

ANARCHY a journal of DESIRE ARMED

Number 16

DISARM AUTHORITY! ARM YOUR DESIRES!

Summer 1988



**Native American
guerrillas in
Colombia**

**RABL rousers in
Minneapolis**

A note on biocentrism

Realizing desire

**Pornography
& pleasure**

A boring night out

**My life in the
porn biz**

**ANARCHY AND
RELIGION; the
dialog continues**

**Gnosis and
esoteric
spirituality**



News in Review

Edited by Lev Chernyi

In this issue

NEWS IN REVIEW..... pp.2-3

RADICAL NEWS IN REVIEW

Native American guerrillas
in Colombia..... p.4

ALTERNATIVE MEDIA REVIEW

Alternative press review..... p.5

INTERNATIONAL ANARCHIST NEWS

RABL Rousers demonstrate
in Minneapolis..... p.6

The anarchist scene..... p.6

ANARCHY notes..... p.7

ANARCHIST MEDIA REVIEW

WORKING GIRLS; A review by
Lev Chernyi..... p.8

Anarchist press review..... p.8

Lizzie Borden; excerpts
from a KIO interview..... p.9Letters-that-don't-get-
printed Dept..... p.9

FEATURES

THE PAPALAGI; The great
spirit is stronger than
machines..... p.10A Note on biocentrism
by Lev Chernyi..... p.11Realizing desire
by New Rage..... p.12A boring night out, circa
1975 by Lev Chernyi..... p.14My life in the porn biz
by Holly..... p.15Pornography and pleasure
by Paula Webster..... p.16ANARCHY & RELIGION; the
dialogue continues..... p.19Gnosis and esoteric
spirituality; a review
by Lev Chernyi..... p.24

DISCUSSIONS

Towards a post-ideological
resistance..... p.28

COLUMNS

News to me by Toni Otter..... p.29

LETTERS..... pp.26-31

250,000 American workers condemned to death?

A U.S. Senate bill "guaranteeing" warnings to workers facing on-the-job exposure to toxic chemicals was recently defeated by a filibuster led by opponents. A similar bill had already been passed by the House last October. The bill would have set up a seven-member panel of scientists in the Department of Health and Human Services to identify the most dangerous carcinogens and other toxins on the job and the groups of workers most at risk. 300,000 of those workers would have been notified individually each year at an annual estimated cost of \$25,000. And employers would have had to pay for medical monitoring of those workers, allowing workers to accumulate evidence enabling them to file liability suits against those employers.

The American Cancer Society,

hardly a radical organization, had estimated that passage and implementation of the bill would have reduced cancer deaths by 250,000 over the next ten years. But business opponents led by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the National Association of Manufacturers have succeeded in ensuring that most workers will not be allowed to find out about their exposure to such toxic chemicals, potentially saving those companies involved in the use of such substances billions of dollars a year in likely liability judgments against them.

In a society rationally organized for the benefit of all involved, such monitoring and information would be done nearly automatically—probably resulting in the relative minimalization of peoples' self-exposure to such industrial toxins. But we live in a

world owned and controlled by capital and political authority, whose interests are almost always going to remain diametrically counter to the workers and others whose lives they dominate. As such, it is hardly news that exploitative groups like the Chamber of Commerce and National Association of Manufacturers will continue to demand that those injured, maimed and killed by the activities of American businesses be quietly forgotten, without any blame for their predicaments being laid at the feet of those who have created so much pain.

National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health have estimated that one in every four U.S. citizens have been exposed to carcinogens or other potentially disabling toxins on the job at some time during their work life, most of them unaware of it. Where will your cancer come from?

Desert threatens collective

The Zahack collective in Portugal is located in mountains in the midst of a growing area of eucalyptus monoculture. The collective, as well as the rest of the farmers in the area, is threatened by the erosion, fires, pesticide and fertilizer use, and sinking water table resulting from the rapidly increasing area planted in eucalyptus by the wood products industries.

Zahack claims that by 1996 it is planned to double the present area planted in eucalyptus in Portugal—almost one tenth of the total area of the country. In 1974, the year of the aborted Portuguese revolution, there were 1,300,000 hectares of pine forest in Portugal. At this point only one half remains. According to Zahack, the spread of eucalyptus monoculture has proceeded because of their easy adaptation to the Portuguese climate, their relatively quick maturation, and their suitability for industrial planting and harvesting.

This system of industrial monoculture is lowering the water table drastically as a result of the relatively large amounts of water required by

the trees, and their deep root systems. Fires are frequently set purposefully in order to destroy indigenous forest as well as the more diverse and small-scale agricultural traditions and holdings in order that the land can be terraced and flattened by bulldozers and caterpillar tractors, and then planted in eucalyptus. Whole villages have been incinerated by such practices.

The Zahack collective is urgently requesting help in its campaign against these practices and to save as much of the area as possible from ecological ruin. They ask that their plight be made known, that donations be made so that more land can be bought and preserved, and that those who are able visit for the summer to help man fire-stations, to help with reforestation, and to establish a summer-holiday camp (although they also warn that there is neither telephone nor electricity, and that the accommodations are rather primitive).

Collectivo Zahack
apartado 6059
3000 Coimbra, Portugal

Skateboards banned

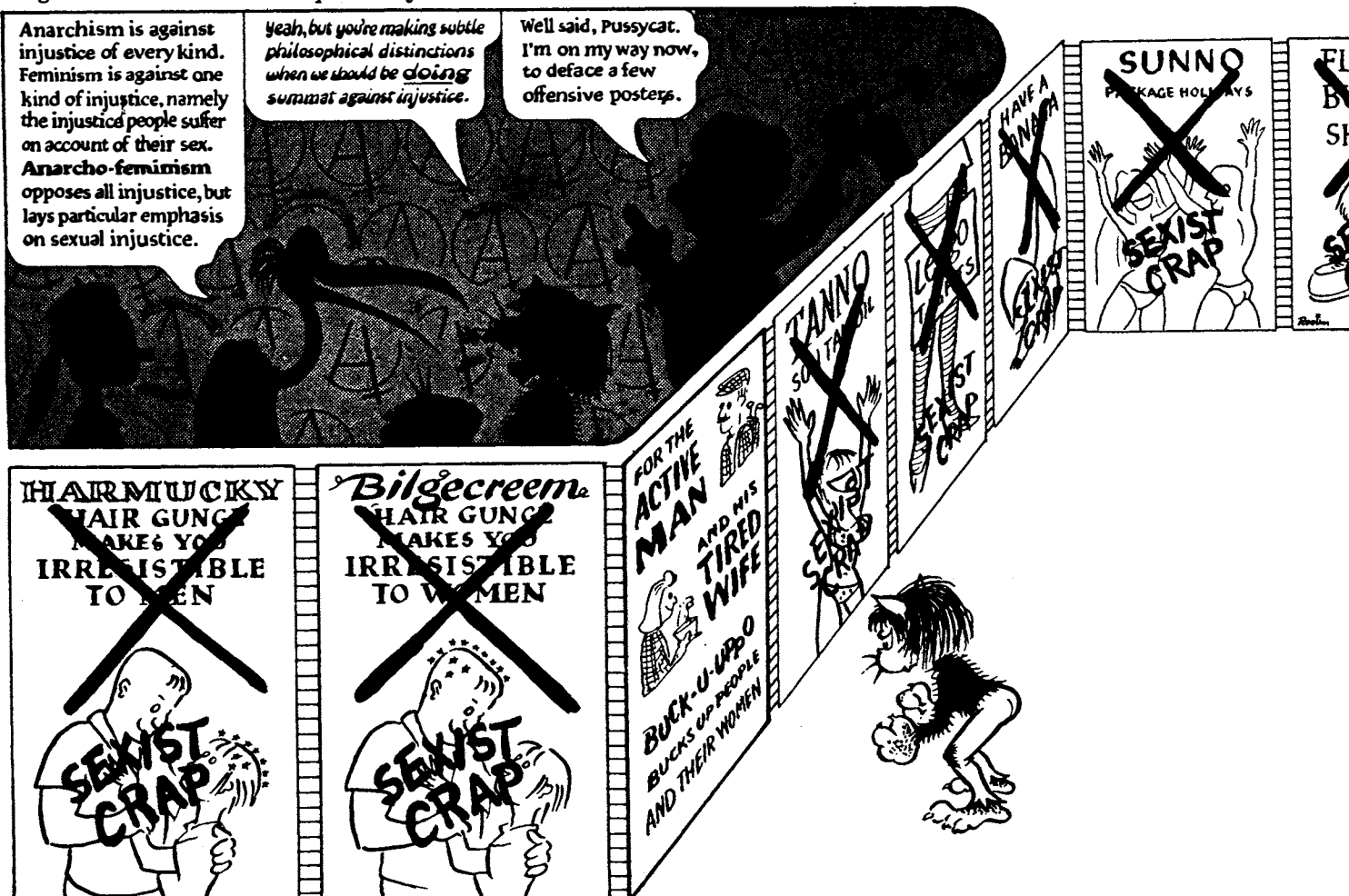
On April 5th the Columbia City Council banned skateboarding in a nine-square-block area of downtown Columbia from Walnut St. to Locust St., and from Seventh St. to Tenth St. The ordinance as originally proposed would have banned skateboarding from an even wider area covering the entire downtown business district, as well as from areas around schools. About 40 teenage skateboarders attended the City Council meeting in a futile show of opposition.

The ban was supported by the executive director of the city's Special Business District Kevin Flaherty, who claimed that the ordinance has the backing of downtown merchants. "Something must be done about this skateboard matter. It's a public safety matter," he said. Strong talk from a man who doesn't want to see any more businessmen forced to take evasive action when hordes of skateboarders swarm over downtown sidewalks!

Abortion nonsense

In March the Missouri House passed a bill banning a physician from performing an abortion if it is known the purpose of the pregnancy was to abort and provide fetal organs or tissue for a transplant. Representative Judith O'Connor (Dem.) was sponsor of the measure which was approved by a 123-9 vote without any debate. "The bill also prohibits offering money or any other inducement to a woman to conceive a child and then obtain an abortion in order to use fetal organs or tissue for scientific purposes."

It is suspected by some that Missouri Governor John Ashcroft (Rep.) has already had a fetal brain transplant, and that the Democratically controlled Missouri legislature may be attempting to prevent other Republican office-holders from increasing their IQs by such measures due to the threat that fetus-brained Republicans will eventually overwhelm the meagre intelligence of nonaborted Democrat-brains.



Edited by Lev Chernyi

The Panama Crisis

Judging from the headlines and the nightly network news, there must be no more pressing concern weighing on the minds of Americans today than the "crisis" posed by the continued presence in power of Panamanian strongman Manuel Antonio Noriega.

If it is a crisis, it is an entirely manufactured one. None of the feverish accounts of Noriega's supposedly imminent downfall have offered a plausible explanation of why it is so imperative that he, out of all the thugs, gangsters, bullies and murderers with whom the United States government routinely does business, be immediately driven from office.

In South Korea, Israel, South Africa, and much of Central and South America, U.S. economic and/or military aid continues to prop up vicious, dictatorial regimes whose crimes dwarf those of a nickel-and-dime middleman in the international drug trade. If every cocaine exporter in high places south of the border were to be put out of business, the result would be economic chaos in North as well as South America. Even as the clamps are being put to Noriega, the cocaine flow continues unabated by way of hundreds of small-time crooks and CIA operatives just like him. Half the inner city housing projects in the U.S.A. have their own mini-Noriegas. What's the big deal?

The big deal is, of course, what Noriega knows and what he might tell about it. The campaign being orche-

strated against him has one real goal, and that is to discredit any incriminating evidence he's prepared to deliver against our own criminals in high places, most notably one aspiring to be the next president of the United States.

George Bush is Noriega's former boss and partner in crime. Noriega has said as much, and there's no shortage of evidence to corroborate such a charge. For Bush to maintain that he was unaware of Noriega's dual activities as dope dealer and CIA agent when he, Bush, was responsible for signing Noriega's paycheck, is as preposterous as Ronald Reagan's claims of being oblivious to what was going on in the basement of the White House during his term of office.

Lookout!

POB 1000

Laytonville, CA. 95454

Unknown soldier arrested

Fist City, TX (LEAK): The story of the missing Unknown Soldier took a bizarre twist today when the reanimated corpse from World War One was arrested for disturbing the peace in this middle-sized, two-fisted southern industrial city. The aging national symbol was reported missing from the Arlington National Cemetery in Virginia two days ago by Social Stability officials who at first considered the incident a harmless prank by rowdy college students. Earlier reports that Unknown had been observed breaking out of his tomb under his own power were poo-pooed by Nazel Administration spokesmen, but were widely applauded by inquiring minds.

"This is obviously the work of so-called pinko-commies," said Sheriff W.W. ("Red") Herring at a press conference in Fist City late this afternoon. "This was one of them so-called peace demonstrations and this Unknown guy, all dressed up in a zombie uniform, was obviously a plant—jumpin' up an' down an' mouthin' some stuff about a piece of a chance and again never and free for all.... You can bet he was on the payroll of

the commie-pinkos all along and the real Unknown is probably layin' up in some warehouse somewhere."

A different view was expressed by Ecclesiastologist Rev. Canon Phodder, who believes that the Unknown mystery is the work of the Devil, hand in tentacle with Cthulhu, who works in mysterious ways. And President Nazel himself expressed a similar thought—that "the idleness of the tomb was obviously a strain on his Moral Fiberils and the Devil rushed into the vacuum." Economist Wally Street suggested that "the freak circumstances of the Soldier's return in no way implies that the market has gone out of whack," and then went on to deplore what would happen to profits if young men began listening to this guff that Unknown was alleged to be sprouting "in the manure of the popular mind."

Meanwhile, the Unknown Soldier's whereabouts are unknown, but he is believed to be in Police or Medical custody, or held in a military prison, or possibly on a ship at sea. "There can be no doubt that it was really the Unknown Soldier, whoever he

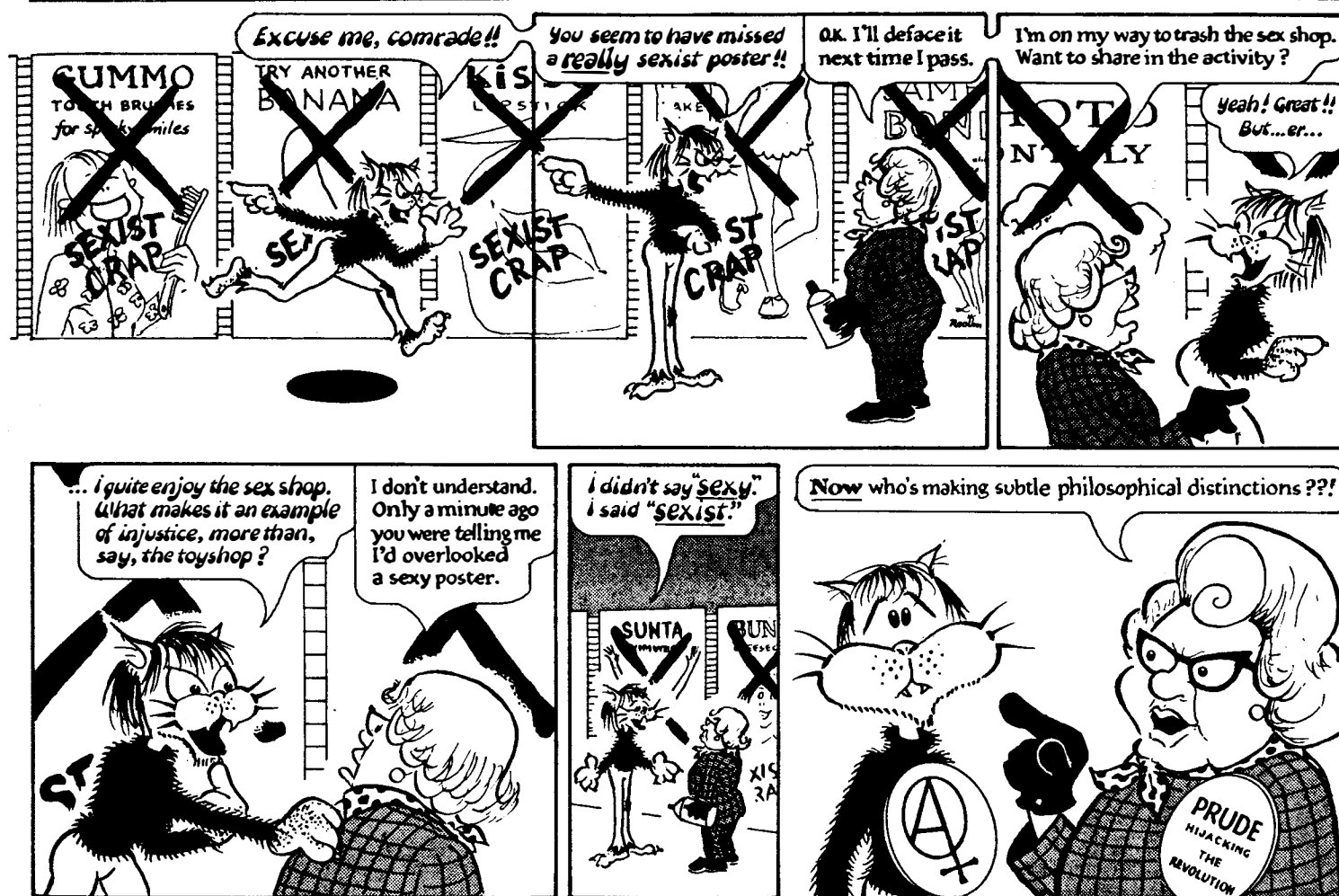
was," said Russell Eric Frank, spokesperson for the Retroactive Peace Brigade. "Those who heard his stirring speeches and read the pamphlet he was handing out were fortunate, for he articulated our Message perfectly. If we're going to have peace instead of war, young men will have to stop following orders—or, as Unknown scrawled on the side of his tomb, 'Freedom—I Won't!'"

Nazel spokesmen were quick to deny that Unknown or anyone else had written anything on anything, let alone the tomb, let alone what Frank said Unknown had said. But independent sources report that "Freedom—I Won't" has been scrawled on walls near the Arch of Triumph in Paris, in Britain's Westminster Abbey, near the Victor Emmanuel Memorial in Rome, and at the base of the Colonnade of the Congress in Brussels. The slogan is spreading quickly and some of the gloomier commentators on the established order fear that peace may break out at any time.

Neal Wilgus/Leak News Service

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Please enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope with all article, story, photo, and graphic art submissions if you wish to have them returned. Short news and comment articles which are used in "News in Review," "Radical News in Review," and "International Anarchist News" will be edited for brevity and style. Other submissions (features) will be edited only with the author's permission. Until we can afford to remunerate authors, photographers, and graphic artists for their published contributions we will give free subscriptions or other appropriate tokens of our appreciation.

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Radical News in Review

Edited by Lev Chernyi

Native American guerrillas in Colombia

Introduction by Olga Sanchez

The Quintin Lame Commando is a guerrilla organization in Colombia. For centuries in Colombia, social and political violence has been very acute; wealth and power lie in the hands of a tiny group of landholders and businessmen, while half the population doesn't have the basic necessities of life. The poverty leads to crime--the Mafia is everywhere--and there are guerrilla organizations numbering upwards of 10,000 armed men and women. While the state has over the past three years doubled the budget and size of the police and the military, there are also death-squad-type paramilitary groups responsible for hundreds of deaths. Here in document form we are publishing some papers from the Quintin Lame Commando because that armed organization stands apart from the other nationalist and Marxist-Leninist guerrilla groups (such as the FARC, M19, EPL, ELN, etc.).

The Commando's relationship with the social movement is quite distinctive. The Quintin Lame is above all a native American organization. It has been thrown up by the struggles pursued by the native communities of the Cauca region in the south of Colombia. These communities number around 200,000 people. Over the past 20 years or so, the native population has managed to organize and stake its claim to self-determination.

These struggles have led the natives of the Cauca, Paez Indians mainly, to set up an organization of their own, the Cauca Regional Indian Council (CRIC). The CRIC is a democratic organization representing around fifty *cabildos* ("communities"). Their fight has to be waged against ruthless repression by the great estate owners, their *pajaros* ("hired killers"), and government agencies (notably the police and the military--the area is under military occupation).

To confront this repression, which has cost the natives many lives, several communities outside the CRIC set up self-defense groups. In the early 1980s these groups coalesced and established the Quintin Lame Commando. This is the Commando's own account of the history of the Indian movement bound up with others in the struggle. It explains its difficulties and confrontations with "hegemonic" parties and armed organizations (i.e. with groups styling themselves "revolutionary vanguards"). These groups aim thereby to lead "the masses" and aim to seize state power. Meanwhile they seek to manipulate, direct and ride on the backs of social struggles already underway.

The activities of the Quintin Lame Commando are opposed to this notion; instead, it reckons that the protagonists of the struggles and the oppressed in general--and no one else--can determine for themselves the aims and methods of their struggles. There is a protracted learning process of united struggle and freedom. Such a view implies that the Commando is not made up of professional political

soldiers, but rather of volunteers from the communities who participate in turns. The Commando, which in "ordinary times" operates on only a few dozen or a few hundred fighters, can, if the need arises, thus mobilize thousands.

The state and its anti-guerrilla experts know all this. The Cauca and its adjoining regions have been under military rule for decades, but, however savage, the repression has not succeeded in demobilizing the native movement or the Commando.



Photo from Black Flag, London.

Quintin Lame Commando

translated from a 1986 Quintin Lame Commando pamphlet by P.S.

The struggle of our ancestors

We, natives of the Cauca and of Colombia as a whole, have never willingly bowed before the rule of our enemies. The fact that we are still around now is the result of centuries-long resistance during which we have retained our dignity without bowing our heads before the oppressor.

When the Conquistadors arrived in the areas we inhabited, our ancestors came together into the Pubense

Confederation embracing Paez, Pijao, Guambiano, Coconuco, Pubense Indians and others too, for the purpose of standing up to them. Although initially defeated by the Spaniard's superior weaponry, the local natives did not surrender. Headed by the Paez and the Pijaos, they carried on a bush war from behind the steep rock faces of our mountain ranges, and the invading forces did rather badly. The *cacique* ("chief") Gaitana assumed leadership of the Paez and several times held the Spanish forces at

native guerrillas and this was a constant worry for the Europeans.

In 1577 the mining center of La Plata was put to the torch, causing the deaths of more than 900 Spaniards. Similarly, Caloto was several times destroyed, thereby forcing the invaders to move elsewhere. Communications between the forts at Popayan and Cali were continually harassed.

In addition to the Paez, other Indian bands fought in the war. The campaign of the Pijaos, led by the *cacique* Calarca was especially dogged. They destroyed, among other settlements, Ibagu, Buga and Cartago. Only treachery by some among the native ranks consigned the Pijaos to final defeat. While the fact is that the Paez for their part were never beaten, and the fight to defend Indian rights has always been waged down the centuries by all the native groups in the Cauca.

In many instances they had recourse to "lawful struggle" (i.e. in accordance with the laws imposed by those in power), for instance, in the defense of the deeds of the Resguardos--a defense undertaken by the great *cacique* Juan Tama, or indeed, Quintin Lame's own recourse to the Law 89 of 1890. But the Indian warriors have always been ready to defend our legitimate rights by force of arms. For experience has shown that those who hold power respected the law only when this suited their purpose, or when nothing else was left to them.

On several occasions, our forebears entered into alliances with other sectors, seeking at all times to benefit the Indian cause. So it was, for instance, in the wars of independence when the Indians of the Cauca fought alongside Bolivar, securing thereafter some years of peace and self-rule. Likewise, during the civil wars of the last century, the Paez Indians joined forces with Mosqueros and Obando to obtain the return of certain lands usurped. And they even managed to hold on to a sizeable number of weapons following the victorious battle at Segovia.

Manuel Quintin Lame

Manuel Quintin Lame was one of the great champions of the Indian cause. He gave a lead in the mobilization of the communities of the Cauca and subsequently in those of the Tolima in the first half of this century. Around 1905, after having lost a portion of their lands, the great estate owners of the Cauca resolved to bring the Indian community as low as possible by wresting from them part of their already reduced holdings and by increasing considerably the obligatory labor service on their haciendas--a sort of slavery known as the *corvee*.

The Indian people, unable to bear the oppression any longer, resolved to rise in revolt. Manuel Quintin Lame placed himself at the head of the native revolt. He was a farmer born on 26 October 1880 in San Isidro near Popayan. But his was a Paez family and it came from Tierradentro, so he was conversant not

Continued on page 11

Edited by Lev Chernyl

Alternative Media Review

Alternative press review

THE THOUGHT (c/o The Philosophers Guild, POB 3092, Orange, CA. 92665) is a rather curious creation of its "chair-founder" Ronald C. Tobin. Published on a fairly tight monthly schedule, this publication seems to be a basically right-wing "libertarian" effort of modest proportions. A clue to its perspective is provided in the April 1988 issue (#56), which features an 8-page diatribe by a "true-believer" in Ayn Rand (one of her former pupils, Virginia Hamel) defending this virtuous woman's reputation from Barbara Branden's critical biography of the saint of objectivism. An interesting, though somewhat limited, first-person account by Avi Naftel of a visit to the Gaza strip after the Arab/Israeli "six day war" is the high point of the issue. Subscriptions are \$8/12 issues (one year).

THE LATEST FACTSHEET FIVE (c/o Gunderloy, 6 Arizona Ave., Rensselaer, N.Y. 12144-4502) shows continuing improvement in production standards for this now 72-page compilation. If you're not familiar with it yet, this self-described "zine of crosscurrents and cross-pollination" consists largely of anarchist, punk, science fiction fan, and mail art periodical reviews numbering in the hundreds! Also included are a few marginally interesting columns by folks like Anni Ackner and Kerry Thornley, as well as quite a few short poetry zine, audio recording and book reviews. If you haven't seen a copy, you ought to check it out at least once. Subscriptions are \$2/issue for up to 4 issues.

THE FIRST ISSUE OF DRAGONFLY (534 Texas St., San Francisco, CA. 94107) has appeared. This nicely done zine includes a pretty good "rant" about our "autopia" called "Stopping the car" by H.H. Bliss, a short but lucid denunciation of the inhuman tactics of the mental health industry in "Ideas of Reference" by Johann, a short-short-short story by Susan Carol Barnes, and some nice collage-work. The first issue even features a new calendar system based on a combination of lunar and solar transits, with months based on the phases of the moon (the first issue of *Dragonfly* was published on the first day of "Carnelian"—mid-April in traditional reckoning). Send an SASE or a donation for a copy.

I HADN'T READ A COPY OF **UTNE READER** (Box 1974, Marion, OH. 43305) for about a year and a half (since they last sent us an exchange copy). Unfortunately, the March/April issue (#26) looks more than ever like a "Marshmallow Reader" instead. Of course, if you want to go for the big bucks in "alternative" publishing, it probably makes a lot of sense to publish a liberal version of *Readers Digest*. It's subtitled "The best of the alternative press," but if this is the "best" we're in worse shape than I thought. With 128 pages in each issue and thousands of periodicals from which to pick their reprints, I'm sure the folks at *Utne* could make a few more challenging selections—if they wanted to. But if you're afraid to face the real issues, if you want to give up but still think of yourself as a (nice) "radical," this is probably the magazine for you. Subscriptions are \$24/year (6 issues).

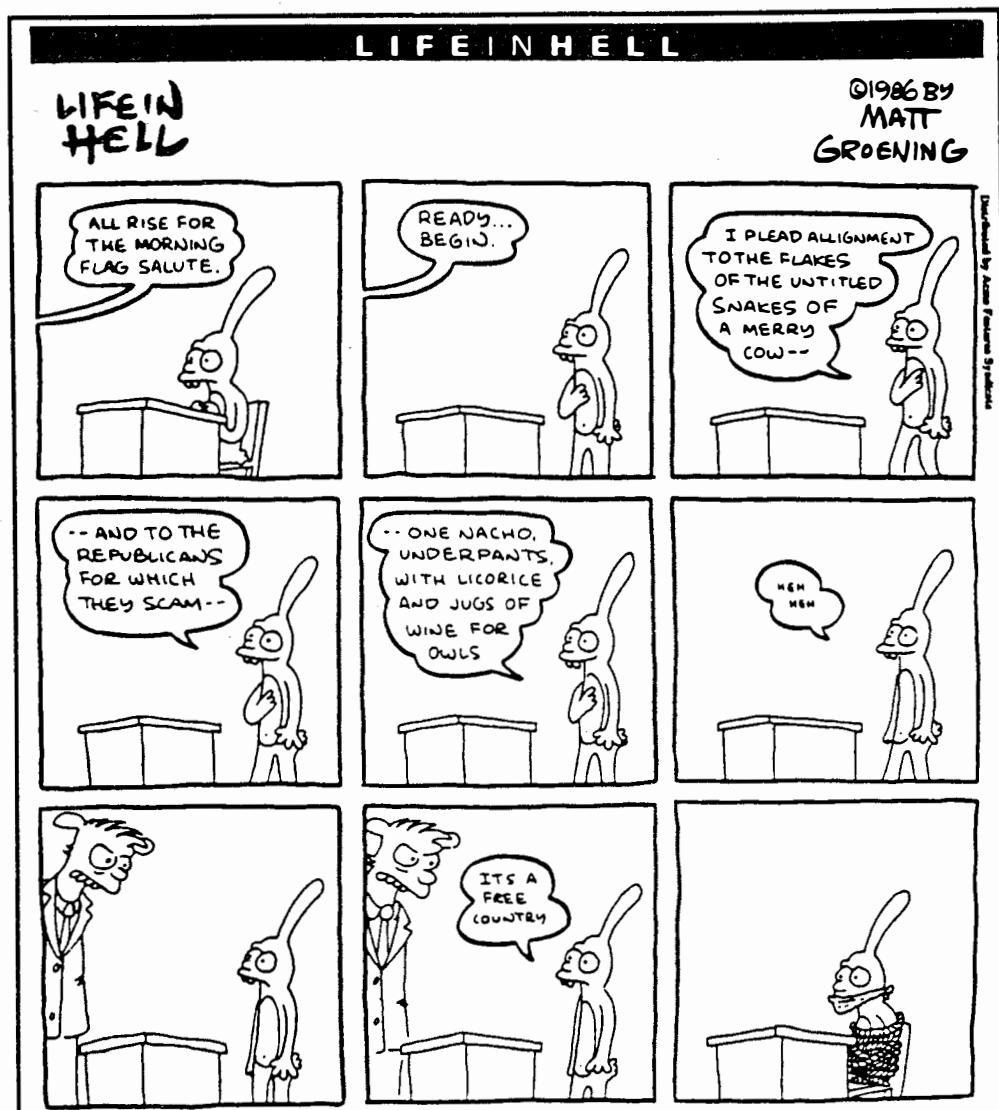
THE CAMPUS REVIEW (336 South Clinton, Suite 16, Iowa City, IA. 52240) is one of the remaining right-wing "alternative" student papers modelled on the nasty attitude of the iconoclastic

and much more well-known *Dartmouth Review*. What it lacks in intelligence it makes up for in chutzpah in pursuit of its defense of white, heterosexual, propertied, patriotic male values. Its May 1988 (V.4, No.4) issue's hysterical anti-leftism rivals the worst of the left's hysterical anti-rightism, though it's not nasty enough to make me sympathize too much with its leftist victims. It's generally boring, but probably more interesting than other right wing rags. Subscriptions are apparently \$1/(year?).

KALLISTI; A Magazine of Alternative Views (POB 19566, Cincinnati, OH. 45219) has a fairly well-done mix of short, short articles, columns and reviews making its lightweight fare very readable and digestible overall. The variety of writers (considering the limited space) allows enough diversity to maintain interest, while the photo features (fashion with and without "clothes") and comix ("Juliane and his Guardian Planarian" is a regular feature well worth a look) add spice. The one piece to this puzzle which doesn't seem to fit is an apparently rather racist apology for the practices of the current Israeli regime in the form of a serialized story by Sheva Bron called "Amir's Men." Subscriptions are \$9/year(6 issues).

THE APRIL, 1988 ISSUE of New Options (POB 19324, Washington, D.C. 20036) pushes the novel idea that "Pat Robertson was onto something big" in its lead article—happily citing his repeated call for Americans to "come up with a 'common ethical standard' and set of 'shared values'" as evidence. Typically inane fare for this little (8pp.) cotton-candy political review—originally New Ageist, now even less definite it its amorphously "decentralist, ecological, globally responsible" vision. Exudes a superficial, yet self-congratulatory, middle-class American optimism on every page. Subscriptions are an outrageous \$25/year(11 issues).

ON THE COLUMBIA SCENE, MOMENTUM; a lifestyle and opinion monthly (POB 270, Columbia, MO. 65205) is nothing special, nothing surprising—just a folksy, relatively unpretentious, and mildly interesting attempt at increasing the diversity of our local media. *Momentum* (May 1988, #2) claims a "small readership," apparently targeted at "largely busy, educated folks." It includes "Halfism Explained," a quick attempt at humor by Michael Renner, a survey of local



bed and breakfasts in Rochepoint and Arrow Rock, and a eulogy for the Columbia Community Grocery (the now closed local food co-op), including a survey of local food buying clubs still in existence. Also featured are a couple of columns—one "On Moral Hangovers," the other "Still Married After all these Kids"—and a naive American tourist's Mexican travelogue. Subscriptions are still \$5/year (12 issues), though this will be changing soon.

WE'VE BEEN EXCHANGING papers with *The Torch/La Antorcha* (c/o Revolutionary Socialist League, POB 1288, NYC, NY. 10116) for the last year, noting that these folks have been mildly questioning their Marxist-Leninist-Trotskyist dogmas at the same time as they have been reaching out to influence some segments of the anarchist movement. One of their more interesting recent articles was "Paul Goodman's Anarchism and the Movement of the '60s" in the March-May 1988 issue. But it's still impossible to ignore their rather heavily-handedly leftist style. Subscriptions are \$4/(year?).

ALSO RECEIVED:

After a short absence Lawrence Livermore's *Lookout!* (POB 1000, Laytonville, CA. 95454) is back stronger (and longer) than ever! This wide-ranging and lively punk-zine is well worth looking into. Despite its endorsement of Jesse Jackson/electoral politics, this zine remains possibly the most literate and thought-provoking of its kind. Send \$1 for a sample.

Issues #7 and #8 of *The Skeleton Quarterly* (c/o Raining House, POB 1452, Santa Cruz, CA. 95061), pocket-sized tidbits for your perusal. Free.

The Midwinter 1988 *Daybreak* (POB 98, Highland, MD. 20777-0098) "dedicated to the seventh generation" is a fairly commercial (advertising-oriented) attempt at creating a somewhat "mainstream" Native American tabloid. Subscriptions are \$12/year(4 issues?).

Storm Warning #7 (4710 University Way N.E., Suite 1612, Seattle, WA. 98140) is a publication of Vietnam Veterans Against the War—Anti-Imperialist which

quotes the Marxist-Leninist dinosaur Bob Avakian with approval. Questionable taste at the least. Subscriptions are \$8/12 issues.

The Spring 1988 issue (#11) of *The New Catalyst* (Box 99, Lillooet, B.C. Canada V0K 1V0) focusses on "Peace in our Places," with articles on the British Columbia peace movement, voluntary simplicity, an interview with Susan Griffith and ecological news and reports. Shares the same faults as other "Green" papers, but is more professionally produced than most. Subscriptions are \$12/6 issues.

Talk Is Cheap (POB 2296, Philadelphia, PA. 19103) is a monthly tabloid devoted to Philadelphia's alternative culture scene—music & politics mostly. With a better than average mix of coverage for such projects, *TIC* #9 (May 1988) features a paean to "Paris '68" by Sue Sturgis, spring fashion photos (check your neighborhood dumpsters!), and Jack Wright on free music/free jazz. Subscriptions are \$6/6 issues.

Dialogue (c/o Brad Ott, 916 Euterpe St., New Orleans 70130) is New Orleans' "alternative monthly newsjournal." Nicely done, this compact journal covers the local activist scene from a fairly anti-authoritarian perspective. Subscriptions \$5/year (9-10 issues).

A "networking bulletin for activists east and west," *On Gogol Boulevard* (151 First Ave., #62, N.Y.C., NY. 10003) has so far published three informative issues. The latest, #3/4 (Spring 1988) covers the INF treaty, and activities in East Germany, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland and the U.S.S.R. The most interesting article describes "The Ideology of Soviet Hippies (1967-1987)." Subscriptions are \$5/4 issues.

Afterbirth #1 (POB 392, Decatur, GA. 30031) features Kerry Thornley's "Meher Baba Talks in My Sleep," and Monaca White Rabbit's "Crises in Corrections." Send a donation for a sample.

Twisted Imbalance and Eat My Shit (POB 12504, Raleigh, NC. 27605) share the same address and not a little of the same style, although *Twisted Imbalance* leans more towards a Subgenius slant—including an excerpt by Ivan
Continued on page 12

International Anarchist News

Edited by Lev Chernyi

Rabl Rousers protest in Minneapolis

The dispatch of 3,200 additional U.S. troops to Honduras in March in a move to put additional military pressure on Nicaragua, led to immediate protests around the country. Demonstrations in Minneapolis, Minnesota--in which many anarchists participated--were especially effective.

On Wednesday, March 16th, the Pledge of Resistance called a demonstration for the next day to disrupt traffic at the busy intersection of Hennepin and Lake which was attended by "at least 500 people."

According to Minneapolis's **Rabl Rouser** (published by the Revolutionary Anarchist Bowling League), "the chants were angrier than usual: '1-2-3-4, We don't want your fucking war, 5-6-7-8, Now we will retaliate,' 'No war, No KKK, No fascist U.S.A.,' and the rhythmic 'U.S. out of Honduras.' Cop cars were pelted with paint bombs and graffiti went up on every available surface. A U.S. flag was burned. As a crowd surrounded a police car, intent on flipping it, the police withdrew from the area. The area was declared a 'liberated zone' and barricades of newspaper boxes, bus benches and burning dumpsters were dragged into the streets."

"The spirit of the demonstration was of festive defiance. As some people covered the barricades many danced in the street to drums, flutes and the makeshift percussion of trash cans, newspaper boxes and other found objects. As the sun set, the flames from the dumpsters illuminated the intersection as streetlights never could."

"After a couple of hours, riot police amassed as a wall at the intersection of 31st St. and Hennepin Ave. With clubs, helmets, teargas and dogs, the cops ordered people to clear the area or they would 'come in hard.' In a mass meeting in the street it was decided to hold the street. Rocks, bottles and sticks were gathered and the barricades were fortified."

"When it was overheard that the police wanted the 'WAMM women' (Women Against Military Madness, a co-sponsor of the protest) out before they moved in, WAMM members linked arms and put themselves between the main body of the demonstration and the riot cops. When the police offered to arrest those who wished to make a point 'Honeywell style' (in reference to the choreographed civil disobedience actions at Honeywell, a major military contractor), the crowd laughed and jeered the cops."

"The area was still held after four hours despite repeated police warnings. As the weather grew colder (it was still freezing out in Minnesota) the crowd began to diminish. A second mass meeting decided to withdraw from the area and return again at 4:30 the next day. At this point the crowd marched towards the riot cops who retreated as a few rocks and bottles were thrown at them. The crowd was able to disperse into the surrounding residential area with only three arrested during the night, all youths."

The next day the crowds swelled

to about 1,000 as the streets were occupied again. The crowd marched the 13 blocks to an Armed Forces Recruiting Station unmolested by police. Once everyone had gathered there, the recruiting station was quickly trashed with paint bombs, eggs, and spraypaint, after which windows and a door were broken with rocks, bricks, and at least one bowling ball (STRIKE!). After this demonstration dispersed peacefully, the failure of the cops to make any arrests or to stop the trashing was explained by one cop quoted in the press, who said, "the anarchists are better organized than we are."

Over the following weekend a Coalition to Stop the War was organized including Lesbians for Peace, the Pledge of Resistance, the Progressive Student Organization, RABL, the Socialist Workers Party, WAMM and the Young Socialist Alliance. A rather primitive attempt was also made to blow up RABL's home at Back Room Anarchist Books, and shots were fired into the offices of WAMM.

Then, with the next demonstration on Monday, an attempt was made to march on the new Federal Building, but upon arrival riot cops attacked protesters, clubbing, kicking, macing and arresting people. Press cameras were smashed and a reporter was bitten by a police dog. Punk youth were singled out for beatings. Children and parents were arrested together. And, the next day WAMM withdrew from the Coalition on the grounds that it could not support property destruction, splitting the anti-war protesters' ranks.

Rain slowed the next major demon-



Armed Forces Recruiting Center in Minneapolis

stration later in the week. Police harassment increased throughout the week, as cops picked up youths on petty charges and beat others. One woman who had been visible during the demonstrations had an arm broken by the cops. And the anti-war protests wound down with a peaceful rally of about 2,000 people at the State Capitol

in St. Paul for the annual Central America Week demonstration, which marked the end of what has come to be called "the uprising."

For a more detailed account of these events, send a SASE for a copy of **Rabl Rouser** #3 (c/o Back Room Anarchist Books, 2 E. 27th St., Minneapolis, MN. 55408).

Neither Expulsion nor extradition

The Federation Anarchiste Francaise (145, rue Amelot, 75011 Paris) has initiated an international campaign for the liberation of Roberto Gemignani and all other Italian prisoners in France.

Roberto has been jailed since December 24, 1986 under threat of being extradited to Italy. All four requests for conditional release made by his lawyers have been rejected. In today's context, at both the French and international levels, no political refugees or immigrants are safe from political repression.

This has led the Federation Anarchiste Francaise (FAF) to attempt to organize a campaign of solidarity and mobilizations beyond the borders of France. This led to an international Action Day on March 6th. And further actions are encouraged: demonstrations, gatherings, occupations...in all places which represent the French state, such as embassies, consulates, travel agencies, cultural centers, etc.

Solidarity at an international level can make a difference. For more information contact:

Comite de Contre-information et de Solidarite
65, rue Bichat
75019 Paris, France

The anarchist scene

This column will 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....

The **North American Anarchist Review** (c/o C.A.L., POB 1446, Columbia, MO. 65205-1446) project has been abandoned due mainly to the massive lack of interest shown since its conception. Despite the apparent success of the **New Anarchist Review** (BM Bookserv, London WC1N 3XX, England) upon which the **North American Anarchist Review** (NAAR) was to have been based, the conditions for its replication here appear to be lacking. While we still feel that such a publication project is needed and would be more than worthwhile, without any support it would have taken too much attention away from the production of **Anarchy**. Instead, we will attempt to incorporate some of the features that would have characterized the NAAR into the production of **Anarchy**. And if, in the future, anyone is interested in taking responsibility for this type of project, we are willing to provide our services....

A **Distribution** (396 7th St., #2, Jersey City, NJ 07302) is a collective dedicated to disseminating anarchist and situationist ideas through the distribution of books

and pamphlets. They are currently distributing a new 20-page 1988 catalog. For a free copy send them a self-addressed, large-size envelope with \$.45 postage....

The fortunes of the two-decade old anarchist journal **The Match!** (POB 3488, Tucson, AZ. 85722) have taken a turn for the worse recently, with its editor and publisher, Fred Woodworth, being forced to find new premises on short notice. He estimates that the move will cost about \$1,000 plus continuing higher rents afterwards--costs that he can ill afford. Any contributions towards keeping **The Match!** afloat would be appreciated....

The May 17, 1988 **Village Voice** (842 Broadway, NYC, NY. 10003) carried an interesting piece by Paul Berman called "The Torch and the Axe" on the life and death of Raffaele "Bruno" Schiavina, an Italian-American anarchist.

"Bruno," known by his pen name "Max Sartin," died in Salt Lake City this past November at the age of 93 after a lifetime of agitation devoted to propagandizing an anarchist-communist **antiongazzatrice** perspective in word and deed. The two journals he helped publish in the U.S. were **Cronaca Sovversiva** and **L'Adunata dei Refrattari**. His associates included Bartolomeo Vanzetti, Luigi Galleani (author of **The End of Anarchism**, recently republished in England), and Mike Schirru, another Italian-American anarchist who died by firing squad

Edited by Lev Chernyi

International Anarchist News

Anarchy notes

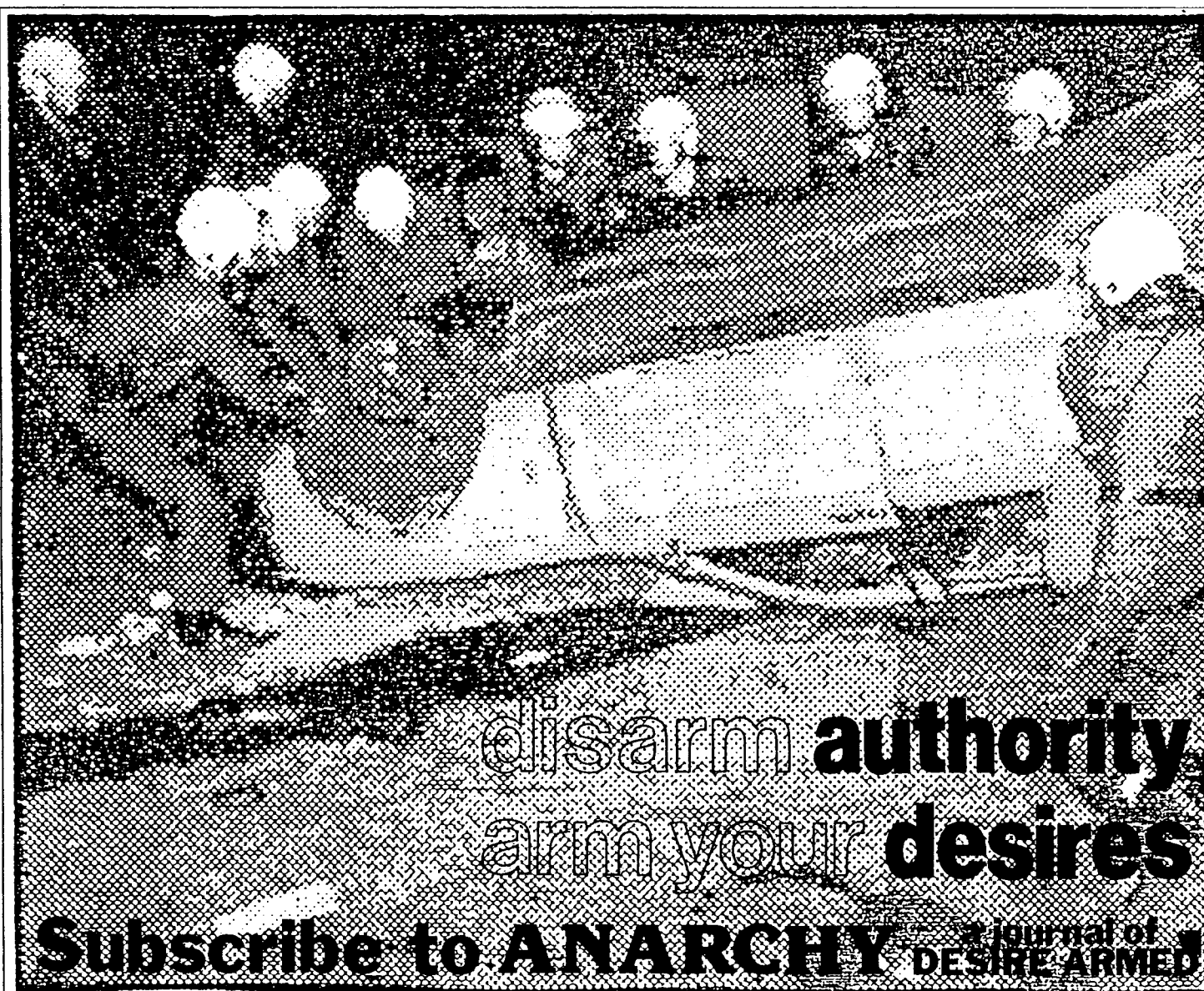
Once again we've been forced to cut and leave out material which was intended for this issue due to space limitations. As we publish more frequently such problems will hopefully decline, but for now you'll notice that there's a note at the end of the letters column on page 31 apologizing for any letters left out of this issue—they should appear in the next. Also left out of this issue were two of our "discussion" projects on "anarchist strategies" and on "Columbia's alternative community." The second is especially sad since Columbia's only food co-op, the Columbia Community Grocery, recently went out of business after several years of decline. There should be some comments on this in our next issue. And again we've had to put off publication of an essay on "Thinking anarchically," intended as a reply to Murray Bookchin's long article published last year in *Our Generation*. This, too, should appear in *Anarchy* #17. And for those still waiting for part II of the short history of the Greek anarchist movement, we'll try to include it in #17 or #18.

As far as **this** issue is concerned, please note that the cover collage was contributed by Freddie Baer. Also note that we have concluded the dialogue of essays and letters on anarchy and religion (which was started in *Anarchy* #15) on page 19 of this issue. However, we encourage those interested in this very controversial subject to contribute articles or letters in order to continue the discussion. And it should be noted that Jay Kinney has recently contacted us, expressing an interest in contributing a further response for #17. We hope you'll find this issue a little more diverse in subject matter than the last—we probably won't be devoting such a substantial portion of any future issues to any such single subject as religion and anarchy. In our next issue we also hope to have a few reviews of some important books which have recently appeared, most notably two books from John Zerzan—*Elements of Refusal* (a collection of his essays) and *Questioning Technology* (edited by Zerzan along with Alice Carnes). And as well, we will probably begin reprinting Raoul Vaneigem's *Revolution of Everyday Life* in installments.

after failing to assassinate Mussolini in 1931....

Someone in Decatur, Georgia (POB 392, Decatur, Georgia 30031-0392...phone: [404] 525-6064) is organizing what they're billing as "The Militant Political and Countercultural Event of the Decade at the 1988 Democratic Convention in Atlanta" from July 16-21. "Militant demonstrations" are promised "on AIDS issues, U.S. intervention, homelessness, racism, and police brutality." There will be a "mass encampment, mass free food, guerrilla theatre, cabarets, large scale puppet parades and free outdoor concerts." With "caravans leaving from New York, the Rainbow Gathering, and the Toronto Anarchist Gathering....

The Federation of Anarchists in Korea (706-022 Suseongku, Manchon 2Dong 990-44, Taegu, Korea) will hold an *International Seminar for the World Peace* in Seoul Korea this coming October. Participants have been invited from nearly 20 countries, including representatives of many anarchist groups and periodicals.



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
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Foreign subscribers, please see page 3 of this issue.
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Anarchist Media Review

Edited by Lev Chernyi

WORKING GIRLS; A review

by Lev Chernyi

Last summer I saw two recent films by feminists on the subject of prostitution. The one, **Working Girls** was down to earth, realistic, and relatively unpretentious. The other, **Broken Mirrors** (from Sweden, I believe), was affected, relatively unreal, and a bit overdone.

A comparison is appropriate since both films deal with similar situations--houses set up for middle-class clienteles in large urban environments. The women are young, mostly white. The customers are middle-aged on average, generally white, and have the necessary money one way or another. Yet the tone and atmosphere of the two films are quite different.

Broken Mirrors goes far out of its way to portray men as though they are necessarily misogynist, with accompanying overtones of violence against women occasionally breaking through their everyday attitudes--until the lives of the prostitutes are shattered by their overt violence. One of the women commits suicide, one is knifed while working, and one of the men who frequent the place is portrayed as a sadistic kidnapper and mass-murderer of women. The unreality of all this compressed violence makes the film hard to swallow. Like the dogmatic anti-porn feminism of Andrea Dworkin and the activists of Women Against Pornography, the film ends up coming off as a humorless, abstract, and totally depressing denunciation of men and hetero-sex--too much of a blatant propaganda piece to be very interesting as either art or documentary fiction. The emphasis is entirely on portraying the women involved as powerless victims of men, until in the end one of the women grabs a gun, forces the (still unknown to the women) mass-murderer out of the house, and quits her life of prostitution.

Working Girls, on the other hand, portrays working women in a profession as old as civilization itself trying to make a decent living without allowing themselves to be overly exploited by their chosen employment. The scenes are convincing portrayals of a day in the life of big-city "working girls." (In the film the women prefer to use the euphemism.) The men, while for the most part not



A scene from WORKING GIRLS.

attractive characters, are a fairly believable assortment. (Though one of the more frequent complaints of some of the women I've talked to regarding the film is that "the men are all portrayed as creeps.")

However, rather than attempting to present an oversimplified polemic against men, **Working Girls** does an excellent job of examining many of the underlying, as well as the overt power dynamics inherent in such a situation. Rather than bludgeoning us with a sledgehammer of self-righteousness prejudgement, **Working Girls** is content to let the subtlety of a more realistic depiction show us how complex the actual choices, attitudes and interrelationships can be. The women are neither exclusively victims, nor necessarily ashamed of their choice of work. They are interesting and for the most part self-directed, not ashamed of their sexuality nor in bondage to it.

Co-produced and directed by Lizzie Borden, **Working Girls**, is a sequel to her first (and very uneven, very low-budget) feature, **Born in Flames**. While her first film was a rather confusing and incoherent (partly for unavoidable production reasons) attempt at documenting the unfolding of a future feminist revolt in a social-democratic New York, her second marks an incredible improvement in technique, narrative coherence, and artistry. Her screenplay exploits many of the rich possibilities given by the basic premise of the film. The camera-work is unobtrusive; the musical score by David Van Teigem is nicely integrated in an understated way.

In fact, the work as a whole finds its most profound moments developed through irony and understatement. The female lead, Molly (very well-played by Louise Smith), makes this her signature. A lesbian (bi?) in her off hours, Molly (as all the rest) is clearly in it for the money,...and the easy hours,... and the mobility,...and the independence. She's made her choice to work, and while not totally happy with it--who the hell is? Her two degrees (from Yale) in English Literature and Art History lead to some great low-key put-downs as she mildly corrects a couple of the more pretentious cus-

tomers. When one of the other women (Dawn, a student who wants to go to law school) asks her to write a homework essay for her--and offers to pay her--Molly can only say in a deadpan voice, "I'm already renting my body, I don't want to sell my mind."

The choice of a female character, Lucy, as the pimp who runs the house makes the exploitative employment situation more transparent, by removing the temptation to identify all female exploitation with male domination. Lucy, instead comes off more clearly just like any other boss--obviously manipulative, totally self-serving and patronizing. Despite her protests ("It's not easy being a woman in a man's business."), Lucy knows exactly what she's doing, and is

quite successful at it. Yet, her employees are all wise to their real situation, and don't hesitate to use their own solidarity as a means to pick up extra cash "off the books" to avoid Lucy always getting her cut. And after Lucy takes advantage of Molly by keeping her on the job overtime without any sensitivity to the problems Molly is having that evening, her exit, and announcement that she's "not coming back," constitute a satisfying denouement to the film--unlike the much more contrived violence of the ending of **Broken Mirrors**.

A lot more could be said here, but hopefully in our next issue we'll include the edited transcription of a forum recently held to discuss this film locally. For those who are interested in seeing it for themselves, **Working Girls** can be obtained in any well-stocked video rental outlet--even in Columbia!

Anarchist press review

ISSUE #6 (OCT./NOV./DEC.) of **Chroniques Libertaines**, published in French by the Centre de Propagande et de Culture Anarchiste (B.P. 21. 94190 Ville-neuve-Saint-Georges, France) focusses on a survey & discussion of whether (and/or to what extent) anarchists need to organize themselves to achieve their goals. This issue also includes a "chronicle" of **Chroniques Libertaines**--a discussion of its direction, purposes and relation to the rest of the anarchist movement and press in France. Foreign subscriptions are 55 francs/5 issues.

THE RAVEN (c/o Freedom Press, 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX, England) has now published 4 issues in fairly rapid succession. This glossy covered, 96-page academic anarchist quarterly is well-produced, though it's sometimes on the boring side. Essays in issue #4 (March, 1988) include an autobiographical essay by Johann Most along with a commentary on Most's life by Heiner Becker and a short fragment on "Computers and Anarchism" by Paul Rabin in which he gives good short descriptions of the ideologies of rationalism and instrumentalism (though his notion of "pure reason" seems rather unclear) on his way towards condemning computers as incompatible with the spirit of anarchy. Other contributions include Chris Powell's appraisal of the "New Realism" in academic criminology in light of the anarchist-leaning "New Criminology," David Pepper's speculations on what an anarchist geography of Britain would be like and how it could be taught in schools, Nicolas Walter on Rudolf Rocker's anarcho-syndicalism, and the most interesting essay of the lot, a reprinting of John Hewetson's series of **Freedom** articles on "Sexual Freedom for the Young"--refreshingly clear and unambiguously written. Subscriptions to **The Raven** are 11 pounds by surface and 15 pounds by airmail for one year (four issues).

THE FIFTH ESTATE (POB 02548, Detroit, MI. 48202) continues its propagation of high-quality polemic at the cutting edge of radical theory with a second issue (Spring 1988, #328) devoted primarily to the critique of so-called "deep" ecology. Also of great importance in this issue is the review of Betsy Hartmann's **Reproductive Rights and Wrongs** under the appropriate headline

"Woman's Freedom: Key to the Population Question." And Lynne Clive's essay, "Palestine: Legacy of Conquest" continues the **Fifth Estate's** tradition of excellent commentary on the continuous middle east crisis. Though Dogbane Campion's "Anarchy & the Sacred" is noteworthy for its ill-defined defense of "the sacred" juxtaposed with an otherwise fairly convincing critique of the technological rationalism and remaining belief in "progress" still professed by some of the more "backward" segments of the anarchist movement--mostly anarcho-syndicalists. Subscriptions are still \$5/year (4 issues) and well worth it.

NUMBERS 17 & 18 OF **TOTAL BRAND** (Box 150 15,104 65 Stockholm, Sweden) arrived together recently. These slick color-covered magazines include articles (in Swedish) on the activities of the Animal Liberation Front (DBF) in Sweden, another threatened eviction of the "well-known" independent/punk venue Ultrahouse, and the campaign against Shell Oil in Sweden--ten gas stations were damaged in attacks last September, with more sabotage occurring over the winter. In other attacks, two large power lines were pulled down in the north of Sweden in protest against their devastation of the forest, and a Christian anarchist group, Friends, has organized several direct actions against banks--including attacks in which they smashed the windows of a central bank while it was open and distributed leaflets. The next issue of **Brand** (#19) will commemorate its "90 years of existence as a revolutionary magazine," starting out socialist, now anarchist. Subscriptions are 70kr/12 issues.

THE LONG-AWAITED Semiotext[e] USA issue (522 Philosophy Hall, Columbia University, NYC, NY. 10027) has proven to be both somewhat provocative, yet also somewhat disappointing. After previous issues set a relatively high standard for production and content, the **USA** issue just doesn't impress me as much as I would have hoped. Maybe its because I've already seen many of the contents elsewhere (the whole issue seems to be constructed of reprints), maybe because there's nothing very meaty in any of the contributions--it's more like a smorgasbord of rad-cult tidbits. Then again, maybe my expectations for **Semiotext[e]**

Continued on page 11

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

Lizzie Borden on WORKING GIRLS

Excerpts from an interview by KIO

The excerpts which follow are taken from an interview with Lizzie Borden published by *Kick It Over* #18, Spring, 1987 (POB 5811, Station A, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M5W 1P2).

Alexandra Devon: I've heard, in a number of articles, you described as an anarchy-feminist.... Is this a label people have put on you? Are you comfortable with it?

Lizzie Borden: I'm comfortable with it by process of elimination because I never quite figured out what it is, but I feel closer to it than any other political identification. I'm so critical of any kind of organized left wing just because of bureaucracy really becoming another class, and the relationship of women to whatever organized left there is. So the idea of anarchism has always appealed to me simply because it's always calling into question that which is. I somehow see anarchism as that, I see it as not necessarily excluding different political identifications. For example, on one issue it might be possible to side with a socialist stance, on another issue a very Western stance. But the thing about anarchism is that it allows you not to have to be over-programmed. The other thing is about feminists. What gets me now is people saying that they're not feminist anymore. Feminism is such a mild word for how I consider myself, that I'm absolutely a feminist. Anarchy-feminism to me has always been about stirring things up. You try to constantly ask those questions which will prevent stasis from setting in. Even at the expense of sometimes being seen as contradictory or saying things that go against what you said a year before or a minute before. For me it's a process. We all know what's wrong with Western capitalism and we all know what's wrong with the extreme left, so anarchy-feminism—it just seems to be the only viable identification, if one is to identify at all.

Alexandra Devon: What were you trying to say about feminism in *Born in Flames*?

Lizzie Borden: One of the points of *Born in Flames* was about "feminisms"—the plural rather than the singular. That's been the problem of some political movements and feminism too—the idea that you have to codify a platform. There are a million types of different women who consider themselves feminists but don't have the same agenda....

Now all of a sudden everything has wound up in the women against pornography movement, at least until a few years ago. It ends up being an issue that people have to feel one way on. Then there's a lot of hatred against the women who try to have another viewpoint. So that the Andrea Dworkin types are totally against the women who are saying, "Hey look, we don't want to be censored." Then there's the women who are much more exploratory in terms of sexual practice. It ends up tearing everything apart—which is great—the media loves it! It allows potent movements to be so diffused that nothing can happen. That's scary!

Catherine Tammaro: I wanted to ask you a question about the white radio station in *Born in Flames*.... Adele (the disc jockey) makes a statement about the return of a female prophet, about a spirit. What are your feelings on spirituality and how they fit in with a unified vision of anarchy-feminism?

Lizzie Borden: I don't think there is any fitting into a unified vision of anarchy-feminism. That character, the female prophet, she's very much like that in any case, as a representative of a kind of artist/poet type. What generates a lot of poetry is some kind of a connection to notions of spirit. It's not a political notion so much as an artistic one....

I personally have been such an atheist all my life that I have no views on spiritual stuff, except in so far as passion is spiritual, or the need to make something is spiritual, and the need to come together is spiritual. Spiritual in that there is a collective body of feeling that ends up being bigger than the sum of its parts. Not that there's an external goal—I don't believe in "The Goddess," I don't believe in any of those things, because I never have. I've never had a God that I had to shift to Goddess. But I think spirit is about a sense of something greater, and that greater can be what gives you the courage to keep fighting in the face of a lot of cynicism....

When people ask me why *Working Girls* is feminist, my feeling is that women have to control our images and prostitution, too. If prostitution exists in this culture—and it has existed and probably will exist for a very long time—we can't just say it's bad, that it's feeding into the male trip of power over women. If it exists, we as women cannot only control the images of prostitution, but all of the works about it—for example, movies. If women in prostitution can be seen as not necessarily victims, or if, in fact some of them can be allowed in this culture to achieve a position of strength, it can only help.... I'm just so tired of some of these movies—high-class call girls or street hookers who are addicts. There's a million kinds of prostitutes just like there's a million kinds of feminism. But what happens is that the media makes it look like there's one kind, one judgement upon it, and that's simply not true. We don't deal with one kind of businessman or one kind of secretary. Anyone who knows women who "work" would have a different opinion than mainstream portrayals of prostitution. Men who have gone to prostitutes have a different opinion. It is the people who have never had any experience that buy into pictures of prostitutes in the media, which is a little much.



Lizzie Borden

Photo by Bill Banning/reprinted from KICK IT OVER, Toronto.

Letters-that-don't-get-printed Dept.

The following letter to *Kick It Over* was written last spring (1987) in response to their interview with Lizzie Borden. The reply which follows it was received recently (March, 1988). We print this exchange because it can be illustrative to reveal the types of things which some publications refuse to print and the reasons they give.

May 30, 1987

Dear KIO folks,

I enjoyed the new issue (#18), especially the interview with Lizzie Borden, whose new film, *Working Girls*, I highly recommend everyone see! Your editorializing was more restrained than in the case of the Kirkpatrick Sale interview in the previous issue; and of course it also helped that Borden was more articulate.

I liked the healthy disrespect for the prudish and hypocritical moralizing of the anti-porn film *Not a Love Story* that she expressed, as well as her concern to counterpose the actual reality of "working girls" everyday lives to the stereotypical images of prostitution perpetuated by all those who fear &/or exploit sexuality and sensuality. Unfortunately, this latter category of people includes all too many feminists and anarchists, along with all the zealots of the religious right, left and center.

Until the hypocritical "feminists" of *Not a Love Story* are willing to express an equal horror for all the rest of the trafficking in women's and men's lives and bodies—all the other forms of wage-slavery and commodity-exchange—their patronizing arguments will only continue to reveal their own sexual and social self-repression.

Lizzie Borden's film deals in a non-judgemental, matter-of-fact way with a subject which condemns itself, not moralistically as an absolute "evil", but rather as another form of the same dehumanization experienced by everyone

who is forced to work "for a living." And in the same way the pathetic image of the johns in the whorehouse mirrors all our own relentlessly miserable attempts at buying our happiness instead of creating it directly ourselves within the genuine communities which remain to be constructed by us.

It's way past time that would-be radicals grow out of the moralizing, guilt-ridden ghetto of "good causes" and self-righteous condemnation of "evil." We have a world to win, but only if we have the courage to arm our most intimate desires instead of continuing to prop up the scourge of morality. All morality is repressive. All morality is ultimately a form of ideological self-denial. What we need is the liberation of desire, not its continuing inhibition—the flowering of freedom, not the suppression of sex.

Arm your desires!
I don't forget to smash reality!
Lev Chernyi

Reply from KICK IT OVER

Dear Lev,

With regard to your letter to the editor, it's rare that we don't print intelligible letters—as indeed yours was. We had two—yours & another—that we decided not to print. The one name-dropped obscure European radical philosophers in order to make a point of one sort or another, although not very effectively. Yours just seemed very high-handed. Men are always trashing feminists for not being radical enough & what you said had been said before. And as you can see from the issue, we didn't exactly have lots of letters space—in fact, to improve our graphic presentation, we had to cut down on copy....

See you at the gathering,
R.H., Toronto, Ontario

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 make a lot of things that we cannot make, nor will ever be able to make, things we don't understand and that mean not a thing to our heads, just heavy stones. Things also, we don't want to possess at all but are still admired by the weak ones amongst us, giving them misplaced feelings of inferiority. That's why we want to have an open discussion on the amazing tricks of the Papalagi.

The Papalagi have the talent to change everything into their spear or their club. They take the wild lightning, the hot fire and the swift waters and make them subject to their will. They lock them up and give them orders. And they obey them. They become strong warriors for them. The Papalagi are capable of making the wild lightning even faster and lighter, the hot fire even hotter and the swift water even swifter than it was already.

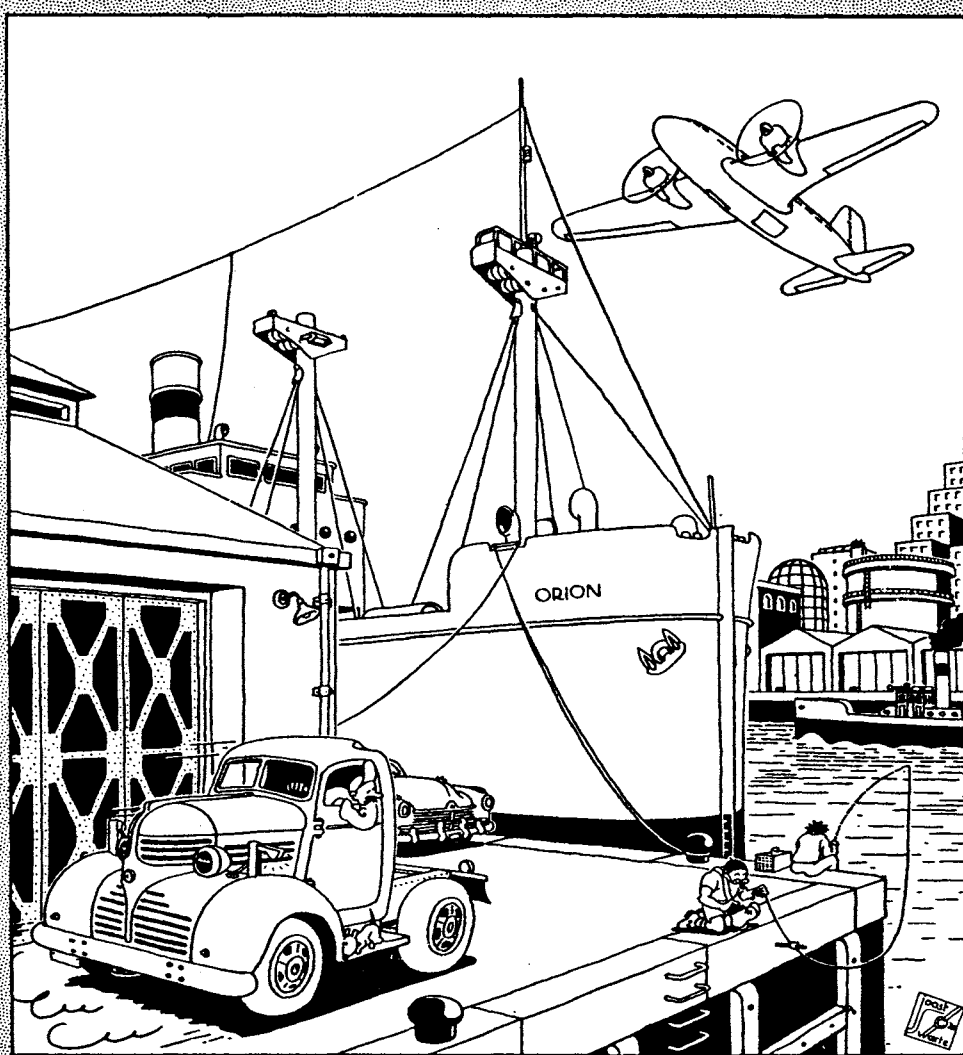
The Papalagi really seem to be "The Breakers of the Heavens", the messengers of the Gods, because of their mastery over earth and sky. The Papalagi is like a fish, a bird, a worm and a horse at the same time. He drills into the ground, through the soil and he digs tunnels under the widest freshwater streams. He crawls through mountains and rocks, he ties iron wheels to his feet and speeds off, faster than the fastest horse. He takes off into the air, he can fly! I've seen him glide through the air like a seagull. He has a big canoe for on top of the water and also one for under the water. He sails his canoe from cloud to cloud.

Beloved brothers! The words I speak are the truth and you must believe your servant, even when your common sense makes you doubt everything I just said. For the Papalagi's things are very big and impressive and I'm afraid many among us will be shaken by so much power. And where to start, when I would have to tell you everything that my astonished eyes have taken in!

You all know the big canoe that is called a steamer by the white man. Doesn't it just look like a gigantic fish? How is it possible for it to make "Papalagi" means white man, stranger; literally it means, "Breaker of the Heavens." The first white missionary landing on Samoa came in sailing vessel. When the natives saw it approach, they thought it was a crack in the sky through which the white man came to them. He broke the heavens. In the mythology of the Maoris of New Zealand, the Papalagi are the whiteskinned ones who came down from the heavens in shining, white vehicles.

THE PAPALAGI

SPEECHES BY
TUIAVII OF TIAVEA
A SAMOAN CHIEF



THE GREAT SPIRIT IS STRONGER THAN MACHINES

the passing from one island to another faster than our strongest young men can row across? Have you ever seen its large tail fin, when it sailed away? It moves the same way the tail of a fish in the lagoon moves. And that fin propels the canoe. How that can be, is the Papalagi's big secret. The secret rests in the belly of the big fish. In there sits the machine that feeds the power to the fin. And in the machine that big power is hidden. My head is not strong enough to explain to you what a machine is: The only thing I know is that it eats black stones and gives power for it in exchange, a power so big as to be impossible for a man to have.

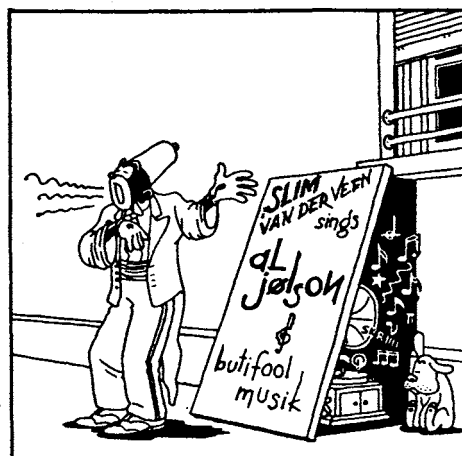
The machine is the heaviest club the white man has. Feed it the heaviest ifi tree from the forest and the machine will smash it to pieces, like a woman smashing taro for her children to eat. The machine is the greatest magician of Europe. Its hand is strong and never tires. If so motivated, it can cut out a hundred canoes, no a thousand canoes a day. I've seen it weave loincloths, so fine and delicate as if woven by the graceful hands of a maiden. It was weaving from morning till night, spitting out loincloths, a whole pile of them! Our strength is worth nothing compared to the might of the machine.

The Papalagi are magicians. Sing a song for them and they will catch it and even send it back to you, anytime you want. They put a piece of glass in front of you and catch your image on it. And thousands of times your counterfeit image can be

taken from it, as many as you like.

I've seen even greater miracles. I told you that the Papalagi catch the lightning from the sky, that is the truth. They catch it, then the machine has to eat it and spits it out again at night, in the form of thousands of small stars, glow-worms and small moons. It would be a small thing for the Papalagi to bathe our island in light at night time, so it wouldn't be much darker than during the day. Also, they often send out these light-flashes in their service, they tell them where to go and have them carry messages to their brothers abroad. And those flashes of lightning obey and carry the message.

The Papalagi has made all his limbs stronger. His hands stretch to the far shore of the sea and to the stars, and his feet overtake the wind and the waves. His ears hear every whisper in Savii and his voice has wings like a bird. His eyes even see in the dark. He looks through himself



as if his flesh is transparent like water, able to see every speck on the bottom.

All the things I have witnessed and of which I'm telling you now, are only a small part of all the things my eyes have beheld. And let me tell you that the whites take pride in working stronger and newer miracles all the time and scores of them stay up all night to wonder about more ways to cheat God. Because that's what happens, they want to defeat the Great Spirit and take possession of his powers for themselves. The Papalagi challenge God. But God still is stronger than the strongest Papalagi, his cleverest machine included, and God is still the one who decides who dies, and when. The sun, the water and the fire still obey God first. And the white man didn't succeed yet in regulating the rise of the moon or the direction of the wind.

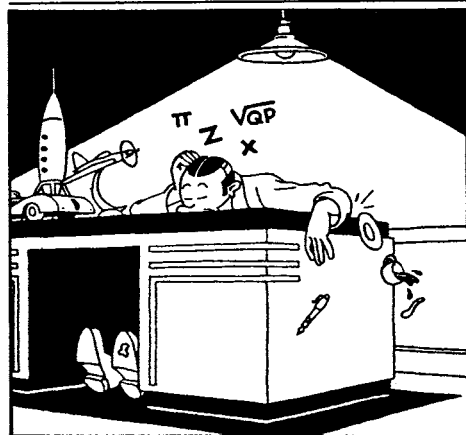
That's why those miracles are not that important. And, my beloved brothers, those island dwellers that let themselves be dazzled by the white man's miracles and those that pray to the whites because of their doings and those that call themselves poor and unworthy because their minds and hands are unable to make things like them, those I call weaklings. The skills and wonders of the Papalagi may provoke much admiration in our eyes, but when you see them in the bright daylight, they don't mean more than weaving a mat or cutting out a club; all our labor is like children's play in the sand. Because nothing that the white man has made can stand the comparison with the work of the Great Spirit.

The huts of the high alii are marvelous and beautifully ornamented;

they are called palaces. The tall huts that are erected in God's name are even more splendid and standing taller than the mountain Tofua. But still they are crude and sloppy and lack the warm lifeblood, when you compare them with a hibiscus flower with its flaming red petals, or compare them with the crown of a palmtree or the coral reef, that drunken jungle of color and form. The Papalagi never succeeded in weaving his textiles as delicately as God makes every spider weave his web and there is no machine as complicated as the tiny sand-ant that lives in our huts.

I told you that the Papalagi fly to the clouds like birds. But the gulls still fly higher and faster than man and they can also fly in a storm and they have wings growing out of their bodies, while the wings of the Papalagi are merely artificial and they break off and fall easily.

So, all his miracles have a weak spot somewhere and there isn't a single machine in existence that needs no caretaker or driver. And they all carry a hidden curse inside of them. A machine may make all sorts of things with its strong hands, but during its labor it eats out all the love that is present in the things we make with our hands. What do I care for a canoe that is cut out for me by a machine, a cold lifeless machine that is unable to talk about its product, that doesn't smile when the product is finished and can not take its product to his father or mother to have it admired. Would I be able to love my tanoa like I love her now, when a machine could make me another any moment, without my intervention? That's the big curse of the machine; the Papalagi love nothing anymore, because the machine can



make them a new one anytime. They have to feed it their own life's blood in order to receive its heartless miracles.

The Great Spirit wants to spread around and diffuse the powers of heaven and earth himself, to his discretion. No human has the right to do that. Not without punishment can a man expect to change himself into a fish or a bird, into a horse or a worm. His gains are much smaller than he dares confess to himself. When I drive through a village I make good pace, but when I walk I can see everything better and my friends invite me into their huts. Reaching your destination quickly is rarely a real benefit. The Papalagi always want to reach the destination of their travels quickly. Most of their machines have no other purpose than rapid transportation of people. But when they come to the end of their trek they immediately want to go on another one. That way the Papalagi run restlessly through life, more and more losing the ability to walk and run, never catching up with their destinies; destiny that always comes to us without us going to look for it.

Anarchist press review Continued

some of the articles appear as unadulterated leftist cheerleading. Still, if you want to know what's happening on "the illegal front" and what these groups think they're doing, this is the place to get that information. The latest issue (#11) contains information and communiqués regarding Revolutionary Anti-Racist Action's destruction of three MAKRO supermarkets, resistance to the census in West Germany, Rote Zora on the "Campaign against gene technology," Revolutionary Cells; Red Army Faction, E.T.A., and Puerto Rican resistance. Subscriptions are \$6/year.

ANGRY WORKERS' BULLETIN #2 (2140 Shattuck Ave. Box 2200, Berkeley, CA. 94704) has improved on the first issue, with another promised soon. This issue of this "ultra" magazine has a special section on "The Capitalist Nature of the Eastern Bloc," along with articles on "Strikes in Social Democratic Spain," the Falklands War, "John Olday; Artist and Fighter for the Social Revolution," and the recent Watsonville Cannery strike. The focus here is on class war from an anti-authoritarian perspective. Send \$2 for a sample.

SMILE #2 (c/o Karen Eliot, POB 3515, Madison, WI. 53704) is produced by a group called Schiz-flux made up of "de-individualized persons called Karen Eliot"—and they encourage you to produce a magazine named "Smile" on the same model. Issue #2 has proven to be one of the more interesting new publications I've seen (I haven't seen #1). Inspired by the situationists and Bolo-bolo, it's emphasis is on the realization of desire and "the substruction of the capitalist/socialist planetary work machine." Subscriptions are \$6/4 issues.

ALSO RECEIVED

A note on biocentrism

by Lev Chernyi

In recent years, as some currents within ecological organizations and movements in North America have become more radical, there has been an increasingly insistent tendency to jettison any aspects of traditional social theory and philosophy which can be characterized as "human-centered."

This tendency has operated under many names—notably biocentrism, anti-humanism, bioregionalism and deep ecology—and has originated from several different sources. It has seemingly struck such a strong chord in many people's imaginations, that it would appear to be a natural and inevitable response to the explicit theoretical and practical devaluation of nature that has characterized all of our dominant cultural traditions. Christianity, liberalism, Marxism, and even some strains of anarchism, have all shared a virtually unquestioned

Therefore I tell you that the machine is not more than a nice toy in the hands of the big white children and their tricks must not scare us. The Papalagi have never invented a machine yet that protected them from death. Never did they make or do anything that's more powerful than the things God makes or does, every hour. No machine or magic ever lengthened a human life, or made it happier and more joyful. So let us stick to the works and wonders of God and let us despise the white man, who want to play God himself.

arrogance towards the natural world which is increasingly perceived to be at the root of this civilization's march toward the ecocide of the entire planet.

Unfortunately, however, the solution to the problem of the theoretical and practical arrogance of civilization and its resulting destruction of nature is not as simple as inverting the traditional priorities. Just because **humanity** is despoiling the rest of nature doesn't necessarily mean that "human-centered," "anthropocentric" and "humanist" perspectives **per se** are at the core of our disastrous course.

The real situation, as always, requires a more subtle and complex maneuver than a simple reversal of ideological perspective. Superficially, the adoption of nature-centered ideology may seem to be the "radical" response needed when every other ideological system is intent on reducing all of nature to the narrowly

instrumental categories of resource exploitation and development. But a more genuine and thoroughgoing reversal—one which reaches to the core of our everyday alienation—is required to reach the underlying contradictions which actually constitute and determine the perverse trajectory of our runaway civilization. In fact, it requires a questioning and rejection of any and all ideology itself. Not particular ideologies, but **all** ideological thought and its attendant practical consequences, are at the core of the problem.

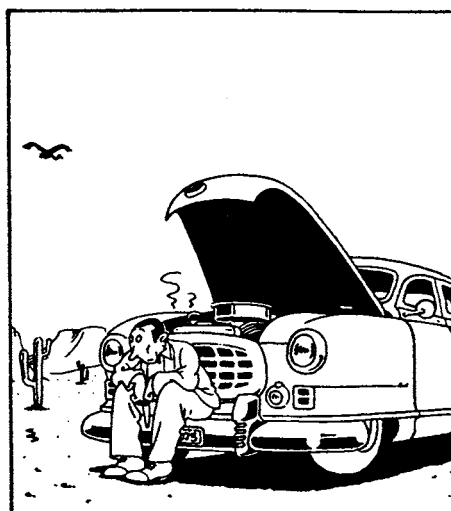
What is needed is the construction of a theoretical and practical alternative which embraces nature as a whole from an unalienated human perspective. If we can't situate ourselves as human beings (with our natural human desires and needs) **within** nature, there is little other choice than to accept that there is an irreconcilable split **between** humanity and nature. The alternatives are then clear. We can choose either a human-centered embrace of nature, or one of the ideologically alienating perspectives which reify both nature and humanity as ontologically separate entities, elevating one over the other.

The ideology of biocentrism, paradoxically, brings us no closer to nature. In fact, by reifying nature and attempting the impossible task of perceiving it from a completely non-human perspective, we are also forced to reify our own selves. And biocentrism becomes inextricably tied up in a mass of contradictions which end up by defining our relationship to nature in terms of morality, "natural law", guilt, sacrifice, and self-repression.

In fact it is impossible for us to see out of any other than our own human eyes. It is likewise impossible to listen, feel, taste, or smell with any but our own human senses. And even when we use our imagination to construct a non-human, "biocentric" perspective in our minds, we cannot possibly avoid projecting our own perceptions into that perspective. No matter how hard we may try, we cannot escape the fact that we are human beings. Thus, even when we attempt to adopt a "non-anthropocentric" ideology, this perspective always remains an inalienably human-centered ideology.

What biocentrism and deep ecology do accomplish with their ideological pretense is to confuse all the basic questions and give us even more confusing answers. In order to view the world from a greater perspective, they attempt to boost themselves up so that they can stand on their own shoulders. But, rather than the desired result of achieving a perfectly non-human thought, they instead pull their own legs out from under themselves and end up viewing the world upside down and inside out. And all the while they try to convince themselves that this new perspective is oh so much more objective and significant than anything they could have seen with their own eyes!

We don't need to be contortionists to understand our place in nature. There is no need to deny the validity of our own human desires, or the adequacy of our own human perspectives. All we need to do is accept them, work from them, really live them for a change, and a whole new world will be opened to us.



ently) unedited results maintaining a surprisingly high-quality level of discussion, although the format doesn't especially encourage coherence. Subscriptions are \$6.50/4 issues.

RESISTANCE: Documents and Analyses of the Illegal Front (Friends of Durruti, POB 790, Stn A, Vancouver, BC Canada, V6C 2N6) is an irregular tabloid which at times presents some fascinating details of radical, armed actions/groups/communiques, though the editorial perspective of the paper is unclear enough that which includes several worthwhile books like Noam Chomsky's *Pirates and Emperors: International Terrorism in the Real World* and Ivan Illich's *Toward a History of Needs*. Free.

Guangara Libertaria #34 (POB 1516, Riverside Station, Miami, FL. 33135-1516) is a well-produced, Spanish-language anarchist periodical apparently published by the Cuban exile community in Miami. Subscriptions for donation.

The Seditious #4 (Incendiary Publications, 203 Leslie St., Lansing, MI. 48912) is a publication of the Anarchist Labor League. Subscriptions \$2/year.

Maximum Rock'n'Roll #57 (POB 288, Berkeley, CA. 94701), still going strong as one of the best punk-zines around, now with the added attraction of a new column by Lawrence Livermore. Subscriptions are \$9/6 issues.

The Dec./Jan. '88 issue of **San Diego's Daily Impulse** (POB 90312, San Diego, CA. 92109) is an anarcho-punk zine. This issue includes a reprint of Bob McGlynn's essay, "What is to be Undone." Subscriptions are \$5/year(6 issues).

Counter Information #18 has been published from a new address (P/HC Info., 11 Forth St., Edinburgh EH1, Scotland). This street-sheet still gives quick coverage to local and international activist news. Copies are free, but send postage. Continued on page 12



I wish to set forth a method I have found useful in confronting the tendency of our present condition(ing) to **disorient** us. We advocate trust in our desires, but it is also necessary to find and free those desires. To aid in this attempt I suggest the mental exercise of putting one's thoughts into words internally so as to concentrate passions and make consciousness aware of itself.

Without an **effort** at consciousness one's mind is filled with all sorts of shit--I experience subjectivity as a succession of fantasies, resentments, advertising jingles, anxieties, phrases, and these are essentially "preconscious," always shadowy and half-formed. Much of my present experience is dominated by the Past in this form, and it was the intense discomfort I experienced as a teenager that occasioned my first clumsy resort to this lucidity so as to find a way to establish unity out of these fragments of consciousness. Now it seems that this method parallels the radical project of the proletariat delivering humanity from the dead hand of the Past so as to fully realize the Present.

What also seems clear is that this method can turn the totality of consciousness into consciousness of the totality, without which our anti-ideological efforts are insignificant. As you will see, this consciousness allows nothing but itself--it must be all or nothing. One does not just replace erroneous, conventional beliefs with other, "radical" ones--one begins to know definitively **how** consciousness is created.

Considering the process itself. I determine to start simply by noting to myself what I am **doing** (though this will quickly enable one to note with exactitude what one is **feeling**). "I am writing" (though the "writing" is all in my head), "I am putting on my shoe," etc. One starts here and can even stay here but the object is not to force a kind of essay format on the consciousness, but to link it up with subjectivity. I maintain no more than a one-sentence hold on any "content" or "subject" so as to effectively subject dissipation to the will for wholeness. To think what you will can be realized by willing what you think. Immediately I become aware of unity and power--as well as the absurd and arbitrary nature of this lucidity. I cannot hope to destroy forever my fragmented consciousness without destroying the society it mirrors. But this

provisional method can remind one that unity is real, however momentary its present, individual realization.

Someone has said that "the consciousness of passivity must overcome its own passivity," and I submit this method as useful to this end. This "overcoming" is what I see as the bridge beyond literacy, beyond books and the dead trees they require (a valid materialist argument for posterity as opposed to journalism, by the way). I am recognizing what seems to be a rather advanced addiction to print. To deplore this is somewhat pointless, as reading considered as **form** is a consolation for a world where everything changes--"money changes everything"--but those words stay forever the same on the page. When one thinks in words, however, **those** words change ceaselessly. One acknowledges a feeling aroused by a random scent, for example, or the wisp of a melody, but in bringing such feelings fully to light, to complete awareness for that one or two sentences is at the same time to put them more fully to rest, so that I can little by little push back what still torments me from the past, keeps me from occupying the present. Thus nothing is suppressed without first coming fully into the light--that attention so as to more effectively banish it. And thus with all the banality cluttering the minds of even advanced anti-authoritarians.

Perhaps someone else will care to expand this formulation: as against those who would realize rationality without suppressing it, as against those who would suppress rationality without realizing it, we aim at the realization and suppression of rationality so as to liberate consciousness from its colonization.

As Kierkegaard put it, "The revolutionary will have power to concentrate the whole content of life and the whole significance of reality in one single wish. If a person lacks this concentration, this intensity, if her soul from the beginning is dispersed in the multifarious, he never comes to the point of making the movement, she will deal shrewdly in life like the capitalists who invest their money in all sorts of securities, so as to gain on the one hand what they lose on the other--in short, he is not a revolutionary."

New Rage
POB 11492
Eugene, OR. 97440

Anarchist press review Continued

The July-December 1987 **Libertarian Workers Bulletin** (POB 20 Parkville 3052, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia) has recently arrived, covering the Australian Anarchist Centenary and carrying international news. Articles include part one of a history of the Korean anarchist movement, an account of the 1986 Pan-Hellenic (Greek) anarchist conference, and the origins of the anarchist movement in Argentina. Subscriptions are \$4/year (2 issues).

Kick it Over (POB 5811, Station A, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M5W 1P2) is a quarterly anarchist-feminist tabloid with a somewhat moralistic cultural/ecological focus. Issue #20 contains a social ecology supplement with reprints of articles by Janet Biehl and Murray Bookchin. Subscriptions \$7.50/4 issues.

The **SRAF Bulletin** (Social Revolutionary Anarchist Federation, POB 11966, Salt Lake City, Utah 84147) continues to plug away after 20 years with #103 published in June 1988. Not for the faint of heart, this publication continues to plunge into ever greater depths of boredom & stupidity--matched by few other such forums for self-abuse. Subscriptions are \$3/6 issues.

The **Rebel Worker** (POB 92, Broadway 2007, Sydney, Australia) is the voice of the Anarcho-Syndicalist Federation (Australian section of the International Workers Association) with class war news from Australia and around the world. Send a contribution for a copy.

We just received issue #3 of **Freezone** (POB 1465, Troy, NY. 12180), a small anarchist journal including a short article on urban housing and a review of two books by Noam Chomsky. Send a donation for a sample copy.

Ideocccion (C.C. 984, 2000 Rosario, Argentina) is the bulletin of Grupo Impulso published in Spanish. Send a contribution for a sample.

Bayou La Rose (Survival Network Information Center, POB 2576, San Diego, CA. 92112) has published its 10th anniversary issue (Winter 1988) featuring more on Native American struggles--the Sarawak Blockade, Leonard Peltier, Big Mountain. Subscriptions are \$5/year (4 issues).

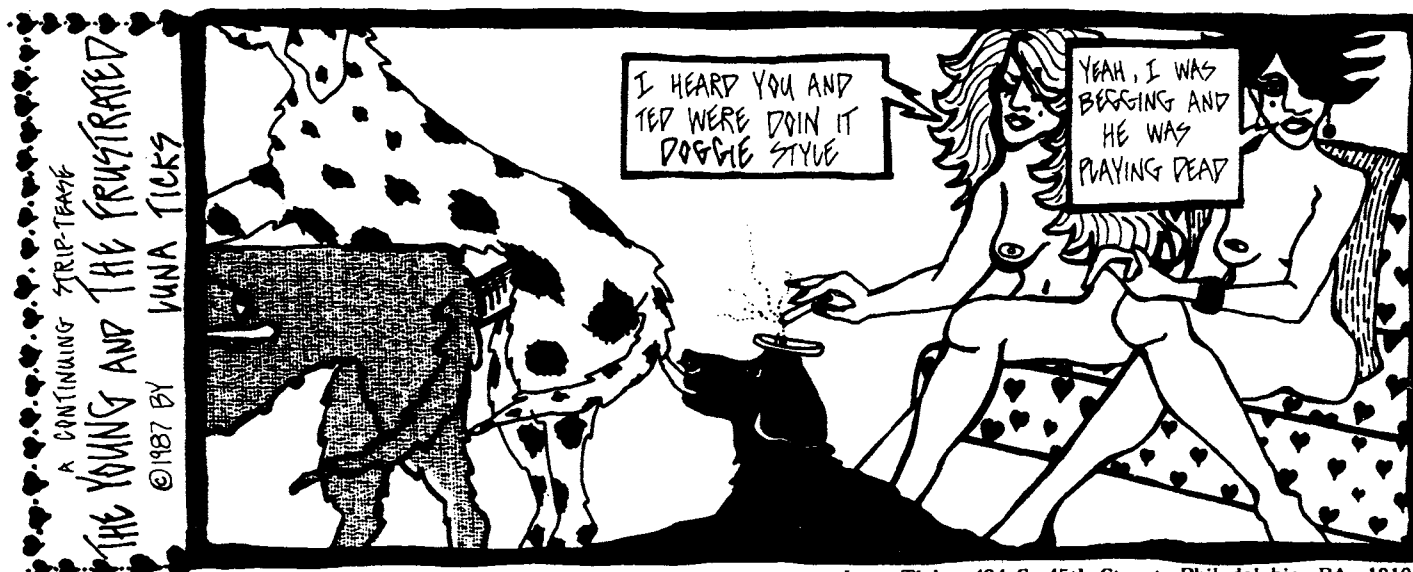
Alternative press review Continued

Stang from the Boston Babylon and a reprint detailing David Byrne's supposed rip-off of Subgenius ideas & Stang's proprietary attitudes. Both zines now have slick, color covers and some nice artwork. Send \$2 for samples (and don't use the full title of **EMS** on envelopes, Postal authorities have been hassling the editor about this).

Sound Choice (POB 1251, Ojai, CA. 93023) is an "International Journal of Independent Music" published by the Audio Evolution Network. Well worth checking out, this thick zine packs everything from the Butthole Surfers to the music of the Bayaka Pygmies into its pages. Subscriptions are \$12/year (6 issues).

Touchpoint (27 Music Square E. #169, Nashville, TN. 37203) is "a contact service for the non-monogamous. It consists of listings of people seeking correspondents, friends, lovers or mates, and anyone over the age of 18 can participate whether hetero, gay, bi, or undecided. Send an SASE for info.

The 1988 Spring Supplement and main **Loompanics Unlimited** (POB 1197, Port Townsend, WA. 98368) catalogs are packed full of unusual books which span the spectrum from brilliant to useless to dangerous. Besides book sales, Loompanics also publishes titles like Bob Black's **The Abolition of Work**. Free.



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

Native American guerrillas in Colombia Continued

only with Indian issues and the problems of the farm workers and hacienda farmers, but also with those of the Indians from the Resguardos, whom he supported whole-heartedly. It was clear to him that the needs of the entire native population--subjected to centuries of exploitation and oppression--had not changed.

Quintin Lame was aware that there were laws in existence that favored the Indians, laws protective of our rights. So he addressed himself to the authorities first of all in the Cauca. When he found them turning a deaf ear to his petitions, he approached the authorities in Bogota. He always believed that the national government, unlike the one in Popayan, would be impartial in its actions and would acknowledge the rightness of the Indians' demands. However, as the years passed, bitter reality showed this belief to have been a mistake.

Quintin Lame did not remain idle while he awaited the answer from the highest authorities. Seeing that the Indians' original mobilization along peaceful lines on a demand regarding their legitimate rights had been greeted by the club and imprisonment, he also helped organize some armed bands for carrying on the fight. With widespread support from the communities, he and the bands toured vast areas, passing through numerous villages like Paniquita and Purace, Inza and Balalcazar, striking fear and anxiety into our enemies.

The great estate-owners of the Cauca organized for the repression of Quintin Lame. Headed by the poet Guillermo Valencia, they declared him Public Enemy Number One. They tossed him into prison over 100 times, and went so far as to hire Indians themselves to betray him. They were ready to murder him, just as later they murdered his successor, Jose Gonzalo Sanchez. This is why Quintin Lame was obliged to quit the Cauca and pursue his struggle alongside the Indians from the Tolima. He died there in San Jose de Indias on October 7, 1967. Although the struggle led by Manuel Quintin Lame did not achieve definite success over the caste which has always held power in the Cauca, it was a crucial phase in our resistance against the oppressor, a stage in the defense of our lands, our culture, our organization, paving the way for further stages in this ageless confrontation.

In our own day Manuel Quintin Lame has become the symbol of a fresh struggle that we Indians are waging to defend our rights and that we are not inclined to give up until we have secured the final victory.

The Indian movement

For around fifteen years now, we people have embarked again upon mobilization in the Cauca as well as in the rest of the country for the purpose of fighting for our rights to land, organization and culture. A variety of organizations have spearheaded this mobilization and we may take the view that the results thus far have been positive. We have recovered thousands of hectares of land for our resguardos, the corvee has all but vanished from the Indian districts, our cabildos have extended their autonomy and our culture has

been given a fresh boost. At the national level, our struggles are admired and respected, and we are in the throes of successfully overcoming the humiliation in which we have languished for so many centuries.

However, these gains have cost us very dearly. Although legislation currently in place "protects" our rights and, first and foremost, the inviolability of our resguardos, in practice the ruling classes and the agencies of the state have let loose a bloody repression that has cost the lives of more than one hundred of our organizers, activists and co-workers. The big estate-owners have formed gangs of hired killers who, with the acquiescence of the authorities, kill our people. The police and the army sow terror in the Indian districts; secret agents murder and are handsomely rewarded for it while enjoying the protection of their superiors. One of the first of our leaders to fall was comrade Gustavo Mejia, a great life-long fighter for the people, to whom the Indian movement is largely indebted for the success it has known in recent years.

Gustavo was killed in Corinto with the connivance of the entire local ruling class as well as with the whole-hearted support of some well-known liberal politicians in the Cauca. Other great fighters like Justiniano Lame, Avelino Ulcue, and Benjamin Dindicue were victims of the complicity of our area's governmental and court authorities. In other native areas of the country, equally respected leaders have perished without the least sign of reaction on the part of the competent authorities.

Today, now that the might of the Indian movement promises tremendous progress as far as our rights are concerned country-wide, the threat of violent death hanging over our leaders and co-workers--a death scheme by the great estate-owners in cahoots with the civilian and military authorities who utterly disregard the very laws which they claim to champion--grows more prominent.

The emergence of the Quintin Lame Commando

In the Cauca, a backward oligarchy has clung to power for several centuries and the upshot has been oppression and misery for the population of this area. This oligarchy feels threatened by the strength of the native peoples' movement. It resorts to every means at its disposal to

hold onto its ill-gotten gains of our land, and to sustain a political authority which with each passing day slips from its grasp. Obviously the law poses no obstacle to the ambitions of this oppressive caste. The main reason for the current violence in the Cauca is the despairing action of a ruling class that no longer has any historical justification, but clings to power as best it may. Implicated in this--in the wave of crime and murders over the last decade--are not only the great estate-owners and their hired killers, but likewise the civilian and military authorities--judges and other local officials, the area's leading politicians--in short, the entire ruling class and the state apparatus under its control.

This is the reason why, first with their self-defense groups and subsequently with the Quintin Lame Commando, the Indian movement has gradually formed its armed struggle wing whose principal *raison d'être* is the defense of the rights of the Indians. Likewise, other segments of the population of the Cauca suffer violence and repression. The struggling peasants in the north, in Patia, Timio or Cajibío, the civic leaders of Puerto Tejada, Corinto or Santander, and the Popayan leaders are constantly threatened and harassed. Some were even murdered by the enemy.

Upwards of 100 Indian and people's delegates have been killed these past ten years without any of the murderers having been brought to book before the courts. And not because their identities are unknown; for they nearly all committed their crimes in broad daylight without the merest attempt to conceal themselves. Our commando has identified most of the assassins of our comrades and has already brought several of them to justice. Hired killers had become veritable nightmares for the native communities. They attempted to halt our struggle with violence. Thanks first of all to the self-defense groups, and then thanks to our commando, we have tackled the hired killers and managed to bring this plague largely under control and to restore peace to many communities.

The escalating violence against the Indian movement peaked at the end of 1986 with the illegal eviction from the recovered Lopez Adentro lands on November 9th and the murder in Santander of Alvaro Ulcue the next day. In reply to the first of these incidents, our commando entered the San Luis subsidiary of the Central Castilla, thereby demonstrating that we are ready to mobilize against the sugar planters who bear the primary responsibility for the Lopez Adentro eviction. As for Ulcue's death, whose perpetrator's we have sworn to punish,

we demonstrated our protest by occupying Santander de Quilhao with the assistance of another revolutionary organization on January 4th, 1987.

We are aware that the Cauca and El Valle oligarchy is currently planning to murder several Indian and popular leaders and that a list has even been drawn up for this purpose. Our commando has the names of certain individuals who are behind this conspiracy. Let us state clearly that if their plan should come to pass, we will take steps not only against the hired killers, but also against the putative authors and economic godfathers of such crimes.

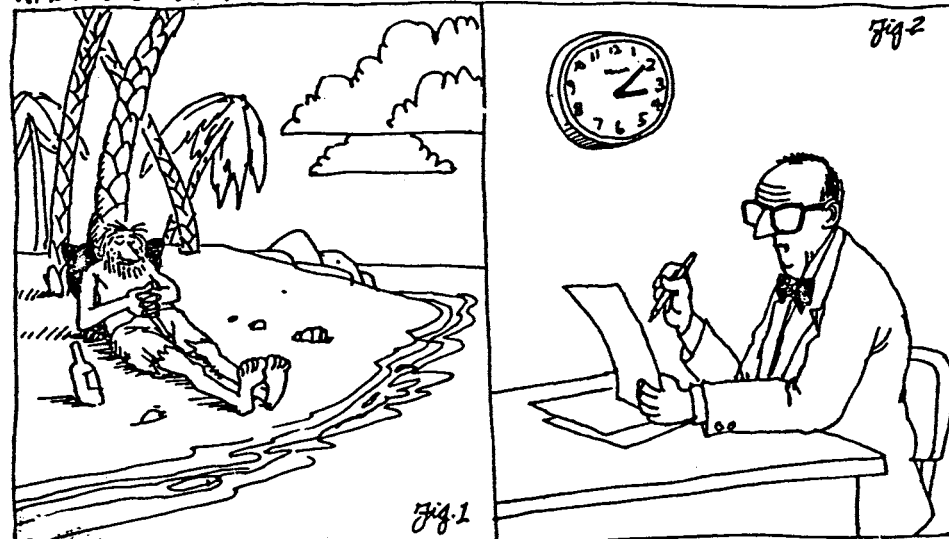
Lately also, certain self-styled revolutionary groups have stirred up problems in our resguardos by trying to impose themselves by force without acknowledging our autonomy or our own authorities in the shape of the Cabildos. In some instances, they have gone so far as to kill comrades who resisted their ambitions. Our commando has also tackled these groups, always in pursuance of the interest of the community and of the Cabildo's authority.

It should also be noted that the Quintin Lame Commando has not the slightest ambition to constitute a force to direct the Indian communities. For us the Cabildos, freely chosen by the community, and the community itself, represent the highest authority. We are at their service and at the service of the entirety of the Indian movement of the Cauca and of Colombia. We want to state very clearly that our action is directed solely against the enemies of the Indians and of the populace in general, and that we respect the several political, religious or cultural ideas of the population. Likewise, we respect institutions working honestly inside our communities.

We disagree with the conflict some have sought to sow between Indian and peasant groups. Smallholders should have their rights assured and our commando has made it known, when disputes have arisen, offering them our support. It is our belief that Indians and peasants alike share similar problems and that those differences of opinion that do arise must be resolved through dialogue. The Quintin Lame Commando appreciates that we Indians are not alone in suffering from hunger and persecution, but that the vast majority of Colombian people is targeted by the prevailing system. Thus we identify with the struggles of all segments of the populace and we participate fully in the national liberation struggle and in the building of a more just society for all Colombians. We wish to establish fraternal relations with the people's various trade unions, political and armed organizations, and to establish a single front which--beyond all sectarianism and aspirations to hegemony--may successfully mobilize the vast bulk of the population against the power of the exploiters.

We believe also that while this front is in the throes of being formed, a democratic procedure has to be adhered to--in which each organization's autonomy is respected--and a variety of contributions has to be accessible so as to enrich and galvanize the struggle. We armed organizations are not called upon to foist our will upon the generality of the popular movement. We must, rather, be at its service. SOURCE: BLACK FLAG, BM Hurricane, London WC1N 3XX

WASTED & USEFUL LIVES



A boring night out, circa 1975

by Lev Chernyi

You know what it's like when nothing's happening. You don't have much energy, and no one else does either. It's the middle of a midwestern winter. The days are monotonously short, hazy and cold; the nights frigid. You get together with a few friends and nobody knows what to do.

Somebody lamely suggests a familiar bar. "Maybe there'll be a band playing tonight." And for lack of a better idea, everyone bundles up in coats and scarves, and piles into the car for a silently freezing trip out to the edge of town.

The bar is an old converted barn, across the ancient two-lane highway (now bypassed by an interstate) from the town's last remaining drive-in theatre, which is, of course, dark tonight. The bar's sign appears as the car approaches the half-icy, half-muddy and mostly empty parking lot. A single floodlamp illuminates drab lettering which reads, "The Gladstone Mfg. Co." It doesn't look too promising.

We all slowly pile out of the car. Gingerly avoiding the deeper slush puddles which dot the lot like mines in a minefield, we make our ways to the dimly lighted doorway. The door opens and another world is revealed.

Directly inside, where a lower level of stalls once stood, is the bar—with five or six rednecks and longhairs, along with their girlfriends, downing their longnecks. Along the far wall six or eight others are intently pursuing a couple eight balls into their dark little burrows. A

couple quarters wait in a line. The pinball machines stand largely unoccupied. A few more people sit at the mostly vacant tables to right.

As the leaden warm-up sounds of a blues-rock band drift in from the upper room of the split-level barn, we all march past the mercifully warm woodstove near the door over to the bar. Then with our collection of longnecks, nuts and a pickled egg or two, we make our way towards the music.

The upper room turns out to be as empty as the lower. The band appears pathetic as a result. If there were a few more people at the tables, I'm sure it wouldn't sound quite so bad, though.

The four of us slump around the table of a booth. My girlfriend, Cheryl, and I sit on one side, while Mike with his pipe already smoking away and Bob with his crutches leaned up beside him, sit on the other. No one recognizes any friends in the "crowd." Even after we've downed some of the beer, the place seems about as dismal as it would have been to just hang around at home.

After a few more mediocre tunes and some uninspired conversation, it's time for another round. But there's no denying it, I'm **bored**.

I can't listen to the music anymore. After searching the profiles around us again, I can still only pick out the face of one nameless acquaintance. My thoughts wander. Why did we bother to come here in the first place? I've got to do something or I'll simply fall asleep here in this cold, damp old barn. Isn't there anything here to interest me?

My thoughts turn to Cheryl. Wouldn't it be a whole lot nicer to

be at home, warm in bed right now? But we're stuck here in this country bar doing nothing...but **why** let that stop us?

I reach over and put my arm around Cheryl. She snuggles up to me, looking grateful for an excuse to momentarily ignore her own boredom, too. I lean over and kiss her, sliding my hand up to caress her breasts. She in turn slides her hand up my leg, playing along with my lead. But I wonder how far she'll keep playing along, once she realizes what I have in mind?

I slide my hands down to her waist and begin lifting her sweatshirt up over her breasts, over her head, as she lifts her arms and wriggles out of it. She looks at me like I'm a little crazy, but she still allows me to unbutton and remove her sweater, once again snuggling up to me as we kiss and fondle each other for a moment.

Then I reach down and begin sliding her blouse up over her bra and up over her head. Surprising the hell out of me, she doesn't resist in the least! Off comes her blouse, and immediately her hands are expertly removing **my** sweater! Then off comes my shirt as I unfasten and remove her bra. Her breasts bob out, nipples erect in the cool air, goose-bumps all over her naked skin.

Once she's removed my t-shirt, we can embrace, warm flesh to warm flesh, our icy hands sending exquisite shivers of pleasure down each other's spines. I can't help but notice by now that a few of the faces in the anonymous crowd are now looking intently our way, but it's easy to ignore them.

So I reach for her jeans. Unzipping them is a snap as she helps me pull them off by wiggling out of them. **Whoa**, that's cold! My own jeans are now down on the floor.

As I quickly rip down Cheryl's panties, I see Bob's getting into the spirit across the table. He's already got his overalls down over the cast

on his leg. Hobbling around taking off his underwear, he looks more ludicrous than I imagine Cheryl and I appear to the increasingly amused crowd around us! However, Mike, unperturbed by any of this, is still sitting back amusedly puffing on his pipe, as if he were sitting at another table safely out of our reach. His only comment is, "You guys want to get arrested or somethin'?"

As soon as Cheryl, Bob and I have divested ourselves of all our clothes, almost as one, we turn our attention to Mike and begin removing **his** over fairly severe protest. By the time we've managed to get his shirts off, he's made it quite clear that any further attacks will earn the rest of us severe bodily damage, so we back off and let him smoke his pipe, bare-chested, but in peace.

At this point I figure we're committed to going all the way. Especially, since it's too cold to just sit around buck naked. So I survey the room, picking my targets, imagining a roomful of naked people, and the fun that might be!

So I run out from our booth and try to corner the nameless acquaintance I had noticed before, figuring he's the most likely to consent to an unceremonious defrocking. But he's bigger than I am, and he only goes along with us down to his waist. Not much fun here.

Bored with this, Cheryl and I start going for the strangers at the other tables. And chairs fall to the floor as they all beat a hasty retreat from their seats. All the while, Bob is prancing around (well, he's at least coming as close to it as you can when you've got a broken leg) with a absurd grin of delight, urging everyone to join in our lunacy.

By now, realizing that they've been completely upstaged by all the commotion around the empty dance floor, the band wants to get into the act. Not realizing what he's letting himself in for, the lead guitarist taunts Cheryl, saying, "Come on honey, take off **my** pants!" And like the proverbial red flag waved in front of the bull, he's got her off and running for **his** jeans!

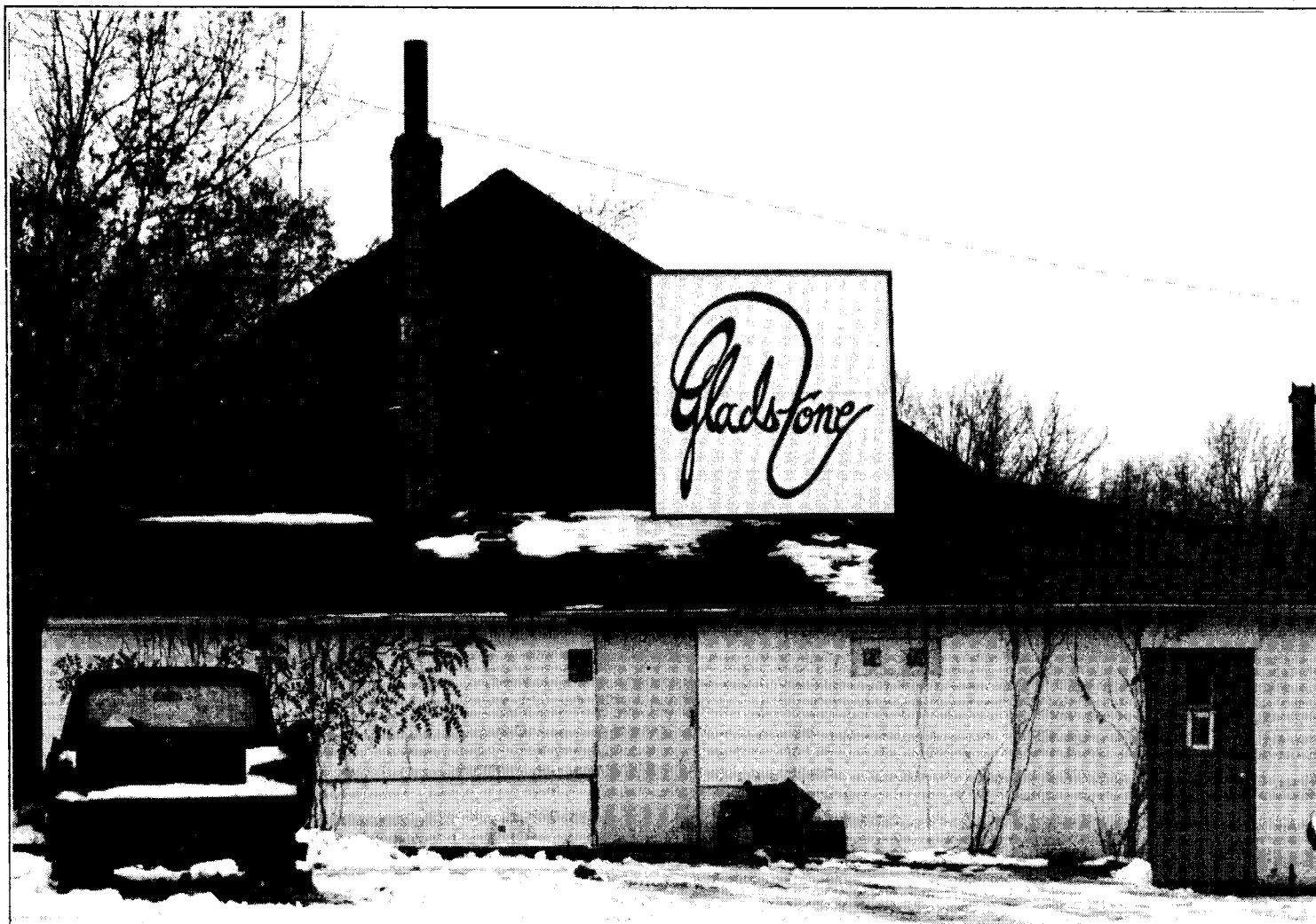
This turns out to be the funniest joke yet, as he trips over his amp cords, covering his crotch with his guitar and attempting to defend himself from Cheryl's dexterous advances. Too cocky for his own good, he's about to be reduced to pleading for a humiliating escape, when Cheryl mercifully allows him quarter.

She turns to me and together we survey our handiwork: all the nearby tables have been abandoned. The band, in a shambles, is attempting to regroup for another tune. A few of the braver folks still sit at the farthest circle of tables. And, of course, the doorways to the barroom are crowded with craned necks. So Cheryl and I grab our beers and make a little more casual and subdued rounds of the remaining populated tables, but no one consents to join in with our master plan, which is thus rapidly losing its appeal for us, too.

We take seats in the back of the room near one of the doors, partly in compassion for the poor folks who are straining their necks trying to get a gander at us without actually setting foot in the room. We finish our beers in silence, watching the band, feeling the coldness slowly creep through our bodies.

One of the bartenders enters from a door near the band, collecting

Continued on page 19



Gladstone Mfg. Co. after recent renovation, circa winter, 1987.

Photo by A. Backer

I've been exploited by a lot of things in my lifetime, but I never felt exploited during my four-and-a-half years as a professional pornographer.

Even when I returned to the field for a few short months as an "exotic" dancer, I was treated far better by my employers than I was in most of my non-pornographic workplaces.

In fact, when I left the pornography business, my sexuality was happy, healthy and whole. After four-and-a-half years of porno, I loved sex. But after four-and-a-half years of officially sanctioned sex (marriage), I'm now frigid. (Sanctions often have that effect...)

This is my story only. People who have low self-esteem and easy access to mind-altering substances might have different stories; they're different people. But my story is as valid a part of the porn experience as theirs are, and I ask only that it be read with an open mind.

When I was eighteen, I got some sort of draggy flu and missed a week of the part-time clerical, minimum wage job which I'd had for six months. I was fired.

Needing to pay rent (don't we all?) and hoping to make some quick money off of my naked body, I called all of the street-rack newspapers in my city which featured naked girls on their covers. Some were rude: "Do ya got big tits?" Some bought pictures from agents. When a woman answered at another, sounding genuinely enthusiastic about my call and asking if I'd stop by the office, I was much relieved. What I thought was a one-shot \$50 deal, turned out to be my full-time, off-and-on employment for the next four years.

Rags turned to riches shortly after I'd needed the fifty bucks so badly. I received a \$3500 settlement from the estate of a dead relative and I took off for a vacation in London. When I returned, I got another mindless job--selling candy in a cute little white uniform. I also got an invitation to a party held by the publishers of my photos,

The party led to a friendly sort of sexual relationship with the photographer. I started hanging out after work at the newspaper office where I looked at lots of very sexually-exciting big bosom magazines. Quitting my job as a salesgirl, I moved in with the photographer and his roommate, learned to take photos, do paste-up and write.

Eventually, I got paid regularly. But this publishing company was not a corporate entity--it was a group of "old hippies" who were trying to keep alive the sexual/political revolution that never really happened in the 1960's. We shared dope, meals and sleeping space. When there was money, we got paid. When there wasn't (and paying workers was a much higher priority than rent), we knew we had food and a place to stay. Whatever I wanted to do in my untutored wisdom I was allowed to do. The energy of the creativity balanced out the lack of skill and the poor choices in the long run. I learned, I grew, and I never felt bad about myself.

Money, or rather, the desire for more money, led me to leave this homey atmosphere for the more corporate one of the largest producer of sexual magazines on the west coast. I received a \$60 a week raise

My life in the porn biz

by Holly

(which, ten years ago, meant more like \$200 a week). I punched a time clock. I wrote on demand. I got promoted. I was given new duties. I flirted and enjoyed lots of sexual foreplay with a department manager in his office. I managed my own office when my boss was on a month's sick leave. When I decided that it was time to go back to school and do something "honest" with all that I'd learned about men, women, and kinky sexual practices, I was offered another promotion.

It was in school that I first "learned" that I'd been exploited. I weighed twenty pounds less then, and I dressed like a punk sex kitten--stileto heels, leather mini-skirts, lots of eye makeup. Women in flannel shirts, boots and mustaches told me that pornography exploited women, turned them into objects.

Still, no one I knew had ever been forced, coerced, or drugged to do anything against her will. We'd seen kiddie pics, animal sex flicks, lots of fake, and a tiny amount of real sado-masochistic material, golden showers, toilet freaks, baby freaks, TV's, and shoe collectors. But when the stories about snuff films started going around, even the hardcore, ultra-dirty pornographers couldn't get ahold of anything that wasn't Hollywood fakery. It may have existed then, and with the advent of home video equipment in the hands of psychopaths, it surely exists now. But professional pornographers have nothing to do with it.

I lost a semester of college when, under the influence of too-damned much alcohol, I was raped, impregnated, aborted and suffered a breakdown. I lost the next semester when, midway through several independent study projects, my advisor was promoted to dean, and had no time to mess with students. What the hell.

So I returned to porn for a few months, this time dancing in a club in Boston's Combat Zone. I worked my little tail off, sometimes dancing for as many as five twenty-minute sets in eight hours (usually a girl does only three sets). The dancing was great; the pay was superb, though I hated the hustling of men for "drinks" of ginger ale at \$7 a shot. I had one great one-night stand with a just-graduating neurosurgeon. And I learned that pornography doesn't exploit women at all.

When porn exploits, it exploits men--the same men who support the idiotic social system that creates their need for women about whom they may fantasize "free of guilt." The horror of enslavement to one person no matter what in order to protect (marriage) property rights, with no release, creates the need to fantasize. And then there's the non-marriage-market material--the retarded, emotionally immature, sexually variant, physically-deformed, imprisoned, and workaholics--who are denied any sexuality and truly rely upon socially-designated "available" females for their primary release.

The biggest problem with pornography is, as I see it, that it promotes only one facet of what people are. People are more than their bodies. Their sexual relationships are often

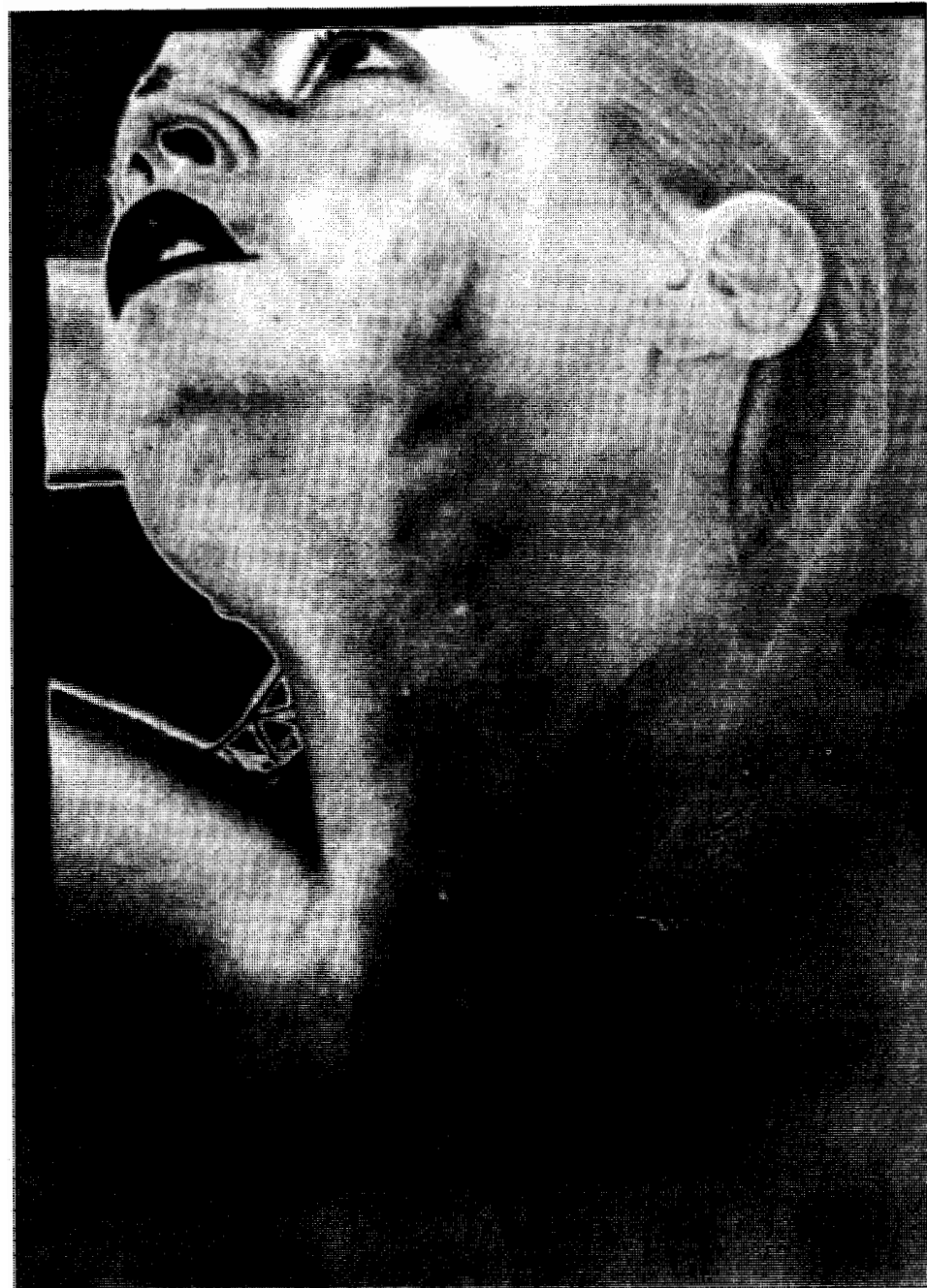


Photo by Claire Voyant

only one facet of their total relationship.

Some people say it's wrong to relate with one another only in a sexual way, but pornography lets us think of people exclusively in a sexual way, without having to worry about lifetime commitments, emotional vulnerability or failed erections.

Personally, as long as everyone is up front about what they want out of a relationship, I fail to see that there's anything wrong with people setting their own terms as to what they want. For other facets beyond the sexual, there are other forms of expression. I'd like to see more and better pornography for those who are interested in having fantasies about more real and whole people. But I would never discard the "quick fantasy fuck" stuff. And if you pay me what I want, you can think sexual thoughts about me and/or my body.

Later, I got married because I was unemployed and I had a bladder infection that wouldn't quit. I needed the medical coverage a husband could extend. And because someone asked, of course. He told me his employer (the U.S. military) would frown on his simply cohabitating with me. And because I truly thought that I could make it work. (Maybe two people can make an economic relationship with a primary sexual partner work--and there are, under our system of governmental and social institutions, certain benefits to those who hold

legal marital status--but it needs to be both of them, not just one.) Maybe we loved each other....

Now I began to learn what exploitation was all about. At home I was a captive audience to my husband's immature and hysterical demands. Besides being a mother to our baby, I also had to mother him. In the tiny town to which we were sent by the military, thousands of wives vied for the few available jobs. I was fired from one when I decided to have an affair (to repair the self-esteem shattered by my marriage) with a man not my supervisor.

Thrown out of the house with a suitcase, a bus ticket and \$40, I retreated to a town where friends of a friend took me in. I was sick of the corporate, of the culturally accepted, and of doing what was "right." I'd been exposed to a minimal amount of anarchist thought, and realized that here was the first set of ideas that made whole sense to me. Instead of a world of bosses and bossed, of exploiters and exploited, anarchists want to create a world in which everyone is empowered.

I wanted to work as selflessly as possible...trying to help those who needed support the most. I took a job working with a social service agency run by some people who considered themselves radicals. But the counter-culture has its exploiters, too.

Continued on page 19

Introductory note

For most people pornography is an emotional issue. In a highly repressed society what else could you expect? Traditionally, the battle lines over porn have always been drawn between those who explicitly defend puritanical, religious, and moralistic values on the one hand, and on the other those who seek to subvert them.

Of late, however, some of the skirmishes have been fought on a new front. A new wave of anti-porn "feminists" have come to the fore. At the same time as there have been rising numbers of new adherents to a completely co-opted bourgeois feminism, there have also been increasing numbers of women who have incredibly come to see "radical" feminist values purely in terms of moralism and ideology. Where once the feminist movement harbored several currents with some genuinely radical perspectives, these currents have now been effectively buried by an avalanche of legalism and respectability, puritanism and reaction.

Perhaps it was inevitable that feminism would meet this fate. Its meaning has always been ambiguous enough to encompass huge contradictions. And like any originally liberatory theory, it faced tremendously strong forces which tended to channel its energies into all the pre-approved, "safe" directions where authority and hierarchy themselves would never be challenged.

And then, besides this, there was always the double nature of pornography itself at work in this transformation—the liberatory impulses of porn have always been engaged in a perverse dialectic with the counter-force of the patriarchal values embarrassingly implicit (when not glaringly explicit) in most porn. Thus there has always been a certain rhetorical ease with which one could make the jump from the critique of patriarchal values to the critique of male desire. Certain anti-porn activists have even taken this road to its extreme end in equating all male sexuality with violence. For these anti-porn moralists, "porn is the theory; rape is the practice."

In this essay, Paula Webster makes the case for the continued viability of those feminist perspectives which still retain their originally liberatory impulses. If they are to survive, they must come to terms with the positive features of pornography without demanding the suppression of any of the forms of porn which fall outside the mainstream of traditionally repressive sexuality.

Recently in Columbia, two "feminists," Gloria Leonard and Delores Alexander, debated the porn question with fairly predictable results. Alexander, the first director of the National Organization for Women and a founder of Women Against Pornography, presented a few slides of covers and centerfolds from PENTHOUSE, HUSTLER, and PLAYBOY in order to "prove" her case that all porn is violence against women, if only because it objectifies women. While claiming that she was not "a prude or a Victorian," she went on to betray her fear of non-traditional sexuality by fantasizing an S&M



scene when describing one magazine cover—purely because the woman pictured (no one else was in the photograph) was wearing leather. In another photo of a woman posing with a knife near her crotch, the scene amazingly became one of genital self-mutilation in Alexander's eyes. Her opponent in the debate (Gloria Leonard) was also a long-time member of N.O.W., however, apparently because of Leonard's pro-porn stance, the local press (COLUMBIA DAILY TRIBUNE) article refused to ever identify her as such, much less identify her as a "feminist." Nevertheless, many from the local "feminist" scene applauded even (especially) the most prudish of Alexander's remarks, while denying any validity to Leonard's claim to a "feminist" identity.

From my seat at the debate, it appeared all too clear that, more than ever, if anti-porn is the theory, a new puritanism is the practice.

Lev Chernyi

"Pornography and Pleasure" originally appeared in HERESIES 12 (the Sex Issue). It is reprinted here from CAUGHT LOOKING; Feminism, Pornography and Censorship, an excellent anthology compiled by the Feminist Anti-Censorship Task Force. Copies are available from:

Caught Looking, Inc.
135 Rivington Street
NYC, NY. 10002

Every feminist in the New York metropolitan area has heard of Women Against Pornography. Indeed, in the last few years, pornography has become the focus for a great deal of feminist activity. In one of the best-organized and best-funded campaigns in movement history, women have been encouraged to examine their gut reactions to sexually explicit material and to take a political stand that condemns pornography as a major cause of violence against women.

Women from every part of the movement, and women who would have no part of the movement, came together around this issue. Political differences, both in theory and practice, were set aside as pornography was assigned a privileged position in the discourse on women's oppression. At least publicly, the link was unquestioned. Pornography caused violence against women, it was violence against women. Pornography made women victims, for it depicted women as subject to men's sexual lusts. The very existence of 42nd Street was an assault on women. All those pictures, films, advertisements degraded and therefore violated women.

A vast sea of feminist solidarity swelled around the issue of pornography. To move against the wave felt truly threatening. Although a few voices addressed contradictions in the anti-porn analysis, no dissenting movement developed. Criticism was kept to a minimum. It is one thing to disagree with a group you are fighting against, but serious discord within your own movement is pro-

Pornography and pleasure

BY PAULA WEBSTER

Photographs from VIVA (Vol. 2, No. 9, June 1977)
and from a private collection (source: Vasta Images/Books)

blematic. We seem to fear that feminist solidarity, so precious to us all, will not survive any rigorous criticism.

Yet many women, under their breath, confided that something was missing from all this discussion of the production and consumption of sexually explicit material. Dogmatism, moralizing, and censorial mystifying tended to dominate the anti-porn campaign. What about encouraging an honest dialogue about our sexual imagination? The shifting of discourse might have opened the floodgates of many passions. So much remains unsaid about our eroticism, our fantasies, our sexual activities, our longings for satisfaction. Our pleasure, as it is constituted inside and out of heterosexuality and patriarchy, never got center stage. Because this was a movement to chastise men for their vices, women were not encouraged to talk about their relationship to sexuality.

But what did we really feel under the onslaught of sexual imagery provided by the campaign? I remember seeing a slide show with about 30

images of predominantly heterosexual couples engaged in intercourse (genital and anal), bondage, and sadomasochism. There were shots of individual women, bound and gagged, pictures of female dominatrixes, assorted album covers, posters, clothing advertisements, as well as a handful of very jarring images of self-mutilation and the now-infamous *Hustler* photos of women arranged as food on a platter or put through a meat grinder.

Despite the lecturer's claim that all reactions to the slides were encouraged, each slide was interpreted to reveal its implicit pernicious meaning. One viewer, for example, asked why the photo of a young girl about to have anal intercourse was described as "the violent rape of a child." The reply was that she was obviously under age, so at the least it was statutory rape. The lecturer added that anal intercourse was "very painful," therefore it was unlikely that this "tiny young girl" could have been anything other than **brutally injured**. I thought this reply indicated certain biases about pain and pleasure

and preferred positions. Yet the most important misunderstanding was that a mere representation was spoken of as a reality--as an actual event recorded by some Candid Camera. The multiplicity of issues around gender, power, and sexuality embedded in each slide was disregarded; only one way of seeing was acceptable. Our "visual guide" invariably revealed the real or implied violence of the slide. All images of women were suspect.

In one department store ad for girls' shirts the seductive looks of the child models were offered as proof positive that the evil influence of pornography had filtered down to the truly mass media and was spreading like a contagious plague through even the most mundane things. Such photos, not unlike ones we could all find in family scrapbooks of ourselves as preteens, were indicted as encouragement to incest. No one thought it strange that these ads, directed primarily at women consumers, did not incite these women's lust for their sons, daughters, and other women.

To discourage and deny the charge that the campaign was anti-sex, erotica was held up as the **only** sexually explicit material that did not represent violence or cause it. "Erotica" became the code word for stimulation appropriate to a feminist consciousness, while "pornography" was defined as exclusively male and therefore "naturally" devoid of distinctions between sex and violence. The implications of this neat dichotomization and sex-typing of desire reflect, unchanged, the Victorian ideology of innate differences in the nature of male and female libido and fantasy. Men, we are to presume, because of their "excessive" drive, prefer the hard edge of pornography. Women, less driven by the "beast," find erotica just their cup of tea.

Given this map of the sexual world, it was most distressing that during the slide show no erotica was ever presented, leaving the impression that erotica itself is very rare, or so mundane that we can trust our memories to recall its charge. This category of images, absent and therefore mute, was considered essentially unproblematic. It was good, healthy sexual imagery--the standard against which pornography and perhaps our own sexual lives were to be judged. The subjectivity involved in dividing explicitly sexual material into hard-core, soft-core, and erotic was never challenged by the audience.

What is defined as pornography and what is defined as erotica no doubt depends on personal taste, moral boundaries, sexual preferences, cultural and class biases. These definitions have contracted and expanded over time; advocates of one or the other form of imagery have switched camps or staunchly defended their own. Just as normative attitudes about sexual behavior, masculinity and femininity, and the social relations between the sexes have shifted, so have attitudes about sexually explicit material. There are no universal, unchanging criteria for drawing the line between acceptable and unacceptable sexual images. As feminists, we might question the very impulse to make such a rigid separation, to let a small group of women dictate the boundaries of our morality and our pleasure.

No discussion immediately followed the slide show. Divided into groups, we walked down 42nd Street, entering the shops and arcades where films, magazines, and live sex shows are offered to the male public. For the price of a subway ride, I could actually watch for a few minutes, in my own private booth, the act that for all my years in the nuclear family was considered dirty, disgusting, and therefore taboo. If pornography is propaganda, and I do believe that it is, it is not promoting the violation and degradation of women, but traditional heterosexual intercourse and gender relations. (Perhaps they overlap, but that is another story.) What is missing is romance, shared social status, worries about contraception and shame. The short film I saw was not about love, but it was undeniably about sex.

I was grateful for this opportunity to demystify a territory that had been off-limits to me as a woman. I felt relieved about the dangers of pornography, since I had viewed little violence and a lot of consensual sex. However, I was more curious than ever about the meaning and function of such a zone dedicated to solitary

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Pornography and Pleasure

Continued

sexual stimulation and voyeuristic fantasies. The secrecy surrounding sexual activity had been, for me, the price all women paid for femininity. We were not to speak of our desires, only answer "yes" or "no." The tour evoked complex reactions, including envy, fear, and sexual arousal. The social and psychic repression of my female desire was giving way, ever so slightly, under the barrage of sexual imagery. I was a fascinated tourist in an exotic, erotic, and forbidden land.

The tour and slide show raised many questions for me. What is the underlying appeal of pornography? And what does the volume of business done on 42nd Street say about sexual relations? What can pornography tell us about the nature of desire and its relation to fantasy? Is pornography really any more dangerous to women than fashion magazines, television commercials, and cinema? Otherness in the guise of domestic purity and mindless submission seems more pernicious than Otherness in the guise of sexual activity. How, I wondered, can we begin to measure the effects of objectification in pornography when the Otherness ascribed to us at birth because we are not male already labels us as socially inferior? Such an ancient Otherness leaves little room for any avowal of our subjectivity. Moreover, reality and representation of reality are not the same. Objectification may be a function of representation. All the actors (male and female) in pornography are objectified. They do not speak. They are not individuals. They have no depth, no contours. They are the ritual performers of the culture's sexual paradigms. They are not the real, but a commentary on the real.

What I felt after the tour and slide show was the need for discussion of our many contradictory reactions to what we had seen. Yet the lines had already been drawn between bad and good sex, brainwashed fantasies and uncontaminated desires, danger and purity. The excitement of the unknown, the delight and terror at seeing so much active flesh (male and female), was never acknowledged. Like Mom and Dad, the tour leaders responded exclusively to our reactions of disgust. Our worst adolescent fantasies (or our best) were true. "They" will do anything to get it, to have it, to use us. To see pornography as a safety valve for the aggressive sexuality of men was mistaken. Pornography "really" acts to disinhibit male violence. If it is not done away with, we will see an increase in rape, battery, and child molestation. This final volley of doomsday prediction was not easy to recover from. To disagree was to be aligned with the brainwashed or the naive.

I am convinced that the current anti-porn campaign holds significant dangers for feminists interested in developing an analysis of violence against women and extending an analysis of female sexuality. The provocative claims of the campaign create an enormous obstacle in the form of moral righteousness; they feed the old and voracious anxiety we experience when confronted with sexual imagery. Even more important, the campaign has chosen to organize

and theorize around our victimization, our Otherness, not our subjectivity and self-definition. In focussing on what male pornography has done to us, rather than on our own sexual desires, we tend to embrace our sexually deprived condition and begin to police the borders of the double standard that has been used effectively to silence us. It is not in the interests of feminism to circumvent the vast area of sexual repression. And pornography is primarily about sexuality. It is important to wrench this ground out from under the barrage of moralizing so that we can understand the social construction of all our ideas about our own and male sexuality. While it is equally important to understand the cultural determinants of violence against women, I would suggest that these tasks remain separate for the moment.

I have serious reservations about certain tendencies within the anti-porn movement. Are we seeking to protect the ideal of Womanhood by claiming some natural female superiority in the realm of morality and decency? And don't we ignore the sexual socialization of both men and women in asserting that men "by nature" prefer this and women that? What about the subversive elements in pornography, which might help feminists to understand the conditions under which all sexual behavior is

negotiated in a sexist society? If women are humiliated by pornography and feel degraded watching women get pleasure, then we might pause to ask if women are humiliated by real, everyday heterosexuality and its demands. Power relations play an important role in our actual sexual lives. Can we really expect the realm of fantasy to be free of the residues of that power struggle?

As women, we have been brought up in a society where to be sexual in an active or "promiscuous" fashion is to transgress the rules for femininity. Not just the rules set up by men but the rules set and enforced by other women. We learned that men were the prince/beasts and we were their expectant princesses/martyrs, waiting to be aroused by a kiss, leading to love and marriage and the protection of our vulnerable sexuality. The pursuit of sex threatens to make good girls bad, so we usually accept the cultural standard of sexual minimalism...few partners, fewer positions, less pleasure, and no changing of preference. Nice girls don't talk about desiring sex. We talk about what **they** did to us. Women are allowed to be the objects of desire, to attract attention. But we have tended to refuse the role of sexual subject. Being forward, pushy, seeking sex are not acceptable. Being passive, teasing to please are still preferred

to seizing our own pleasure. Pornography might be seen as challenging this protected and confining corner into which women's sexuality has been pushed, for it negates the sacramental character of our sexual desires.

Indeed, I am convinced that pornography, even in its present form, contains important messages for women. As Angela Carter suggests, it does not tie women's sexuality to reproduction or to a domesticated couple or exclusively to men. It is true that this depiction is created by men, but perhaps it can encourage us to think of what our own images and imaginings might be like.

Television, film, and our mothers all reinforce the notion that only bad girls like sex. If we reject this good girl/bad girl distinction, the split between the mother and the whore, the tour guide and the topless dancer, we begin to understand that neither has a better deal under patriarchy. The comfortable separation between feminists, especially academic feminists, and prostitutes, office workers, and other "exploited women" crumbles when we realize the extent to which all our bodies become commodities, whether within or outside the nuclear family. In placing the gratification of men above our own, we pose absolutely no danger to male-dominated society. What I am suggesting here is not a withdrawal from sex, but an active pursuit of **our** gratification, with a sense of responsibility, entitlement, and enthusiasm. The good girl/bad girl distinction will fail to terrorize us and control our access to pleasure **only** if we set out to destroy the double standard.

Specifically, what we might take from male pornography is a vision of the mutability of sexual experience and a variety of directions for sexual experimentation. Whatever its limitations, pornography does demystify a number of sexual practices that have been taboo for women. As voyeurs, we can participate in homosexual activity, domination, group sex, and masochistic and sadistic orgies. With the clues we gather here about our own fantasies, we can begin to map out the zones of cerebral and fleshly arousal.

Pornography also offers women a multiplicity of vantage points for analyzing the sexual paradigms that frame all gender relations and constrain our sexual interactions. Pornography implies that we could find all races, genders, ages, and shapes sexually interesting, if only in our minds. Compare this to the pinched reality of a liberal ideology that snidely prods us to do our own thing against a background of political repression. While pornography itself is not a critique of society, its very existence in such a deeply anti-pleasure society speaks to an attempt to introduce a non-moralistic view of sexual practice. Of course, pornography is not a substitute for sexual practice, though it might be an addition to it. Even if women were to miraculously take over this industry, we would only be able to change the content so that **our** masturbatory pleasure was considered. It would not give us permission to act. That permission can only come when we accept that our desires will not make us victims, that our sensuality is not dangerous to our well-being. This will inspire us at the same time that we work to restructure society to be more hospitable to our desires.

My point is that a stance of moralizing about sexual imagery and, by implication, practice gets us no closer



Photo by Claire Voyant.

to defining how sexual activity and fantasy fit into our lives or our analyses of oppression. If we think that women can only be the victims of sex, what strategies do we propose for taking control and altering this situation? Each heterosexually involved woman must ask herself if she will continue to refuse sexual autonomy and subjectivity in the name of femininity.

Perhaps it is premature to call for a truly radical feminist pornography-erotica. But to speak of our own desires and to organize for our own and our collective sexual pleasure would be a beginning. We could open the debate about the nature of female sexual desire. It is precisely in the private, secret, and "shameful" realm of our own sexuality that we have feared to take responsibility for being subjects. We easily talk about denying men pornographic pleasure, but this does not bring us closer to gaining our own.

The training we received as girls encouraged us to renounce acting on our own behalf and for our own pleasure. Our own sexual desires threatened Mom and Dad, and they told us how dangerous sex was, especially curiosity or experimentation. They warned us about men. The good

ones would protect us and the bad ones would exploit us. Now we are hearing these same echoes in a feminist campaign. Men are lustful and women are loving. They are violent and we are peaceful. They like rough sex...we don't.

Some feminists reject this classification of genders which stresses natural, immutable differences. The essence of male sexuality is not barely repressed violence or insatiable bestiality. Nor is female sexuality passive or characterized by efficiently sanitized longings. As we have come to understand that women are made and not born, we must conclude that

men too undergo a similar social construction. Masculinity and femininity are social products that establish but do not reveal the true natures of these hierarchically opposed groups. Are we ready to give up the eternal enemy and challenge our feminization, which leaves us mute about our desires for pleasure, and so many other things? Once we take our eyes off them and renounce our obsessive concern with their thoughts, feelings, and actions, we can move from blaming to assessing our vision for change.

It is time to organize our pleasure as well as our protection, to use

pornographic images to raise consciousness about our desires and our fears. If we can switch our focus from men's pleasure to our own, then we have the potential of creating the discourse that will challenge the values of "good girls" (non-sexual women) and explore the bridge that connects and divides expression and repression. If we could imagine operating without all the internal and external constraints society has imposed on us, feminists might create a truly radical pornography that spoke of female desire as we are beginning to know it and as we would like to see it acted out.

Night out Continued

empty glasses, seemingly oblivious to our state of undress. Then as he passes by us, without slowing a step, or bothering to look at us more than in passing, he drawls neutrally, "Ya do this everywhere ya go?" But he doesn't wait around for an answer.

With our drained bottles left behind us, we grab our clothes, get dressed and leave. What else is there to do? The crowd of gawkers splits as we walk through the door, keeping their distance as if they're afraid that at any instant we'll tear off our clothes again!

Back at home, warm and cozy under our covers, Cheryl and I share a little extra ardour in our lovemaking. Afterwards, I wonder to myself, "But what'll we do for fun tomorrow night?"

Porn biz Continued

The poor are people, not an excuse for others to feel powerful. My desire was to self-empower my "clients" by raising their self-esteem, so that they could advocate for themselves. My supervisor's goal was to set up a comfortable environment where she could employ family and friends regardless of skill, while taking control over those too helpless to fight back. Rather than be fired for such evil activities as wearing red lipstick, french perfume, and a two-inch high circle-A on my jacket (Green Party symbols were acceptable, though), or for wanting to do a good job at my tasks, I resigned. Rather than lose all hope of ever gaining custody of my child, I returned to my now contrite husband.

I have no sex life at present. I can't do porno of any sort--besides being too heavy to be naked for money, any such activities could jeopardize my possibilities of getting custody of my little girl. And I can't get interested in someone who demands "his rights" when my baby lays crying.

I have a job which doesn't pay me enough money to provide for both childcare and housing, so I can't leave. I can only contemplate affairs.



ANARCHY & RELIGION —the dialogue continues

The letters which follow conclude a discussion which began in *Anarchy* #15. 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 Hennock, 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 did Fred Woodworth in his opening essay, that a very special relationship exists between atheism and anarchy.

Yet, as Jay Kinney attempted to indicate in his essays which followed, 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. Readers are invited to continue this dialogue in the letters columns of our upcoming issues.

Fourth letter to Jay Kinney

Dear Jay,

I hope the enclosed article that I wrote for *Strikel* makes sense to you. As always I find that attempting to deal with complex subjects in a short space with any adequacy is nearly impossible, but even at this short length I have my doubts that *Strikel* will publish it.

I really do have trouble with your distinction between "policing other people's minds" and criticism that is within acceptable bounds. Where do you draw the line? What are your criteria? This whole argument of yours worries me. I can't decide whether you are more upset about (1) possibly having had your own position grouped with more vulgar religious positions and treated with similar abuse by atheists,

resulting in a rebound defense of all religious views as being beyond criticism, or (2) the often biting, satirical, and even nasty attacks on religion that are produced occasionally, and a resulting preference on your part for polite, calm & rational criticism, or (3) the negativity, itself, involved in any criticism, whether of religious views, political views, etc., or (4) the tendency of some atheists to invalidate people's experiences themselves, rather than their interpretations of those experiences which involve religious categories, (5) or the invalidation of religious interpretations of experience (which is what I like to do), or (6) the argument that atheism is a corollary of anarchism (or vice versa) and the resulting tendencies

Continued on next page

Fourth letter to Jay Continued

to write off all religious beliefs without consideration for their possible differences, or etc.

Whatever your actual point, I think that your argument is so ambiguous and broad in its coverage as to be indefensible. It would be one thing to criticize **some** atheists for their dogmatic materialist attacks on religion, or **some** atheists who alienate religious people by attacking them rather than talking to them, etc. It is quite another to, as it appears to me you are doing, tar all criticism of religion with the same brush. It would be one thing to point out what you think is a **specific** abuse and call it an equivalent of "policing people's minds;" it is another to use that phrase to criticize all atheists

with a charge that cannot be refuted because of its ambiguity.

I hope this article does make my argument (that all religious dualism involves reification, and is thus incompatible with the clear & critical thought necessary to create an anarchist society) clearer. One of these days when I have time, I'll have to write a much longer piece on this subject. I think it is an extremely important area for anarchists to understand and work on. If the concept of reification and an understanding of its ubiquitous presence in contemporary thinking were genuinely known and widespread, I think that half the battle toward creating a sane world would be won. Well, maybe a quarter of the battle?...!

...I look forward to hearing from you again.

Take care...& smash reality!
Lev Chernyi

to grant them their due and right to existence, shouldn't involve the valuation as inferior of those less experienced nor make them slaves to those more experienced. I also find it worth considering that the world's esoteric traditions have traditionally taught that there is a hierarchy of consciousness. Writers such as Ken Wilber (see enclosed article, "Of Shadows and Symbols: Physics and Mysticism") make what I find to be a convincing argument for this "hierarchy."

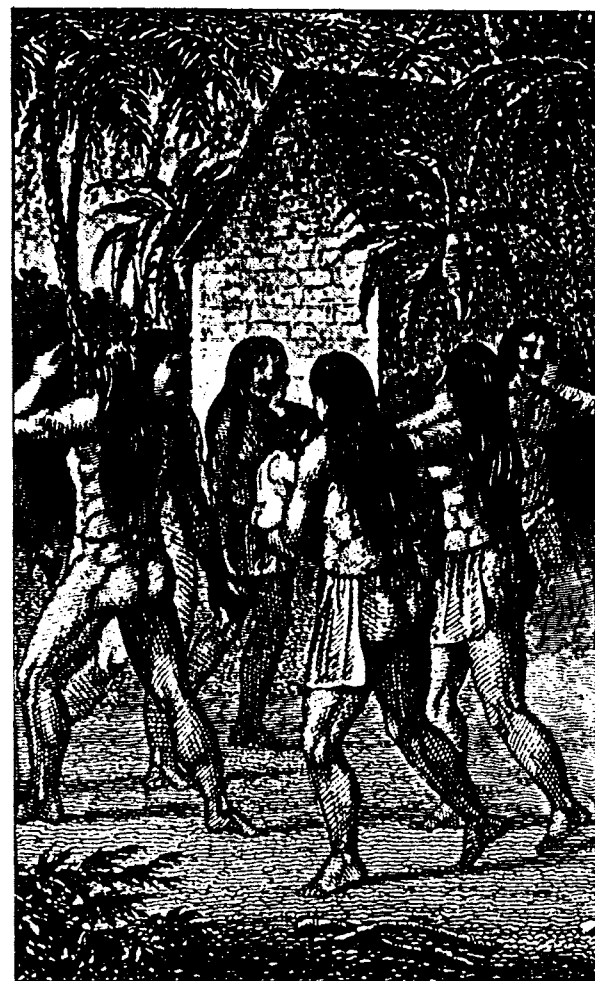
So you can see that my views diverge at almost every step from those which I associate with standard anarchism. This is why I felt more at ease with the label "libertarian socialist" in our kitchen discussion in Columbia, though I find any stock label to be inadequate.

Given all of the above, why have I even bothered to engage in the debate with Fred and you? In part because I assume that the libertarian project is not the sole possession of doctrinaire anarchists and libertarians but has value for all of us who wish to change society in the direction of greater freedom and justice. It is also my assumption that such changes can only occur through the cooperation of people who share a **minimum** set of goals and values. It has been my contention that religious beliefs and spiritual orientations (or disbeliefs and nonorientations) should be outside of this minimum basis of agreement. Rather, the basis of agreement should concentrate primarily on political and economic matters. In other words, any libertarian movement with an interest in growth and effectiveness, should be inclusive regarding potential allies, not exclusive.

I've not replied at length to your specific comments on sacred/profane ontology, etc. because **given your definitions and assumptions**--such as that "God" or "the sacred" are (pernicious) abstractions--they seem to follow logically. On the other hand, if one maintains as do I that those labels (such as "God"), while inevitably inadequate and misleading do refer to something **real**, and that there is some value in examining and even using the religious symbols which have come down to us through the centuries, then we're back to base one which is the individual's right to his or her own **weltanschauung**. I will defend this right both against any religious institution that would try to enforce a monolithic worldview and against any political institution or theory which would presume to encroach on it (meaning the individual's right), even in the name of freedom.

I hope that you will send me a copy of any further response you plan to send to **Striket**--perhaps before you send it to them--so that I can have the chance to respond alongside it in the same issue. That exchange would be, I think, the final one in this "debate" because I think we've reached the point where we'll either have to agree to disagree or risk going around in circles forever.

Best wishes,
Jay Kinney



beyond their functions as tools for thinking and communication). However, concepts (etc.) do have certain logical connections (connections determined by the rules of the logic-games by which people are able to reason.), words do have certain definitions that are more or less accepted by different groups of people as their usual meanings, and I prefer to use words and concepts accordingly whenever possible to make my arguments maximally understandable.

My perspective regarding values is somewhat analogous to my position regarding concepts. **People** have intentions or values; **values** have no reality beyond their individual instances of existence for intentional/valuing beings, whether these beings are amoebae, or bureaucrats, or priests (or "gods," if there are any beings that can be called that).

Thus I find myself both agreeing and probably disagreeing with your statement that reason and science are "insufficient for apprehending the universe and reality." I agree, certainly, because **no** system of ideas will ever be adequate for apprehending anything completely. Given the nature of what they are, they can give us certain finite and relative handles on the reality we live. They can be more or less effective as tools for expression, orientation, or change. But they all will have by their very nature certain limits which we can cultivate an awareness of if we wish, but which we cannot avoid. In other words all idea-systems can have a high degree of validity within certain well-definable limits. Outside of these limits they usually become primarily systems of (self-)deception.

Some of the sciences are very effective tools for helping us understand some of the relations between entities which we can successfully abstract out of their natural environment and manipulate. Sciences can help us express our passions for knowledge, control, etc. in certain spheres of our experience. Science can help us change our world--electrification, automobilization, & nuclear destruction would all be unlikely without the idea-systems called the sciences. But science becomes nonsense when people take it to be able to generate any kind of adequate conception about the nature of the "reality" we live each day. Such absurd attempts at domesticating the reality of human

Second letter to Lev Chernyi

Dear Lev,

This is my third attempt at this letter over the last week or so. I've been trying to figure out why I've been having such a difficult time with this response, and now I believe I've got an idea. I think this idea may also account for much of the distance between our two positions, and may also indicate why it is unlikely that we'll ever reach a mutual viewpoint that is totally satisfactory to both of us.

In short here seems to be the heart of the problem: According to my perception of your viewpoint (and I recognize the risk of putting words in your mouth), you take the validity of the anarchist or libertarian critique as a given upon which the rest of your arguments are built. This critique includes a number of concepts and values which are more or less considered to be **a priori** such as the inherently oppressive nature of the State or Hierarchy, the realm of human activities being the cause and cure of alienation, the value of Liberty holding a supreme position in the realm of human values, the sufficiency of reason and science for apprehending the nature of the Universe and "reality," and the possibility of a workable worldwide society existing without borders, leaders, wage-labor, or the use of coercive force.

Accordingly, your critique of religion as I understand it evaluates religion according to these standards and assumptions, going so far as to see religious ontology as one of the primary causes of human alienation throughout history.

However, my starting assumptions are quite different and not surprisingly they lead me to different conclusions. For starters, I consider reason and science to be insufficient for apprehending the Universe and reality. I think that both the Universe and reality are too multifaceted and enormous for any individual to grasp either **sensuously** or **theoretically**. However, I think that science and reason are worthwhile tools with which to approach matters within certain limits. To go **beyond** those limits requires nonrational and intuitive means which may not lend themselves to ordinary scientific systemization. Accordingly, I believe that all rational discussions about ontology such as this one are by definition inadequate.

Next, while I grant that much alienation may stem from, and be solvable within, the realm of human activities, I nevertheless believe that a certain alienation is inherent in any individual ego-identified human being's relationship to the rest of the world around them, and that the attempt to eliminate this alienation, by political means or otherwise, while still preserving the supremacy of the ego, is an exercise in

futility.

I view Liberty (or Freedom) as an important value, but one that needs to be balanced against other values such as Justice and Mercy that are also important. Moreover, I think a definition of Liberty that identifies it with a state of existence where one is free of any effect or restriction placed upon one by others is a misleading myth. No such state of freedom exists, has existed, or ever will. Existence as I see it entails the inevitable overlapping and reverberation of different conflicting actions, tastes, viewpoints and orientations. Freedom within this context recognizes this and means that the maximum effort has been made to allow such differences to coexist.

I recognize within the State and most institutionalized hierarchies a basic tendency towards oppression, i.e. a domination of the many by the few, and an unjust concentration of power with those few. However, I'm wary of setting up the State or Hierarchy as quasi-metaphysical categories which are invariably synonymous with evil. Given the complexity of the present world I'm skeptical of the possibility of a free international social order working without at least a certain level of organization and even certain agreed upon "laws." Whether such organization would be able to be labeled a "State" is an open question to me, and I have problems with simplistic notions of "Smash the State" that forever defer tackling this question of just what is a workable free social order.

Similarly, while I oppose authority based on force or deceit, I do not think that every single instance of hierarchy is necessarily bad. In fact, it seems to me that in matters of capability or experience a certain natural stratification occurs whether intentional or not. For instance, I think that there was a certain truth and value in the guild hierarchy of apprentice/journeyman/master. Such hierarchies, if one is

Fifth letter to Jay Kinney

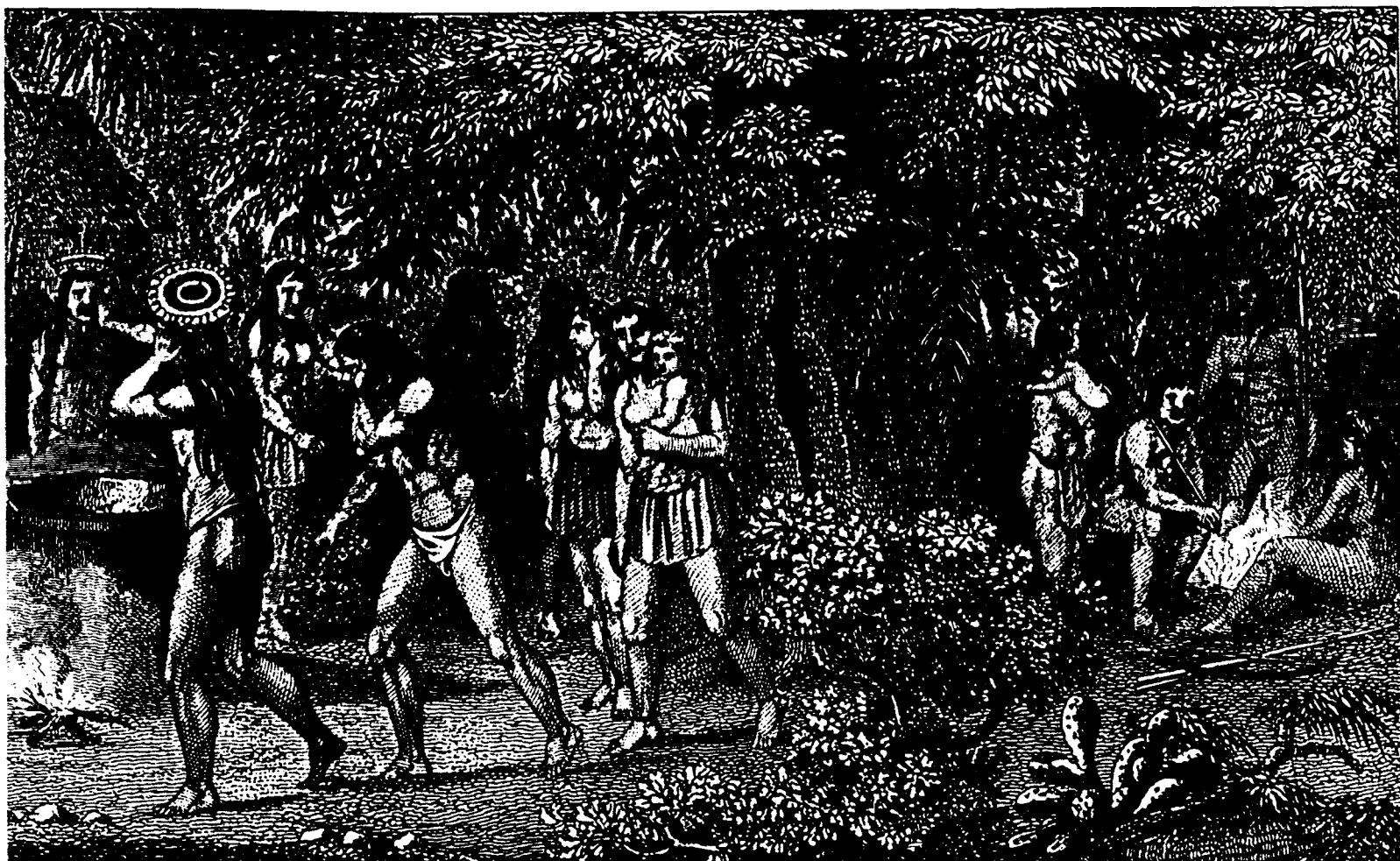
Dear Jay,

Just now received your letter.... In reading it I find it somewhat fascinating that we seem to share similar perspectives in so many ways, yet we don't seem to be able to connect in our communication around certain central points. Maybe we're both making too many erroneous assumptions about the other's perspectives, and in turn not making the essential aspects of our own views clear enough?

I only half recognize myself in your list of positions/attitudes that you use in your attempt to describe my "viewpoint." I don't believe in any

"a priori" concepts or values, as you put it in your letter. But I can understand how it might appear that I do to someone unfamiliar with my arguments--at least I **think** I may understand this.

My perspective on concepts is entirely **nominalist**. In other words I think that all ideas, words, & concepts used by us humans are just that--ideas, words & concepts used by human beings to express themselves, tools to "understand" their predicaments, and tools to change them. As such, I don't believe that any concepts have any "a priori" meanings, values, or truth (or reality



experience through use of passionless, one-dimensional categories are analogous to a belief that a satellite photo could tell us all we need to know about the earth. It might tell us certain very important things about the earth, but it has very obvious limits and cannot give us the whole "picture."

However, despite our likely agreement concerning what I've just said, I probably also **disagree** with some of the implications you may be drawing from this "insufficiency" of reason and science--though I may be mistaken. The attitude you seem to be expressing in your letters and articles not only indicates an awareness of some of the limits of reason, but also appears to me to deny the validity of logic and reason within even their **proper** sphere of existence and validity in the discussion of ontology, religion, etc. To me this is the most dangerous aspect of your perspective--and one which can easily lead you on a slide down the slippery slope of irrationalism if you are not **very** careful.

The important lesson that should be gained from the realization that reason has limits is not that it should be discarded whenever it becomes inconvenient, but rather that it must be

employed with even greater awareness, precision and an immense respect for its limits as a tool. It is this difference in attitude toward rationality that I think is our biggest and most fundamental divergence. But now that I've said this, let me get back to your letter and after explaining my responses to it, I'll return again to this question of the usefulness and proper sphere of reason.

Regarding your "perception of [my] viewpoint": I don't "take the validity of the anarchist or libertarian critique as a given upon which the rest of [my] arguments are built." In fact, the reverse is closer to the truth--minus any "givens." My anarchism derives from my philosophical perspective [which can be called dialectical phenomenology] and from the most fundamental attitudes I take towards the world I experience. My atheism in the sphere of philosophy is derivative from my theory of knowledge and my resistance to any type of invalidation or reification of my most fundamental level of experience, just as my anarchism in the sphere of political theory and practice is similarly derived.

I start from only one "given," one "a priori" premise, and that is that my experience is my only reality, and nothing outside of my experience can possibly be "real" in any meaningful way for me. (By experience I definitely do not mean "sense-data," but rather the synthesis of my subjectivity and my world in my life-process; or more accurately, my subjectivity and my world can in reality only be abstracted out of the unity of my experience through my reflections and analysis of that experience.) By saying that nothing outside of my experience can possibly have any reality for me, I mean that if I have no indication, no hint, no "effect" to attribute a "cause" to, etc., then there is nothing there for me.

As a corollary, this implies that if there is some kind of hint, or indication, or effect which indicates that something may have an existence (potentially) for me beyond what I already know of it--then this hint, indication, or effect is the face of that possibly larger phenomenon which I can see from my inalienable perspective. And that phenomenon is thus already within my experience and cannot be ontologically or metaphysically separated from it. And further, that this larger phenome-

non can only have a speculative, or largely theoretical existence for me beyond my knowledge of the properties of the face that I experience directly. In other words it is largely conceptual, and as such a limited approximation, an abstract representation or projection, that must remain subject to revision as new experience is gained and that must be subject to rational and logical evaluation.

It is true that I consider the state and hierarchy to be inherently oppressive in a very important sense--i.e. the state as described by Kropotkin is an institution which would not exist without **political** hierarchy, and **political** hierarchy is by definition a situation involving the exercise of **power** over some people by others, which is usually oppressive. Of course, the state has other functions besides the exercise of power, but none of these other functions is as essential to its definition as a state as its ability to enforce its power over people within its boundaries.

And depending upon how specifically we want to define what a state is, we may or may not accurately be able to describe an anarchist society as stateless--except that we must remember that according to the way that most people use the word "state," it is not applicable to an anarchist society, which would severely limit the exercise of political power (though I think that a "pure" anarchist society in which all political power has been abolished is almost an impossibility within the next millennium).

However, what I have just said is far from "setting up the state or hierarchy as quasi-metaphysical categories which are invariably synonymous with evil." Obviously, an international social order, free or not, is impossible without organization and agreements. (What you mean by "laws" I don't know; it depends upon how you want to define the term as to whether I could agree here with you or not--certainly they would not be laws in the currently accepted sense of that word, though a libertarian equivalent with certain similarities, yet differences, might be reasonably called "laws.")

And just as obviously, not all hierarchy is necessarily bad. First of all there are different types of hierarchies, and the only one I want to criticize is **political** hierarchy. You only confuse the issue when you bring in other

types of hierarchies as if they were something anarchists had any desire to eliminate. No one that I know of is arguing that "higher" states of consciousness should be abolished because they're hierarchical and thus bad! But I'll say further that I also don't consider political hierarchy or the state as Kropotkin defines it to be absolute evils or even somehow "objectively" bad.

The only claim I want to make is that they are destructive of the things I value most highly in my life and others lives, and that I think other people are enough like me deep down below their levels of conditioning and fear, that there is a potential for most of them to agree with me on this. I believe in no objective values beyond the values that individual subjective beings possess--in fact, the concept of objective values or absolute values, or metaphysical good & evil is itself an absurdity! (The concept of value is meaningless without some sort of subjectivity for which things have value, i.e. value is a subjective phenomenon, not an object in-itself.)

As for your statements about alienation, I couldn't agree with you more. There are obviously different types of alienation, and only socially produced alienation will be eliminated through social means. However, there is a socially produced alienation from nature (from our "natural" selves & our experience of the "natural" world) that exists above and beyond the "natural" alienation involved in one's existence as a being in some way separated from other beings, and even more fundamentally in one's existence as a being which has two sides--objective and subjective--as its very condition of experience.

Back to values again: I don't view liberty as having a "supreme" position in the realm of human values. For myself, my "highest" value is what Max Stirner called "ownness," which is the opposite of alienation. It is self-possession rather than self-alienation--being a whole and undivided person at one with oneself at the most fundamental levels of living. Relatively speaking, of course, you are right--many finite values are important to me, and important to be shared if we are to create a freer social system. Your descriptions of the "misleading myth" of absolute freedom, and of the meaning of freedom as you see it are both well-conceived.

So now that I've tried to show you the inaccuracy of your impression of my perspective, let me try to summarize what we **do agree** on as I see it! (1) There are definite limits to the valid use of reason and logic. (2) Science and reason are worthwhile tools within certain limits. (3) Not all experience lends itself to scientific or even rational examination. (4) Only socially created alienation is eliminable by social means. (5) Absolute freedom is incompatible with social order. (6) The state and hierarchy are not "evil." (7) A free social order would require organization and operating agreements of some kind that could conceivably be called "laws." (8) There are types of hierarchy that have nothing to do with social domination. (9) "Pure" anarchy is an unrealistic goal for the immediate future. (10) "Impure" anarchy, or a relatively more free, unalienated, and satisfying social system, is within the realm of possibility. If I'm not mistaken in this evaluation, that's a powerful lot of agreement we share!

Where is our disagreement centered? It seems to me that it is probably centered on our attitudes toward and understanding of reason/rationality/logic--the use of definitions, the meaning of dualism, the necessity for a dialectic understanding of concepts/language--knowledge from my perspective, the lack of such a necessity from yours.

Because of these differences, I happen to see dualistic ontologies [and

Continued on next page





Fifth letter to Jay Continued

thus from my perspective, religious ontologies) as examples of human alienation which reinforce and reproduce a whole network of alienating relations between humans and other humans, and between humans and the objects of their perception and activity. You don't see this, and deny that dualistic ontologies are necessarily instances of human alienation. This leads you to the conclusion that religion is not necessarily connected for good or bad to social freedom, whereas I see it as essentially alienating and incompatible with the libertarian project to the extent that it is dualist and not dialectical. With you I am ready to criticize any dogmatic denunciations of religion which do not seek to understand what it is they are against, but only oppose religion as if it were some abstract, monolithic evil. With you I am ready to oppose the enforcement of any ideological "correct-line" by social institutions or would-be revolutionaries. Dogmatic materialism, scientism, or rationalism are as repugnant to me as dogmatic religion. To all of them, though, I oppose their opposite, a critical and dialectical perspective which does not claim to be able to describe or explain any "ultimate reality" beyond our own experience, which submits any rationally constructed description of anything—including religious views—to rational criticism, and which knows the limits of human knowledge.

Thus I am brought back to the question of the usefulness and proper sphere of reason which I promised to get back to earlier on in this letter. My basic concern here is the old argument (which you seem to be flirting with) that matters of religion are somehow beyond rationality, and **therefore** they are above criticism. This is complete bullshit, and is **only** a strategy for avoiding criticism. If something is so far beyond rationality that it cannot be formulated at all in any conceptual terms it is genuinely beyond argument...but if this is really the case then it is also necessarily beyond any rationally formulated implications. If **anything** is formulated in conceptual terms **no matter how inadequate** those terms might be, then that formulation is subject to rational criticism **on its own terms**. If you want to call something a metaphor, then it is beyond criticism as a formulation of fact, but it is absolutely vulnerable to criticism **as a metaphor**. Thus, when, for example, certain Christians formulate conceptions of their god, they often do so in terms which are mutually contradictory, then they defend their formulation by saying that god is beyond logic, or it's a mystery, etc. This would be fine if that would be the level of discourse they really wished to remain on—a terrain of logically contradictory concepts with no rational meaning—however, then they turn right around and **demand** that their conceptions be taken

seriously and rationally in their implications as if they were really fact! This kind of deceitful double standard is a species of irrationalism to which I have an emotional repugnance. But, unfortunately, it is all too typical of the usual level of discourse concerning religion.

In distinction to such religious irrationalism, let me examine your conception (in your original article concerning anarchy and religion) of a "sentient, all-pervading consciousness." This is a rationally formulated conception which demands to be treated as such. It is criticizable, and if it is found to be logically contradictory then it is false in some way. As it stands, though, it is not necessarily logically contradictory, and is a possible theory about our world. If we accept it as just this, a speculative theory which may or may not be true, it is not in any way religious according to the usual definition of religion, rather it is a possible fact, and can be treated and evaluated as such. No metaphysical claims, such as that this consciousness is "the absolute," or that it is "more real" than human experience, are made. It is thus not dualistic, and is compatible with a dialectical atheism as a hypothesis about our world.

What happens then, when we call it (metaphorically) a god? The first thing that happens is that (unless we clearly and explicitly state that we only mean to call it a god as a metaphor) people will immediately mistake our meaning, and think that it is supposed to be a statement of fact. And secondly, whether or not they realize that it should be treated as only a metaphor, they will begin confusing all the various historically generated connotations of the word "god" with the metaphorical denotation we may wish to give it. In other words, by calling it a god, we've immediately created a whole heap of conceptual confusion and mystification. However, be that as it may, this still does not invalidate necessarily the usefulness that we may derive from the metaphor, though it may mitigate that usefulness. We are still remaining outside the boundaries of religion, as most people would define it—if only barely, by not calling it "god" in fact.

Suppose then that we take the next "logical" step and call it a "god" in fact. Now we have stepped over the boundary of atheism into religion in most people's minds. We now "believe" in this conception of reality despite any evidence pro or con that is meaningful or true. We have entered the realm of dogmatism, dualism and mysticism. We have set up a metaphysical idea and attributed to it a reality that it does not earn through our senses and rational thought. It is now "true" because we have had a "religious experience" in which "it" told us to believe in it, or because we read it in a sacred book, or because our guru told us so,

etc. As with all irrationalist doctrines, now even the slightest mundane event can become a "miracle" indicating the truth of our revelation and denying the truth of any other perspective. Our belief in this conception of the world is now more real to us than our own experience, our own values, our own lives. Now we orient our lives around its demands, its imputed values, etc. This is religion. This is ideology. This is incompatible with the way free, autonomous, intelligent, and unalienated human beings think about their world.

One reason I took this conception of a sentient, all-pervading consciousness as an example to illustrate the different ways of thinking about things is that I hold a tentative, speculative hypothesis which is so similar that it may be identical to what you mean by this conception. As I see it, it is very possible that all objects of our experience may in some sense share the possession of a degree of sentience, though it would have to be of a very rudimentary nature in comparison to that of more obviously living beings. And one could imagine that if one conceived of all the sentience throughout the universe to make up some sort of interconnected whole, some very interesting implications might follow. However, as long as one does not "believe" in this conception, the implications are only hypothetical implications, and we still remain in the same world we started out in with no compulsion to orient our lives around this. Our lived experience remains the center of our lives, not an idea about the nature of the universe. In this sense, I am an atheist....

I just finished reading the article by Ken Wilber ("Of Shadows and Symbols: Physics and Mysticism," an introduction from his book *Quantum Questions: The Mystical Writings of the World's Great Physicists*, which also appeared in *ReVISION*, Vol 7, No 1.) that you sent along with your letter. I was hoping it would be a stimulating and rational appraisal of the similarities and differences of science and mysticism. The first six and a half pages were no disappointment; aside from the usual dualist confusions which remained in the background, this part was a well-reasoned, interesting and worthwhile account of the subject. Unfortunately, the rest of the article did not live up to the promise of the strong beginning. In fact, the rest is a disaster for both mysticism and rationality.... I assume that the parts of the article that you have side-lined are the parts that you think are most important for our own argument, beginning with Wilber's description of the "central mystical experience" as the apprehension of reality (I'm sorry, that's "Reality") directly, immediately, without any conceptualization, no abstractions, in an act in which subject and object become one.

Now this formulation, as it stands, can fortunately or unfortunately signify at least two different possible things. One of these things I see as being very valuable and important; one is worthless. If I were a self-identified mystic instead of, or as well as, being a self-identified anarchist and atheist (and in certain situations occasionally I do identify myself as such), then I would call the one possible meaning of the above statement "genuine" or "true" mysticism, while I would call the other possible meaning "false." But since I usually feel more affinity for the traditions labelled "anarchist" and "atheist" than I do for most of what passes for "mysticism," I tend to identify "false mysticism" with mysticism as such, and prefer other words to describe the "genuine" variety. All this preliminary jockeying is just to show you that once again I am not so much interested in criticizing the concept-name of "mysticism" as I am in criticizing what certain people (and I would say the

majority of people) mean by this word.

That said, okay, what are the two possible meanings? The first, the one I find very valuable, is the idea (in itself it is an idea of what is in a very important sense beyond ideas) of the immediate apprehension of reality without the capital "R." This is the sense in which we take very seriously all the ideas of non-mediation, absence of concepts, etc. and follow these indications deeper and deeper into our experience through all the layers of conceptual interpretation to the point where we "transcend" even the duality of subjectivity and object-world, to the point where we not only conceptually understand that both subjectivity and world are abstractions, but that we spontaneously and non-conceptually "realize" that we are always **living** this preconceptual unity of experience, even when this experience involves our use of concepts.

In this sense of mysticism we can take a journey into the center of reality by shedding all the conceptual layers which confuse us until we get to the point where we realize and accept the fact that we are **always already there**—it is only in the reflections of our consciousness, in the conceptual objectifications of our seamless pre-subjective, pre-conceptual experience that we get lost in a maze of images which we mistake for reality. This simple idea lies at the heart of what I call (depending upon the circumstances and my purposes) either genuine mysticism, or dialectical phenomenology, or dialectical atheism, etc. I think this idea is most clearly and unambiguously present in the Taoist and Zen traditions, as well as in the contemporary writings of some of the more dialectical and phenomenological philosophers like Max Stirner, Maurice Merleau-Ponty and Paul Goodman.

So what is the other interpretation of Wilber's description of the "central mystical experience"? It involves a misdirected search for a Reality "out there" somewhere at the fringes of the object-pole of our experience, or "in there" somewhere at the "center" of the subject-pole of our experience, rather than an unveiling of the point where subject-pole meets object-pole, from which both poles originate as abstractions. It involves a futile search for a Reality which is an object (whether it is objectified as consciousness, or spirit, or brahman, or god, or universe) with which we can attempt to become one, rather than the spontaneous self-revelation or intuition of the concrete, unmediated reality that we live. It is a misguided attempt, finally, at "immediately apprehending" a Reality that has been preconceived, a reality that is seen as being "beyond abstractions" not in the sense of being something else entirely, but in the sense of being even higher, better, more ultimate, and in effect, more abstract than even the most abstract concepts imaginable.

It should be no surprise that this type of "mysticism" ends up recapitulating all the ontological dualisms from which the religions are constructed. This is the interpretation of Wilber's "central mystical experience" that I find whenever "spiritually-oriented" people reveal their thoughts to me, and it absolutely plagues the anemic mysticism of the "new-ageists." This is the type of mysticism that devalues our everyday experience here & now in favor of abstract concepts which are supposed to be somehow **more real**. It claims to value the "here and now," but in fact it only values an abstractly spiritual interpretation of the "here and now," it cannot let-go of abstractions; it is hopelessly enthralled by them—the bigger, the better, the more magnificent the abstractions, the more real it seems, & the more uncritical, empty-headed, spaced-out suckers are attracted to the gurus who pimp it all.

These so-called mystics have an insatiable appetite for abstractions that swallows whole the search for the Absolute, Ultimate, Super-duper, Undifferentiated, Infinite, Transcendent, Immanent, Highest, Most Marvelously Glorious, Fucking-A **REALITY**. This type of barrenly abstract word-game has no interest for me. And I daresay it has no interest for any others who take their mysticism and their rationality seriously. My personal rule of thumb is the more capitalized buzzwords I see in someone's writing, the less they probably have to say.

Sorry if I got carried away, but I hope this torrent of abuse gives you a better idea of why I am so passionately critical of religion. Life is a mysterious thing when we try to understand it conceptually; so is the universe, so is every object of my experience from a blade of grass to a computer. None of this can ultimately be satisfactorily explained through conceptual means--because the reality we experience is not a load of concepts. Science cannot explain it. Philosophy, mysticism, etc. can only at best point beyond concepts to a place where we can realize that conceptual answers to "ultimate" questions do not exist, to a place where we are no longer bothered by such questions because we have seen through their futility.

However, this does not mean that we can dispense with rationality when we talk of such things. If we want to rationally discuss these matters, then we must abide by the conventions of logic. To paraphrase the line from Wittgenstein that Wilber quotes, "whereof one can only speak nonsense, thereof one is inescapably nonsensical."

Wilber's willful capitulation to irrationality in his description of the "paradox of spirit" is nauseating to me. It's one thing to (as most "genuine" mystics do) play around with relative paradoxes--in which conceptions seem at first sight to be contradictory, but turn out on closer examination to be reconcilable with each other when their specific meanings are revealed--it is quite another thing to immerse yourself in the absurdity of absolute contradictions. There is no incompatibility between mysticism and rationality in their "genuine" senses. As long as we keep in mind the relative limits of conceptualizations, we can talk about anything we can possibly conceptualize with a high degree of validity. "Mysticism" which is willfully irrational, however,

is just as incompatible with a genuine, dialectical rationality as a dogmatic Rationalism is with a genuine mysticism.

I could do a step-by-step criticism of the second half of Wilber's essay--from his college-student confusion of scientific method with epistemology and scientific domain with ontology, to his incoherent diagramming and discussion of the "Great Chain of Being"--but I won't burden you with details. Suffice it to say that Wilber's generally mechanistic conception of mysticism is so naively misguided that if he could show it to most of the physicists he quotes they would probably immediately disown any connection with it.

Despite his own seemingly sound criticism of Capra, et al, he reproduces the same type of mistake, only on a more sophisticated, more abstract level. Yet in doing this, his result is even less convincing than Capra's to the point of humor--his discussion of "religious science" is ridiculously naive for example. Genuine mysticism requires more than a mixture of trendy ideas with extravagant language, it requires good solid logic and more than a superficial understanding of dialectics and holism (Wilber's impoverished understanding of holism as a "sum" of objects and their relations--an atomistic holism--leaves much to be desired).

I hope all these words aren't too overwhelming. I'm just glad to have this opportunity to get some of my thoughts in order--it's been so long since I've had much time to write anything....

I have a feeling that whether or not we want one final exchange to be the last of our debate in *Strikel*, that they won't print anymore anyway. I have my doubts that they'll even print the article that I sent last week. But regardless of whether they do or don't print my article, I'm thinking about putting out a pamphlet in the future reproducing our entire dialogue--articles and letters--if you're amenable to the idea. Would you mind having the arguments in your letters printed minus any irrelevant comments about other matters? I would be quite willing to let you have the last word (letter or article). And of course the pamphlet would be produced in a limited number of copies on a non-profit basis, if it is ever produced at all. Right now it's just an idea I'm entertaining....

Till next time...

Smash Reality!
Your friend,
Lev

Third letter to Lev Chernyi

Dear Lev,

Ay yi yi... Truly whatever I write I get sevenfold in return. I send you a 2-page letter and here's a 14-pager by return mail. Plus there's your previous 2-pager... and your 6 page *Strikel* piece and the letter before that of several pages. I simply do not have enough waking hours to go through all these missives paragraph by paragraph such as they might deserve (or, at least, as you might wish). I'm left with tackling your latest letter and that in somewhat abbreviated form.

No small source of my frustration with our discussion--wrangling over definitions and assumptions aside--is that my primary interest has been in discussing the strategy and tactics which the present libertarian movement uses and/or might use. This was what most attracted me about participating in the "debate" with Fred, when it was originally proposed by one of *Strikel's* editorial board. However, because you are strongly interested in philosophical discussions, our continuance of the original debate has been almost entirely over philosophical matters like ontology, epistemology and phenomenology. I

must admit that I've felt somewhat at a disadvantage in this terrain because I've never taken a philosophy course in my life and am entirely self-educated in these matters. I'm not trying to beg off the discussion due to this fact--on the contrary, I suppose my innate stubbornness more than makes up for the gaps in my formal education.

Nevertheless, I am keenly aware that the nature of our discussion is undoubtedly above the heads of, and beyond the interest of 99% of the population. This doesn't mean it is pointless, for it is helping us to clarify our own thinking after all, but it does mean that it is of limited practical use. Or so it seems to me. (I'm not adverse to collecting the exchange in a pamphlet by the way. It may be of interest to some. I wouldn't expect it to be a hot seller, though.)

However, while we're tackling these questions of basic reality, perception and reification, most anarchists and/or left libertarians are running around making judgements and spouting rhetoric of a much less sophisticated nature. If all we had to deal with were the *crème de la crème* of radical theorists we'd be in relatively great shape. Indeed, if

SATAN PLOTTING MAN'S DOWNFALL



This illustration for 'Paradise Lost' was made by Doré, the great French artist. It shows Satan and Beelzebub immersed in a lake of fire, into which they have been cast after their fall from Heaven. "Upright he rears his mighty stature" the poem says of Satan, and the two fallen but still rebellious angels busy themselves plotting how they can offend God most grievously.

most Marxists had the philosophical chops of Walter Benjamin or Antonio Gramsci the world would be a far more wondrous place. As it is, the Marxism that seems to be invariably promulgated on both an institutional and a popular level is that ubiquitous stuff called "vulgar Marxism," which lends itself far better to forceful slogans, unilateral judgements, and party discipline.

A similar situation seems to be the case with anarchism, except that "vulgar anarchism" hardly lends itself to party discipline (or institutionalization), which is some comfort, I suppose. I'd suggest that it is vulgar or automatic anarchism at work when an anarchist sees a Trotskyist literature table at a peace demonstration and decides that baiting Trots is a worthwhile expenditure of energy. It was vulgar anarchism when Johnny Rotten sang, "I am an anarchist... I want to destroy." At the risk of returning pettiness in kind, I'd even contend that it was vulgar anarchism at work when my response to your response in *Strikel* was "illustrated" with a clichéd photo of a religious nut and a dogmatic quote from Bakunin.

Vulgar anarchism is not always horrible, more often it is merely simple-minded. In any event, it is hardly going to go away--on the contrary, the vulgarization of a theory or perspective goes hand in hand with its popularization. My interest with my original article was in proposing in a relatively direct, relatively unsophisticated way (call it vulgar if you will) that atheism (particularly dogmatic, knock-down-the-straw-man atheism) is not necessarily an essential corollary of anarchism/libertarianism and that it is counterproductive to present it as such. In the past I've chosen to present my perspectives and opinions in comic form, where

any bitter pills are heavily coated with humor. Perhaps that remains the optimum method for making one's case to the anti-authoritarian on the street, because at this point I don't think your average anarchist, much less your basic working stiff, would have the slightest inkling as to what the fuck we are talking about. I'm not ever sure I know half the time!

I appreciate the degree to which we do agree, which you spelled out pretty well in your letter. I also appreciate your clarification of how your views differ from the assumptions I imputed to you. Now to turn to at least one or two specifics from your letter.

Let me assure you that I am not opposed to the use of logic and rationality, even in discussions of religion, spirituality, theology, ontology, etc. If I were thoroughly opposed to such, I wouldn't have bothered wading into this discussion as I have. It is just that I am of the opinion that logic and rationality are slippery tools indeed when used in criticizing or analyzing the subjective perceptions, beliefs, or psychologies of others.

Example: Shirley X loves Joe Blow. Using the powers of logic and rationality at your disposal you try to analyze this baffling phenomena. After all, Joe Blow is belligerent, rather ugly, washes rarely, and is a sexist pig. He treats Shirley like dirt, sells napalm for a living, and is a member of the KKK. Shirley, on the other hand is attractive, bright, progressive, politically active. You point out all these things to Shirley. She agrees but doesn't care--she loves Joe. You reason that perhaps she is a masochist, or perhaps Joe reminds her of her father and she has unresolved

Continued on next page



Third letter to Lev Continued

Oedipal longings. You theorize that perhaps he has been so terrorized that she has been brainwashed. You analyze that Shirley is a victim of Patriarchal oppression. And so on. Logically it doesn't add up. Employing logic and rationality you can come up with an analysis of the situation, but your analysis doesn't alter Shirley's feelings. Moreover, the more you criticize Joe for quite logical reasons, the more Shirley defends him and her love for him seems to intensify. In other words, logic and rationality not only strike out in their confrontation with Shirley's irrational love of Joe but they prove counterproductive. The more you employ them the more she is attached to Joe. You leave town for six months. When you return Shirley has divorced Joe. You ask her what happened? What caused her to come to her senses? Well, she says, he used to drive her nuts by putting new rolls of toilet paper on the spool with the tissues hanging down on the outside, when anyone knows they are supposed to hang down on the wall side. He refused to change so she divorced him. Logic had little to do with her decision.

Well, I may have got carried away with the banal scenario, but perhaps you get my point. Matters of love, emotion, devotion, etc. (which encompass religion most of the time) operate in realms beyond logic much of the time. A large portion of our psyche is occupied by our Unconscious and much of our behavior originates from the Unconscious. The Unconscious does not operate in a logical, rational manner. You can have a dream where all sorts of things occur that are normally impossible--yet they occur in the dream. Moreover, when you wake up and remember the dream you are left with a strong feeling, a mood that colors your perceptions and behaviors all morning. You go to your therapist and discuss the dream. The therapist doesn't say, "Why are you having these irrational dreams? C'mon get it together and have only logical dreams!" No, the therapist says, "What does this dream suggest to you?" You note that the color of the mole in the dream reminds you of the jacket of your 9th grade English teacher who berated you in front of the class, while the black man in the burning car might be your repressed anger. You are "analyzing"

the dream, and finding meaning in it, but it is more by analogy or emotion than by rigorous repeatable logic. The proper approach is an almost poetic process.

My ultimate point here is that my own religious experiences, my occasions of numinosity, partake, in a way, of that dreamlike quality. Some experiences have been drug-induced, but some have not. I do not lightly hand them over to others to analyze, and their meaning for me is not reducible to the results of a rational discussion. I would perceive someone aggressively criticizing my experiences as being contradictory or irrational as (a) besides the point, and (b) encroaching on matters which are none of their business. My most personally meaningful experiences are also my most private--and I grant that respect to others' such experiences and the beliefs and meanings they have derived from them.

As long as this discussion of religion occurs primarily on the level of philosophy, logic has its obvious place. However, considering the realm that religious phenomena occupy in actual life, it strikes me that it would be truer to that if we were discussing all this using more psychology, poetry and art. But then I associate spiritual matters, in some regards, with artistic matters, and I have a longstanding resistance to political critiques that deny artists the right to do any damn thing they please. For me the basic requirement to do good art is the granting of the right to explore and potentially immerse myself in any belief, worldview, theory, etc. that has meaning or significance for me. I can, and will, suffer the consequences but that's part of the bargain.

Perhaps as you suggest dualistic ontologies are incompatible with a libertarian position. If so, I guess I'll not consider myself a left libertarian while exploring the value and meaning that such ontologies might have for me. If I come out the other end and decide that such ontologies are full of it, I'm sure that the libertarian movement will still be puttering around to welcome me back.

I must admit to some trouble in following your analysis of my example of a "sentient, all pervading consciousness." The first two paragraphs of your analysis seemed to make sense based

as they were on such a conception being a "speculative theory." However, in the third paragraph...you seem to discount what might be a "religious experience," considering it only a metaphysical idea which has been unduly accorded belief. Your bottom line here seems to be that something only has a reality that is "earn(ed)" through our senses and rational thought." My view here is that our senses and rational thought are not adequate, in and of themselves, for the determination of "reality." They may be a significant component of reality testing, but they are not necessarily sufficient.

Again, an example. Let us say Mister Z has a religious experience--one that could be called mystical. Like Jacob Boehme, he sees the glint of the sun on a pewter dish and it suddenly alters his consciousness. His sense of self is no longer the same but encompasses all that previously seemed "other;" his view of the world around him is transformed and he feels the tangible presence of a benign order which includes all opposites such as joy and sorrow or creation and destruction; and all this is an experience that he is incapable of putting into words that do justice to the experience. Nevertheless, being a writer by profession prior to his experience, once the intensity of this experience subsides he is compelled to try to communicate it to others. It is a given that any rendering of it in words is going to be inadequate, a reification even. But still the effort is made, for whatever reason. The experience has irrevocably changed Mister Z's life and his priorities have been altered. His attempt to communicate his experience gains the attention of others who perceive sincerity and value in his admittedly incomplete renderings of his experience.

Is such a scenario merely an exercise in your dreaded irrationalism? Or, rather, is it a significant break with everyday reality which is worth considering and even emulating? I will grant you that if Mister Z's "lived reality" is rendered into dogmas which, in turn, are unthinkingly taken up by blind devotees, we are indeed wandering into ideology. However, I do not think this is always the case.

Your self-described "torrents of abuse" about "spaced-out suckers" and your repugnance at irrationalism color our ostensibly rational discussion just as my affection for certain spiritual teachers and symbols do. As such we drag a goodly amount of emotional baggage into this discussion and it is

Gnosis and Esoteric Spirituality

A review of
Jay Kinney's
GNOSIS MAGAZINE
by Lev Chernyi

The Gnostic heresies

According to its own hype, *Gnosis Magazine* attempts to "explore the inner traditions of the West" by "presenting highly readable intelligent information on the esoteric spiritual paths that are present in our own backyard." It attempts to "draw connections between ancient wisdom and modern psychology, between the mystical and the occult paths, between scholarship and daily life."

According to one of my dictionaries, "gnosis" denotes the "intuitive apprehension of spiritual truths, an esoteric form of knowledge sought by the Gnostics." For those unfamiliar with the Gnostic traditions, the principal groups referred to by this name were most prominent around the 2nd century AD. And while all evidence of their theology, ethics and ritual reveals a diversity which resists any very strict classification, they all appear to have shared in common an emphasis on redemption through esoteric knowledge or "divine" revelation.

What can be reasonably called gnostic tendencies, of course, predate the 2nd century and continue through the present day. Their origin may be

this baggage, I suspect, that is the source of our being so near yet so far. I'll agree with you for several pages and then you'll push one of my buttons and BOOM my hackles are raised. I gather that something similar happens for you with my writing.

My only solution to this situation--short of resigning ourselves to a lifetime of correspondence where we exchange lengthy letters forever trying to agree on terms, ontology and such--is to conclude that politically we are in close enough accord to let matters of ontology, epistemology, and what have you, go. Similarly, it is my contention that if left libertarians and anarchists are ever to grow in numbers and effectiveness, it will be precisely through agreeing with and making alliance with others based on minimal political/economic matters and "agreeing to disagree" on weightier, philosophical matters. Your dialectical phenomenology is admirable, in its way, but it isn't even that common a base upon which most anarchists build their theoretical structures. So even if you could win me over to total agreement on your viewpoint, it wouldn't be worth much because that would just make two of us with this nifty ontological analysis.

In any event, that is all I can spew out this letter. Make of it what you will.

Regards,
Jay

related to the dualism of earlier Persian religion, Platonic idealism, and the apocalyptic visions of some of the early Jewish mystics. They only came to full expression, however, with the rise of Christianity. And are best known today in the West as Christian heresies, since they were historically suppressed by what have become the dominant tendencies of Christianity.

In the more common gnostic views, humanity is seen as being essentially spiritual, but because of a tragic fall it has been thrown into a world that is completely alien to its real being. Often, this situation is characterized as a fall of an absolutely pure spirit into a thoroughly evil world of matter, and this Manichaean dualism is frequently confused with the more general gnostic tradition. Usually, it is through the experience of gnosis that humans are seen as becoming conscious of their origin, essence and transcendent destiny. And this revelation commonly includes the conception of the world as an abortion dominated by Yahweh, the evil creator-god of our world, who is subordinate to an incomprehensible and unnameable spirit above him.

Origins of the magazine

When Jay Kinney visited Columbia while he and I were just beginning the correspondence reproduced in these pages, he mentioned to me that he wanted to start a magazine devoted to esoteric spirituality in order to explore religious traditions which remain largely suppressed and unknown. At the time, I took him to mean a low-budget publication which would be open to critical thought and discussion with a decidedly libertarian orientation to spirituality. Now, over three years later, six issues of Jay's magazine have appeared, and it is easy to see that I erred in more than one of my relatively thoughtless assumptions.

Gnosis Magazine is currently a slick, 56-page quarterly publication with commercial-quality full-color covers which allow it relatively easy access to many nationwide newsstands where **Anarchy** would (to say the least) be unwelcome. Published by the Lumen foundation (POB 14217, S.F., CA. 94114-0217), his journal now has around 2,000 subscribers and, with newsstand sales of over 10,000 along with the increasing number of ads inside, it surely has long surpassed an annual budget of \$100,000. So much for my "low-budget" assumption.

When **Gnosis** was still only a gleam in Jay's eye, I asked him if his magazine would be open to

contributions concerning "esoteric atheism" (by which I meant, as I explained to him, the more suppressed and unknown episodes of atheist **unbelief** throughout history) and its own forms of nonspiritual "gnosis" (the immediate apprehension, or intuitive self-understanding of our place in our world). He quite frankly wasn't interested. So I wasn't too surprised to find that the limits to critical thought and discussion in **Gnosis**, now that his dream has been realized, seem rather narrow and confining, at least to me.

There is one critical letter in the latest issue (written by Peter Lamborn Wilson, who contributed probably the best essay to appear in **Gnosis**, "The Anti-Caliph," in an earlier issue) which does threaten to raise some fundamental questions about the politics of gnosticism--especially its historical and current ties to authoritarian (and even outright fascist) political movements and doctrines. He makes the point that:

Since the '60s, seekers have fallen loosely into two categories: those interested in "liberation," and those interested in "authority." Sentimentality and ignorance smudge the borders between these two camps, but I would like to drive a wedge between them.

But it remains to be seen how open or critical a discussion will be allowed to appear even on this seemingly unavoidable topic, since, as Jay says (in refusing to make any overt commitment to a libertarian position), he only envisions **Gnosis** as, "among other things,...a neutral ground where...dialogue can take place."

Secret Societies

The content of the latest issue of **Gnosis** (No.6, Winter 1988) centers on a few secret societies with relationships to gnostic beliefs--primarily the Rosicrucians, Knights Templar, and Freemasons. As such, this issue was for me undoubtedly the most consistently interesting to yet appear. The major articles include: "The Templar Tradition: Yesterday and Today," "The Rosicrucian Dream," "Freemasonry & the Hermetic Tradition," and "The Priory of Scion." Unfortunately, though, this issue remains on such a superficial plane of discourse that it isn't nearly as satisfying as it could be. Historical information on the suppressed currents which have challenged one or more aspects of civilization at one time or another are, by these very challenges, almost automatically of great interest to anyone who wants to make a radical break with the inertia of the present world system and their own complicity with it. But when this information is presented in a totally uncritical and shallow manner--when there is not even a hint of any real understanding of its relevance for the radical project of reclaiming our world, of overcoming our alienation, and of reinhabiting our everyday lives--it is inevitably going to be somewhat disappointing.

What is most striking about the essays presented is that the "arcane," "esoteric," and "hidden" doctrines that "secret societies" like the Rosicrucians, Templars, and Freemasons all guarded were so mundane and muddled. These groups appear to have been mainly storehouses of spiritualist commonplaces with esoteric facades. One has to conclude that there was

at one time or another some genuine experience which gave rise to these traditions and which at least some of their adherents reexperienced along the way. But what happened to it? Despite all the talk of "gnosis," one gets the feeling that these heretical traditions are so encrusted with inertia and the dead weight of their own symbolism and histories that they are almost totally incapable of inspiring any genuinely self-revelatory experiences today. For the most part, they seem to be as boring (and about as profound) as any mainstream Christian Sunday School class would be.

The most absorbing article in the "secret societies" issue has to be Robert Anton Wilson's "The Priory of Scion; Jesus, Freemasons, Extraterrestrials, The Gnomes of Zurich, Black Israelites and Noon Blue Apples." And as might be expected this essay embodies all the virtues and vices of Wilson's usual mode of presentation. His **modus operandi** involves an apparent commitment to an underlying spiritualist perspective, but with at least a modicum of dialectical understanding (which for Wilson takes the form of non-Aristotelianism--specifically that of Korzybski's general semantics) expressed in a style which attempts to be humorous. The major problem with Wilson's work is that, despite his modicum of dialectical perception, he has never developed any sort of clear idea about where he wants to go with it. This allows even Wilson's muddle-headed mentor, Timothy Leary, to appear to ultimately possess more sense.

The reversal of perspective

So just **where** are the supposed liberatory possibilities of religion to lie? It is by now a commonplace observation (for all those not blinded by their beliefs) that one of the primary functions of religion is to sublimate people's yearnings for a better, more complete and more fully lived life. Rather than realizing their desires here and now, or at least attempting to do so, acolytes of most of the various types of religious belief choose to continue the repression of these possibilities. Some prefer to put off any realization of unity and fulfillment until an afterlife, or the "end of days" (e.g. the "resurrection of the body" after death). Others prefer to remove any "realization" from the world of the living altogether by objectifying it as a spiritual (i.e. a totally rationalized) corpse and relegating it to the realm of the symbolic. However, there is no **religion per se** (no form of spiritualized dualism) which takes as its project the **only** sensible and liberating response to our situation--the liberation of our desires in order to realize them here and now in the genuine communities and unrestrained bodies of a free and integrated humanity.

In fact, the only genuinely liberatory use of religion has been in those moments--historically and in personal experience--in which a reversal of perspective has taken place. It has come only when the sacred and profane are collapsed into one, when god is dissolved into the rest of the world, when the body really is resurrected. The liberatory moment of religion occurs only with its dialectical realization through its **negation**.

Unfortunately, the only essay I've seen so far in **Gnosis** which even attempts to explore this theme has been Peter Lamborn Wilson's "The Anti-Caliph; A Study in Islamic Heresy." As the exception to the (otherwise uninspiring) rule in **Gnosis**, this essay gives us a hint of what could be done with a genuinely anarchic journal focussing on esoteric religious traditions--a project still seeking its initiation.

Wilson's essay is written from a perspective which sees heresy as a radical tradition--a "permanent revolution expressed in mystical language." From within the broader tradition of Islamic heresy which he sketches, Wilson focusses on the meaning of the **Ruz-i Qiyamat** or "Great Resurrection" at Alamut on 17 Ramazan 559/August 8, 1164 and the writings of Ibn 'Arabi, who was born on the first anniversary of the Qiyamat. The Great Resurrection began when Hassan II proclaimed that the "Chains of the law have been broken," overturning every vestige of the exoteric authority of Islam. As Wilson puts it, this "uncovering of the inner meaning of Revelation results in a **benign reversal** of its outward symbolism; those who participate in this gnosis are freed from both the literal meaning and the legal stipulations of organized religion. In both senses of the word they have **broken the code**." So, of course, "Outward Islam must of necessity view the Qiyamat as antinomian, heretical and revolutionary."

For Wilson, the power of heresy consists "as both critique and polemic, as discourse and war." He doesn't really acknowledge that most "heresies" consist more in squabbles over the semantics (and thus the distribution) of authority, than in the demand for its abolition. But it is true that **antinomian** heresies can embody a radical break, not just with particular dogmas of particular religions, but even with the very essence of all religions--their ontological dualism. Rather than perpetuating ossified institutional structures, heresies can encourage the creation of anarchic social relations; rather than prescribing compulsive rituals, they can encourage spontaneity, immediacy, and a directness that may or may not use ritual forms at times; rather than demanding adherence to repressive moral codes, they can facilitate the realization of desire. Rather than demanding the performance of rigid social roles, they can subvert those roles by demanding greater authenticity; rather than promoting an (irrationally) rationalist faith in reified ideals, they can promote a faith in our own experience; and, finally, rather than demanding the division of our world into the sacred and profane, they can deny such divisions, leaving us to experience its wholeness.

Calling the tradition of Islamic heresies "The Anti-Caliph," Wilson states that "we want to know the meaning of that past, but even more--if we can perform a little hermeneutic phenomenology and **live** at least for an hour within the Anti-Caliph's world--we will demand to know what it can teach us here on this most mysterious of planes ("everyday life") at this most precious of moments, the present."

Subscriptions to **Gnosis** are currently \$15/year and can be obtained from POB 14217, San Francisco, CA. 94114-0217.

THE
UNCOVERING OF THE INNER MEANING
OF REVELATION RESULTS IN A
BENIGN REVERSAL OF ITS OUTWARD
SYMBOLISM; THOSE WHO PARTICIPATE
IN THIS GNOSIS ARE FREED FROM BOTH
THE LITERAL MEANING AND THE LEGAL
STIPULATIONS OF ORGANIZED
RELIGION.



Letters



Rebel Without a Cause

DISCIPLINE PROBLEMS?

He seems to be at war with the world.

In the classroom, he's the one who spills ink, breaks things, creates general havoc.

And at home, his parents don't understand him. They wish he could be more like his siblings. Less active, more controlled and subdued. Better at tying his shoelaces, more obedient to social demands.

He's a rebel who doesn't understand why he rebels or what to rebel against.

Actually, his "enemy" is the society in which he lives. In it people are treated like objects to be bought and sold, manipulated, displayed or ignored.

And children like him are its most unprepared victims. For no real reason, he continually finds himself ill-treated by habit, convention, and design.

And he is not alone with the problem. It is estimated that one out of every ten school children have noticeable difficulties accepting socially "normal" behavior patterns--most

of them boys.

A PROBLEM HE DIDN'T CREATE

The causes of his problem are pervasive and diffuse. They are nearly impossible for him to identify precisely because they are so ubiquitous, overwhelming, and taken-for-granted by everyone with whom he is ever likely to come into contact.

The causes are ultimately identical with the very structure of our social world, a structure conditioned by capital--its formations, deformations and accumulations. The fundamental alienation of the individual from his/her activities, the mystifying roles of social relationships, the prevailing belief in hierarchy, authoritarian conditioning, sexism and ageism all combine to create a frustrating and fundamentally unsatisfying environment, which leaves him with vaguely defined impulses to rebel. With such a complex and ubiquitous situation, is it any wonder that his pri-

mitive critique seems so incoherent and easily explained-away by natural causes?

HELPING THE "MBD" CHILD "GET HIS HEAD TOGETHER"

He isn't sophisticated enough to defend himself against the ideologies and weapons of those who incarcerate and indoctrinate him. And if we act quickly, we can ensure that his nascent rebellion will never find a consciously coherent expression--now or in later life. To achieve this, we merely label him as a minimal brain dysfunction (MBD) child, and manage his problem with intensified indoctrination, increased parental pressure, and pharmacotherapy.

When indicated, stimulant drugs have proven effective as adjunctive controls, often enabling authorities to more effectively destroy his ability to resist treatment.

CIBA Pharmaceutical Company
Division of CIBA-GEIGY Corp.
Summit, New Jersey 07901

ad parody



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.

Occupied territory

Moon is sinking lower and it now rests among the roofs of our homes. If it were not out my window I would not know that it was above my roof--my window, my roof? Hold it here, just a cotton-picking minute, which makes up the cotton-picking 40-hour week. Perhaps I could say: my attachment to possessive pronouns. There is a man who comes to the door of the apartment where I live. He asks for money--just enough to get by. I am a generous sort so I give him \$350. This happens every month and I am beginning to tire of this pattern--why it seems like a ritual.

Now I will tell you a lie: During the second world war, which still has not ended, in a town occupied by enemy forces, people banded together in resistance. The occupying army required them to pay heavy taxes to finance the war. Every financial transaction added to the army's capital which it desperately needed. Unwilling to be complicit in their own murderous subjugation, the people developed a scheme. "We know who we are. We know who the enemy is. When I see that you are in need of clothes or food, I shall freely give them to you. When I am in need of drink you shall share openly. Wherever I work, I will shield you from the eyes of the boss, the manager, the soldier, that you may take what you want, or go where you want without using these writs of our death. And all the monetary notes that we have or can lift from our bosses we will burn them in our stoves, forever erasing them from the ledger books and from our minds.

We are in occupied territory, the rest is not so obvious. But as long as our imaginations are on fire there is the chance that it will spread with the blowing of the wind, that this tinderbox I live in shall burst open in flames to light the night and greet the moon which now is hidden behind the apartment building across the street.

love and anarchy,
D.B., Chicago, IL.

Portugal commune

Hi Freaks,

We are an anarchist commune in the south of Portugal. Growing crops and goats and want to make contacts with other anarchist communes in the USA to share ideas and experiences. Please write to:

Colectivo Parreirinha
Apartado 100
P-8300 Silves
Portugal

Mandatory recycling

Dear Anarchy,

In the "Politics of recycling" (Anarchy #14), you mis-represent New Jersey's new recycling law. You criticized the law because it is "mandatory" and therefore inherently oppressive. The law contains no provisions to force individual households to recycle and no penalties for not recycling. The law mandates that townships and cities in New Jersey provide door to door pick-up for recycling. It does not cost taxpayers additional revenue to operate this program. The program saves money from land-fill costs and generates money from the sale of recycled trash.

The law does require households to separate their trash for pick-up, if you use the state-provided service to pick up your trash. There are no garbage police in New Jersey opening up people's trash cans to see what's there, and I'm sure many spoiled and wasteful New Jerseyans still throw everything into one can because it's easier for them.

The state does not require the household to use its service. You can eat your trash for all they care. Anarchy requires responsibility. And trash systems require certain orderly processes. If one doesn't mind the "limitations of the state" concerning what day to put the trash out, why should one be upset with "mandatory" recycling?

Yours,
Zvi Baranoff, editor
Green Action
POB 37

Tempe, AZ. 85281
P.S. Keep up the work. Long live anarchy!

Lev replies

While I may be treading on thin ice by giving my opinions about a recycling system I know little about, I don't think New Jersey's mandatory recycling law is quite so innocuous as you imply it is.

All present laws are legislated, interpreted, and enforced by hierarchical political institutions whose powers ultimately rest on the exercise of force. They are thus oppressive, if only because they are not enacted by the population at large, but instead forced upon them. The "voluntary" recycling program here in Columbia is no different on this score, since extorted tax dollars are being spent to keep it running.

But beyond this, even according to your own description, there is an obvious "penalty" for New Jersey households which don't separate their trash--the state-run service won't pick it up. There are no "garbage police" in New Jersey for the same reason that there are no "electricity police" here in Columbia where our electricity is "provided" by the city. If you don't pay for your power, it simply gets turned off. And the generic police are always ready and willing to deal with those cases which exceed usual constraints.

And finally, the extra layer of regulation and state bureaucracy added to the trash collection process effectively forces municipalities to subordinate their programs to the state government, rather than retaining control of their own waste disposal. Just because the general

Letters

effect is salutary, doesn't indicate that the means are wholly satisfactory.

Trash systems in industrial societies do require orderly processes, but these processes can be conceived, consented to, coordinated and implemented in more or less authoritarian manners.

I'm so bored

C.A.L.,

Hey shithead--when are you going to write me a real letter??--ha!ha!

Thanx for your mag--I thought I was going to be in it? Couldn't find my name. Oh well. I guess I can read it....ha!ha!

I'm so bored I'm about to shit! Dyed my hair purple--my parents fully shit--oh well, no big deal. I pierced (last week) my ear, too--it's such a wonder what I'm going to do next when I'm bored--ha!ha!

Well, since you wrote me a short letter--I'll write you a short letter. (Asshole!) Just Kidding!

Got to go. I'm about to go insane.

Love ya,
T., San Marcos, CA.

Selling sugar water

These are indeed strange times we live in. We have seen values and ethics twisted and coopted in every way imaginable by greedy, insatiable corporations. For instance I recently bought a pair of Reebok running shoes and found the Reebok name advertised a total of sixteen times including the inside and bottoms! Corporations should be paying us to advertise, yet we have been forced to pay exorbitant prices for their logos on our belongings. We have all been forced, or volunteered, to become walking billboards.

We delude ourselves if we believe there is any free choice in this relentless intrusion onto our bodies and into our psyches. Of course, the obvious solution is to refuse to buy anything with the company name on it, but if it can't be avoided, and sometimes it can't, there are some things we can do.

One of the most revolutionary acts, it seems to me, we can perform now is to deface, or should we say *enhance*, our own property. We can remove their corporate graffiti and obscenities

off our bodies: rip the labels off, scribble or creatively cover (by any means necessary!) their corporate logos and company names with strips of sparkles, or Marks O Lots, or our own artwork.

Last month here in Oshkosh we had a Pepsi-sponsored bike race that prompted me to write a letter to the *Oshkosh Northwestern*, our only local newspaper. The editor first refused to print it because of my use of "white poison" instead of "sugar." He thought it was slanderous, so I compromised. Then he said the letter was too strident, so I even covered up my anger, made it nicer, and added a little joke. Finally, the editor accused me of having "something against" Pepsi because I didn't list other corporate names.

Of course, I could have listed IBM, American Express, Ford, Chevrolet, Chrysler, General Motors, Rockwell International, Bechtel Corporation, McDonald's, Burger King, Penthouse International, Reynolds Tobacco, AT&T, Merrill Lynch, and Reebok and Union Carbide, but they did not sponsor the race. I name them here because I have no special prejudice against Pepsi. I simply hate the growing arrogance of many corporations.

But, since the Oshkosh editors could not be satisfied with my compromises, I suspect their real reason for suppressing this letter was local business interests. Pepsi, it turns out, has a bottling company here and sponsors many local civic events. The *Oshkosh Northwestern* also co-sponsors another bike race with Pepsi. Pepsi has in the past withdrawn from sponsorship of the race. They could do it again. We all have learned too well that it doesn't pay to bite the hand that feeds you.

As a result of tax breaks all of us are at the mercy of corporate "benevolence." There is a national trend for the government, media, and too many individuals to drop to their knees before corporate priorities, and these days there is inadequate criticism of corporate maleficence. This makes what happened at our Oshkosh bike race a metaphor for others across the country. Here is my response to what happened:

"Dear Editor: The bike race brought to Oshkosh last week by Pepsi-Cola was a great spectacle and it provided exercise and discipline for those taking part. If that's all we say about

SEE WHAT HAPPENS WHEN PEOPLE DON'T WORK.

This is Jim O'Donnell. He has a real job. With the logging industry.

He's holding tree spikes that broke a sawblade. They were put there by people who would rather not work.

Instead, they prefer to live for adventure, spontaneity and the pleasure of genuine experience.

They also sabotage machinery, loot logging sites, pull survey stakes and spike trees. They scorn externally-imposed law, morality and limits.

They refuse, as more and more people are doing, to accept their proper role in society. A role planned for them by people like the timber executives Jim O'Donnell works for who see Nature as lifeless, a pile of resources waiting to be exploited.

These bureaucrats and managers hold this view because, like all commodities, they too have a pricetag on them--called a paycheck.

They too are exploited.

This makes them lifeless, as well.

These "vandals", on the contrary, see Nature as wild, living and beautiful. A source of infinite joy.

They recognize this beauty as part of their own human nature.

They feel wild and free, unconstrained by the shackles of paycheck-to-pricetag consumerism that imprison so many people.

Jim O'Donnell wants them stopped. They are a hinderence to the efficient reproduction of consumer society and alienated humanity's dream of Nature fully tamed.

But what Jim O'Donnell and others like him don't understand is that the smallest glimpse of freedom is never forgotten. Once the gates of liberation are opened, there is no holding back the flood.



THEY SEE THE CRYSTAL SPARK OF LIFE AS TOO PRECIOUS TO EVER AGAIN RELINQUISH.

the race we are overlooking something important! Watching the cyclists as they spun down Main Street was thrilling, but it seems strange this sporting event would be sponsored by Pepsi.

"Pepsi-Cola is a giant pillar in a junk food culture with its merchandising of chemicals, dyes, caffeine and sugar (white poison). Clean drinking water and nutritious food, not Pepsi, make a fine-tuned athlete, while so-called soft drinks and other junk foods destroy the integration of the mind and body. It is subterfuge, and in fact, I believe it should be false advertising, to imply that these young people have gotten where they are by drinking this dyed, flavored sugar water!

"During the race we were bombarded with Pepsi blared over the loudspeaker systems; we saw Pepsi everywhere we looked. These fine athletes, and others, deserve better than to have Pepsi and other corporate advertising plastered across their chests, feet and heads. The slogan "Pepsi" was posted hundreds of times on each of the triangle race flags and strung around the whole downtown area on both sides of the street.

"Yet another Pepsi logo was shamelessly paraded on the door of a souped-up white Chevy. While two motorcycles led the race, working to assure the safety of pedestrians and bikers, this gratuitous Chevy actually threa-

tened the public safety. Zooming directly in front of the cyclists it revved its motor, gushed obnoxious exhaust fumes and peeled rubber at every turn.

"For non-thinkers and corporate sycophants, indeed, this car made a marvelous display. This Pepsi-Chevy continuously spewed its noxious carbon monoxide into the faces and delicate lungs of these young athletes. With each cloud of dark smoke, some of us saw also the deadly hot air expelled by the corporate arrogance of our times.

"When more of us care more for the well-being and health of participants, such events will need no corporate sponsor. Certainly, sporting events will not be incongruously sponsored by soft drink, beer or cigarette companies whose main priority is to promote their corporate name and increase their corporate profits."

It's time to look more thoughtfully and critically at the corporate involvement in our lives. No matter how sweet it may be we can't afford to swallow self-serving corporate propaganda that is sugar-coated as civic concern. When John Scully from Pepsi was being recruited by Steve Jobs for the top position at Apple Computer, he was asked a question. The *Oshkosh Northwestern*, and the media in general, might well take note. Particularly

the media that opted not to print this letter, because its content is critical of corporate America, might take note. The question Steve Jobs asked Scully was: "John, do ya wanna sell sugar water for the rest of your life, or do you want to change the world?"

Sincerely,

Nikki Craft,

Citizens for

Media Responsibility

POB 871, Oshkosh, WI. 54902

Aghast & delighted

C.A.L.,

Salutations! I've just read (cover to cover) *Anarchy* #14. Freddie, who did the amazing cover, sent it to me. I'm aghast and delighted at your publication.

Have you ever considered, or do you print poetry? I would very much like to contribute stories, essays, and poetry (although a dear friend told me I have no business writing the stuff).

I was very surprised to see mention of *The Match!* and Fred Woodworth, who I think is pretty amazing. Did you know that he's been publishing since '72?! Being 17 (and somewhat of a novice to the anarchist ideology & way of thinking) I get freaked out at "older" anarcho-types (like 32 years old! oh shit!)

Continued on next page

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

Notes for discussion

Towards a post-ideological resistance

For those who have read the Columbia Anarchist League's statement, *As We See It!*, it will come as no surprise that our orientation can possibly be most aptly characterized as anti-ideological. Hints and clues to the existence of a sporadic anti-ideological tradition can be found throughout history--often roughly paralleling what is generally considered evidence of the prehistory and history of (more generally) anarchist theory. With the publication of Max Stirner's *The Ego and Its Own* in 1844, a sophisticated philosophical synthesis of these two parallel and roughly overlapping currents was first made explicit. Since that time many of the most obvious failures of ideological anarchism have vindicated Stirner, while the relative (although not complete by any means) neglect of the more social/economic/political side of things by Stirner has been addressed by the more mainstream anarchist currents.

This dialectic was given new life in the 1960s by the situationist synthesis (Situationist International), which reinvigorated the anti-ideological critique--borrowing from Marxism, Stirner (this was not always understood as such), and anarchism from within the context of the Situationist International's development out of the avant-garde art/anti-art milieu. This new synthesis, while certainly not adequate, constituted a powerful and (at least in more radical circles) accessible critique of some of the major problems within the overwhelmingly retrograde major currents of the so-called "revolutionary movements" world-wide. At this point, the S.I.'s critique of spectacular society (Guy Debord, *Society of the Spectacle*) and its re-foundation of revolt on the basis of everyday life/lived reality and radical subjectivity (Raoul Vaneigem, *The Revolution of Everyday Life*) have so profoundly altered the terms of debate and action that any contemporary attempt to further the anti-ideological critique in words or acts must also be characterized as post-situationist.

Since the time of the S.I.'s major contributions, however, the vast changes in the dynamics and make-up of revolutionary tendencies have left our current situation both more clear and more muddled. With the resurgence of contemporary feminism, the emergence of ecological/anti-technological critiques (most coherently voiced by the *Fifth Estate* and its contributors), the explosion of religious/spiritual splinter cults and doctrines, and the increasing sophistication and perfection of techniques of authoritarian control, we have reached the point where a new level of theoretical and practical synthesis is urgently required.

But where do we go from here? From my own perspective, in North America the major players in the debates regarding the reorientation of a post-ideological resistance have been the *Fifth Estate* group and John Zerzan--whose newly published book, *Elements of Refusal* is now available. (One simply doesn't hear much anymore from those who identify most strongly with the more direct lines of post-situationist activity--or, at least I don't.) However, I have profound questions about aspects of both of their underlying perspectives--especially with the *Fifth Estate's* defense of spirituality and "the sacred." (My questions about Zerzan's positions can't be so easily defined.) But regardless of how one views the current debate, it seems clear at least to me that we need to develop a more direct public discussion of the theoretical and practical issues involved, a forum where the most important aspects of the debate can be dealt with concisely in a dialogue between those who are most interested in helping to shape the terms and practice of the post-ideological resistance. To that end I would like to make space for discussion available in succeeding issues of *Anarchy*. If you think you have something important to say on this topic, and you'd like to say it here, please write to us at:

Anarchy, c/o C.A.L.
POB 1446
Columbia, MO. 65205

Aghast & delighted

Continued

It's so bizarre to see people totally beaten down by "the system." My step-dad (who used to talk very radical stuff years ago) works for a war-machine company. After we had a discussion (fight) about jails, the death penalty, why people commit crimes, laws...he "invited me to leave" (kicked me out). His rationale was that if I thought "those kind of thoughts," I had no business living here. Later on, he apologized. How weird. The whole "love it or leave it" kick.

What I'm trying to show is that a person can be totally changed by work & government & family. Things to be avoided! It's a sad story.

A new publication that is a very good mixture of anarchism + socio & ecological issues + punk stuff is *Hippycore*, POB 195, Mesa, AZ. 85211. It's a good bridge. It gets lots of punks who think little to be punks who think lots.

Solidarity--
N.G., Mesa, AZ.

P.S. In #14 that letter from T. in San Marcos, CA. was really stupid! Please send an *As We See It!* Thanx.

Animal morality

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Mr. Lev Chernyi's response to a reader's request for a position statement on animal rights (*Anarchy* #14) deserves detailed examination despite its inconsistencies and obscurity because its very flaws typify "naive" (or unreflective) speciesism; to understand the one is to understand the other.

Chernyi's statement has three parts (not counting his gratuitous attack on his correspondent's idealism): a general ethic, an interpretation of the concept of "animal rights," and a summary of Chernyi's own ideas on the status of animals. Chernyi's "ethic" rejects both moral discourse in general and the concept of "right" in particular. Chernyi calls the concept of "rights" for humans or animals, a "mystifying" abstraction. In the real world, he maintains (with a perfectly straight face), "right is always...might." He calls naive the identification of "right" with the "morass of morality," which latter he interprets in absolutist terms. And he rejects this absolutism without embracing any specific alternatives. Chernyi's opinion of animal rights is that animals have no rights because rights don't exist (for reasons already given). And, finally, Chernyi's ideas on the status of animals amount to three points. First, the condition of animals is important, but less important to Chernyi than the condition of people. Second, it's okay to kill animals "for sustenance" but not okay to torment them in factory farms. Third, domestication of animals is evil; animals should "run free."

Chernyi's ethical philosophy has two serious problems. First, Chernyi's rejection of ethical discourse depends on his improper equivocation on two senses of the term "right." Used as a noun, "right" denotes a claim against moral agents; used as an adjective, "right" means, "morally correct" or "good." The two "rights" func-

tion independently so no degree of "mystifying" abstraction in the former suffices to discredit the latter. Second, Chernyi's ethical skepticism robs him of the concepts and justificatory apparatus he needs to make the moral distinctions he clearly wants to make. His inability to distinguish normative and descriptive discourse leaves him in the strange position of seeming to endorse the crudest sort of power-worship. ("Right is always...might.")

Chernyi's rejection of "animal rights" fails for a simpler reason. The pettifogging literal-mindedness of his argument obscures the rather obvious fact that in common parlance "animal rights" functions as an umbrella-term encompassing all persuasions of animal liberationism, not just those derived from rights-based ethics. (The silliness of Chernyi's attack becomes obvious when translated to a more familiar context. Would he question the value of desegregation because movement leaders frame the issue in terms of "civil rights"?) To complete his refutation of "animal rights," Chernyi would have to address its utilitarian and other formulations--something he doesn't begin to attempt here.

This brings us to Chernyi's three specific points regarding the status of animals. The first of these concerns the relative importance of animals and people and admits of two possible readings. Does it mean "Chernyi thinks animals are important, but personally takes more interest in people," or does it mean "animals are important but not as important as people?" The first would be either a mealy-mouthed dodge or a lapse into autobiographical irrelevancy. The second would be sheer question-begging. The invocation of this speciesist cliché is always revealing because questions regarding the relative importance or value of humans and animals arise only when their interests conflict; there is no reason in principle why persons of conscience cannot take an active interest in maximizing the

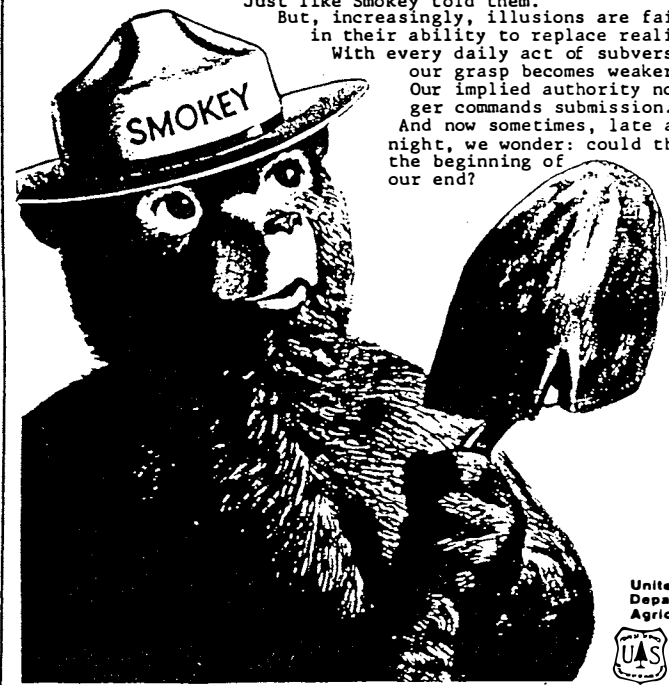
welfare of both. (Does opposing apartheid prevent one from using cruelty-free toothpaste?) Besides, there are several reasons for thinking that animal issues are at least as deserving of our attention as many human issues and more deserving than some. To begin with, oppressed people can and do organize and fight for their own liberation in a variety of violent and nonviolent ways; animals cannot. Their sole recourse lies in compassionate human intervention. Second, the scale and intensity of suffering caused by animal exploitation far exceed the suffering caused by most human rights violations; the only human analogies to the factory farm and the research lab are slavery and the holocaust, and they had chronological and geographical limits. Finally, the exploitation of animals nearly always serves trivial ends. The development of a new mascara, the duplication of redundant or inconsequential research results, and the creation of unnaturally pale veal, to take just three examples, inflict fantastic suffering for literally no good reason. Because they are so pointless, such practices would be easy for us to stamp out if we made the effort.

Chernyi's second point, that it's okay to kill animals "for sustenance" but not okay to torment them in factory farms, needs clarification. Who, in Chernyi's estimation, can reasonably claim to kill animals "for sustenance"? The shipwrecked sailor who must eat a fish or starve to death? Low-technology peoples indigenous to regions that cannot support agriculture? (I mean really low-technology peoples here, not semi-westernized importers of snowmobiles and nylon parkas.) Modern sport hunters who eat their kills? The typical American consumer who buys meat in preference to beans and rice? By leaving the criterion of "for sustenance" vague, Chernyi subtly and illegitimately transfers the exculpability of the exceptional former cases to the more relevant latter cases in which flesh-eating

KEEPING UP APPEARANCES

In this society impressions are often more important than the real thing. Indeed, images are what control how people feel. And what they'll put up with. That's why we hired a team of psychologists and media specialists to create an image that people could identify with. And that we could control. They gave us Smokey the Bear. And Smokey gave us the ability to shape people's view of reality to such an extent that no one noticed when we cut the forest down. They were too busy worrying about not burning it down.

Just like Smokey told them. But, increasingly, illusions are failing in their ability to replace reality. With every daily act of subversion our grasp becomes weaker. Our implied authority no longer commands submission. And now sometimes, late at night, we wonder: could this be the beginning of our end?



United States
Department of
Agriculture
Forest
Service

poster parody



BOYS AND GIRLS!

Here is what you can do to help our forest:



is a luxury, not a necessity. The question is not whether we should be "appalled" by factory farms (anyone but Caligula or Dr. Mengele would be) but whether we should give them our economic support. Apart from this, the idea that "humane slaughter" is okay has problems. People who eat meat by choice rather than necessity place more value on the trivial whim of their palates than on the life and autonomy of other sentient beings. What makes this okay? Chernyi opposes coercion, exploitation, and violence in every other context; the slaughter of animals for food epitomizes all three in the grossest possible way. Why do these things become alright simply because the victim has four legs instead of two? Furthermore, the very concept of "humane slaughter" and the general principle of "nice exploitation" of which it is an instance embody a hypocrisy that would in any other context move Chernyi to apoplexy. (Imagine the scathing reply Chernyi would address to any reader who suggested that it's okay to enslave blacks, rape women, or exterminate Jews as long as you do it "nicely"!)

The tragic irony here is that diet is an area in which human and animal interests coincide. The benefits of vegetarianism from the standpoints of maintaining human health, relieving world hunger, and reversing environmental damage have been too well-documented in *Diet for a Small Planet* and other sources to require rehearsal here.

Last but not least objectionable is Chernyi's harsh condemnation of the domestication of animals (especially the keeping of companion animals), coupled with his fervent wish that all animals "run free." In the first place, it is curious that Chernyi should pick this, of all animal-related issues, to wax indignant about. The Draize test, the LD-50 test, fur ranching, whaling, trapping, and rodeos, taken all together, seems to bother him less than the thought of some little old lady neutering her tomcat and keeping it indoors. Presumably Chernyi's

idiosyncratic perspective follows from his anarchist commitment to liberty, but it shows Chernyi's ignorance of or contempt for the facts.

In the U.S. 5,000 puppies and kittens are born every hour. Only 2% find homes. Twelve million are put to death annually in shelters. The rest are either sold to labs or abandoned to a feral existence of disease, hunger, danger, and explosive reproduction. These are the unfortunate consequences of people's widespread tendency, based on laziness or romantic delusion, to let dogs and cats "fun free." The solution lies not in impotent diatribes against domestication, but in an increased attitude of responsibility toward these creatures and a vigorous spay/neuter program.

Considering what a tangle Chernyi gets himself into over the factual and philosophical aspects of the "animal rights" issue, it is easy to sympathize with his despairing lament that ethics boils down to "many, many people awash in a sea of confusion." That seems an apt description of Chernyi's plight (although his statement utterly lacks the intellectual humility that normally accompanies such self-confessed perplexity). Chernyi's confusion appears to result partly from innocent ignorance and partly from the willful obscurantism evinced by his clumsy strategic flight to metatheoretical skepticism and by his *ad hominem* slurs against animal liberationists themselves. Chernyi says they make "very little" sense, derides their "religious devotion" to their cause, and, by his sneering references to "animal lovers," suggests that animal liberationists are moved by sentimentality rather than a concern for justice. (In reply to the first accusation, I would direct Chernyi's attention to the writings of Tom Regan and Peter Singer. Both men are important spokespersons for the ethical treatment of animals and both are extremely careful thinkers whose methods and conclusions cannot be dismissed in the glib terms Chernyi is pleased to employ. Certainly the animal liber-

ation movement, like any other, has attracted its share of unappealing adherents, but this hardly discredits its program, nor does it relieve the sincere critic of the intellectual obligation to attack any position in its strongest form. As for "religious devotion:" yes, many animal liberationists feel strongly about their views, just as many feminists, desegregationists, and even anarchists feel strongly about theirs, but this, too, is irrelevant to evaluating those views, which must stand or fall on their merits.)

If I seem to dwell overlong on the flaws of a statement that, in all fairness, appears to have been scribbled in a careless haste, it is because those flaws express the statement's naive speciesism, a prejudice that deserves exposure and condemnation. And if I seem to single out Mr. Chernyi for unfavorable attention, it is because he is the only member of the Columbia Anarchist League who responded to the reader's inquiry. Inadequate and perverse his statement may be, but the silence of his colleagues is *moreso*. Such mindless acquiescence in the status quo is out of character for a group that expends so much energy in jeering at dupes of the system.

Sincerely,
Diana Blackwell, Columbia, MO.

Lev responds

For those of you who have made it this far, I have a few quick points to make in response to Diana's letter.

First off, I want to remind our readers that we do invite everyone to write about their opinions and reactions regarding *Anarchy*. In the future, however, we'd appreciate it if letters were kept to a maximum length of one single-spaced typed page, or two double-spaced typed pages (about one-third to one-half the length of Diana's letter), unless they are very concisely written and the points to be made cannot possibly be compressed into such a length. Anything longer, in general, will be considered for possible inclusion as an article.

That said, Diana's letter seems to me to perfectly illustrate one of the points I made in my original reply to the question of my position on "animal rights." That is, her "I'm so superior" moralistic tone and arguments provide an excellent example of the type of discourse we can almost always expect from those who enthusiastically embrace the mystifications of morality, ideology and the red herring concept of "rights."

She seems incapable of talking about her own preferences and experiences, her own relationships and desires. Rather, she is infatuated with a moralistic calculus which requires a "justificatory apparatus" in order to function! This type of essentially authoritarian discourse demands that everyone fall in line behind its dictates. Its claim to universality is merely a cleverly disguised attempt at manipulating other people's feelings of guilt, insecurity, and alienation. Instead of transparent communication with other people who are seen as (at least potentially) whole persons, it talks down to us as though we are incapable of ever knowing our own minds and desires, or ever understanding

News To Me

by Toni Otter

How often do I read newspaper articles that tell me what to think? I'm amused and angered by the mainstream media's attempt to condition my responses. After a Marine was kidnapped, I read a typically pathetic editorial which failed once again to convince me I should die for the Pentagon.

A Scripps's Howard News Service (SH) editorial published in the 2-19-88 *Columbia Missourian* is concerned with the kidnapping in Lebanon of Lt. Col. William Higgins. SH says I must be insulted and frustrated by the kidnapping. I'm just amazed this Marine was foolish enough to go to Lebanon. Not long ago the US Navy was shelling the country. Why should Lebanese trust a Marine?

Higgins, writes SH, was part of a UN peacekeeping force. What credibility has a Marine, notorious for murdering Third World people, as part of a peace mission? The Marines do not keep peace. They wage war for the US government, which supports the Israeli government, which recently devastated Lebanon, which now endures UN troops. The Lebanese may find it bitter, or well-planned, that the UN and Marines, absent while Israel attacked Lebanon, are now very present and concerned to keep peace.

SH seems intent to whip up war hysteria. (Is war good for those who finance SH?) It points out Higgins was kidnapped by Hezbollah, which allegedly has pro-Khomeini bias. The brilliant deduction then follows that the US government should turn "up the heat" on Iran and Syria, but is vague as to how. Would SH suggest a Marine commando raid?

Khomeini is, of course, a terrorist, though not as dangerous as any US president in recent history, if only because he has far less power. The editorial conveniently fails to remind us that US corporate demand for Iranian oil and support for the Shah set the stage for Khomeini. If SH were indignant over US government terrorism, at home and abroad, its cry against Khomeini might be less hypocritical. SH would do better to critique Pat Robertson and Jerry Falwell than manufacture a holy war against Hezbollah.

SH concludes its editorial by attempting to shame us. It reminds us Teddy Roosevelt (TR) would turn "over in his grave" if he knew we were soft on kidnappers. Of course, we all remember TR. People throughout the world felt his big stick, especially during his 1901-09 presidency. In his book *The Winning of the West*, TR wrote, "The most ultimately righteous of all wars is a war with savages" which thus suppressed the "red, black, and yellow aboriginal owners" of much of the globe in favor of "the dominant world races." The Filipinos struggling against a bloody U.S. military occupation TR described as "savages and barbarians, a wild and ignorant people, Apaches, Sioux, Chinese boxers." TR eventually won a Nobel Peace Prize.

It is TR's memory SH invokes as a guide for decisive action and which the *Missourian* chooses to revive in the interest, no doubt, of objective journalism. The *Missourian* is published by what some consider the best journalism school in the U.S.

If Canada invaded the U.S., if the U.S.S.R. were very supportive of Canada and, once the U.S. was in shambles, if Soviet soldiers were stationed in St. Louis to keep peace, would many Missourians be insulted or frustrated if these soldiers were kidnapped? Consciously or not, Higgins made bad decisions. He chose to become a Marine and he went to Lebanon. The Israeli invasion, effectively U.S.-financed, left so many victims it must be hard for even Lebanese who oppose kidnapping to shed tears for the tragically ignorant Marine. Higgins and others like him will be better off once they figure out what SH, Uncle Sam and the Marines have done to their heads.

If SH intended to inflame my macho, paranoid impulses, it failed. I don't hate the Arabs or Persians. I'm not frustrated because a Marine was kidnapped. What I am is more determined than ever to expose the lies and murderous confusion of news agencies and governments which support war in the name of peace; which mold public opinion for bloody power and pointless profit.

the complexity our own relationships with animals--human and non-human.

Perceptive readers will have already realized that I am in no way in favor of the human brutalization of non-human animals (just as I am abhorred by the

equally widespread brutalization of human animals). My view of nature, and what constitutes natural human behaviors, however, is vastly different from Diana's. As I stated originally, my preference is for all animals to run

Continued on next page

Letters

Lev responds Continued

free, including human animals. Domestication of all animals is repugnant to me, though I am willing to live with a certain level of the most humanly useful types of animal domestication. If you would like to receive a more detailed response to Diana's letter, write to *Anarchy*, and send me a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

And Toni replies

Diana, I share your concerns for animals, though we have our differences. I did not preview Lev's original response to the Republican. Why did you presume I did? I do not understand all your imaginative interpretation of Lev's barely articulated views. For example, he says animals should run free and you incorrectly conclude he is against neutering pets. You may have more in common with Lev than you realize.

Earth First!

Hey!
Thanks for a copy of @.... Contrary to the impression you may be getting from *Fifth Estate* (which I also subscribe to) & other sources, there really are people within Earth First! who can think for themselves! In fact, many of us are quite tired of all the crap that's been appearing in the *Earth First! Journal* as of late. I've just decided not to fight it—I find it much more fulfilling & valuable to concentrate my energy on developing other methods of communication, organization, fundraising, etc., than to try to change what is already supposed to be on our side! I'd rather argue with "them" than "us." So I like your paper—here's 3 bucks.

Enclosed are a few of my recent flyers. This summer we're going to wage a full-blown propaganda war on the Forest Service here. By fall, no one will be

able to believe anything that's posted on a Forest Service bulletin board—no matter how "official" it looks!

Hey, did you hear? We just shut down the B.C. government's plans to kill 200 wolves from helicopters this winter! 15 of us went up there to intervene if the kill started. It's a long stay but they finally backed off. The best part was occupying the Environment Minister's office. I got to talk to Canadian & U.S. TeeeVeee & say outrageous things while sitting in the Minister's chair with my feet on his desk! And we weren't even taken to jail!

Why work when you can cause trouble for the system instead?!

M.J., Bellingham, WA.
P.S. Hey! Do you know others who like to put out flyers & similar propaganda who would be interested in doing regular flyer exchanges? I'm always on the lookout for new ideas & I love to see what others are up to. There are quite a few "hip" folks here in Bellingham, but very few who do this type of stuff. Most of the other flyers around town are so banal it makes me sick. Hopefully as mine get better they'll inspire others.

Ever since

Dear Columbia League anarchists,
I picked up your newspaper, *Weekly World Anarchy* (#13), about a year ago and have enjoyed it ever since. My compliments to your paper—I hope you release many more. I was particularly interested in the "shantytown" article because it was appropriate to so many pro-divestment activities that have taken place here. The University of Texas with \$880 million invested in South Africa stands as the largest university investor in the U.S. 16 U.T. students took over the university president's office 20 October 1986, and have become the first student protesters to be sentenced to jail time. Their case is presently in the appeal process....

Is the newspaper your only project? I would be interested in hearing more about the work of C.A.L. I work with a local organization called Democracy in Academia. Presently we are working on a St. Patrick's Day rally in solidarity with the resistance in Northern Ireland and a May Day rally also. We have been struggling for over a year and a half to keep a shanty on campus despite numerous attacks from right wing groups and official bureaucracy.

Yours in struggle,
S.G., Austin, TX.

No wasted words

Hi Lev,
...I thank you for sending *As We See It!*, a most concise and articulate review of anarchy. It's always difficult to explain the basic meaning of anarchy. It's not so simple to define such a foreign field of thought, compared to statist ideals. But definition is merely the first step to revolution. And sure enough, we have a multiplicity and duplicity of anti-social/civilization/state definitions. So much so that the vast majority of "anti-authoritarians" have become little more than individual politicians doing nothing more than expressing a belief or opinion. All of which falls within the purview of the state, is accepted as a part of the machine, and made sterile because the ideology, opinions, beliefs, are devoid of action. In a sense, we have become embroiled in definitions in much the same way as lawyers and courts hammer away at laws. Therefore, they become one and the same within the system.

Thus, any further writing about what already has been discussed over and over ad infinitum, will only continue the process of state incorporation. What those of us, who have by choice left the general anti-authoritarian milieu, seek is to go beyond the definitions and form a plan of action....What has stopped the anarchist and anti-authoritarian ideology from happening is the lack of a plan. When speaking to fairly libertarian-minded individuals, I commonly hear about how nice anarchy sounds—but what's the plan? How to reach for it.

Well, there's the old evolutionary theory—eventually everyone will get aware and it will simply happen in time. I personally view this as hogwash in terms of my own life. Were we interested in having anarchy for the next generation, we would participate in our children's lives in much the same way as the founding fathers of the U.S. constitution have ruled our lives from such a time and distance. If we desire anarchy for ourselves, then we must make it. For us. And then our children can choose for themselves—and it will be much easier a choice, because we will have made it available as a choice—something we don't have in our present lives.

And so, because the words and terminology of anarchy and anti-authority have become a fad in this civilization of today; because those terms have lost their meaning as a source of ideological and physical changes; I, for one, will distance myself from the milieu, and seek for those individuals who are not

Dust Devil

they call it a Dust Devil

its tail twirls
across the Sonoran

whips through the mesquite
thicket

aways the saguaro

upends Dixie cups
as it gathers momentum

to dump its load
of sand

In my eye

Sheryl L. Nelms
POB 31595
Tucson, AZ. 85751-1595

only able to talk, but can and will do, as well. As I am, as I have lived throughout my life....

Anarchy is a good term—it reflects my understanding of what I perceive to be a good way to conduct a society within which I may function as an individual. The definition is made—we know what anarchy can be. Now let's get beyond the definition and resolve to bring it about....

So my only problem with contributing to *Anarchy* is that I don't wish to see my words wasted, argued over, but not producing action. I enjoy *Anarchy*. It's highly entertaining, educational, and inspirational.... I respect and appreciate your dedication and actions. I do think more can be done—but a step at a time. You do keep the ideas awake and available, no small thing.

Smash reality for real!

In friendship,
A.N., Florence, AZ.

"Attention please"

"Attention please" 28 yr. old anark, incarcerated (P.O.W.) Last 10 years, Needs your letters and assistance! No Family, friends (in prison also, or dead), or outside contacts. Confined in "isolation" with no funds for basic necessities, or an attorney to assist with my enormous legal battles. Need letters of encouragement, free-world contacts, visits, reading material, photos, donations. I need a lifeline and a kind word—I'm sinking!

Write: Michael J. Stotts
No. 17829-034
Box 1000
Talladega, AL 35160
P.S. S.A.S.E. if you write, please!

Great disappointment

Dear Lev,

After receiving the first issue of my subscription to *Anarchy*, I must confess it was a great disappointment.

Rather than being an intelligent overview of Bakunin's theory of "...the abolition of the state," *Anarchy* has turned out to be just another forum for the disenchanted: filled with cant and sophistry, *Anarchy* contains nothing but invectives against society.

The pamphlet *As We See It!*, on the other hand, was excellent. But its metaphysical arguments concerning human subjectivity and "alienation," like all arguments based on metaphysics, "differ in

kind"—they have no application to the physical world. "The State" as Adolf Hitler ridiculed, "is considered rather as something which has resulted from economic necessity, or at best, the natural outcome of the play of political forces and impulses." Hitler felt that it was the *volksisch* concept which formed the basis of the state, and as we all know, Hitler was right!

Again, your metaphysical criticism of the nation-state, with the observation that "we are forced to live, work and die according to the dictates of hierarchical organizations" ignores Hitler's observation on the peoples' ability to resist authority (the Weimar Republic) and work together in one homogenous group consensus. It is the emphasis of "not following leaders" which makes anarchy so appealing in this situation.

Another fallacy within your publication is the strong Marxist and communist tone contained in the writing of *Anarchy*. Why? Anarchists tend to be more free thinking than any advocate of the left. Yet *Anarchy* seems to be sympathetic to communist collectivization but hostile to capitalist enclosurement. Why not attack both?

Anyways Lev, I will continue to subscribe to your periodical and glean the parts that seem to conform with an actual sense of anarchy. Thank you!

Sincerely,
B.G., Boston, MA.

Lev responds

Sorry to hear *Anarchy* is such a disappointment to you, but you should realize that, though Bakunin was a very important figure in the history of the development of anarchist theory and practice, the anarchist tradition admits a huge number of disparate strands into its midst. This is because, unlike those movements which can claim to derive from some dogma (like Christianity, Buddhism, Marxism or Nazism) the anarchist idea is relatively unrestricted by ideological demands for orthodoxy.

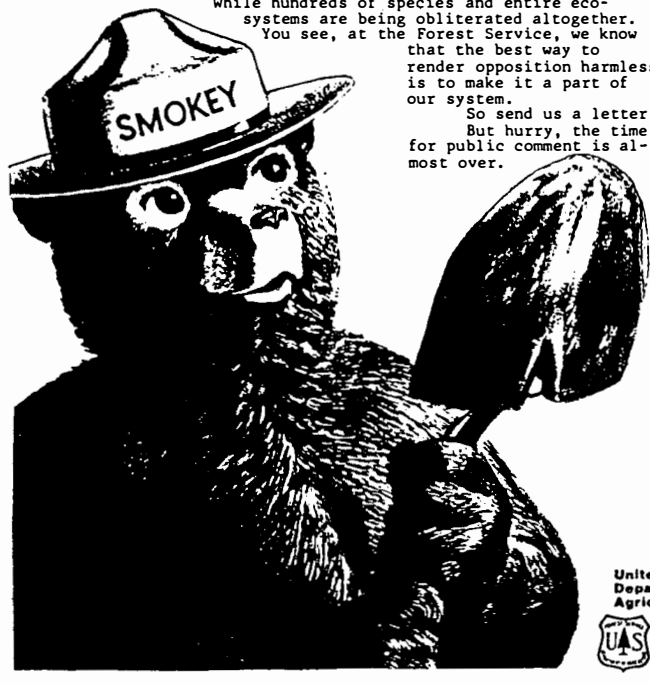
I have to admit that I find your criticisms of our "metaphysical" arguments puzzling, since no metaphysics was intended, and I fail to understand what you might mean by your seemingly idiosyncratic use of this word. It would seem to me to be crystal clear that our use of the word "alienation," for example, precisely avoids any metaphysical speculation regarding any sort of supposed ontological essence of humanity which might be alienated. Our analysis adheres closely to the demands of a nonmetaphysical, dialectical, social and historical examination of the phenomenon of alienation.

I'm sure most people would agree with me that it is quite doubtful that Hitler was "right" regarding anything but his understandings of the practical demands of organizing and running a reactionary social movement, a totalitarian state, and at least in the first stages, a world war. That he actually understood the theoretical bases of his ability to manipulate masses of people through authoritarian institutions and ideologies is quite unlikely.

Anarchy is sympathetic with anti-authoritarian (small 'c') communist collectivization, along

REMEMBER, TO MAKE IT WORK WE NEED YOUR HELP.

Clearcut logging. Strip mining. Cattle grazing. The process of transforming a living forest into a stream of commodities. Resources to be exploited. Profit for the taking. It was easy once and no one complained. With everyone so dependent on a timber company paycheck and distracted by their jobs, how could they? These days, however, people are questioning our plans. And putting up resistance. So we grant limited reforms and make token concessions. While hundreds of species and entire ecosystems are being obliterated altogether. You see, at the Forest Service, we know that the best way to render opposition harmless is to make it a part of our system. So send us a letter. But hurry, the time for public comment is almost over.



United States
Department of
Agriculture
Forest
Service

ad parody

Letters



with the minority tradition of libertarian Marxists (though we certainly don't agree with all of their positions). However, *Anarchy* is very critical of all the mainstream authoritarian Marxist movements--Russian, Chinese, Yugoslavian, Cuban, and Nicaraguan included. But at the same time, we try to keep a sense of proportion in mind when we speak about those of these movements under direct attack by imperialist military forces organized, directed, and funded by the U.S. government. In the same way, when we speak of Afghanistan, it is important to condemn first of all, the manipulation of the situation by Russian and U.S. imperialism, before getting down to the level of criticizing the authoritarianism of the resistance groups, though this is important, too.

It should be remembered also that, though we are quite sympathetic with anti-authoritarian cooperative, collectivist, communitarian, and communist movements, we are also quite insistent on the need for a defense of the individual and her/his desires.

I hope this clarifies some of the questions you've raised.

Questioning Knabb

Dear *Anarchy*,

Concerning issue 15, Ken Knabb's essay is in many respects excellent. But consider this statement: "There is nothing intrinsically masculine, for example, about writing; women are going to have to learn how to do it if they don't want to remain impotent." Ken wrote this about 10 years ago. If he rewrote it today, would he change this sentence? Would he replace in the essay the generic "he" with "s/he"? Are there other changes he might make in the essay? I invite Ken to respond to *Anarchy*.

In the upper right hand corner of p. 13, the word "denigration" is used. Denigrate means literally "to blacken." It thus promotes the simplistic notion that black is bad and by implication that white is good. In a world as racist as ours, I suggest substituting "defamation" or other synonyms for the word denigration. Why stigmatize the beautiful color black?
T.O., Columbia, MO.

Recycled humph

"Albanian National Anthem"

Alba-a-ania, Alba-ania!, the freest of nations in the world!
Alba-a-ania, Alba-ania!, march forward with thy red flag unfurl'd!
No thoughts we allow, but that of Chairman Mao,
for what is right is right,
Alba-a-ania, Alba-ania!, the nation of glory and light!
We dedicate ourselves to Enver Hoxha, leader of all Albania, with the help of the Chinese people,
we shall defeat revisionist Russia! Communism's defender! We shall not surrender! For we are in the right!
Alba-a-ania, Alba-ania! the nation of glory and of light!

Now that I've gotten through typing my little jingle, I'm curious what your source was for my address. Since you have the new zip code for my P.O. Hole, it

must be of fairly recent origin--did you get it from *Factsheet Five*, or from somewhere else? Not that this particularly bothers me--I'm just curious.

As for your paper, it doesn't cause me so much pleasure or outrage, so much as it strikes me as recycled humph, covering essentially the same territory over and over again, without really accomplishing anything. It's not so much that I want to hurt your feelings, but I must point this out: that having tasted of the Marvelous, I cannot go back to the intellectual sawdust which is what even the best writing in this and other "anarchist" papers is, just as a cat who has tasted of good tuna will not without much yowling go back to "C.A.L. Can."

Even in its senescence and decline, small tidbits from the *Church of the SubGenius* pack more punch than long-winded articles on "reified" and "non-reified" religion; just any one page at random from *The Book of the SubGenius* kicks more ass than years of these papers put together.

The Marcuse de Sade still manages to get in a left hook with a right curve at the puerile puffery emitted by "Deke Nilhson," however, one page from *I feel a Chillasm* by Bob Black disembowels the above-mentioned drivelt so much more effectively than can box 11331, though I hear what he's saying.

Suggestion: Bribe Bob Black with money into writing something for your paper, even if it's hate letters putting you down, such as this. I might buy your paper. I don't really care about his love life--well, actually I am concerned in a way, but that won't stop me from searching for his stuff regardless of the merits, and there definitely are 2 sides to the mess in Boston, notwithstanding Bob's apparent bitterness and seemingly Quixotic aspect of the unpleasantness.

In closing: The difference between 11331 and 11551 is not so much that between "Good" and "Evil," as between "insurrectionary" Oy" and insurrectionary joy. Where is *Popular Reality* when we truly need it? Chairman GoodProp rules!

In the name of "Ba'ab, the Merciful, the Benevolent, L.N., Sacramento, CA.

In Lev's defense

Thanks for writing. We always appreciate interesting criticism. However, it's too bad you have so little patience for discussions of liberatory theory, though I'm sure you're not alone in (justifiably) finding our last issue a bit on the "long-winded" and repetitive side. I'm afraid that sometimes it's just the price one has to pay for getting into a subject in some depth.

Similarly, there is a price paid by your "Marvelous" Church of the SubGenius for its own approach--their price seems to be a lack of coherence which can rather rapidly approach total boredom from my own point-of-view. Whereas, on first exposure I'm sure many people find SubGenioid rants and collages to be just the tonic they needed for that boring afternoon at school or at work, after just a few more exposures the joke often begins to wear a little too thin

to sustain any interest, except for a few true-Believers, of course. Although, for some people the joke can prove to be so off-the-wall as to evoke no reaction at all from the word "go." And then again, the welcome given to John Zerzan's rather mild criticisms of the holy Church (of the SubGenius) in one of the last issues of *Popular Reality* surely proved that there are some rather stuffed shirts even within the SubGenioid hierarchy who themselves can't take a joke--or a little incisive criticism.

This isn't to say that we have the "right"--or that you have the "wrong"--style, however. Different people have different tastes. This overly industrial world's already boring enough without demanding that everyone prefer the same approach to radical critique. Personally, I think they're all rather impoverished and generally poorly conceived, though that doesn't stop me from doing the best I can to help try to improve the average.

Thanks for your (relatively well-meaning?) "suggestion." You'd have no way of knowing, of course, but we have already reprinted a couple of Bob Black's better pieces in the past, "The Abolition of Work" and "Let us Prey." No need to "bribe" him when his stuff is already

Reprint no problem

Dear Lev,

Thanks for sending me the issue of *Anarchy*. Delighted to see it, and very pleased that you reprinted the article. About reprinting, no problem; any time you like, the more the better. I definitely think it is worthwhile. There are a lot of people "out there," and it is very hard to reach them, so every means one can develop are all to the good. Thanks very much for your kind words, which, believe me, I very much appreciate--and thanks even more for what you are doing. That's what really matters.

Best,

Noam Chomsky, Cambridge, MA.

Greek anarchists

Dear Lev,

I was most interested in your essay on anarchism in Greece which derived from your contact with Greek anarchists. I don't know much about this topic but I was surprised to see the 1890s listed as the start of the anarchist movement. Seems late. I do know that while doing research on the IWW I came across the information that the modern Mexican labor movement had its beginning in the mutualist societies organized in the 1860s by student followers

who never affiliated with the 3rd International even tho they thought of themselves as supporters of Bolshevism. They, in fact, struggled with the regular CP for more than a decade and were larger and more influential until the mid-1930s. They were eventually destroyed by a combination of police and CP pressures. The remnant went over to the Trotskyist movement in the late 1930s. Trotsky himself wrote that the Greek section of the 4th Int. was second in size only to the Russian section. I have come across a lot of this material while reading in the Poulos Collection, Tamiment Library, NYU, which has original documents and newspapers.

I wrote the above only to contribute to the search for more understanding of the radical tradition in Greece. My impression is that the Greek left has an incomplete sense of its own history. Any enlightenment would be helpful. I also think you are far too simplistic to say EAM-ELAS eliminated mild socialists. The opposite is true. They forged a genuine popular front and brought in many liberals and socialists. There were struggles with other supposedly left groups but that's a murky history and the CP is not simply a villain in that affair.

Given all the above, I think the revival of anarchism during the junta period is quite extraordinary. One wonders exactly where the roots were: from students who went west to Italy and Germany or from native sources or just what? I look forward to future installments on this topic. My sense is that developments since the 1970s are much easier to document and follow.

Enclosed find a \$6 sub. Send me any back issues from the past year and put the rest toward future issues.

Also enclosed is part of a series I've been writing for a Greek-American paper.

For the liberation of us all,
D.G., Brooklyn, NY.

Picked up

Dear folks,

I just picked up a copy of *Anarchy* #14 at Salt of the Earth Records. I read it and enjoyed it thoroughly. I then went to the Community Grocery and was pleasantly surprised--I had never heard of the place.... Thanks and keep up the fine work.

Amicably,
J.T., San Antonio, TX.

SOME CALL IT DEVASTATION. WE CALL IT MANAGEMENT.

AT THE FOREST SERVICE, WE CREATE THE EUPHEMISMS
THAT OBSCURE THE DIFFERENCE.
SO YOU'LL ACCEPT IT.
BECAUSE WE KNOW THAT EVEN THE BEST
PLANS WILL FAIL,
IF PEOPLE RESIST TOO MUCH.



ad parody

out there for everyone to [with his blessing] steal! It's too bad there aren't a few more both intelligent and entertaining writers around, though even Black's style (as well as his too often intolerant activities) definitely gets a little old at times. And as for *Popular Reality*, while it occasionally published some good stuff, it contained its share of small-print, big-ego drivel, too. Personally, I don't really miss it that much.

So don't worry about "hurting our feelings," just try improving your own approach. It could use it as much as any of the rest!

of the immigrant Greek anarchist Plotino Rhodakanaty. Much as I've tried to find out more about him and his origins, I've mainly come up blank. The reference is from John M. Hart, "Anarchist Thought in Nineteenth Century Mexico," unpublished PhD, UCLA, 1970.

Other information which is odd is to state the founding of the Greek Communist Party as one of the major reasons the anarchists were eclipsed. This suggests anarchists can't face competition. More importantly, however, in Greece there was a group called the *archivo marxists*

Note on letters

Sorry! If your letter did not appear in this issue, it should appear in *Anarchy* #17, which will be out in autumn 1988. Due to the continuing backlog of letters and the limitations of space due to our costs (as well as the backlog of other material which we couldn't include in this issue), many letters had to be held for the next issue. We'll try to expand the letters column in the next issue to catch up.



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