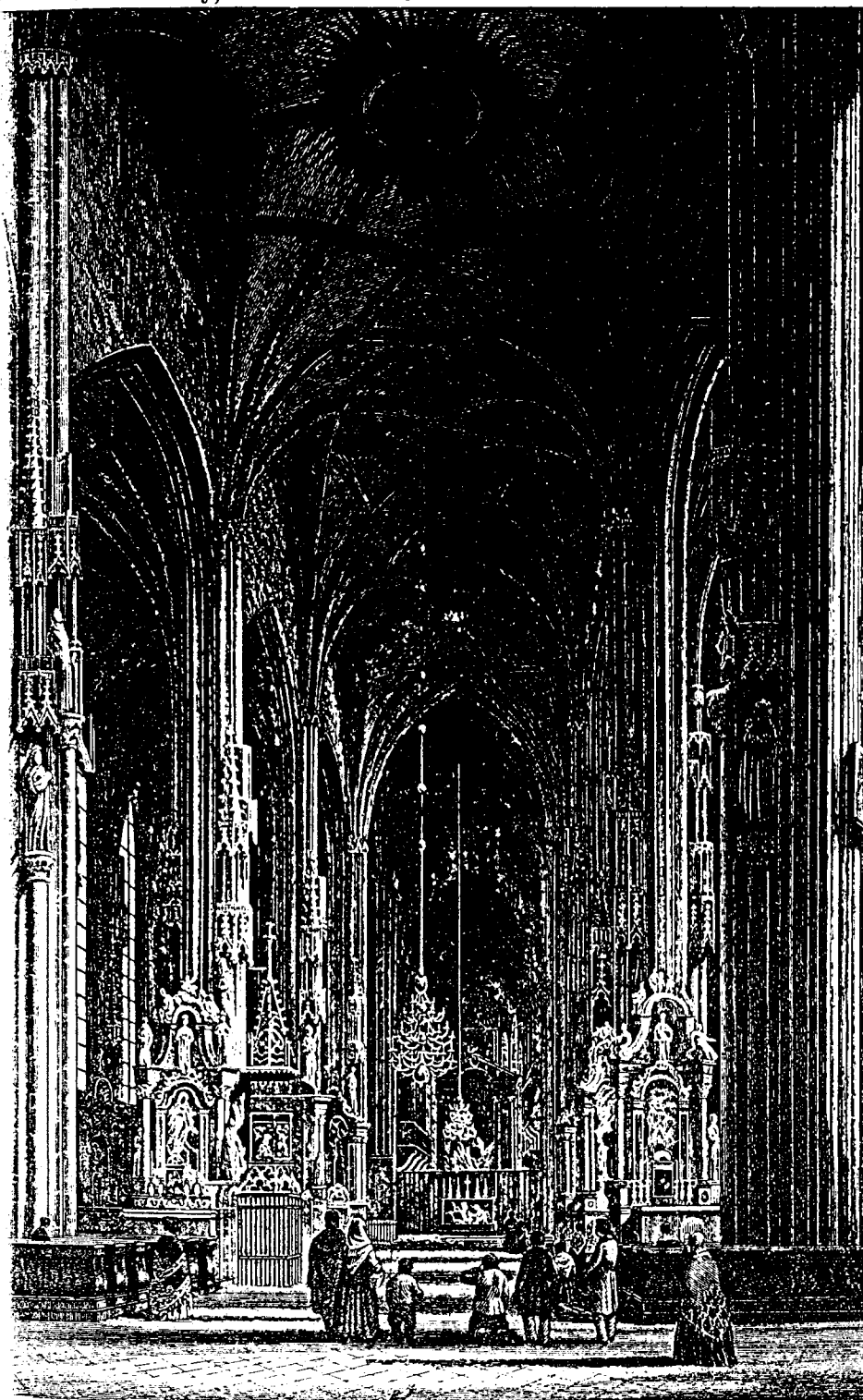
they aren't full-fledged atheistic anarchists.

Earlier I mentioned that I believe anarchists who hold to a narrow sectarian definition of political and spiritual correctness risk alienation from their own deepest needs and desires. Among those needs and desires I count the very real human need for a healthy relationship with the whole of life, for a sense of wholeness. This "whole" needn't be defined as a deity, either immanent

or transcendent--variously it can be understood as Gaia, Mother Nature, the Void, the Ecosystem, Life, the Universe, etc. However all cultures in all times and places have had

some metaphor(s) for this, (as well as methodologies for experiencing it) and I don't think this is because "the vast bulk of the population is, and always has been, mired in ig-

"Doctrinal purism is especially tragic when it is invoked on issues that are properly matters of individual conscience. Take, for instance, anarchists who choose to intimately link vegetarianism, Reichian sexual psychology, or anti-porn sentiments to their libertarian politics. No one will deny that matters of diet, sex, or reading matter have political dimensions worth discussing, but they remain matters of individual choice. The same goes for spiritual beliefs and practices."



norance and superstition" as **The Match!** would have it.

On the contrary, I find the cross-cultural outcroppings of myth and ritual to be heartening signs of human creative imagination confronting the unknown. The innate human intelligence and natural order that make an anarchist society plausible have been with us from the beginning--and have often been most evident among the "simplest" people (peasants, Indians, etc.) living closest to the earth. To see history as a cavalcade of ignorance and superstition is, at heart, to take a scorched earth policy towards human culture; it finds little to learn from other times and other world views.

I'm convinced that the spiritual impulse is universal, though it has often been poorly served by its organization and institutionalization as religion. Sadder still, however, are the numerous instances where the desire for union and transcendence is consciously denied yet unconsciously erupts; from millions of Maoists waving little red books to evangelical atheists who compete with streetcorner preachers for the souls of the unconverted. Better to acknowledge that what makes us human is not only our rational left brain but our intuitive right brain and our feeling heart. Another person's **rapprochement** with the infinite may not be ours--in fact, it can't be ours--but that needn't deny them their place in the peace movement or even in the libertarian left.

Jay Kinney has drawn for and edited numerous comics, including **YOUNG LUST**, **COVER-UP LOWDOWN**, and **ANARCHY COMICS**. He has been an editor of **CO-EVOLUTION QUARTERLY** (now **WHOLE EARTH REVIEW**) and is currently editor and publisher of **GNOSIS MAGAZINE** (POB 14217, San Francisco, CA. 94114).

First letter to Jay Kinney

Dear Jay,

I am writing to you because of your defense of religion in the last issue of **Strikel** I felt enough disagreement with your article that I sent a letter to **Strikel** criticizing it (which I have xeroxed and included in this envelope). However, I don't want to leave it at that. If by chance you have any interest in establishing a dialogue about the question I think we might both learn something more about it.

Although I am a longtime atheist, and although I vehemently disagree with your suggestion that religion can be reconciled with anarchy/freedom/non-alienation/etc., I do understand your criticism of anarchists who are so close-minded about religion and spirituality that they dismiss it out of hand without looking at what is valid in it.

Their attitude seems to me to be largely ideological in the sense that they have not taken the time or expended the energy necessary to critically examine the whole social phenomenon of religion. Like any other phenomenon involving alienation, the underlying content expressed is not what needs to be changed. The content, however distorted it may be, is an expression of genuine human needs, desires and ideas. What needs to be eliminated is the alienated form that these underlying needs find their expression through. Because the essence of religion is this alienated form, atheism is a necessary response. But because only the form and not the underlying content needs to be abolished, any non-ideological atheism must be more than a reflexive rejection of religion. It must pursue all the contra-

dictions involved, developing an immanent critique of religion from the inside--a critique that shows how religion fails on its own terms **because** of its very form as a type of human alienation.

If anarchists are to be effective at subverting all forms of ideological thinking (including ideological anti-ideologies) we must become more sensitive to all the complexities involved. We must learn to think dialectically--i.e. we must learn once and for all that any concept is just that, a concept, an abstraction and nothing more nor less. Any concept can be reified.

To avoid this reification we must look at both the valuable uses of any concept, and its limitations, its tendencies to lead us off into wrong directions. Some concepts will be found to have largely intact, usable, non-alienating meanings. Among these I include "anar-

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The Sacred & the Profane

by Lev Chernyi

I was pleased to see Fred Woodworth's excellent article..., since the relationship between atheism (the critique of religion) and anarchy is too often neglected in these days of new-ageism and the proliferation of spiritualist ideologies amidst "alternative" and marginal communities. Unfortunately, Jay Kinney's essay on the same subject was not nearly as illuminating and instead included several misleading and positively wrongheaded assumptions which cannot go unchallenged.

First, I must say that I have a great respect for much of the work Jay has done, and I have no desire to downgrade it. However, his views on religion appear to share a typically "new-ageist" (Fred calls it "liberal") perspective in which ideas (and especially ideological ideas) are seen to be equally valid and compatible regardless of their meanings, logical implications, and manifest contradictions.

Jay begins his essay with an argument that "the libertarian impulse down through time has encompassed both the iconic and the iconoclast, both spiritual enthusiasts and hardcore atheists," and that the "rejection of religion and spirituality as being invariably authoritarian, oppressive, misguided nonsense, is an inappropriate response for anarchists." He goes on to claim that the question of religion is "properly a matter of individual conscience," a "private matter," and that the presence of large numbers of overtly religious people in the present peace movement(s) is an encouraging...sign." And, finally, that "the spiritual impulse is universal." All of these statements appear highly dubious, if not completely unsupportable to me.

The major problem with Jay's arguments is that nowhere does he ever define what it is that he means by "religion" and the "spiritual," so that we don't even have any criteria by which to judge whether religion and spirituality are really compatible (or incompatible) with anarchy according to his own point of view. All we have are his bald assertions that they are compatible, and the vaguest of suggestions (and to be fair this really isn't clear) that

from his perspective, religion and spirituality might be defined as methods that satisfy, "the very real human need for a healthy relationship with the whole of life, for a sense of wholeness."

If we take this vague suggestion of a definition seriously it quickly becomes obvious that it approaches absurdity. No atheist that I have ever known would be likely to suggest that the reason s/he rejects all religion is that s/he desires an unhealthy relationship with the whole of life, or no relation at all, or that s/he rejects any desire for wholeness. And I would venture to say that this is not what religion means for the vast majority of people in the world that I inhabit, whether they are atheists or religious. Of course, if we were to accept this as an adequate definition of religion we would have little problem showing that it is compatible with most anarchist theories, and that "the spiritual impulse is universal." But this would be a hollow victory for religion since it would render the very concept of religion nearly meaningless for any practical purposes. In fact, what Jay seems to imply here to be "religion" and "spirituality" would be much more appropriately called "philosophy."

The Sacred and the Profane

If we want to make any real sense of the relation of religion and the anarchist movement, we would do better to adopt a more realistic definition of religion. And if the conceptual confusion surrounding the debate over religion is clarified, some logical conclusions can be drawn. I propose using a very common definition of religion according to which it consists of any doctrine which postulates the existence of a god or of supernatural beings. If we can accept this as an adequate definition then it becomes clear that the essential nature of religion consists in its division of the world into two spheres--the supernatural and the natural, or in other words, the divine or sacred and the profane. Far from being a holistic conception, religion can then be seen as in actuality dualistic, metaphysically dividing a world in

two that might otherwise be considered an indivisible whole. This, I believe, is the concept of religion that atheists usually criticize, and that is essentially incompatible with anarchism.

As Fred Woodworth said, "the religious believer is first and foremost..., tied to the concept of Ultimate Authority." Throughout history, the fundamental metaphysical division of the world into sacred and profane has invariably resulted in the subjugation of the profane to the sacred--or woman, man and nature to god(s) or the supernatural. In this sense religion is the archetypal ideology. It elevates a concept, an unreal abstraction, to the status of being more real than the existence of human beings and the natural world. It attributes a counterfeit subjectivity to that abstraction by denying the autonomy of the impersonal forces of nature, and the personal powers of human beings. The consequent results are all too sickeningly well known...as the history of Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Hinduism, etc. all attest. In essence, religion is a form of human alienation, and nothing more. To the extent that anarchists seek to end the alienation of human powers, they must become atheists in the sense defined above.



mental ideological separation of the world into two opposing realms. And this separation is extremely dangerous because once it is accepted as real, the door is opened inviting all kinds of authoritarian and alienating implications to follow.

"Throughout history, the fundamental metaphysical division of the world into sacred and profane has invariably resulted in the subjugation of the profane to the sacred--or woman, man and nature to god(s) or the supernatural. In this sense religion is the archetypal ideology. It elevates a concept, an unreal abstraction, to the status of being more real than the existence of human beings and the natural world."

Between Essence and Appearance

This is not to say that all religious ideas are worthless or positively harmful. Within the context of a basic system of ideas which is essentially alienating, a vast array of possible variations exist. Some are obviously worse than others. Some more obvious in their degradation of nature and humanity, some less so. Some include important and valuable ideas and perceptions. However, the point is that even the most benign religion conceivable must require the acceptance of a funda-

Getting back to Jay Kinney's arguments, we now have criteria by which we can evaluate his statement that the libertarian impulse has been manifested in spiritual as well as in atheistic movements. What we find is that indeed, there have historically been libertarian movements such as the Brethren of the Free Spirit which have couched their theories in religious terms--but to the extent that they have been truly libertarian they have tended to reduce these religious terms to absurdity. They have advocated atheistic interpretations of religious

First letter to Jay Continued

chy," though I am not nearly so sure about "anarchism." Other concepts will be found to be largely or wholly given over to alienating meanings and uses. I would include "religion" and "spirituality" among these. But even so, this does not mean that "anarchy" will always be free of ideological connotations, nor that "religion" must for all people and all times be absolutely alienating.

As you seem to imply in your broad hints about what you mean by religion and spirituality, the use of the concepts of "god" or "spirit" is not necessarily authoritarian/mystifying/etc. As long as they do not signify more than "metaphors," i.e. as long as they are not taken literally, as long as they are treated as concepts in a conscious manner. However, these concepts have historically been so identified with the practice of reification and the justification of alienation that it is extremely

unrealistic to expect any but the most critical and conscious people to understand them in this way without reifying them. This must especially be the case if you yourself don't spell out what you mean by these concepts in your article. To say that people can use any concept as a metaphor for the totality of life and still remain anarchists is true, but beside the point when you don't distinguish at the same time the fact that any reification of these concepts is incompatible with anarchist goals/ideas/practices.

The reality of our situation is that almost no one understands the ideas of "god" and "spirit" in non-ideological/non-reifying ways. Our tasks as anarchists include the ruthless exposure of all ideological thinking. I believe that in the realm of religion this must begin with making the case for atheism, but only in such a fashion that it is clear

that we do not desire that people adopt a vulgar materialist outlook on life. This would be a worthless goal. The critique of religion must center on its identity with ideological patterns of thought and alienation of human life. To the extent that atheism participates in the same mistakes, it must become also a center of criticism. The same may be said of anarchism, ecology, bioregionalism, co-operative ideologies, etc.

Although I myself am an aggressive atheist, I find it no contradiction that I have studied Taoism, Zen and Tai chi. It makes me uncomfortable when I participate in group activities that possess religious overtones however, because I know that in most cases the people involved are surrendering their own abilities to think and center themselves in their actually experienced world, in favor of ready-made reified frameworks of thinking through which they are reduced in some sense to objects in an abstract world. They deny

the reality of their experiences to the degree that they impose an abstract spiritual interpretation on them that they mistake as being more real.

For example, "Christian compassion" is an ideological compassion. Genuine compassion springs directly from the heart, not from any kind of doctrine, while ideological compassion is derived from the repression & sublimation of human desire and has an ambiguous character. To understand the distinction involved here you might refer to Paul Goodman (*Gestalt Therapy*) or Max Stirner (*The Ego and Its Own*).

Anyway, this has gone on long enough. I am enclosing copies of a couple things I've written, and an essay by Ken Knabb which makes some good points (see "The Realization and Suppression of Religion" elsewhere in this issue)--along with a xerox of my letter to Striker! I hope you'll read them & respond.

No offense!
Lev Chernyi



traditions through which the religious terminologies have been preserved, but through which the ideas of god and the supernatural have been subverted and deprived of any real meaning by their reincorporation into the "profane" world of a humanity integrated with nature. Thus to the extent that these historical movements have been libertarian, they have not been religious; to the extent that they have been religious, they have not been libertarian. The two tendencies may exist side-by-side, but only in a state of conflict since alienation and anarchy are fundamentally incompatible.

Just because these movements used religious terminology does not in the least mean that they were religious in any normally accepted sense of the word (as a Christian friend reminded me when I explained some of the beliefs of the Ranters to her). During historical periods in which religion had a monopoly on the categories of thought, it was only natural that anti-religious

"Within the context of a basic system of ideas which is essentially alienating, a vast array of possible variations exist. Some are obviously worse than others. Some more obvious in their degradation of nature and humanity, some less so. Some include important and valuable ideas and perceptions. However, the point is that even the most benign religion conceivable must require the acceptance of a fundamental ideological separation of the world into two opposing realms."

movements would be forced to find their expression through the subversion of the very religious dogma they opposed. Rather than showing that religion can be libertarian, the histories of these movements show that the inability to go beyond religious categories crippled and eventually helped destroy these movements. All the ideological deadweight which goes along with religious categories makes their use for other than religious/ideological purposes extremely problematic. In the vast majority of cases, those who attempt to combine religion or spirituality, and libertarian or anar-

chists ideas are merely juxtaposing contradictory concepts in an unstable system. Eventually, one tendency will dominate the other. And regardless of which one wins out, it should be obvious, more than a century after the ideological nature of religion was thoroughly exposed by the German Young Hegelians, that today it can only be confusing and self-defeating in the long-run to couch libertarian theory in religious language of any kind.

Ideas and Reality

Anarchists must relentlessly expose

the fundamentally alienating nature of religions while showing that all their most worthwhile features can be preserved (and liberated) when their alienating core is eliminated. Far from seeing religion as a "private matter of conscience," anarchists should realize that no ideas exist in a vacuum. If beliefs are held at all, it is because they inform human action. No one holds religious beliefs without those beliefs in some way shaping that person's life activity. To pretend otherwise is pure folly. The religious beliefs of members of the so-called "Peace" movements will invariably have a mystifying effect on those movements, retarding any libertarian tendencies that they might harbor. That these movements exist is encouraging. That they are influenced with ideological mystification can only be disheartening.

I realize that there is much more that demands to be said regarding this complex subject. But I hope that what I have had the space and time to say can help people put things into a more productive perspective. We can talk about religion, atheism, and anarchy until we are blue in the face, but unless we define what we mean by these terms we will never be able to agree on anything, or even understand why it is that we disagree. I really don't think I disagree with most of what I think Jay wanted to say so much as with the conceptually mystifying terms he uses to say it. I think that we can all agree that we seek a "healthy relationship with the whole of life," and that alienation must be transcended. However, I think the project is better termed anarchistic and atheistic, rather than religious. As long as ideological thought dominates peoples' conceptions of what they must do, people will remain crippled and self-defeated. To paraphrase Jay in a way that reverses his own intent, once one leaves the "small circles of urban intellectuals" and "subcultural clusters" who think that religion can be reconciled with the anarchist impulse, one discovers that to the mainstream of society, religion and anarchy are essentially incompatible. It's not all just a question of semantics.

First letter to Lev Chernyi

Dear Lev,

Thanks for your letter and the enclosures. Presumably there will be a discussion section in the upcoming *Strikel* that will allow me to respond to some of your comments in print, however I might as well share some of my thoughts with you directly.

You are correct in pointing out that I did not provide a specific definition of "religion" or the "spiritual" in my essay. This was, for the most part, on purpose. I had the hunch that if I defined those words too closely the discussion could easily degenerate into nitpicking over defects in any one single definition. For instance, I have problems with the definition of religion you use in your letter to *Strikel*, and thus with the premises you base your arguments on. (And I'll discuss them shortly...) However, my intention with the essay, as I noted in it, wasn't to argue the pros and cons of religion or atheism *per se*, but to discuss the relation of the libertarian left to others' spirituality. By leaving the definition

of religion open I hoped that *Strikel* readers would project their own diverse notions of religion and spirituality into the discussion so that my points could have the maximum provocative effect. I did this in conscious contrast to Fred W. who often presumes to talk about religion in general, but who usually seems to end up jousting with a narrow brand of Christianity, leading me to wonder just how much he has investigated all the varieties of that which he rejects.

That said, let me get down to nit-picking over the definition of religion you suggest in your letter to *Strikel*...to wit, "any doctrine which postulates the existence of a god or of supernatural beings" from which follows that "the essential nature of religion consists in its division of the world into two spheres--the supernatural and the natural, or in other words, the divine (or sacred) and the profane." My first problem with this is that your definition does not include some of the major varieties of Buddhism which do not spe-

cifically postulate a God or Supreme Being. Yet, from the perspective of the role it plays for millions of people, Buddhism is undoubtedly a religion. My second problem is that not all religions can be included under the rubric of dualism; some are monistic and make no distinction between supernatural and natural but only between modes of perception. According to monism, reality is a unitary whole; everything is sacred; God and the World are one and the same, etc.

However, I'm not very interested in getting into a high-level abstract argument over the philosophy of religion(s). I'm more interested in the question of the individual's right to his or her own beliefs/perceptions/interpretations of experience. If a person has a personal experience of the reality of "God" (or Infinite Consciousness, or what have you), no amount of logical argument or accusations of "counterfeit subjectivity" is going to convince that person otherwise. Experiences such as this are the core from which religions grow. Certainly as institutions expand and doctrines proliferate, the religions can rapidly depart from the sense of

living reality which is inherent in the original core, and thus become bureaucratic monuments to reification. However, I am personally convinced of the authenticity and significance of such core experiences. This is probably where we have our greatest disagreement. An atheist says, in effect, that such experiences are lies/hallucinations/misinterpretations/etc. Moreover, such experiences are stigmatized as politically incorrect since they sometimes lead to the use of metaphors which are associated with oppression.

Indeed, one's use of metaphor is not without consequence, and I am well aware that the emphasis on male religious metaphors throughout modern history has helped perpetuate the unbalanced male domination of society and nature. I believe that this period is finally drawing to a close, as the rise of feminism, neopaganism, feminine spirituality, renewed interest in gnosticism, etc. all indicate. This isn't to say that there hasn't been some grain of truth to masculine parental metaphors for the Absolute, but to note that such characterizations are necessarily

Continued on next page

Freedom and Religion

by Jay Kinney

Lev Chernyi raises some worthwhile points in his response to my article on Religion and Anarchism. In order to propel the discussion further along I'd like to respond, in turn.

Lev is correct in pointing out that I did not provide a specific definition of "religion" or the "spiritual" in my essay. This was, for the most part, on purpose. It was my hunch that if I defined those words too closely the discussion could easily degenerate into nitpicking over defects in any one single definition. My intention with the essay, as I noted in it, wasn't to argue the pros and cons of religion or atheism *per se*, but to discuss the relation of the libertarian left to others' spirituality. By leaving the definition of religion open I hoped that **Strike!** readers would project their own diverse notions of religion and spirituality into the discussion so that my points could have the maximum provocative effect. I did this in conscious contrast to Fred Woodworth who often presumes to talk about religion in general, but who usually seems to end up jousting with a narrow brand of Christianity, leading me to wonder just how much he has investigated all the varieties of that which he rejects.

That said, let me take issue with the definition of religion Lev suggests in his essay...to wit, "any doctrine which postulates the existence of a god or of supernatural beings" from which follows that "the essential nature of religion consists in its division of the world into two spheres--the supernatural and the natural, or in other words,

the divine (or sacred) and the profane." My first problem with this is that Lev's definition does not include some of the major types of Buddhism which do not specifically postulate a God or Supreme Being. Yet, judging from the role that Buddhism plays for millions of people, it is undoubtedly a religion. This suggests that an acceptable general definition of religion is more likely to dwell on function than on doctrine.

My second problem with Lev's definition is related to my first, and that is that not all religions can be included under the rubric of dualism. Some religions are monistic and make no distinction between supernatural and natural but only between different modes of perception. According to monism, reality is a unitary whole; everything is sacred; God and the World are one and the same, etc. What's more, some religious thinkers who might be labelled dualists, don't divide the world into two opposing realms of sacred and profane, as Lev suggests. For instance, the interaction of yin and yang, which Taoism speaks of, is not a battle for supremacy between two realms, but rather an ongoing dialectical dance which the wise individual gets in rhythm with, in order to act appropriately and effectively in the world. For Taoists there is an implicit unity behind duality, and I imagine that they'd find the notion of fighting against "dualism" to be an amusing manifestation of dualism itself.

In any case, if we must have a definition of religion, I'd suggest that the abiding characteristic is not deity or dualism, but rather, an articulated worldview which establishes an individual's place in the

universe, defines a set of values to live by, and provides the emotional support necessary to live by those values. More often than not, this worldview may include a set of unprovable "first principles" or beliefs which take the unknown or unseen realms of life and render them into a manageable form. When a certain worldview is accepted and systematized by a number of people, it takes on an objective existence that can be called a religion. The "spiritual"--that other undefined all-purpose term--I associate more with the individual, subjective experience of one's relationship to

the universe. It is actually a defense of the **spiritual** that interests me more, but because most people's spiritual life is lived in the realm of religion I'm stuck with discussing systems and institutions which I'm much more ambivalent about.

Readers may notice that the definition of religion I'm proposing is so general that it could even include humanism, atheism, Marxism, or anarchism as a "religion." And well it should, for I consider the role that such philosophies play in the lives of their adherents to be more or less equivalent to that of religion. Accordingly, in my view, the supposed opposition between atheism and theism is actually a struggle between religious systems, for atheism, like theism, proceeds



First letter to Lev Continued

incomplete and misleading.

Your point that in periods when religion had a monopoly on the categories of thought it is only natural that libertarian movements would express themselves through subversion of the prevailing religious dogma, is well taken. However, I think it is a misreading of what such movements were about to impute to them "anti-religious" intentions as such, unless by that you mean anti-institutionalism or anti-dogmatism. "God" was still a very real presence for the Brethren of the Free Spirit or the Ranters. They may have rejected the "religion" of Catholicism, but they were not rejecting the value--for their own lives--of a spiritual orientation. On the contrary, they were catapulting themselves into a total preoccupation with the spiritual life, one beyond that allowed for within the mainstream religion of the day.

I doubt that their "inability to go beyond religious categories crippled and eventually helped destroy these movements," as you suggest. This strikes me as a retrospective judgement on par with a tautology that might assert the lack of modern health professionals helped spread the Plague in the 14th century. Certainly the outcome of the Paris Commune might have been different if its participants had been armed with particle-beam weapons, too. People work with the language and structures of their own time and can hardly be faulted for failing to jump to conclu-

sions that may seem quite self-evident to someone in 1984. I'm inclined to the notion that most people throughout written and unwritten history have carried within them impulses towards freedom **and** impulses towards, for lack of a better word, "control." In general, these conflicting impulses have **both** manifested in all sorts of areas of human society. At the risk of going against holy anarchist writ, I'd like to suggest that the impulse towards freedom is not in every single instance **good** nor is the impulse towards control/organization/order invariably **bad**. If freedom means the right of the single ego to do whatever it wants, regardless of the effect on others, then I am not benefitted by the person who asserts his "freedom" by blasting through a stop light into the side of my car.

If anarchy has one chance in a million of working as an ongoing way of life it is only because, left to their own devices, most people prefer to work out a cooperative living arrangement with others with a minimum of coercion and bureaucracy. The threat of nuclear destruction increases the urgency of moving the world in this libertarian direction, while the rise of awareness of our place in a planetary ecology brings with it the realization that all our actions are interconnected. Accordingly, enlightened self-interest requires that the "me" we seek to advance needs to include the whole planet (we'll leave the Universe out of this for now...).

Religion and Spirituality, at their best, also build this awareness. At their worst they stand in its way or actually destroy it. If I err in the direction of a blanket defense of religion it is only because I find a blanket condemnation of it even worse.

I do not claim to be a pure anarchist myself--when pressed I prefer the label of libertarian socialist, if only because it alludes slightly more to the need for a balance being struck between the interests of the individual and of "society." Stirner has no use for Society and considers it one more coercion of the individual's self-will, and there is certainly an exhilarating purity to his perspective. However, ultimately I part company with him on any number of points, not the least of which is the question of who is the "I" that he is defending against all comers? I've come to the conclusion, for the present at least, that the "I" that most of us presume to defend is largely fictitious and itself a product of social conditioning. Accordingly, to use this "I" as the pivot for one's critique of the rest of existence is akin to programming a "logic-bomb" into a computer's operating software: it is liable to self-destruct at an inopportune moment.

On the other hand, I am not a big fan of society's laws, rules, strictures and ideologies and I do not see them as holding prior claim over the individual. The social "we" is just as fictitious as the egoist "I." Counterpoised to both these constructs I posit what Jung called the Self--the self-identity where the conscious ego is in constructive dialog with the Unconscious, the

left-brain with the right-brain, the rational with the irrational, the mind, senses, feelings and intuitions all interacting, within a context which admits that at the deepest level of the Self the dividing line between you and I, between humanity and other species and life-forms, between the temporal and the eternal, is up for grabs. It is Self-interest in this sense that I am interested in, and it often carries with it the realization that sometimes to cleave too narrowly to a strictly logical rationale for one's actions can get one into all sorts of **cul-de-sacs**. I can think of a few anti-authoritarians who have a brilliant rap and rationale but the emotional maturity of a two-year old. I'd sooner trust a conservative with a good heart (say, Wendell Berry), than an anarchist without an iota of compassion or mercy. The latter can contrive politically correct rationales for anonymous violence, shoplifting from anarchist bookstores, slandering comrades, etc., while the individual who listens to his heart is often more likely to actually help change things for the better. If this is "liberalism," so be it; it mainly strikes me as common sense.

Well, this will have to be it for now. What ends up in **Strike!** may well be different from this--as ever I reserve the right to change my mind pending further thought and dialog. By the way, it looks like I'll be in Columbia the first week in September. Perhaps it might work out to arrange a face-to-face during the 2-3 days I'll be there.

Regards,
Jay Kinney

from assumptions that are "given." These given assumptions may seem self-evident to the atheist (e.g. that Reason is the preferred tool for evaluating the universe) but they rest no less on faith for all that.

However, believe it or not, I'm not very interested in getting into an abstract argument over the philosophy of religion(s). I'm more interested in the question of the individual's right to his or her own beliefs/perceptions/interpretations of experience. If a person has a personal experience of the reality of "God" (or Infinite Consciousness, or what have you), no amount of logical argument or accusations of "counterfeit subjectivity" is going to convince that person otherwise. Experiences such as this are the core from which religions grow. Certainly as institutions expand and doctrines proliferate, the religions can rapidly depart from the sense of living reality which is inherent in the original core, and thus become bureaucratic monuments to reification. However, I am personally convinced of the authenticity and significance of such core experiences. This is probably where Lev and I have our greatest disagreement. An atheist says, in effect, that such experiences are lies/hallucinations/misinterpretations etc. Moreover, such experiences are stigmatized as politically incorrect since they have sometimes led to the use of metaphors which are associated with oppression.

Indeed, one's use of metaphor is

not without consequence, and I am well aware that the emphasis on male religious metaphors throughout modern history has helped perpetuate the unbalanced male domination of society and nature. I believe that this period is on the wane, as the rise of feminism, neopaganism, feminine spirituality, and the renewed interest in gnosticism, etc. all indicate. This isn't to say that there hasn't been some grain of truth to

valid and compatible, regardless of their meanings, logical implications, and manifest contradictions." What I am pointing out is that if you are really in favor of freedom, you should defend others' rights to hold beliefs different from your own, no matter how stupid, repellent, cock-eyed, or dualistic **as long as they aren't trying to make you live by them**, and vice versa. This doesn't rule out arguing with those ideas

"I prefer to make my own choices, and I'm quite sure that this is the gut-level response of the average person when faced with advocates of freedom who devalue the rights of others to hold spiritual views different than their own. If the slogan 'Not with my body you don't!' is a worthwhile libertarian principle, then I'd suggest 'Not with my psyche you don't!' as an auxiliary principle worth practicing within our circles."

masculine parental metaphors for the Absolute, but to note that such characterizations are necessarily incomplete and misleading. As ever, "the map is not the territory," as Korzybski points out, though true believers and their critics like to pretend otherwise.

When I contend that religious belief is a private matter, I am **not** suggesting that "ideas exist in a vacuum." They obviously don't, as the newspaper headlines underscore every day. Rather, I am questioning whether it is really the role of anarchists to police other people's minds. I'm not necessarily defending the notion, as Lev characterizes it, that all "ideas...are seen to be equally

and trying to establish the superiority of your own, nor does it preclude defending yourself from others' actions based on their ideas. But it does disengage the anarchist project from hawking a particular belief system (atheism) as being a necessary component of human freedom.

To repeat: Freedom includes the option to choose from a maximum number of possibilities for one's life and one's worldview. Inevitably, this includes wise choices and stupid choices, so-called good possibilities and bad ones; it includes, in short, the option to make mistakes--or what others consider mistakes--and suffer the consequences. However, some anarchists seem intent on saving others from themselves under the illusion that this is a libertarian task. I contend that it isn't. I prefer to make my own choices, and I'm quite sure that this is the gut-level response of the average person when faced with advocates of freedom who devalue the rights of others to hold spiritual views different than their own. If the slogan "Not with my body you don't!" is a worthwhile libertarian principle, then I'd suggest "Not with my psyche you don't!" as an auxiliary principle worth practicing within our circles.

To return for a moment to Lev's response: his point that in periods when religion had a monopoly on the categories of thought it is only natural that liberation movements would express themselves through subversion of the prevailing religious

dogma, is well taken. However, I think it is a misreading of what such movements were about to impute to them "anti-religious" intentions as such, unless by that Lev means anti-institutionalism or anti-dogmatism. "God" was still a very real presence for the Brethren of the Free Spirit or the Ranters. They may have rejected the religion of Catholicism, but they were not rejecting the value--for their own lives--of a spiritual orientation. On the contrary, they were catapulting themselves into a total absorption with the spiritual life, one beyond that allowed for within the mainstream religion of the day.

I doubt that their "inability to go beyond religious categories crippled and eventually helped destroy these movements," as Lev suggests. This strikes me as a retrospective judgement on par with a tautology that might assert that the lack of modern health professionals helped spread the Plague in the 14th century. Certainly the outcome of the Paris Commune might have been different if its participants had been armed with particle-beam weapons, too! People work with the language and structures of their own time and can hardly be faulted for failing to jump to conclusions that may seem self-evident to someone in 1984.

If anarchy has one chance in a million of working as an ongoing way of life it is only because, left to their own devices, most people prefer to work out a cooperative living arrangement with others, with a minimum of coercion and bureaucracy. The threat of nuclear destruction increases the urgency of moving the world in this libertarian direction, while the rise of the awareness of our place in a planetary ecology brings with it the realization that all our actions are interconnected. Accordingly, enlightened self-interest suggests that the "me" we seek to advance needs to include the whole planet (we'll leave the Universe out of this for now...). Religion and spirituality, at their best, also build this awareness. At their worst they stand in its way or actually destroy it. We would do well to learn to distinguish between the two extremes and acknowledge friends where we might least expect to find them.

Second letter to Jay Kinney

Dear Jay,

I appreciated receiving your thoughtful response to my letter. It gave me a better understanding of your perspective--of both how close we are to each other, & at the same time, how far away. I immediately began to write a reply to your letter (in order to further try to clarify exactly what we differ about), but I only had time to complete one half of a first draft before I had to leave Columbia for a trip out here to your own territory....

Anyway, I'm feeling very good & am in a mood to try to really get down to basics in the atheism/religion/anarchy debate when I return to Columbia. As the cliché goes, there's usually too much heat & not enough light generated in such debates--but I think the two of us might just be reasonable enough

& good-willed enough to reverse that situation--especially in the one-on-one dialogue that would be possible if we could meet when you come to Columbia.

...if you can spare the time to meet, I can easily take off a day...[I'm also sure that other people...in the C.A.L. would also be interested in meeting & talking with you if you'd care to deal with more than just me.] And of course you'd be welcome to stay at [our home] if you need a place to sleep while you're in Columbia....

I sincerely hope that we can get together, if only for an hour or so, since I think some genuine **communication** is possible.

Neither God, Nor Master,
Nor Misunderstanding
Lev Chernyi

Third letter to Jay Kinney

Dear Jay,

Just received the latest issue of **Strikel** with your revised reply to my criticism. I also...now have the time to return to my dialogue with you concerning religion. I hope you're still interested in communication concerning the subject since I still have a lot to say. I was afraid for awhile that **Strikel** had refused for some reason to run your reply to me, and was glad to finally see it in print; but I was also sorry to see that you never dealt with my major point--i.e. religious reification or religious dualism is incompatible with any consistent anarchist theory. But I will deal with that particular question in the article I am writing for **Strikel** [which I will either enclose with this letter, or send when I finish with it].

For here and now, I'm going to type up the reply that I wrote to your original response to my criticism of your article. I wrote this last August and September, but never had a chance

to type it up and send it to you. Most of it applies equally to your article that just appeared in **Strikel**. Because I think it is worthwhile, and because I think you will read it and try to get what you can out of it, I will respond to your arguments paragraph by paragraph, point by point...Ready or not!

In one sense I can understand your hesitancy to define "religion" or the "spiritual" since it is very possible for "discussion to degenerate into nitpicking over defects of any one single definition." However, even given this possibility, I think that the benefits of being able to deal with relatively defined terms far outweighs the problems generated when people attempt to discuss such emotion-laden terms without knowing what it is exactly that they are referring to. And in any case, the question of definition will inevitably come up (as it has) if the discussion isn't to remain on a superficial level.

In order to really get to the heart of the question of the relation of the

libertarian left and anarchists to "spirituality" it is absolutely necessary to spell out a theory of religion and spirituality that people can relate to and criticize, and that can give the dialogue some coherence and structure. Despite the fact that your intention "wasn't to argue the pros and cons of religion and atheism *per se*," I believe that any discussion of "the relation of the libertarian left to others' spirituality" ultimately must depend upon just such arguments.

You are quite correct in pointing out that Fred W. often confuses his general criticisms of religion with some quite specific criticisms of Christianity. Perhaps I was too enthusiastic in my characterization of his article as "excellent" in my letter to **Strikel** since I do have definite reservations concerning this tendency and the traditionally narrow interpretation of atheism which he usually advances. It would have been more accurate for me to praise the excellence of several of his points with qualifications concerning his more general perspective. The reason that I

didn't do this is, of course, because I wanted to reserve most of my letter for criticism of your arguments!

I realize that according to my definition of religion it would be problematic to include some currents of Buddhism, Taoism, and certain other traditions. But I don't think that this is an argument against the definition I used at all. It merely clarifies the fact that those currents of Buddhism and Taoism diverge from what most people call "religion" in fundamental ways, and are more accurately called philosophies. At the same time, however, I wouldn't want to suggest that a doctrine **must** include a god or a supreme being to be a religion. It could as well be centered around more than one god, or around any other type of conception in which the world is abstractly divided into material and spiritual, or sacred and profane (or other similarly ontologically dualistic) realms.

The case of Buddhism is instructive. To the extent that it is a purely ethical doctrine I would classify it as primarily

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Between Concept and Reality;

More on Religion and Anarchy

by Lev Chernyi

Unfortunately, Jay Kinney's response (see "Freedom and Religion") to my criticism (see "The Sacred and the Profane") of the position he expressed in his original article on religion and anarchism evades my central point--that religious dualism is incompatible with the anarchist project. Perhaps this is because I haven't made myself clear enough. In trying to keep my criticism short enough for inclusion in these pages I may have shortchanged readers with an inadequate presentation of my ideas.

Jay makes three basic arguments in his response to me: (1) that the definition of religion I used is too narrow, (2) that there is no necessary connection between atheist and anarchist positions, and (3) that it is manipulative to criticize other people's worldviews. Let me make some brief comments on each of these arguments and then I'll try to explain my criticisms of religious dualism in more detail.

Three arguments

Jay says that he finds my definition of religion (as any doctrine which postulates the existence of a god or supernatural realm of existence) to be too narrow because it would exclude certain phenomena which he wants to call religion. Unfortunately, in doing this he makes the untenable assertion that his own definition of religion (as "an articulated worldview which establishes an individual's place in the universe, defines a set of values to live by, and provides the emotional support necessary to live by those values") is a more generally accepted definition than mine. All it takes is a quick look at a few dictionaries to disprove this claim. The primary definition given for "religion" according to each dictionary I've checked essentially coincides with the definition I have used, while none coincide with Jay's. This is not to say that his definition is "wrong" in any

objective sense, since definitions are merely semantic tools which can be deployed for a variety of uses. But it does mean that if we want to speak in a common language with others, that we generally need to remain within the accepted boundaries of word usage. Otherwise we will

project from hawking a particular belief system," but this statement needs to be qualified since he is explicitly characterizing atheism as a "belief system" and such a characterization is only a partial truth at best. The concept of atheism itself is at its roots a generic concept

that has any necessary relation to the concept of anarchism (which at its roots is also, like atheism, a generic concept denoting the particular absence of a belief). I will explore the implications of these distinctions further after dealing with Jay's third major argument.

Jay obviously feels quite strongly about the criticisms of people's religious beliefs, apparently asserting that such criticism can be equivalent to "policing other people's minds," "saving others from themselves," or "devaluing the rights of others to hold spiritual views...." From the explanation he gives of these views it is impossible for me to figure out where Jay draws the line between acceptable criticism and criticism which commits these hideous crimes--even after repeated readings. (And for that matter I can't tell if his ire is aimed at my arguments or not.) From my own perspective, though, I will say that what we need is not more tolerance for people's beliefs, "no matter how stupid, repellent, (etc.)," but a clearer conception of what needs to be criticized in people's beliefs and how it is best to go about effectively criticizing it.

Puncturing illusions

Like it or not the social reality that we live within each day is a collective construction sustained by the "stupid" and "repellent" beliefs that Jay would have us defend. As I said before, if beliefs are held at all it is because they inform human action. Religious beliefs especially are not merely "a private matter." To the extent that they are ideological beliefs, they are hopelessly implicated in the fabric of mass illusions that keep everyone in their places both "in the universe" and in all the systems of domination that they submit to. In fact, I would claim that the belief in absolute concepts (of any kind) is the very foundation of the wall which separates us all from each other, from nature, and from our own desires.



end up like Humpty-Dumpty (in Lewis Carroll's *Through the Looking-Glass*), speaking in an increasingly private and uncommunicative language. Ultimately Jay's argument here is akin to the old ploy whereby opponents of the anarchist movement sometimes define "the state" or "government" as "any type of human social organization" in order to "prove" that anarchy is impossible since "society is impossible without organization." Such arguments may have a certain amount of logic to them, but they invariably evade the essence of the problem they are ostensibly dealing with.

Jay's second argument, that there is no necessary connection between anarchist and atheist positions is a more complex question. In an important sense he is right about the need to "disengage the anarchist

denoting only an **absence of belief** in a god or religion. As such it does have the potential to be a characteristic of particular **positive** systems of belief such as Marxism, materialism, or naturalism, and in fact this is the way people usually think of atheism. But there is another possibility which is too often neglected and which is completely ignored by Jay's characterization of atheism as a belief system equivalent in status to any religion. This other possibility is the sense in which atheism can be characteristic of **systematic unbelief**, involving a refusal to invest any conceptual system with any absolute truth, value, or claim to ultimate reality. This is the only sense of the concept of atheism that I really want to defend. And I would claim that this is the only sense of the concept

Third letter to Jay Continued

a moral ideology, but not a religion. To the extent that people deify the Buddha (or to the extent that they believe in the existence of some sort of spiritual plane which has a reality separate from a "material" or "natural" world) it can indeed be considered a religion. For the sake of conceptual clarity and a genuine understanding of what we are talking about, I think these distinctions are essential. On another level, though, it doesn't really matter to me in any particular discussion, whether another definition of religion is used (such that the ethical doctrine of Buddhism, for example, would be included) since the concept-name "religion" is not what I am really interested in criticizing. My concern is the uncritical use of the concept of an ontologically dualistic world and the practical activities that result from its use. My criticism would still hold, and the distinctions made above would still need to be made (possibly using other concept-names), even if we define

religion in a completely different way.

In fact, the distinction between Buddhism as ideology and as religion is really not all that important for me except to the extent that I wish to speak in a commonly understood language with other people in order to better share my perspective with them. And I'm afraid that your definition of religion is only shared by a tiny minority of people. One need only look in the nearest dictionary to find definitions like: "1.a. An organized system of beliefs and rituals centering on a supernatural being or beings. b. Adherence to such a system" (*American Heritage Dictionary*); or "1.a. the service and worship of God or the supernatural" (*Webster's Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary*); or again, "1. belief in a divine or superhuman power or powers to be obeyed and worshipped as the creator(s) and ruler(s) of the universe" (*Webster's New World Dictionary*).

And these are merely the first three dictionaries that I have picked up.

Their unanimity in sharing the definition that I used as the primary meaning of the word indicates to me that my definition of the word is probably more universally acceptable than yours. I know that dictionaries are not authorities where philosophy is concerned, but they do express commonly agreed upon word-meanings, and if we want to speak in a language that most people will understand it is usually wise to heed their information.

There are also interpretations of Buddhism which are harder to characterize as either ideological or religious. My understanding of Zen (from Alan Watts, and others) leads me to conclude that for some people it can be a non-ideological and non-religious doctrine (according to my definition of religion). The elements of Zen which lend themselves to this interpretation naturally happen to be the ones that I find a genuine personal interest in. However, even Zen is not immune from ideological or religious tendencies (far from it!). And this is especially so precisely because it is (as you would probably

argue) so close in so many people's eyes to religion or spirituality.

I cannot agree with you when you state that "not all religions can be included under the rubric of dualism." I am well aware that some doctrines that some people consider to be religious identify themselves as being monistic. However, this does not automatically mean that these doctrines are either (1) actually religious, or (2) that they are fundamentally monistic, or (3) that if they are the one, that they are also the other!

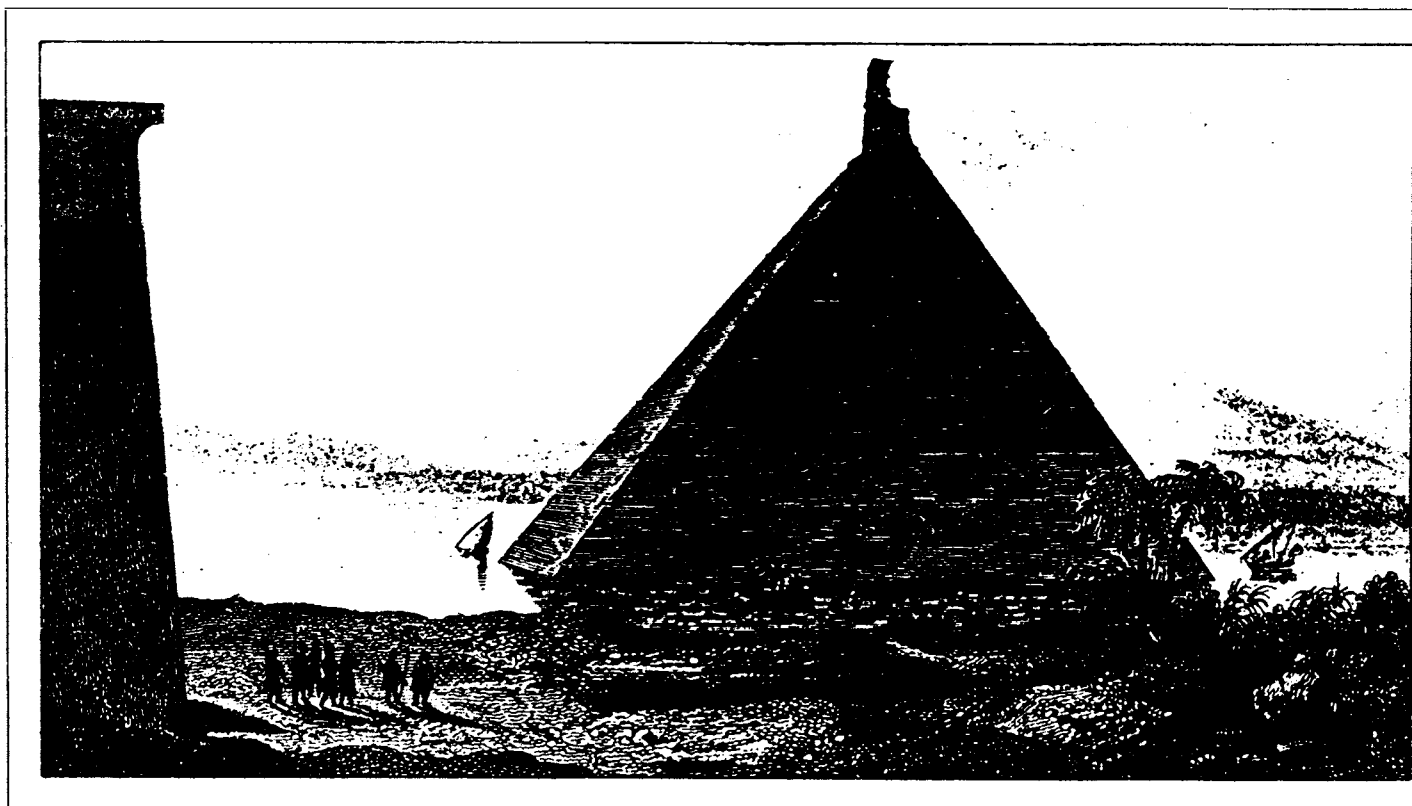
From my studies of "monistic" doctrines, I have found that many are only "monistic" in one narrow sense, while actually preserving a sometimes hidden or mystified, sometimes obvious, foundation of ontological dualism. These doctrines I would indeed call religious, or at least ideological, according to their specifics. Other doctrines may be genuinely interpreted as monistic (e.g. the philosophy of Taoism according to Lao-tse), but they are also obviously (according to my definition and even according to spiritually oriented authori-

Without it large-scale systems of domination would become impossible (which is not to say that the elimination of such beliefs can be completely separated from the total process of social change except in the abstract). The belief in absolute concepts prevents us from really seeing who we are, where we stand in our world, and how we are actually related to other people by imposing abstract and reified ideas in the place of our direct and immediate experience of these realities. Is it really any wonder that the most straightforward, simple and practical ideas of anarchists are rarely even comprehended by people who believe that they are really spirits in some other dimension of reality, or that there is an all-powerful being somewhere telling us what we should do? Our problem is not to discover a way to talk about anarchist ideas without hurting these people's ideological feelings, it is to learn how to puncture their illusions at the same time that we show them that it is quite possible, even exhilarating, to live without such illusions.

This brings me back to my primary argument in "The Sacred and

the Profane" that all religion (in the usual sense of the word) involves

a metaphysically dualistic interpretation.
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ties like Alan Watts) **not religious**. If, as you say, "according to Monism, reality is a unitary whole," then it is far from obvious that "everything is sacred." In fact, calling "everything" (if you are really being literal) **sacred**, has no more nor less meaning than calling everything **profane**, or non-existent, or shit!

Logically it all means the same thing--nothing, because it is conceptually impossible (see Alan Watts about this), and logically absurd to characterize "everything" by any single attribute that depends on its definition for its distinction from another term of a dualism. And, of course, if you're not being literal about the "everything" and some things are really not sacred, then your monism logically collapses into an ontological dualism. Either everything is sacred (or god), and to be sacred is meaningless (i.e. indistinguishable from anything else), or everything is not really sacred, such that sacred things can be distinguished from profane things, and monism vanishes.

In one sense I have nothing against calling everything "sacred," or "god," or anything else, since the most actual meaning that these designations can logically have are their possible functions as alternate names for "everything," and I, of course, do not deny that "everything" exists, nor that it can have many different, if unlikely, names!

The real problem with this type of misnomerism is that its usual motive is the intellectually dishonest desire to smuggle in all the connotations possessed by the words "god" or "sacred" through the back door, hoping that no one will notice this dirty trick, & unfortunately, it works all too often. I could go on and on concerning the subject of counterfeit monisms and the necessary and logical identity of any genuine monism with atheism as I have used the term, but I hope you have already gotten the idea.

Concerning the question of a person's "right" to his own interpretation of his/her experience, I would say that whether or not people see the world through what I would call ideological blinders is not at all purely a question of their internal experience. It undoubtedly will affect their whole way of living and thus it will in some way affect my own life. To the extent that it affects my life, and especially to the extent that masses of people (who as far as I can tell are under the in-

fluence of a whole range of semi-benign to outright malignant illusions) act in concert to shape my social/cultural/economic reality, I cannot possibly ignore the phenomena of ideology and religion, but must actively oppose them.

It is true that in most cases logical arguments will not convince people that religions are reifications, and thus falsifications of reality. But it is definitely not true to say that they can never possibly have an effect. People change all the time. And during periods of mass unrest, people have the capacity to change their lives radically en masse. This much has been proven by history.

It is true that many people's religious beliefs are based upon experiences which they have interpreted in terms of religious categories. However, these experiences vary widely, and I would venture to say that non-religious (i.e. non-dualistic) interpretations could also be found for all of them if people cared to look. As far as I'm concerned, the purpose of anti-religious propaganda is to provide the groundwork for these atheistic interpretations for anyone who is ready to experience their truth, and to provide reinforcement (and a more coherent appreciation for the complexities involved) for those who have already rejected religion.

You say that you are "personally convinced of the authenticity and significance of such core experiences." And you are right in saying that this is where we likely have our greatest disagreement, since I believe that all **dualistic interpretations** of such authentic and significant experiences are misinterpretations. However, I would like to add that just because I find them to be misinterpretations of reality, does not in any sense mean that I think the experiences themselves (before their misinterpretation) are necessarily insignificant or inauthentic.

In fact, I value such hallucinations & unusual experiences highly, and am often quite excited by the "mystery" of life, by the seeming infinity of the world I experience, in contrast with my own seeming finitude and (from a certain perspective) insignificance, as well as by those moments when I spontaneously feel at one with my self/world/universe. However, I recoil in horror from any thought of reifying and mutilating these experiences through dualistic interpretation. I can easily be in awe of the universe, or even of the possibility of my own existence, without feeling the necessity of saying that there is some spiritual plane of existence

beyond the material plane, or that the "infinity" I experience when I feel "at one" with things is "god" or "super-natural," "spiritual" or whatever. As far as I am concerned it just plain **is**. Conceptual reification only destroys it.

Fundamentally, I feel that a large difference between my own way of looking at the world and that of "spiritually"-oriented people is that they insist on accepting some sort of narrowly materialist, or naturalistic philosophy as the only alternative to a spiritual orientation. Whereas, I see the materialist and the naturalistic conceptions as merely the flipside of the spiritual conception. Both share an ultimately dualistic orientation to the interpretation of reality.

I believe that we need to overcome most people's seeming inability to experience their lives directly, without the mediation of reified concepts, without the fixed ideas and dualistic conceptions of ideology and religion. Instead of reified concepts, we need to gain an appreciation that all concepts, and especially religious concepts, are necessarily at most abstract approximations of a living reality that they can never capture. Rather than attempting to imprison the peak experiences of our lives in dualistic categories by spiritualizing them, we need to be able to **just experience them** for what they are, let them be themselves, and refuse to advance more than provisional, speculative, and non-dualistic interpretations of them. I think that you may be attempting to approach this point from the other side of the religion/atheism dichotomy when you speak of "the sense of living reality which is inherent in the original core" of the "personal experience of the reality of god." But I can't be sure!

I did not at all mean to imply in my letter to Strikel that historical movements operating within religious traditions (and having libertarian tendencies) were necessarily anti-religious in the sense of being entirely against the religious traditions they grew out of. Rather, I meant that to the extent that they were libertarian, they attempted to use religious terminology in **NON-dualistic** ways, which is logically equivalent (in my way of defining religion) to their being anti-religious.

When you say that the Brethren and Ranters did not reject a "spiritual orientation" I am not sure whether I agree or disagree with you, since I'm not at all sure what you mean by this. All I can say is that to the extent

that the Ranters and Brethren were caught up in a dualistic theoretical framework and felt that they needed to act in certain ways for ideological or genuinely religious reasons, they were not libertarian. And to the extent that they acted on the basis of their own common desires in a non-ideological manner (even though they were using religious concepts and terminology--though interpreted monistically), they were libertarian and not religious.... Of course, in reality, they possessed aspects of both tendencies, and in fact no movement probably ever has been or ever will be completely without ideological tendencies, or so completely alienated that it has absolutely no libertarian aspects or impulses.

I agree with you that "people work with the language and structures of their own time...." but I also would contend that libertarian movements have **not** failed for pre-ordained reasons. I believe that at any time period the possibilities for transcendence and revolution exist, however weak or strong they may be. And that we **can** look back at the Paris Commune, for example, and say that if they had better deployed their available artillery, and made certain very possible troop movements, that they would have been able to avoid military defeat. Obviously this didn't happen, but it is conceivable that it could have from the historical evidence available (check your history books on this!). In the same way, if the tendencies toward the non-dualistic use of religious categories had been stronger, if the Brethren and the Ranters had been able to carry through their projects farther, there was a very real historical possibility of seeing through and going beyond religious categories. Your use of unnecessary hyperbole and "particle-beam weapons" does not make this any less so.

I realize that this letter is pretty long, but I've tried to be somewhat thorough about giving you a better idea about where I'm coming from, since my perspective as a phenomenological atheist is probably much less familiar to you than your perspective is to me. I hope this letter finds you doing well and hope to hear from you in the near future. We still haven't finalized any plans for the gathering here this coming June--we'll let you know when things are worked out.

Your friendly neighborhood atheist,

Lev Chernyi

Note: This exchange of letters will be concluded in ANARCHY #16.

Letters



We would like to encourage readers to write us in order to open a dialogue both with those who are sympathetic and those who are critical of anarchist theory and practice. All letters to ANARCHY will be printed with the author's initials only, unless it is specifically stated that her/his full name may be used, or that s/he wishes to remain anonymous. We will edit letters that are redundant, overly long, unreadable or boring. Address your letters to ANARCHY, c/o C.A.L., POB 1446, Columbia, MO, 65205-1446.

strength within the struggle as people in a developing stage or transition. And I have been waiting for anarchists to develop past the stage of "anti-authoritarian spontaneity," and to understand that anarchy is only that, i.e. the spontaneous part of resistance within the struggle of the oppressed against the oppressor. Let me say, that I would rather walk, live and die fighting with an anarchist against the oppression of government than with an adventuring bourgeois. I say this because prisoners are in large part anarchist, with

in *Anarchy* #14. Anarchist thought appeals to me because it suggests an atheistic, pragmatic, individually-determined morality. The good/evil or right/wrong dichotomy you condemn will always exist—not as a world view, but as a basis for personal decision-making; it exists in one's own 'rules' (such as they are for libertarians) of ethical conduct, i.e. morality. This word has particularly dreadful implications in the U.S. today, but stripped of these connotations it should no longer intimidate. Why accept the ridiculous stipulations for its

You are correct that debates about semantics take a prominent place in political literature, and this is precisely because of, as you say, "the frightening authority of language." Semantics and language use are realms of intensely political warfare. The political, social, economic and cultural powers which are able to determine (or at least influence) the generally accepted meanings of emotionally-charged words and phrases have already won half of any battle they find themselves engaged in. All one has to do is look at the fireworks involved

jectively "good." Nor will we likely be caught contending that hierarchy, the state, capitalism, or war are contrariwise somehow absolutely "evil." Nor again do we contend that any one of these is equally as "right" or "wrong" as another.

Our stand in the battle over the semantics of morality is taken over the very form and structure of the concept and its use. We don't criticize morality and moralism in general (and as a whole) because we "accept the ridiculous stipulations for its use prescribed by the religious right" (or the religious left, or the atheist center, or anyone else for that matter). Rather, we criticize the inherently manipulative ideological function which morality always performs regardless of who determines its content. We criticize all moralizing because there is no such thing as an objective standard of right and wrong, nor of good and evil. In the real world there are only finite and relative values held by a few billion finite and related human beings. Until many more of us begin to learn this elementary lesson, authoritarian politics will remain uncontested by any genuine libertarian alternatives.

From our point of view, anarchistic, "atheistic, pragmatic, individually-determined" ethics have nothing in the least to do with the scourge of morality. Let's leave the concept to the masters of manipulation—all the moralists of every size, shape and ideological description—and let them continue to hang themselves with it.

P.S. I've never heard of Michael.

Way kool

Dear C.A.L. & Lev,

I think your rag is way kool. I have some fun stuff here put out by religious screwballs. Jimmy Swaggart's magazine, *Evangelist*, is one—you can get it free for the asking—now it's far out. Why don't us 800 phone freaks get the free literature and magazines they send out too?

I must remain anonymous since I get some of this from relatives who don't know I am eating the entrails of their diseased institutions.

yours,
D., Minneapolis, MN

Demented drivell

To Lev, and the other good people of *Anarchy*,

I get your fine paper at a collective bookstore in N.W. Portland, Oregon. I'm writing for several reasons. I lived in Columbia for nearly eight years, and I knew several anarchists and enjoyed their company and conversation. What prompted me to write now, after buying and reading a number of issues, were several of the letters contained in the Fall/Winter 1986 issue. First of all, the demented drivell from the self-titled "party animal." Like a disturbed, frustrated little boy who demands attention, he has to spew forth his hostility in the hope that other people will notice him, if only for a few seconds. He squeals on about how a woman who runs about without a top deserves to be raped. Perhaps if he were arrested, thrown into a cell overnight, and raped up the ass by a bigger, stronger prisoner, he would come away with his foul attitudes unchanged, but I doubt it.

Steal of a deal

Hello *Anarchy*,

Send me your too great rag for the steal of a deal of \$3.00.

Since I hate Christmas, I'm gonna give this as gifts to my family (only liked 1% better than Christmas). Better than the True Value Hardware Value of the Month!!!

Have fun you all!!!
M., Eugene, OR

Any important news?

Dear *Anarchy*,

I've moved. I hope I didn't miss any important news. Did the revolution come? I'm sure the *Tribune* wouldn't print it if it did.

Best wishes,
Peace & love,
K.H., Chicago, IL.

Not killjoys

Love the cover of *Anarchy* #13. I'm a little confused by the "Bob Black drivell" letter. "J.S." writes "what am I missing." An amazing use of American English for one. Irreverence serves an important purpose—mostly humour. I'm all for fun. More groups and movements die because of a martyr & poverty stance than I care to admit I've worked with—humour might have saved them. Moving from crisis to crisis without a bit of fun wears a body down & kills initiative. Doom and gloom is for the left. I want to replace the Leviathan with cheerful, happy & free individuals, not killjoys.

Spoon, San Francisco, CA.
Arrrg! Now my tea's cold.

Pure resistance

Anarchy,

In regard to Bookchin's "Theses on Libertarian Municipalism," it's really stimulating because resistance is an essential element of change, and I welcome the anarchist forces against this rotten government.

Being a political prisoner I see Bookchin's work incorporative of the past ideas of Max Stirner, Pierre Joseph Proudhon and Mikhail Bakunin, who all had common features. They all believed in the denial of any state power and the claim to absolute freedom for the individual. However, again "Libertarian Municipalism" is an anarchist programme, which within the working class struggle many leftists can appreciate. But that appreciation is only to the programme's anti-capitalist-imperialist force. To devout anarchists, of course, it is an alternative. Yet, I have not seen any anarchist program extend beyond adding force to tactics into working class struggles. I see anarchist



—Luna Ticks, 424 S. 45th Street, Philadelphia, PA. 19104

mostly (at this stage of social transformation) pure resistance driving them against the established order of things. To me the prisoners and unconscious poor youth, poor unemployed, and/or otherwise lumpen proletariat are the true anarchists among us. They were the ones who out of anarchy rioted and died in prisons ...even sometimes growing past spontaneity and producing real true people's revolutionaries.

In anarchy,
Vanna

Don't censure morality

Dear Lev,

Debates about semantics, accurate classifications, and proper labelling of ideas seem to be a mainstay of politically oriented literature. In keeping with the custom, I'd like to take issue with your censure of "morality"

use that are prescribed by the religious right? Language is powerful indeed. It is ironic that anarchists denounce power relationships, yet we do not question our subjugation to the frightening authority of language.

Julie, Columbia, MO.
P.S. Does Lev Chernyi = Michael Maelstrom? (same attitude)

Lev responds

I'm sorry you didn't include an address with your thoughtful letter. I would have sent you a copy of our *As we see it* statement which includes a fairly detailed explanation for our antipathy for nearly everything that goes under the label of "morality." Readers take note! All you need to do is send us a self-addressed, stamped envelope and request a copy to get one. As it is, let me just make a few points concerning the subject.

In the politically contested meanings of, for example, "terrorism," "violence," "fascism" and "communism" to see that their semantics and use as labels vary directly according to which contesting faction is speaking. The battles over the meaning and use of the word and concept of "morality" are no exception to this conflict.

However, as most people will probably be quick to note, nearly every battle over the semantics of "morality" involves questioning and defining only its content—specific values, or hierarchies of values within a basic framework of good/bad or right/wrong dichotomies which are taken to be in some way objective or absolute in nature. We, on the other hand, couldn't be interested less in this traditional terrain of conflict. We aren't about to tell people that anarchism, or freedom, or cooperation is in some way ob-



Letters

Secondly, the woman who complained about "the sexist and offensive graphic of a 'woman kneeling at a man's feet.'" What I saw was a loving person trying to bring some comfort to an exhausted, perhaps tormented, individual. But in Kat Morgan's mind, the fact that it's a woman comforting a man is what makes it "sexist and offensive." Her hostility is obvious. Would she have objected if the graphic had depicted the man comforting the woman? Two women, or two men? But it's possible she doesn't have matters of greater import to attend to than ferreting out so-called sexism festering everywhere. So much for her.

You also seem to be lambasted by the religious right, those bleating, brainless half-wits so full of their own self-importance and so devoid of individuality, intellect and soul. Dry husks intent on killing any truth, life, vitality and love. Hitler would have loved them, indeed. It's a tremendous pity that they have made any kind of impact. But creatures of their ilk always manage to find breeding grounds. They're virulent bacteria. Oh, for a cure.

During the ten years I've lived in Portland, I've been back to Columbia twice to visit and both times there was much I found to re-appreciate. There's a lot of hate, intolerance, and mindlessness everywhere, and I often felt that Portland had more than its share. But as Columbia lies in redneck country, it's all relative (though alot of those rednecks are good people).

Keep on printing. I always keep an eye out for your paper, as well as **Black Flag**, and **The Gentle Anarchist** (what a shame they're folding). [Editor's note: It sounds like TGA will probably continue publishing now.]

All twits off our backs,
No governments,
No masters, period!
M.G., Portland, OR.

Keep on fightin'

Dear C.A.L.,

Really enjoyed the latest ish; enclosed is a few bucks to help keep 'em coming. I especially liked Lev's & Badguy's replies to the Jesus freaks and "feminists" who manage to see all manner of sexist horror in even the most innocuous of images. Keep on fightin'....

Best wishes,
Crazy Al, Farmingdale, NJ

Anarchist Labor League

Dear C.A.L.,

Greetings from the Anarchist Labor League! I was amazed to get your fine newspaper in my mailbox, as I was in the process of sending you an exchange copy of **The Seditionist** and a brief note the evening before it arrived. Our karmas must be jammin' as they say. It is encouraging to see that your group is strong enough to put out such a large circulation paper. We are still in the formative stages, doing a lot of fliers and handbills, the newsletter (circ. 100 so far) and a little union agitation at the local auto plants and the community college where I work. In a city this size (150,000) it's really very easy to get a little notoriety. One of the good things about living in a small city.

Many of the people we reach are quite young, high school age a lot of them. Many are involved in the local punk scene (or alternative music scene as the area sophisticates call it), and to be quite honest it's hard to tell how much of the important stuff sinks in. I really think that some of them just like the sound of the word anarchy. Ah well, I guess we'll see in the very near future. Did you go to the gathering in Minneapolis? I unfortunately did not. I see such large meetings, conventions if you will, as being of great importance to the future of our movement. We have struggled on alone as isolated cells for so long, I truly believe that there are more of us out there.

I first came in contact with the anti-body (of anarchy) in 1978 in the city of San Francisco. I thought of myself as a poet at the time and was living on welfare and washing dishes at a 24 hr restaurant. Not knowing many people, I spent a lot of time in the public library, where, as chance might have it, I one day ran across a book called **What is Communist Anarchism** by Sash Berkman. "What the fuck is communist anarchism?" I asked myself, and sat down and started to read the book. I had previously had some contact with socialism, but I found Marx too academic. Anyway, I liked the book, I liked Berkman, I liked anarchy. I found that I had been an anarchist for my entire life and had not known it. It spoke of instinct in the face of social science. There was emotion and love and anger and all the things humans are

made of, all the unarticulated desires given shape and scope and a logical means of fulfillment. I had never wanted to be a leader or a follower, and a Marxist socialism required plenty of both. But anarchism denied the relevance of either station. It was meat I could eat and a table set for all the damned world. I had found a fight worth fighting and a victory worth the name.

If this all sounds boring I am sorry. I work as a clerk at the local community college. In my spare time I preach the destruction of the state. After a day of dealing with the oppressed and the fucked over I have little energy left, but what I have I use to rail against the empire. It gives me relief....

Take care and keep well,
In blissful anarchy,
M.K., Lansing, MI.

Silence & solitude

Dear Lev,

Would you consider printing this in **Anarchy**? It's a poem.

--gravy, Jefferson City, MO.

Anarchy

I have no privacy--at least,
I have no rights to privacy.
No more can I be secure
in my thoughts. I yearn
for silence. I yearn for
solitude. I grow angry day
by day. I can no longer
function unless I do so on
the level of "consciousness"
of my enemies. And this
creates confusion. I cry
for power. Power to lift
death and greed from the
hearts of the ideology
worshippers. I seek a haven
where freedom is
consciousness, and
consciousness is goodwill.

Ed Anger fan

Dear **Anarchy** folx,

Sorry, I didn't write sooner to thank you for the last two issues, but I've been out of the country 12 weeks and just received them. The issue that looks like the **Weekly World News** is cute. I collect their better articles and often write my own Ed Anger spoofs. Didn't get through it yet cause I'm going in order, though when I do I'll write a little critique of Bookchin....

Ciao,
L.A., New York City, NY.

Southern anarchist

Dear friends at C.A.L.,

I am enclosing 3 dollars for a subscription to **Anarchy; a journal of Desire Armed** (or whatever it's called)....

Being an anarchist in the deep south can be frustrating though I have found a couple of other anarchists here in Shreveport. Do you know of any anarchists or anarchist groups/collectives/organizations in Louisiana? If you do please help get me in touch with them.

I am also interested in becoming an "@ pen pal" with somebody. I am especially interested in discussing the economics of a liberated society. (I get in loads of arguments with people over this issue.) Tactics, radical subjectivity, and anarchist ethics are some of the topics I would like to discuss.

(Continued on next page)

COMMENTS ON THE LOCAL SCENE

Towards an open discussion of Columbia's alternative community

This is an invitation to participate in the creation of an ongoing discussion concerning the "alternative community" in Columbia--Where is it going? Is it worth saving? What does it mean for you? What is its value? What could it become? How did we get where we are? Why? Where do we really want to go?

We are profoundly interested in the direction taken by the remnants of this community. This city is our home. These people are our friends. What we do, together or apart, will touch each of our lives and make this a better or worse place for us to live. Our community constitutes one of the most significant contexts of our lives. If it grows, we have a better chance of being able to grow. If it withers, our own lives may also wither, unless we can create something more sustaining and nourishing from its remains. Certainly, a complete capitulation to the "mainstream" can be an answer only for those who no longer have any self-respect or integrity. A surrender to the demands and norms of the dominant (false) "community" of mass culture, traditionally repressive values, hierarchical social relationships and an alienating participation in its institutions of domination could only lead to a situation too grim to contemplate!

We are interested in the creative development of a more liberating and self-empowering community. We want to help foster a culture and community of resistance--a network of relationships which helps each of us carry each other and ourselves further along the road to freedom, genuine community and self-realization.

The original call for participation in this discussion appeared in **Anarchy** #14 (available for \$1.00 from the address below). Space will be set aside in subsequent issues to continue an open discussion of these questions. We urge you to participate. Our continued silence can only spell our eventual defeat. You can send your thoughts in the form of a letter or a short essay to:

Anarchy
c/o Columbia Anarchist League
POB 1446
Columbia, MO. 65205-1446

Thank you,

Criticism appreciated

Dear Lev,

I appreciated your criticism of the Columbia alternative community and your call for discussion. Your efforts at alternative community have been opposed and scorned at times, and you are not alone in this regard. While you are an unappreciated radical, you are also someone whose communication skills may alienate potential friends and allies. For example, you write that people's efforts at alternative community are largely a dismal failure, that you've been mistreated and that your efforts at alternative community have been more radical than others, and then ask for dialogue. Don't be surprised if you receive hostility or silence. I hope those repelled by your style will yet offer comments concerning alternative community and specific organizations.

I can paint an alternative community scenario but the process by which we attempt to get there will alter my vision, perhaps beyond recognition. Concerning process, I suggest working at what one loves best with the people one loves best, forming confederations and reciprocating support whenever possible. This may help place us firmly in touch with our own needs/desires and also encourage collaboration without forcing one another into least-common-denominator compromises. The process of here-to-there is not/has not been easy. The status quo's power is both internal (we hurt ourselves and each other) and external (we are dominated by structure and force). We also have many interpersonal and intergroup differences which are valid and difficult to balance even though we face common oppression.

In a future letter I hope to expand what I've touched upon here, including specific comments about specific organizations.

T.O., Columbia, MO.

(Continued on page 29)

AS WE SEE IT!

-columbia anarchist league

Common perspectives on ourselves,
our world and social change.
Send a self-addressed, stamped
envelope for
a free copy.



Send your request to: C.A.L., POB 1446,
Columbia, MO. 65205-1446

Letters

Southern anarchist

Continued

One note of criticism I have about your journal. I get tired of reading the printed letters of some chest-thumping patriot/nationalist and religious wierdo zombies. One or two letters can be amusing, but more than that gets boring.

Anyway, I am enclosing a stamped self-addressed envelope or a copy of **As We See It!**.

Well, thanx abunch.

Hope to hear from you soon.

Eric R. Daigle

417 Gladstone

Shreveport, LA. 71104

Different responses

Hello,

I am belatedly reading your Fall/Winter '86 issue, and found the exchanges in the letters section especially interesting. What really strikes me is the difference in tone in the responses to (1) the born-again Christian "Zombie for Jesus," as you put it so well, and (2) the neo-Nazi cumbag who says "a girl that runs around without a top on deserves to be raped," and signs himself "Party Animal."

S.S. is soundly thrashed--and rightly so--for her or his mindless incantation of the most insipid and deadening fundamentalist ripe. But why the timid, **understanding** response to Joe Hardon? This guy is at least as "brain-lead" as any Christian, and a sadistic, macho shithead to boot. I don't think that reading, "Women should be able to cover or uncover their breasts as they please without being hassled," is going to change this guy's mind! After all, he doesn't like to be teased...

I agree that he's probably a lonely man in a lot of pain, but that's no excuse for brutalizing other people. Hitler and Stalin were probably lonely and in pain, but I don't feel sorry for them. This world is hell for anyone with an ounce of sensitivity, but that doesn't make it okay to go out and torture other people--although that happens quite often, as we all know.

Anyway, I generally enjoy your paper and am happy to see it's still going. The last issue I had seen was the first one, in 1983 or so. Here's my S.A.S.E. for **As we see it!** Could you send me your current booklist, while you're at it?

Thanks,
F.F., Seattle, WA.

Badguy responds

One thing which all readers should understand is that the people who write for **Anarchy** are often **not** in agreement with each other, and each of us have different styles and interests to say the least. The response to the Christian was written by Lev, while I answered the letter from "Party Animal." Though I did not choose to ridicule and denounce Party Animal, by no means was my response timid. The macho and obnoxious tone of Party Animal's letter was best countered by gentleness and sensitivity, not by coming up with more clever put-downs.

It is easy to denounce someone as "a sadistic macho shithead," but I would rather take a serious look at the question I raised in my response of why such men feel rage towards women, espe-

cially women who express their sexuality freely. I have written on this question because I have been dissatisfied with the standard feminist writings on this issue. (See, for example, "Eros denied: a culture against untouchables" in **Anarchy** #7.)

All the lonely people are victims of sexually-repressive conventions and I want to change things by, first of all, having people acknowledge their sexual alienation, hatred and taboo desires (both wonderful and disgusting). Secondly, I want to create loving community which

of the place of anarchist violence in the history of "terrorism". I sent him a scathing letter as well, but feel free to do so yourself. I've also enclosed an article from my now defunct zine, **Scut...**

Okay, I've got to go commit some acts of grotesque violence in order to bring about the peaceable kingdom.

T., Seldon, NY.

Misplaced letter

(Editor's note: The following letter should have been printed in a past issue of **ANARCHY**,

#6, and I must say I thoroughly enjoyed your paper. As I certainly don't live anywhere within the KOPN listening area, those articles concerning that were kinda boring, but your manifesto-type stuff, "Mary Worthless," the letters column, and especially "The cripple and the man" were all inspiring. (Ah, yes, especially since I was playing my old Crass albums--"Allegiance to the flag, they say, as they lock the prison door/ Allegiance to normality, that's what lobotomies are for.")

It seems that most of the time when I hear bands or youth-

"Ah, yes, that is because this is true, and this, and this..."

But, if I put the book down and consume large quantities of ethyl alcohol for a week, totally ignoring my algebra, and then try to go back to it after my binge of drug-abuse, or just plain non-thinking, I look at the same problem and all I see is **log₃NK(3log₃t)** and it makes absolutely no sense at all. I have lost the train of thought--I have forgotten the background, the past knowledge. That happens with anarchy, too, and reading your paper put all that reasoning back into me, all that distress and bewilderment back to me, and with it the logical conclusions that I came to. Of course, every few months I become disillusioned, and need another shot of intellectual, logical ideas to figure out again what I am talking about. But for now, thank you, thank you, thank you.

Could you do me a big favour? Could you suggest some books on the Spanish Civil War, and especially pertaining to the formulation of anarchist ideals/society during that period? I would appreciate it tremendously.

Sixteen, Oklahoman, (tragically) scholastic,

Jeff Sniderman

No Fashion

9645 East 25th, Apt. 563

Tulsa, OK. 74129

(Editor's note: For information on the Spanish anarchist movement, see especially: **THE SPANISH ANARCHISTS** by Murray Bookchin, **THE SPANISH REVOLUTION** and **THE GRAND CAMOUFLAGE** by Burnett Bolloten, **THE ANARCHIST COLLECTIVES** by Sam Dolgoff, **ANARCHISTS IN THE SPANISH REVOLUTION** by Jose Peirats, **THE REVOLUTION AND CIVIL WAR IN SPAIN** by Pierre Broue and Emile Témime, and among many other books also of interest, **HOMAGE TO CATALONIA** by George Orwell, or **THE NEW MANDARINS** by Noam Chomsky. And a note of caution when looking for information on the Spanish anarchists and the Spanish Revolution, be aware that most books which have been published either follow the Soviet-Marxist, the liberal-"democratic," or the fascist lines which all seek to either deny that a revolution occurred (Communists), or to minimize and defame that which they must be forced to admit did occur.)

Death row

Dear Sir,

I am currently on death row here in Huntsville, Texas and would like to receive your paper you put out entitled **Anarchy; a journal of Desire Armed**.

I find it interesting and would like to compliment you all!

Hope to get the next issue soon.

Respectfully yours,
T.K., Huntsville, TX.

Economic alternatives?

Dear Sir/Madam,

I read a copy of your paper while in a socialist-anarchist bookstore. I am interested in both Marxism and anarchism. I don't understand what economic alternatives anarchism could offer a nation.

I want to learn more about the economic and scientific effects anarchism would have on a so-



—Luna Ticks, 424 S. 45th Street, Philadelphia, PA. 19104

just might help heal and transform brutal feelings into hopeful and boundless passion. You, too, can help make this happen by looking at ways in which you separate yourself from others and by becoming more loving. I wish you luck.

Fucking great!

Hi people,

I'd like to subscribe to **Anarchy; a journal...** (if I haven't already--sometimes I forget who I've sent money to, which makes me a good person to know, sometimes). **Weekly World Anarchy** was fucking great! Also, the **As We See It!** flyer. I sent a copy of it to "my" senator after I got this ridiculous thing from him (editor's note: a "Letter to New York" from Senator Moynihan, which includes, among other things, a caricatured description

but was unintentionally overlooked at the time.)

Dearest editors,

Find enclosed the latest copy of my 'zine, **No Fashion**, published erratically, sporadically, irrationally. I am as of late pursuing the possibility of another issue within a few weeks, but it always requires heavy ad solicitation, which is a terrible, boring, demoralizing task that I hate passionately; and with my recent complete lack of hair (mostly a weather-convenience thing--as the Tulsa days start climbing up towards 90 and such, my discharge-length stuff gets real messy and sweaty, so completely shaving my head is much more comfortable) convincing people of my integrity gets harder and harder.

Anyhoo, some nice people at **Misery**, I guess, sent your Winter, 1983 issue as an insert to **Misery**

fully vigorous editorials spouting and spewing out nihilistic (or merely violent, aggressive) anarchist dogma, I nod and say, "Hmmm, yes, I don't know, hmmm..." because there seem to be so many problems to the blank, abstract "anarchy"--no laws, situational problems, problems putting the simple, perfect theory into practice. However, occasionally I read something that puts it all back into wonderful perspective, and once again I am enthusiastic, lucid and comprehending. It's rather like my Intermediate Algebra; if I slowly go through the book, reading the theorems, understanding them one by one, noticing as one idea builds on another, and gradually they introduce more and more complex ideas, I can keep up. I can get to a horribly complex problem, a very complicated idea, and I can think,



Letters

ciety, whether the effects would be positive or negative and would a society progress?

In the paper I read there was an advertisement where one could request a free copy of anarchist literature. I am interested in knowing whether the offer is still available, and if so would you send me a copy?

Thank you,
C.M., Calgary, Alberta

(Editor's note: Copies of AS WE SEE IT! are available for free. Just send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to C.A.L., POB 380, Columbia, MO. 65205)

Open letter

Dear *Anarchy* readers,

This is an open letter to the anonymous writer of the reaction/article "More than just ludicrous" (POB 11331, Eugene, OR. 97440) on page 26 of *Anarchy* #14.

My legal name is Daniel Elash, but I go by Deke Nihilson (the court's records spell that a.k.a.). I was at the protest covered in the *Emerald* article fragment. I was also arrested in an act of C.D., but the cuffs which they put on me weren't plastic.

I was angered by the breaking of the test moratorium, and went to express myself. I was even more offended by the congress-people, the American Peace Test (APT) organizers, and such luminaries as Carl Sagan and Kris Kristofferson telling me (and almost 500 other C.D.'ers) that I had to express my outrage by (law-and-) orderly walking across the cattle guard into the warm embrace of the Nye County deputies. My intentions were to be neither violent (pointless and relatively suicidal) nor passive (following orders to be a good boy for the TV cameras). So, when it came my turn to step across the cattle guard, I showed the cop issuing verbal warnings the permit the Shoshones gave me to be on their land, and broke into a run. No, it didn't wipe all nuclear warheads or power structures out of existence forever, but it wasn't a very submissive gesture either.

I was on the ground in two seconds, six or seven knees in my back and one (quite firmly) on my head. The deputies didn't appreciate my little gesture at all. In fact, they were so miffed that one of them claimed I bit him, an out-and-out lie. So they held me for eight days on charges of *felonious* assault and battery on a police officer, as well as trespassing and resisting arrest. With the exception of the first five hours of my detainment, I sat alone, solitarily confined in a real jail cell (not the community center with all the others), cut off from all communication with the outside world. Meanwhile, they tested my blood and piss for AIDS and drugs, respectively.

Had I had AIDS, they were gonna try me for attempted second degree murder. The D.A., it seems, had a career to build, and found me a potentially quite good rung on his ladder.

The first five hours or so of my detainment, I shared the cell with a man named Ron. He'd been arrested trying to hike through the desert to ground zero and make himself a human shield. Eight others were arrested trying to do the same thing. None of them knew that the

(Continued next page)

Towards a discussion of Columbia's alternative community CONTINUED

Moving on; the CCG--is it viable?

Anyone who's been around Columbia's only food co-operative, the Columbia Community Grocery (usually called "the C.C.G." for short), knows that it isn't exactly prospering. It's been in poor financial straights for years, with a declining base of membership participation, declining sales, and consistent net losses of thousands of dollars per annum.

Everyone involved in the CCG knows that it's long past time for a change in the way it operates if there is going to be any realistic chance of "saving" it. The major problem here has always been that there are several different conflicting visions of what the CCG is and should be amongst members, the staff, and the board of directors. And this problem has in turn persistently been muddled by an ongoing inability to effectively or efficiently manage the day-to-day operations of the whole project.

Recently (on March 2nd), another CCG membership meeting was held to attempt to address this whole complex of problems. And the meeting itself was symptomatic of many of the things which have been going wrong with the co-op. First of all, publicity for the meeting was half-hearted at best. There were a couple of notices in the CCG itself, but nothing definite or concrete about what really needed to be discussed, and certainly no agenda included in the notices. So, of course, a quorum of members never showed up at the meeting. The meeting itself was then held up for 20 minutes or so waiting for a board member to turn up, while everyone else was required to twiddle their thumbs. And when it came time to start talking about the CCG's manifold problems, we ran into little snags like the fact that no one had a copy of the current bylaws of the corporation--and it was suggested that only out-of-date copies were even in existence.

Lest anyone think that I am trying to single out current staff and/or board members for criticism regarding these points, I want to emphasize that this type of operation has been all too typical of the CCG's practices all along. And the current board and staff have inherited a mess of such proportions that it couldn't be reasonably expected that they would be any better organized than they were, especially given the much decreased level of participation in the co-op. I am merely pointing out how ineffectual the current efforts at dealing with this situation really appear.

When it came down to finding out what the board and staff had in mind, I got the impression that, since membership participation is already at an all time low, at least some of them have decided that now is the time to junk the whole (no longer functioning) *system* of membership participation and control. In addition at least some of them want to change the focus of the co-op from its current "whole foods" orientation and expand the inventory to one that is more "mainstream" (i.e. including more common dietary items such as, for example, Velveeta cheese and Pepsi [specific examples that were brought up], and fish and meat products, etc.). And finally, it was generally concluded that the CCG must either drastically contract its operations, or ambitiously expand them. No middle ground was held to be viable.

It also seems to me to be obvious that very few people (including most board and staff members) are any longer very interested in trying to fulfill the CCG's original primary purposes:

"to educate and provide materials to educate its members and the general public to the value, benefit and desirability of (1) organizing our society along cooperative lines and (2) growing, distributing, and eating nutritious foods grown in harmony with nature."

Though, of course, it is to be expected that alternative institutions, just like the people and communities that they attempt to serve, will quite naturally change their outlooks and goals along the way.

I for one would welcome the CCG's abandonment of its obsolescent system of membership participation—not because it can't work or because it is an anachronistic "19th century" solution as some maintain, but because the membership of the CCG is no longer in any position to even begin to make it work, even as marginally well as it did in the past. All the cumulative past efforts to block the development of an effective system of membership participation and control have borne their fruit. The system is in a shambles without any realistic hope of revival. So we might as well bury it

officially, and move on to a less cooperative, but (given current conditions) more realistic system.

I would also welcome a more "mainstream" approach to the CCG's stocking policy. Not that I think that it isn't worthwhile to stock nutritious foods, but for too long this goal has been formulated in rather moralistic and exclusionary terms. It's about time the CCG opened up its conception of the community it can and does serve, and began to realize that even most of those who espouse "organic, whole-food, health-food" values don't buy a lot of their food at the CCG. This is precisely because many of the foods these people buy aren't allowed to be stocked because of an exclusionary policy that sees the CCG more as a bastion of a pure "health-food conscience" than as a realistically-stocked food cooperative.

What bothers me the most about current efforts to change and "save" the CCG, are their lack of orientation to the CCG's original purposes, which still seem to me to be entirely valid. I'm afraid that the abandonment of the system of membership control and the "mainstreaming" of the CCG will in practice mean a complete abandonment of these original purposes, the first of which has already been under fire for years anyway by all those who would rather the CCG was nothing more than an "alternative" business. This would likely mean that consignment sales would be ended or severely curtailed so radical books and periodicals could no longer be sold there, that any commitment to the free discussion of ideas (present in the past for example in the *CCG Newsletter*) would be jettisoned in favor of a level of discourse meant only to enhance the CCG's image as a business, and that the CCG's current status as an alternative community *institution* (as opposed to being just a business) would end.

However despite these misgivings, it is obvious that the CCG must either strike out on a new path, or shortly resign itself to its own impending bankruptcy. There are several basic directions the CCG could take from here:

(1) Continue as it is until it must file for bankruptcy.
(2) Renew efforts at developing a genuinely participatory, community food cooperative. This just isn't any longer in the cards.

(3) Completely give up on the idea of running a genuine cooperative, reorganizing the CCG purely as a business run by the board of directors and/or the staff. This could be done either as a health-foods store, or as a more mainstream food store. The most likely way to accomplish this would be to retain the image of being a cooperative while abandoning any of the genuinely cooperative organizational practices which remain (i.e. no more membership participation in any sense except as volunteers subordinated to the new management). While I would rather not see this hypocrisy of a cooperative-in-name-only maintained, this seems to me to be the most likely direction for the CCG to go. I would prefer that if this basic direction is taken that enough honesty be maintained to give up use of the word "cooperative," which would lose any real meaning in any case. This whole tack would probably fail if it were chosen to retain the current stocking policy, since it would be largely only duplicating the already successful formula of Columbia Specialty Foods (though in a larger and better location), targeting a narrow range of consumers unlikely to provide enough sales as is the case now. The current location and size of the CCG's building would be more likely to successfully support a mainstreamed inventory if this direction is pursued.

(4) Retain the overall original purposes and membership structure of the CCG as an organization, but get out of the grocery business directly and instead lease the building to the Catalpa Tree Cafe and a separately organized food store (as per scenario #3 above). The CCG could then become primarily an umbrella organization dedicated to the educational activities it has for so long neglected, but which are involved in its original primary statement of purpose. With any surplus income generated by rents from the above, the CCG could maintain a small space devoted to education in its building, or a small community newsletter and discussion bulletin could be published.

(5) Sell the building now while it is still possible, and move to a smaller location, or (as in scenario #4 above) use whatever funds are left to function as a primarily educational organization until a more coherent plan is formulated for reopening a new food cooperative with more chances for success.

There are other more remote possibilities, but these are already probably more than can be dealt with profitably by those engaged in the ongoing reformulation of the CCG's direction. Whatever is finally decided must be decided soon and be steadfastly put into practice, otherwise it may already be too late.

--Lev Chernyi

Letters



Open letter Continued

government went ahead and detonated their bomb three days ahead of schedule in an attempt to avoid the demonstration. Logistics you know.... They were rounding up those hikers all week, and not gently, either.

Ron chose to spend six months in prison rather than take the easy out offered to him by the judge. He felt he could best make his point that way. It wasn't the first time he'd made his point sitting in jail for his direct actions, nor (I suspect) will it be his last.

As for myself, my tests both came back negative, so the assistant D.A. offered me a plea bargain. The APT (who took the cops' word over mine from the start) wouldn't give me legal aid, which they extended to all other arrestees, nor even talk to me. This made it impossible to get in touch with potential witnesses in my defence, since they had the mailing lists. I was also broke and facing felony charges, and it was my word against eight cops. So I pled guilty to reduced charges and was released on time served.

I know this is getting somewhat long, POB 11331, but I feel your blanket condemnation of the protest activities of the week of February 5th, 1987 warrants a telling of the full story, something you felt fit to ignore. The point of all this is relatively simple. Who's "devoid of real critique?" Myself? The Nye County deputies sure didn't seem to think so, nor did the shepherds leading the APT. It didn't take much to question the authority of all on top, just a simple two seconds of sprinting. Who's "respectful of authority?" The nine who hiked in the desert for up to a week to plant themselves firmly on ground zero? Surely not. Even the tedious, commodified wage slaves (your words) who protested as ordered cost the county of Nye \$5,000 in instamatic film alone (they were all booked), plus bussing, food, extra pig-power, court time, and alot of governmentally unwanted publicity.

And whose "charades are a truly bad joke at all levels?" Those other 1500 committing C.D. on even such superficial levels as simply being there, or you glossing over in one fell snipet of article all that happened there so that you could say a few empty words and flex your "anarchist" attitude and feel oh-so-superior to everyone else for doing nothing?

Just what did you do to "confront a miserable social structure and culture?" From what you show, and from what I see and know by being there, Mr. or Ms. POB 11331, all you did was either make the establishment's word for it, or edited it even further to suit your bullshit purposes. I don't know which is lamer, but I guess that's beside the point.

Why don't you go join the

APT? They're your kind of people.

Yours through anarchy and in peace,
Deke Nihilson, Kansas City, MO.

P.S. With all that out of the way, your paper was an incredibly exciting thing to stumble across. Also enclosed is \$3 for six issues.... Thanx.

AAA responds

Dear Deke,

So how does your telling of the "full story" of the test-site protests referred to by the AAA

If this be treason...

Every day, on radio, TV, and in conversation, one is continually bombarded with "We are selling arms to Saudi Arabia," "We are sending warships into the Persian Gulf," "We are sending aid to the contras," and so on. Even anti-state libertarians, voluntaryists and anarchists use "we" in this manner.

Until recently I followed this same pattern--"We shouldn't be selling arms to Iran," etc., but I now try to avoid it, and if someone else says that "we" should

These people will assert that they love their country, but not its government. Apparently they accept the nonsense that we've all been brainwashed with that it is evil not to "love one's country," and that the ultimate horror would be to be a "man without a country."

When examined critically, this government/country dichotomy is nonsense. For example, the U.S. is composed of various peoples and so is Canada. To "love" the U.S. more than Canada is to love its political history and political boundaries more than

America rather than the property of any state.

Any comments will be appreciated.

T.P., Farmingdale, NJ

Organized crime

Dear Anarchy,

A friend gave me a copy of your magazine (No. 14). I liked the article Lev wrote, "Anarchy in Greece, Part I." Good job, mate! Keep up the good work. I like most of the articles, so I've decided to subscribe to your fanzine. But anyway, I hope that your future issues have just the same powerful energy. Remember, capitalism is organized crime.

K.L., Salem, VA

Serious mistake

Dear comrades,

I was delighted to open the **Pagans for Peace** post office box today and find **Anarchy** #14! I read it on the subway, at the unemployment office, on the trolley going home, and cleared a space on the desk to finish it when I got here. A superb issue, in particular the lengthy article by Chomsky and the continuing saga of **The Papalagi**. The marvelous graphics deserve particular praise, too--lots said and visually exciting.

The piece by Chomsky is a lovely short statement of a problem, but really begs the question of how the hell the U.S.A. is going to stop being the horror that it is. Pure self-interest means that the Americans will continue to loot, but there is plenty there for everyone in the U.S.A. Even if the government stopped lying (and it barely bothers now--anyone who wishes to know can have the broad outlines of the true role of the U.S.A.), most Americans would agree with some reservations to the continuation or intensification of this horrible situation rather than ally with the revolutionary forces because, let's face it, going from 50% of the wealth of the world to 6% is going to mean poverty no matter how you slice it.

It is only "morality," fostered in large part by elements in the Christian Churches, that can lead people to reject rational self-interest and act in a way that is likely to weaken the Empire and cause the end of this horrible destruction.

So, we come to consciousness and religion. Taking seriously the role of morals and ethics, spirituality and religion. There's no way I'll say that my approach to the spirit as an anarchist and witch is any more than a tentative adjustment that is subject to change, or that it is definitive beyond myself, but I will insist on the importance of the greater, traditionally religious, questions--deciding "Who am I?" "What is good behavior; what is evil?" "How should I be with others?" "What is the social good and evil?"

I would add, it's a serious mistake to say that all religions' "metaphysical division of the world (which I view as a whole) into two arbitrary, yet absolute, spheres of the sacred and the profane...inevitably leads the way towards all the other abuses involved in the whole phenomenon of religion...because all religions share this whole syndrome of symptoms", as Lev does on page 25. Sure, institutionalized religion tends to be just as horrible as



—Luna Ticks, 424 S. 45th Street, Philadelphia, PA. 19104

flyer invalidate in any way whatsoever its points? Rather, I'd say you prove the flyer's validity by showing that the limits of your "outrage" are totally contained within such harmless and tiresome peace-creep nonsense.

I went through all the variations of these masochistic scenes, believe me, twenty years ago and wonder when weak minispectacles like this one you worship will be universally laughed at.

Perhaps your discomfort over a critique of them suggests that on some level you would like to move on to real opposition. If your underdeveloped subjectivity and imagination need an assist, I could shoot you a list of several thousand acts that would each be immensely more damaging to reigning repression than the micro-martyrism of your pathetic anti-nuke test militancy.

AAA POB 11331 Eugene, OR. 97440

or shouldn't bomb Iran or whatever, I pleasantly ask them to exclude me from the "we."

I'm generally not a nitpicker and I hope that I'm not nitpicking now. It seems that by using "we," one is subjecting oneself to the state, or as Ayn Rand said before she became partially senile, bestowing "moral sanction" on it.

Libertarian International begins its recruiting flyer with John Lennon's "Imagine there's no country" quote, and libertarians, along with anarchists, argue for totally free trade and immigration, but in some ways we radicals haven't gone much beyond discarding the old "My country right or wrong" philosophy. I've heard more than one libertarian tell the platitude that it's always moral to support your country against your government, but never moral to support your government against your country.

those of Canada. After all, you and I have more in common with some Canadians than we do with some American Eskimos and other people. In Europe, boundaries move over the centuries, and countries have come and gone, but politicians still strive to whip up nationalist fervor. It would seem to make more sense for anti-statists to love individuals--Jefferson, Thoreau, Twain, King, or whomever, rather than love state politics and its history.

It has been an important psychological leap for me to recognize that I am not a citizen (member of a state or nation), and that if a state bureaucracy wants to call me a citizen that this is their problem. While it may force me to admit citizenship under duress (won't allow me to travel or whatever), I will refuse to sanction the initiation of force against me, and will regard myself as a **denizen** of North

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Letters

can be, but even when allied with the state completely, as the Roman Catholic Church in Eire, or the Shi'ite section of Islam in Iran, there are minority tendencies which develop along on the liberatory ideas of religion. And there are religious movements whose effects have been considerably more liberatory than negative, which are immanentist, nature-oriented, sensual, pro-sex, etc.--particularly the Witchcraft groups, but also Taoist groups, native North Americans, and some others. So, let's say that religion in the context of authority develops in an authoritarian manner, **just like every other facet of social life and human relationship in the world.**

And the issues of morality, issues of religion, are key issues. A blanket rejection of all spirituality removes a way of effectively incorporating these issues into a revolutionary praxis.

Blessings,
S.W., Pagans for Peace,
POB 6531, Station A,
Toronto, Ontario
Canada M5W 1X4

Lev Responds

I'm sorry if it disappoints you, but the "serious mistake" you point out is actually one of the more central points of this journal. While I remain relatively sympathetic with pagans, some strands of eastern thought, and most of the more "primitive" worldviews (like those of native Americans), I also remain absolutely critical of their ideological tendencies.

I am delighted by the lack of inhibition shown by some neo-pagan currents. With them, I'd like to celebrate the beauty and exhilaration of our embodiment, the mysteries of the nature we share, and the cycles of birth and death we experience. I appreciate more than I can put in words some of the insights afforded by the study of Taoist philosophy and the more liberatory types of Zen. And I have a great respect for whatever still remains of the genuine spirit of "primitive" attitudes, despite the distortion and cultural devastation they have suffered.

Yet, I also reject absolutely the division of our world into sacred and profane spheres. And I reject its classification into the categories of absolute good and evil. These are the core dualities around which all religions and all ideologies are organized. They are useful for social and self-manipulation—for mobilizing masses of alienated people to do things they otherwise would have the "common sense" to avoid, and for enforcing all types of repressive social relationships and behaviors. They are absolute poison for any truly liberatory project or movement. This is all perfectly reflected in the ambivalent attitudes within pagan circles toward radical ideas and activities.

In fact, your defense of morality as a bulwark against "rational self-interest" is a repugnant example of just where ideological and religious logics lead. You assume, first, that humanity is fundamentally flawed (original sin?), and thus unable to comprehend a rational self-interest that encompasses other people (or at least other nations in this context). And beyond this, you assume that any equitable sharing of the vast wealth of this world would mean only "poverty no

Towards a discussion of anarchist strategies

Introduction: In the last issue of *Anarchy* I indicated my wish to initiate a discussion of radical strategies, beginning with an evaluation of Murray Bookchin's conception of a libertarian municipalist strategy which he has been pushing of late. So far there hasn't been all that much response to my call, so I'll repeat, for those who missed the last issue that I am soliciting serious contributions to this discussion.

In a letter to me, George Bradford of the *Fifth Estate* writes, "Your brief exchange on municipalism was very good. This needs to be explored." And John Zerzan, whose provocative "Vagaries of negation" appeared in *Anarchy* #14, has indicated that he will review *The Rise of Urbanization and the Decline of Citizenship*, Bookchin's latest book (which deals extensively with libertarian municipalism), for a future

matter how you slice it." With assumptions like these it is no wonder that you must rely on the repressive irrationality of Christian morality and guilt to lead people to reject rationality and self-interest in order to embrace this poverty. If this dirge-mentality is what constitutes "ally(ing) with the revolutionary forces," then I guess I'm an extreme counter-revolutionary.

On the other hand, my own vision, and I daresay, that of a few others, encompasses the world as an integral whole. Humanity is a part of nature, alienated to be sure, but still an inseparable aspect of the world. There are no absolutes. Humanity and nature are neither objectively good, nor bad. Rather nature constitutes the context within which individuals and groups project their own relative and finite values.

Because humanity is so alienated, exploited and manipulated the vast majority of people have had their vision so stunted and their consciousness so distorted that their conception of their "rational self-interest" is as narrow as you portray it. But the solution to this problem is not to reject "rational self-interest," any more than it would make sense to reject all radicalism just because most people think it's just another name for Communism. The real solution involves the rediscovery of an expanded rationality and an expanded self-interest which will allow us to unite with others around our desires for a transformed and liberated world. And this includes the exploration of all the wealth of possibilities inherent in a recovery of our selves, our genuine desires and our undistorted feelings and perceptions—in contrast to the narrow techno-consumer poverty which currently passes for "wealth."

Religion & spirituality

Hello to Lev and the folks of C.A.L.,

I have something to say about spirituality and religion, but first I want to say that I enjoy *Anarchy* a bunch, and that I'm really glad you folks are doing this. Thanks to Bert for introducing me to *Anarchy*.

Your general attitude towards spirituality & religion seems to be pretty typical of alot of the North American anarchists, and very similar to that of Fred Woodworth and his and other people's American Atheist pamphlets. What bothers me about this attitude is that while it so rightly attacks religion as a tool of oppression, it is totally closed to any acknowledgement or validation of any kind of spirituality. I've never seen anything in

Anarchy about anti-authoritarian pagans, Eastern concepts of spirituality compatible with anarchy, radical Catholics or anarchist Catholic Workers, or anything supportive or even tolerant of non-oppressive spirituality. I think that your over-intellectualized reaction to the oppression of the Churches has made you closed to a part of human-ness as alienated and yet as essential as the desire to self-determine who we are and how we relate to others and our world.

Concepts of spirituality historically predate the state, organized religion, and all other hierarchical alienated garbage that came with civilization. We all possess real human desires to create; to love and be loved; to determine our own lifestyle; to eat, poop, sleep and be warm; to express ourselves; and just be a whole human person. Our patriarchal, technological, statist culture has corrupted & alienated these desires by manipulating them to keep us in line as functioning, productive and acquiescent members of society. The main tools we use to oppose this manipulation are rational thought, and our gut level reaction of anger at being controlled. Neither of these help us to find our own individual "spirituality" because it can only be known experientially. If spirituality and the need to "believe" weren't inherent human desires, they wouldn't be so effectively manipulated by the controllers. To overcome our victimization, we must heal our entire self—mind, body, emotions and spirituality. We must reclaim all of our power, and this means our power to discover our own spirituality.

Now--about Jesus Christ of Nazareth: I think the Judeo-Christian concept of God and the universe is at the root of our alienation. "God" is seen as this separate entity who controls the cosmos, including us. Though we may not believe this as individuals, it is at the very bottom of all western philosophies we use to make sense of our experience of ourselves and the world. You can be for it or against it, but it pervades & influences all western thought. Given this, it makes perfect sense that so many people find it difficult to conceive of a world without government. All of this is to say that I am **not** a Christian. However, I do think that Christ, and his message of unconditional love are really great and can teach us alot. My understanding of Jesus C. is that he was basically an anarchist, but the people who wrote the New Testament experienced him and wrote about him in the context of Jewish

(Continued next page)

issue of *Anarchy*. But the only current contribution to this discussion comes from the letter by L.G. of Montreal, Quebec which follows. Comments on my original note and on L.G.'s letter are welcome. To be fair to readers, I'll also reserve my own comments on L.G.'s letter till *Anarchy* #16. Lev Chernyi

Unite around common aims

Dear *Anarchy*,

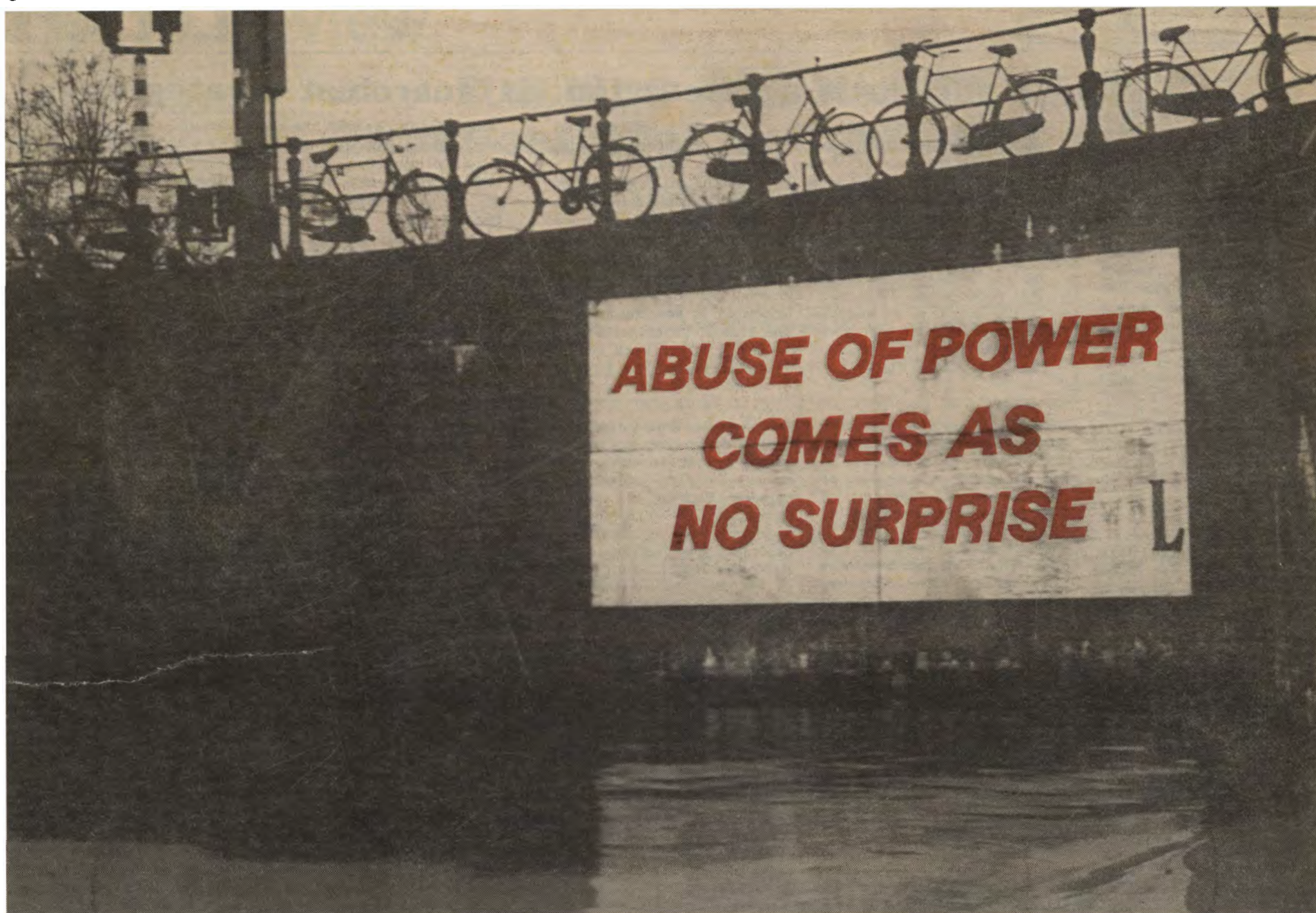
I too found Murray Bookchin's "Theses on libertarian municipalism" interesting and provocative, and was also encouraged by Lev Chernyi's response in *Anarchy* #14. My own view of "anarchist strategy" is not based upon municipal governments, anarcho-syndicalist unions, nor the act of choosing something out of the past as a good model to follow (e.g. Athens or the Paris Commune). Rather than attempting to create something out of our head, we must look at the actual popular struggle, both of the past and present. If you examine true mass movements (i.e. those not the creature of some political party) the unity is based upon a few key issues, representing the concerns of a great many people. This consensus can be moderate ("end the war"), somewhat radical (student power in the '60's), radical (workers self-management, Poland 1980) or revolutionary ("abolish the wage system/state," syndicalism 1922). Such positions do not come from some individual, but are "in the air" at the time--Vincent St. John wrote the IWW Preamble in 1905, but the syndicalist message had gotten through to many people in the previous decade.

People remain united around these key issues as long as the movement is growing and developing. It is during a movement's decline that ideologies come to the forefront and fragmentation begins--although sectarian groups exist and practice at all stages. But mass movements **always** fail and are **always** recuperated. The reason for this is that revolution is a **process** and not the apocalypse. Movements are also successful in their failure. Few of us in the "developed" world live 5 to a room and drop dead at 40 like our ancestors of only 100 years ago. This remarkable change was the result of the "classical" workers movement and not a gift from the bosses. People must see things as process and not become dependent upon the immediate success of their particular movement--like, unfortunately, so many '60's radicals.

What is "in the air" today? Concern with war, nuclear power, U.S. atrocities worldwide, gentrification of cities, a rejection of work and political parties, concern with the situation of women and minorities, the world-wide eco-disaster, etc. All of these issues really boil down to one central issue--**people do not have control over their lives**, not at work, not in the community, and not at home or in a relationship. It seems to me the situation exists for a broad libertarian socialist movement which has decentralist, autonomist and self-management aims. Such a movement could not be created by, nor reduced to, the Green Party, a municipalist movement, nor an anarchist federation, but would encompass all of these.

The central problem is not to create some magic strategy, but to get people to see they all have something in common--their implicit desire to get the state and the corporations off their backs. The best place to start this process would be to get the various libertarian/anarchist groups to begin seeing themselves as part of a movement and stop the sniping and bickering. All this ideological nonsense must go--**Black Flag vs. Freedom**, the 2 C.N.T.'s in Spain, social ecologists' attacks on syndicalists, the castigation of "spiritual anarchists," the continual sniping at "Marxism" as though libertarian Marxists didn't exist, and so on. But we should not be aiming to create a liberal mush. Criticism should be aimed at significant and not secondary matters. A good example of the former is Murray Bookchin and Janet Biehl's analyses of "deep ecology" in *Kick It Over* #20, a necessary critique exposing a fascistic tendency within Earth First! Most "critiques" consist in slugging someone because they choose to work in a different milieu than someone's favorite group (e.g. marginals, workers, women, minorities), or because they emphasize a different issue (ecology, peace, self-management, sexism, etc.), or because they prefer different tactics (violence vs. non-violence, anti-parliamentary vs. limited participation), or because of a difference in style (moderate vs. militant). The fact that all agree on the goals (capitalism and the state must go) and on the means (the people themselves and not some vanguard) tends to get lost in all this hot air. Before we can start thinking of a larger movement and strategies for such an occurrence, we must get our own act together, uniting ourselves around our common aims and leaving the secondary issues to friendly discussions.

In Solidarity,
L.G., Montreal, Quebec



Sign observed in Amsterdam, The Netherlands.

Photo by Nikki Craft

Religion Continued

culture at that time; so things got pretty distorted before they were even written down. Then came 2,000 years of the Catholic Church editing and rewriting, etc. The coolest thing about Jesus C. was when he went into the temple and knocked over the merchants' tables and chased out the bankers. I believe he was against money 2,000 years ago.

You can be spiritual without being controlled!!

Fuck shit up,
T.J., Tucson, AZ.

Lev on spirituality

These days, I seem to be persistently reminded by all and sundry that I am not a whole person until I've acknowledged my repressed "spirituality." However, look as I might, I have never found any animal of this species lurking in myself. Introspection, sex, drugs, experiences of wilderness, meditation and solitude--none of these brings me even faintly close to locating this alleged spiritual component of everyman's and everywoman's being. I can only conclude that, like the fairy-tale "soul" of the Christians [that detaches itself from peoples' bodies at death and floats around to wherever the living dead are supposed to go], spirituality has only a phantom existence. That is to say, it only exists as a more or [usually] less coherent conceptual scheme in peoples' minds.

It appears to serve, not to bring us closer to nature, or to each other, or even to reconcile our own divided selves. Rather it serves mostly to mask any

genuine experiences we might otherwise have been fortunate enough to have lived through. It is a conceptual mediation through which people seem to manage to reify even their most intimate, personal and integral relationship with their worlds. As such, it's an experience I think I'd rather do without.

But, why is spirituality such a powerful ideological force? Why do so many, many people fall for such religio-ideological bait hook, line and sinker? Is it because "spirituality" and the need to 'believe' [are] inherent human desires"? Surely this is as preposterous an assertion as all of the similar claims that could be (and often are) made that, for example, commodity consumption is an inherent human desire, or sexual repression, or hierarchical social relationships. Sure there is **something** there underlying all these prevalent social formations. But it is always an error to mistake these perversely alienated and superficial forms of expression for the actual underlying structures and needs they parasitically feed on.

It is in no way an "over-intellectualized **reaction** to the oppression of churches" that has resulted in my adoption of an outspokenly atheistic attitude. Though I certainly despise most churches, my attitude has primarily grown out of my personal interactions with people who are blinded by their need to identify with, and interpret their lives through, the abstract categories of spiritualism. I view spiritualism in all its guises as **itself** an overly cerebral and certainly self-repressive response to the wonders of the living nature we

all experience. Please keep in mind that I'm not the one here who is fetishizing any sort of mystified conceptualization of experience. I am quite open to the direct experience of my world without the need for such rigid and abstractly mediating preconceptions as "spirit."

I can wholeheartedly agree with you that we need to heal the splits and divisions in ourselves. But as I see it, if this project is to be taken **seriously**, then we need to immediately jettison the idea that there is some sort of separable and compartmentalized spiritual aspect of our being. If you have any commitment to a holistic approach to philosophy, it should be painfully obvious that spiritualism is almost always an extremely dualistic conception (and when it isn't dualistic, it becomes merely otiose), assertions to the contrary notwithstanding. Spirituality is nearly always a direct expression of an alienation which needs to be superceded, not embraced.

You may indeed have missed the positive references in previous issues of **Anarchy** to anti-authoritarian pagans and the more anar-

chic forms of Eastern philosophy, but you are undoubtedly correct that you will never find any "validations" of spiritual alienation in **Anarchy**.

Thanks for writing, T.J. Glad to hear you otherwise like the paper. And if you still think I'm being close-minded, please feel free to respond to this.

Anarchy in Hawaii

Dear **Anarchy**,

I was reading your latest issue with great pleasure on a jet carrying me to the Hawaiian islands to visit family for the holidays, when a flight attendant, a very friendly guy with whom I'd had a pleasant exchange earlier, bent over my shoulder as I looked at some of your splendid collages, and exclaimed, "Wow! That is amazing--what kind of magazine is that?" I showed him the cover and told him it was from Missouri, of all places. "Amazing," he said again. "**Anarchy**--that's my favorite form of government!" Not desiring to quibble over semantics, I handed it over to him, telling him I could get another. He stowed it

away on his tray, very grateful, and said he'd read it in Honolulu. Don't know if you've made it that far yet, but somewhere, perhaps up in some rain-washed valley on the back side, your fine paper is being passed from hand to hand.

Mahalo and aloha,
Dogbane Campion, Detroit, MI.

Note on letters

Sorry! If your letter did not appear in this issue, it should appear in **Anarchy** #16 which will be out soon. Due to the great number of letters received, and the limitations of space in this issue, several letters had to be held for the next. We may expand the letters section of **Anarchy** #16 from the 7 pages in this issue to 9 pages if it becomes necessary to help take care of the backlog.

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