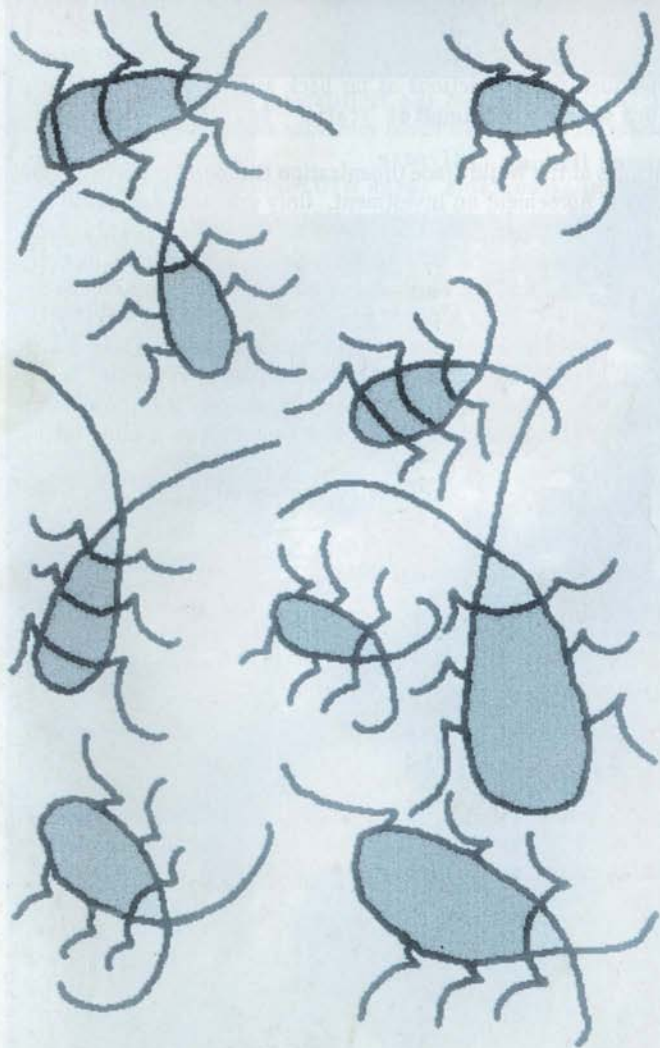


kick it over

• a social anarchist / anti-authoritarian quarterly



• Spring 2000, \$3.75



Interviews:
Lorenzo Kom'Boa Ervin
on Black Autonomy
and Revolution

Noam Chomski
on Student Activism

Features:
Caldwell First Nation

Nietzsche, Anarchism
and History

Vancouver Five

Reflections on Seattle

Council Communism

that how you remember the street names in downtown Seattle, or so I was told as the WTO Protest navigated our way to the site of the WTO Protest. It was 11:00 am, Tuesday, November 30, 1999, and, in the next 36 hours, the streets of downtown Seattle were to leave a mark on me that the prophetic adage somehow failed to transmit. I was accompanied by two recently made political associates from Edmonton. The three of us had decided to take four days off from work, rent a car and drive to Seattle to participate in the anti-WTO demonstrations. We had, all three of us, attended a WTO workshop sponsored by the Council of Canadians and the local Edmonton Peoples Action Network. I had been notified of these planned citizens actions as far back as May by my sister who worked for a British Columbia NGO seeking delegate status to participate in the conference. We had, of us, attended a WTO workshop sponsored by the Council of Canadians and the Edmonton Peoples Action Network. I had been notified of these planned citizens actions as far back as May by my sister who worked for a British Columbia NGO seeking delegate status to the conference. We had, already familiar with the practices and principles of the World Trade Organization through my participation in a previous WTO mobilization against the Multilateral Agreement on Investment. Only something as global and powerful as the WTO could motivate such massive opposition from diverse interests. I was already familiar with the practices and principles of the World Trade Organization through my participation in a previous WTO mobilization against the Multilateral Agreement on Investment. Only something as global and powerful as the WTO could motivate such massive opposition from diverse interests.

was already familiar with the practices and principles of the World Trade Organization through my participation in a previous WTO mobilization against the Multilateral Agreement on Investment. Only something as global and powerful as the WTO could motivate such massive opposition from diverse interests. Activists from around the globe should be thankful to the person who first shouted across the globe: "STOP THE WTO! BEFORE PROFITS!!!" The atmosphere was celebratory. A massive parade of people gathered for the day. This would be the extent of the anti-climatic. It was a stage burning from his car, sporting an army issue helmet emblazoned by a pink rubber

A gunshot tinged the air, something cut through the air, a flash of light, a sound of a rifle, synthetic and sour. We parted and scurried. The masses, countless faces in motion. Somebody was trying to say something. Suddenly, "BOOMPH THOO!" Walls of people moved. Against we were just standing there. Then the sound of more projectiles, scatter guns, rifles rattling the streets. A woman screamed. My associates started running, uncontrollably. The gas was rude and raw, to get it out and together we led our aspirations. "Don't run", and that helped calm the situation and the oppression. I appeared to have had a shot and people brought us water to wash our faces. We had lost Emily in the thick smoke and mayhem.

the morning, news stations were broadcasting dozens of arrests, the calling of the National Guard and the



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"Not for Sale"

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from zoe to the reader

I don't know about you, but my life seems to pass by in cycles. The main problem with this is that the cycles aren't all that conducive to the production of a quarterly magazine.

As a collective, we have decided to create a rotating editorial column so that we could express our ideas individually, and not have to produce some bland over-arching editorial that would have no soul. This issue it seems that I've drawn the short straw and it's my turn to introduce myself.

To begin with, I have an older sister. She's always been doing everything before me, and it was she, of course, who introduced me to this magazine. We were at a community demonstration together (late 80's early 90's - ish) and she picked up an issue of KIO. She showed it to me and went on and on about how cool it was and she couldn't believe that even her so un-hip little sister didn't know anything about it. This, of course, spiked my propensity for sisterly competition and in the next few years I read every copy I could get my hands on, leading to a great variety of mis-adventures. As to the cyclical nature of my life, I lost touch with the magazine for a while, but it came back into my life when I heard that some friends were moving the magazine from Toronto to Guelph. I jumped at the chance to work on a magazine that had taught me so much.

As with most things that you really want to do and are really worth while, they don't mesh easily into your life. Balancing the things which you have to do with those that you want to do has never been an easy task, though hopefully the two are not too far removed from each other. My life tends to involve endlessly sporadic time commitments and fitting these to the continuous nature of a quarterly magazine has been difficult and rewarding. I have always been committed to learning, in any form, and it is great to be a part of something which helps to transform all of the beautiful sporadic conversations of our daily lives into a 'hard copy' in order to broaden the discussion (which is my view on why KIO kicks). This issue falls absolutely into this form. The articles have spontaneously and sporadically come together, with no direction given by us, the collective, to form a magazine, which to me, seems to discuss, of all things, infiltration and complexity. The articles help to expose the diversity of the issues, and the complexity within each, and the larger cycles of the struggles.

I came to the collective with the idea that I would be helping to 'create and continue' a magazine, an assumption which led to many obstacles. The magazine already exists, the information and struggles are there. The act of publishing and distribution only builds a continuity of discussion within our sporadic cycles. If we don't work to take possession of our ideas, the action and change that we can make becomes minimal.

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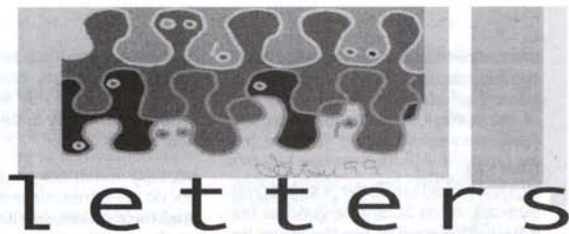
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- Occasionally, KIO will trade our mailing list with other anarchist projects. This helps both us and them reach out to new readers and supporters. Please check here if you **do not wish your name** given to other projects.

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Sarah Gunn



KIO



Letters

Notification of Disapproval, Title of Publication: Kick It Over. Publisher: Canadian Publications. Page(s) Which Meet Disapproval Criteria: All.

Description of Material That Meets Disapproval Criteria, Include CCR, Title 15 Section: 3006 (c) (1), Any matter of a character tending to incite murder; arson; riot; or any form of violence or physical harm to any person, or any ethnic, gender, racial, religious, or other group. 3006 (c) (6), Plans for activities which violate the law, these regulations or local procedures.

[Comradely?]

State of California, Department of Corrections, Pelican Bay.

reply: The prison system itself is a form of violence. It is especially directed at 'minority' ethnic and racial groups. Perhaps the folks at Pelican Bay "disapprove" of KIO because we recognize these two facts? The American Bureau of Justice Statistics published in 1997 the startling findings that per 100,000 adults in prison in 1995 6,926 were African Americans compared to 919 Euro-Americans. Per population that is a difference of 6,007. More over, since 1985 there has been an increase of 3,382 African-Americans and 391 Euro-Americans per 100,000 adults in prison in the USA. See page 27 of KIO #36 and judge for yourselves. Is this not 'Ethnic Cleansing' ; concentration camps in the great United States? These statistics are not just numbers. We need serious alternatives to a destructive prison system. But as Al Cunningham, contributor to KIO #37 p.28 and a prisoner at San Quentin put it, "It's a money thing!" Indeed, but not just a money thing!

Hi Kick It Over,

I am very much liking your magazine. While I cannot call myself an anarchist I do subscribe to many anarchist principles. I feel that libertarian socialism is the one answer for the injustices and outrages of the world. I am quite gratified to see that you spend a lot of time thinking about actually getting from point A to point B in your editorials and articles. The failure to do this seriously is one of the glaring weaknesses of the anarchist movements. A number of your writers (I've seen one other issue of your magazine besides Feb. 1999) spend a great deal of effort talking about abolishing property, or the implications of ending the factory system, etc., as if it is a realistic possibility that we'll have to make a decision on these matters sometime soon. I'd advise you to continue to kick over this problem of actually influencing society at large in your editorials, while leaving the speculation to your contributors. **Frank, Bedek ON**

...

Comrades,

I was delighted to receive KIO once again and glad to discover that Bob Melcombe, who struggled so long to keep KIO alive

has found an energized group to continue the good work. Enclosed is a small donation to help. I'm sorry that it can't be greater than it is.

I was impressed by the quality of the articles, reviews and poetry in this issue. I was especially interested in the emphasis on directing our anarchic energies and insights toward working in the communities in which we dwell. I was interested too in both the analytic quality of the writings and the divorcement of the writers' ego needs from their writings. Another area that moved me was the article about Attilio Bortolotti (including the photo of Art and Libera). They were old friends and comrades and I spent pleasurable times with them.

If I felt any negative reactions to the materials found in this issue it was the academic jargon that infected Tom Martin's article "Seven Deadly Assumptions". Although I found his thoughts stimulating and important, I felt that the complexity of his language was alienating. *But this may be the reaction of an autodidact.* I react similarly to other articles in other anarchist publications. My prejudice makes me think that even the most

complex, philosophical and challenging of ideas can be expressed beautifully without resorting to specialized formulations.

David Koven, CA

...

Kick It Over,

Thanks for your warm response to my letter. My impression is that the KIO group are moving in a direction that I think is most important. I don't think that people like ourselves are trying to renounce the great anarchists of the past and their contributions. But in light of what has happened to the world since the beginning of this century, it's of most importance for us to try to save our anarchic vision for future generations. The great anarchists of the past were after all, men [and women] of their time and as brilliant and dedicated as they were, they shouldn't foresee the materialistic, passive direction in which society would develop. At eighty, I consider myself one of the last products of the 19th century. But, having experienced the changes in society I've become more and more convinced that we anarchists, if we are to have any influence on the future must abandon the images of violent change

in society and address ourselves to those communal and co-operative aspects of anarchy which have always been part of our heritage. **David Koven, CA**

Dear KIO,

Hi, I just picked up a copy of *Kick It Over* from a London bookstore-good to see it back. Also good to see the listing for the June 18th action, although "Global Street Party 2" is not, as the listing itself (from the original proposal) made clear. The types of actions being organized for the day are various and the number of groups involved world wide is huge. Reclaim the Streets and Street Parties-catalysts as they may have been-are just part of this diversity. At the risk of telling you something you already know, we're informed that in Canada there is an alliance of around 40 groups and campaign working on J18 including unionists, students, radical ecologists etc.

Del (Reclaim the Streets), UK

Dear Comrades,

I was glad to hear you are back on the scene. I was also glad to read the subtitle adjective "Social Anarchist", especially if it means that KIO's 15 years focus on Feminism and Ecology will change, and the next 15 years of KIO will be focused on workplaces, if anything else for "Justice" reasons.

I believe that there is absolutely no need to label myself "ecologist" when I talk/act ecologically, "anti-militarist" when I talk/act anti-militaristically, "feminist" when I talk/act feministically.

All these are "realms" where one must be active as anarchist (communist), because every anarchist (communist) must continually struggle to re-unite the "realms" of his/her life and to destroy the dividing lines within "the people" of "class" (or whatever else you prefer to name all those people who have the common interest to destroy all kinds of Power and exploitation).

If I label myself "ecologist" when I talk/act ecologically, then I help the creation of one more dividing line within the people whom we want to reunite. That is what Bookchin has done. Instead of embodying and enriching his anarchist analysis with his ecological views, he made a new dividing line: social ecology. And now we have anarchists versus social ecologists that is, we have to destroy one more dividing line.

Anyway, I hope that such articles as those of Heathcott, Wollersheim and Moore will be the rule and not the exception to the rule in the pages of the new KIO.

No, I am not an anarchist "workerist", nor do I underestimate many excellent books and articles on "man-woman" relationships and on "nature-human" relationships. I just try to act as an anarchist (communist) in every aspect of my life and on every social level.

Spyros, Greece

Dear KIO collective,

Congratulations on getting KIO up and running again. Your first issue looks really good. But what happened to the [women's and ecological symbol that was part of the "Over"] in "Kick It Over"? Does this omission represent a move away from feminism and ecology by the new collective, or was it merely an oversight?

Regina C, ON

reply: The omission of the symbols from our title does not represent any move away from feminism or ecology. One of the first things that we did as the new collective was to redesign the title as a way of making the project "ours". Hopefully our editorial content will make it clear that Kick It Over is still dedicated to the feminist and ecological projects.]

Greetings,

Welcome back! We are pleased to have you grace our shelves again.

A long time ago we'd sent you money as mutual aid when you were financially strapped, and are now pleased to see you come back. Recently we've noticed a decline in anarchist print, so your rebirth is a reassuring note.

Tom, Bound Together Anarchist Collective Bookstore and Meeting Place, San Francisco CA

Dear KIO,

Thanks for sending me your last issue. I don't understand everything that you were talking about but it was the first time I was reading an anarchist journal, and I think that I'll better understand by reading more and more of that stuff. Could you please list me the addresses of other journals of that kind?

Thank you for the things on which you open my mind and that I've never been exposed to before.

Alexis, PQ

reply: Some addresses for other anar-

chist magazines can be found in the "In Brief" section of this issue.

KIO,

I have just read your winter 1999 edition of "Kick It Over". I enjoyed the article by Tom Martin, "Seven Deadly Assumptions". It confirmed many of my ideas.

This is only the second copy of your magazine that I have received, and as I read the articles I try to get an idea of what "anarchy" is about. I have never been a person who had an interest in politics before, so as I read your articles I get confused with the language used. In any case, while I agree with your outcome, I don't agree that you'll succeed, especially as you say "...make the revolution happen step by step, fist by fist, smile by smile" (p.33).

You will never succeed with violence (fist by fist), and you can't "make" the revolution happen. People have to be able to accept it as part of their values. What I believe needs to be done, is to introduce a better basis for our values before anything else will change. We need to take back personal responsibility.

One way of doing that is to get rid of Christian values and introduce the concept of Reincarnation. Christianity is dying in our culture, but there is still too much leftover confusion to establish any real value system. Reincarnation is responsibility, and responsibility will create the kind of world that we need.

Jerry

Dear Editors,

I agree with many of the insights about the nature of the anti-cuts movement in Canada made by Peter S. Moore in his article "Looking for an Anarchist Livingroom." The anti-cuts movement is definitely a Statist movement of people wanting a benevolent government to soothe our aching cuts and bruises.

I was disappointed, however, that more of the article was not dedicated to identifying our role as anarchists and anti-authoritarian within that movement. As many of us do Anti-cuts work, it would have been quite relevant to focus the

What is really interesting to me is Moore's idea of "taking the message to the people", i.e., how can we popularize anarchist ideas given the political reality that we live in, within a framework that Canadians might understand.

Moore offers precious little in the way of exploring these. **Carl Lucas, ON**

Dear KIO,

What is Terrorism really? Under the word in the dictionary, I found the following: "the political application of terror and intimidation". Terrorism is to commit deliberate attacks on targets with the intention of injuring and/or killing people. Earlier in history, the Nazis executed a civilian for every German soldier that was killed by the partisans. The Americans show even less compassion, if that were indeed possible. They take things so personally that [they] retaliate with much less exactitude. The means of retribution were much more spectacular, rockets being the preferred choice, because, after all, then no American would have to wash the blood on their hands, and if by chance more people die than expected (planned?), who cares as long as it is not another White American. The proof is also lacking that only terrorists were affected by the recent rocket attacks against Iraq.

With the attack on the alleged chemical weapons factory, who is to say that the survivors in the vicinity of the attack won't be adversely effected by the resulting leakage of said chemicals? According to a United Nations report, it was only a factory that produced pharmaceutical products, however, it still begs the question of these dead people being branded as terrorists before a court of law, had the circumstances allowed such a procedure to occur. Thus, the question arises of what it really means when a president chooses this way to deal with things, in preference of the universally accepted method of applying a reasonable standard of judgment. Am I to believe that Bill Clinton has no faith in the way of normal judgment? So what that some of his political prisoners also feel the same way and exhibit the same behaviour, what of it? Or is this all simply a case of impatience on behalf of some of the most powerful people on the planet? What is to be said of a president that orders rockets to rain death and destruction on human beings as a result of plain impatience.

I am especially troubled that this president, who recently put his signature to 50 new grounds against the death penalty, yet part of a party that never before supported the death penalty, is considered a left winger in the USA. I guess that the phrase "the political left" is com-

pletely devoid of meaning nowadays.

I wonder if we haven't already long ago voted for terrorism without absolutely being aware that we did so. So what is the point of trying to combat terrorism if we have long accepted it in the highest ranks, I ask you?

Marion Wollersheim, Netherlands

Dear Comrades of KIO:

What a joy to receive your splendid publication!

I (Sid) have not been able to read all of it, as I have had eye surgery a few weeks ago. But my surgeon promises me that in about a month I should have close to 20/20 vision on the operated eye. Let's hope he's right!

Clara and I have been in the anarchist movement since the 'thirties. We were founders and activists in the Vanguard Group, and, among many other things, we published the magazine *Vanguard* and also the bi-weekly "Spanish Revolution". I was also the editor of the English page of Carlo Tresco's paper. We were involved with the IWW, the various foreign language organizations: the Jewish Anarchist Federation, the Spanish groups and even a Russian group. The defeat of the Spanish Revolution was a terrible blow, but we did not abandon our libertarian principles.

Well, about five years ago Clara and I started a small study group, together with some young folks who were new to anarchism. (Many of them told us they became anarchists after reading Kropotkin.) The group then spread out to others in our region and eventually we became the Atlantic Anarchist Circle. I hope that your group will become part of the Atlantic Anarchist Circle. We have had two conventions, and recently a major two-day workshop in anarchist organizing, and now we are planning an organizing tour of the entire region.

The best piece in your magazine is "Broadening the Anarchist Gene Pool". Sounds like something we would write. But some of your stuff is somewhat obscurantist-super academic. Let's have more straight talk.

Clara and Sidney Solomon, NY

To Kick It Over,

I was so excited to see a new issue. It has been a long time since Kick It Over has come out and in that time some

major publications in the anarchist movement have ended - *Love and Rage*, *the Blast*, *Free Society*, and *Profane Existence*. The need for a serious, practical, anarchist periodical has been great, I'm glad you are back. The article on anarchist organizing and identity by Joseph Heathcott was brilliant.

I'm submitting a book review on Barbara Smith's latest book. Smith is a Black feminist, lesbian, anti-authoritarian socialist who has been doing activism and organizing for the past three decades. Her contributions to radical thought have been monumental and have always pushed to end all forms of inequality, illegitimate authority and exploitation. I think that anarchists can learn a lot from what she has to say, and though she is not explicitly an anarchist, many radical people of colour are not, and if we are only to look to explicitly anarchist writers and speakers, we will largely ignore the contributions to radical thought of many people of colour, queers and others.

As the anarchist movement grows - with more and more people doing Earth first, tenant organizing, Food not Bombs, feminist activism, joining the IWW, opening infoshops, bookstores, cafes, libraries, and people doing prisoner support and prison abolition activism and so on - we need to have forums to discuss our politics, strategies and organizing with one another so that we can develop our ideas and learn from one another. We need *Kick It Over* in the movement.

Chris Crass, CA

Note: Chris' review of Barbara Smith's "The Truth that Never Hurts: Writings on Race, Gender and Freedom" will appear in our Summer 2000 issue.

Dear KIO,

In Peter S. Moore's otherwise perceptive article "Looking for an anarchist Livingroom", he makes one serious error - his analysis of the Montana Freeman. While they are certainly not anarchists or any sort of leftists, they are also not the extreme branch of neo-conservatism or "secessionary bourgeoisie" - they and other members of the wider militia movement are members of the far right, have a distinct ideology and are predominantly working class.

There are two major ideologies in the militia movement - Christian Identity and Christian Constitutionalism - which overlap to some extent and both of which have adherents outside the mili-

tion movement. Christian Identity is by far the uglier of the two; it is in fact a system of racist theology that originated in the Aryan Nations (formally known as the Church of Jesus Christ Christian). Briefly stated, the key beliefs of Christian Identity are that non-whites are sub-human, Northern Europeans are descended from the Ten Lost Tribes of Israel, and that Jews are not the descendants of the other two "unlost" tribes, but impostors and children of the devil who replaced "real" Jews when the Romans wiped them out shortly after the Crucifixion. Identity Christians believe that the "subhuman" non-whites and Jews are secretly controlling the world, depriving Northern-Europeans—God's chosen people—as their rightful place as rulers of the world.

While the Freemen and some of the other more notorious figures in the militia movement are Identity Christians, the vast majority of the militia members (including Timothy McVeigh) are Christian Constitutionalists—and repulsed by explicit racism which they see as un-American. They believe that the US constitution was divinely inspired, but also that the Articles of Confederation and traditional common law are also in force. Through a convoluted interpretation of the three, they believe that any government above the county level is illegitimate—that the federal or state agents must seek permission of county authorities before attempting to enforce any laws. They also believe that grand juries may throw out laws they disagree with and are often advocates of direct democracy. In addition to participating in militias, Christian Constitutionalists have set up parallel "common law" courts and engaged in other activities that challenge centralized authority.

Although they view the neo-conservative establishment with disgust and there is both anti-statist and a less articulate anti-corporate populist streak to their politics, anarchists shouldn't start cheering for Christian Constitutionalists. Leaving aside the questions of capitalism, the market economy or private property; their Christianity is of a highly conservative, often fundamentalist, sort; they have very traditional and often very patriarchal views of the family; and, despite their rejection of explicit racism, there is a strong, unconscious undercurrent in their movement seeking to return to a time when white male su-

premacy was unquestioned. Despite Christian Constitutionalists' radical politics, the neo-conservative establishment has found ways to co-opt them, particularly through the anti-ecological Wise Use movement.

Both the Christian Constitutionalist and far smaller Identity Christian movements are predominantly working class. Working class people have every right to be disgruntled, especially as the economy continues to get worse and their livelihoods down-sized. Although the militia movement was greatly weakened by the Oklahoma City bombing, Christian Constitutionalism as an ideology will probably continue to attract many. It provides an explanation for many of the social problems working class people face—without making them feel un-patriotic. That they have turned to the far right rather than to the far left and particularly anarchism with its shared emphasis on democratic decentralization, speaks to the poor ability of anarchists and other progressives to communicate effectively with the average person. For these reasons we need to seriously consider the nature of the appeal of Christian Constitutionalism and other populist far right movements, rather than dismissing them as leftists so often do—and figure out how it is that they communicate their message that makes them effective. **Matt W. MA.**

reply: I think that the reason that they are so effective is not how they are communicating but what they are communicating. Patriotism, Patriarchy, Christianity, Individualism, Militarism, and Racism are all ingredients that are already present, its simply a "radical" spin on some old themes. Progressive minded people have a hard time communicating our ideas in part because what we advocate is a radical reversal of most of those ingredients if the far right are communicating to people about what they already know, Libertarian Socialism is like outer space. This said, I don't reckon that we're doing our jobs satisfactorily in the communication department, but we have to recognize that we are in fact speaking a different language than the rightist populists. It makes our task more difficult.

Dear KIQ Folks,

I was thrilled to discover the winter issue of KIQ when I was in San Francisco recently. I was a long time subscriber

before and wondered where you'd disappeared. None of the other anarchist mags I picked up seemed to fill the void.

I read Joseph Heathcot's "Broadening the Anarchist Gene Pool" with great interest. Although I have identified as an anarchist/anarcho-feminist for almost 20 years, I've never been part of an "anarchist culture" I've worked in grass roots groups in the movement against violence against women, the queer movement, the environmental movement, etc., my work always informed by anti-authoritarian philosophies. Sometimes I mention being an anarchist, but mostly it doesn't come up. I wonder how many others like me there are out there-gut anarchists.

The few times I've bumped up against anarchist-punk culture, I have not joined in. I don't relate to the music or the social ambiance. As an average looking, 30-something dyke, I clearly don't fit in. And yet, and yet... In the last year I've made an anarchist friend who has been lending me comic books (*World War 3* etc.), zines, talking about music, art, ideas. It's been very cool. It makes me realize how complacent I've become from being one of the most radical people in all the groups I work in, with the people I hang out with. It doesn't take a lot to push the edges of peoples consciousness. Now, I need my own edges pushed a little too. Thanks to the lot of you in Guelph (my old home town) who've taken KIQ on. I look forward to reading future issues.

One of the things I'd ask you to pay attention to, is encouraging women to write for you. My vision of anarchism includes plenty of women's voices. To this end, I enclose a few poems. Cheers,
K.L. Kivi, BC



letters

address and send your letters to:

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Guelph, On
N1H 7A1
Canada

World Without Borders

USA

Nighttime Gardeners Raid Federal Biotechnology Research Facility

In celebration of U.S. Senate Resolution 200, which designates January 2000 as "National Biotechnology Month," the nighttime gardeners of *Reclaim the Seeds* ushered in the gardening season with a raid on a federal biotechnology research facility. Having cut [their] way into a greenhouse containing transgenic wheat, *Reclaim the Seeds* proceeded to destroy over half the crop and ruin the experiment.

[They] chose the Western Regional Research Center (WRRRC) of the U.S.D.A.'s Agricultural Research Service for the enterprise.

This facility is notorious for its research on transgenic corn, tomatoes, and potatoes, as well as the genetic manipulation of fruit tree DNA in its labs. The WRRRC describes one of its goals as to "develop new and novel food and industrial products...using biotechnology to develop improved tailored agricultural crops and bioengineering to create new products from agricultural crops and processing co-products."

Some folks have written a "How-to" Nighttime Gardening Guide which can be viewed at the Bioengineering Action Network website: www.tao.ca/~ban

Reprinted from *a-infos* January 20, 2000

Colombia

Crossroads of War and Biodiversity: CIA, Cocaine, and Death Squads

Forty million people, along with the most biologically diverse, endangered ecosystems in the world, are under attack by the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and mercenaries paid by oil companies. This war is fought with bombs and bullets, as well as with herbicides and media misinformation. The rapacious greed of multinationals like Occidental Petroleum, Shell, BP Texaco, and their counterparts in the Colombian elite is the main problem. Also, Drug exports to the US pay for the weapons of the right-wing government-backed death squads and the revolutionary guerrillas.

For years, Colombia was banned from receiving US military or drug fighting money due to its poor human rights record and its failure to cooperate in the drug war. In 1998 they received \$89 million, and this year the total reached \$289 million, despite continued human rights abuses. Colombia is now the third largest recipient of U.S. military aid after Israel and Egypt. Direct U.S. military intervention looms on the horizon for this region, which exports more oil to the U.S. than the entire Middle East. President Clinton is giving the nod to a death-squad offensive. These squads work closely with Colombian military and together they are responsible for the deaths of 25,000 people this decade - 300,000 since 1945. Violence has displaced 1.2 million people in the last three years (mostly women and children).

Death squads guard petroleum facilities and shipments of cocaine. The head of these squads, Carlos Castaño, is a key player in the Cali Drug Cartel, according to the Drug Enforcement Administration. Castaño took over the direction of the death squads from another CIA asset, Colombian Army General Van Martínez. CIA involvement in Colombia began in the 1950s and grew along with the drug trade. In 1991 the CIA established a Colombian naval intelligence group that became a key part of the death squads' continuing terror campaign against guerrillas and anyone who speaks out for change or peace. Many death squad leaders graduated from the School of the Americas in Fort Benning, Georgia, where thousands of Latin American soldiers have been trained in counterinsurgency and torture.

In July, the largest Colombian guerrilla group, Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC) launched an attack against the mountain headquarters of Castaño, but were driven back by the Colombian army with U.S. intelligence assistance.

The news media have confused the issues and kept secret U.S. culpability in this dirty war. They create an impression that the FARC and the Ejército de Liberación Nacional (ELN), have long controlled most of the drug trade, but, in fact, "ELN until now has been a minor player." Moreover, the guerrillas are presented as unwilling to lay down their arms as part of a peace plan. In the late 1980s, guerrillas put down the gun for the ballot box. They were met with the votes of many people and a hail of bullets from the death squads. Almost

5,000 members of the opposition political party, Patriotic Union, have been killed by the right wing since 1989. Besides the war, the oil spills, dams and herbicides, there is the usual devastation from cattle, road construction, logging and mining - the social and environmental externalities that come with the U.S. model of economic development.

Thousands of young people have joined the guerrillas' bid to end the right wing's forty years of collusion with oil company exploitation and death squad violence. Their goal is to stop this neo-liberal madness that devastates people and the environment in a chase for profits.

For more information contact:
Eco-Solidarity Colombia, Tel: (520) 388-5514, email: ecosolidarity@hotmail.com, website: www.geocities.com/rainforest/andes/2185

Reprinted from a-infos, Jan. 19, 2000

South Africa

South African unions gird for action on privatisation by Stewart Bailey

The first broadside was fired yesterday [January 19, 2000] in the expected battle between the government and trade unions over the state's privatisation programme, as the Greater Johannesburg Metropolitan Council (GJMC) signaled its intention to shun union pressure and forge ahead with its iGoli 2002 programme.

Magane Thobejane, the GJMC labour specialist, said yesterday all attempts to find an inclusive settlement had proved fruitless. Thobejane said elements of the plan, which had been on hold while the council had sought agreement with the unions, could now be implemented. Kenny Fihla, The GJMC's, political head, [labelled some] of the unions' arguments as "backward, illogical, ultra-left ideologies." Mediation with unions over the iGoli 2002 programme broke down last week after the parties failed to reach consensus on restructuring issues. Brian Greenstein, a labour analyst at Andrew Levy & Associates, said a strike

would be a test case for the government on how future privatisation-related labour concerns were dealt with. Brian Hlongwa, GJMC's privatisation coordinator, said the iGoli plan had the full support of the government. "You can expect to see the government take a fairly hardline stance on this privatisation. If this programme fails due to pressure from labour, the state could experience problems with privatisations on a national level," said Hlongwa.

However, Zaid Nordien, a spokesman for the department of public enterprises, said the government would continue to search for inclusive settlements for all shareholders in its restructuring programme. He argued that privatisation at a national level could be fraught with far greater complexities than those faced by Johannesburg.

Anna Weekes, a South African Municipal Workers' Union (Samwu) spokes[person], confirmed the threatened strike by the Union over iGoli 2002 would have ramifications for the government's broader privatisation strategy. "This strike will open up a can of worms over the Gear policy, which we have been opposed to since its inception," said Weekes. Cosatu, to which Samwu is affiliated, last week called for the GJMC to resume mediations in good faith. Cosatu claimed the GJMC had merely assented to mediation to fulfil "technical requirements."

Reprinted from a-infos, Jan. 20, 2000

India

India, Narmada Dam Protesters "Imprison" Jailers

The long-running struggle by villagers in central India to halt a dam that would submerge 40,000 homes entered the realm of farce yesterday [January 18, 2000], one day after police arrested about 1,000 protesters, including the prize-winning novelist Arundhati Roy.

The arrested demonstrators were taken to a disused prison building in a small town near the dam site and locked up. The jail has neither electricity, water nor other facilities.

When the handful of jailers made preparations to leave, the protesters physically prevented them from going. The prisoners, all of whom have been charged with unlawful assembly, spent the night inside the prison. They have now refused to leave until they receive written answers to their objections to the dam.

The Maheshwar Dam, on the Narmada river in the state of Madhya Pradesh in central India, is halfway to completion. The state authorities are casting around in increasing desperation for foreign finance to complete the scheme, after the departure of German and American backers who were alarmed by its financial and environmental implications.

The site of the dam was occupied by 3,000 villagers from the affected areas as well by Ms Roy and journalists at dawn on Tuesday. After abortive negotiations between the demonstrators, the District Collector and several desultory attempts to make arrest, the police moved in force during the afternoon and hauled the protestors away.

One witness described seeing Ms Roy pulled and pummelled and dragged across the rocks in the building site by police officers before being taken away in car. After being charged, she was later released.

Ms Roy, who won the Booker Prize in 1997 with her novel "The God of Small Things," [contributed to international exposure towards] the Narmada Valley campaign. An extended pamphlet, "The Greater Common Good," [was published] which detailed the human cost of big dams in India such as those being constructed on the Narmada river.

The crux of her argument is that no real provision has been made for the resettlement of the dam's victims, despite elaborate claims to the contrary.

In the case of the Maheshwar Dam, nearly 40,000 farmers, fishermen, sand miners, boatmen and their families stand to lose their homes and livelihood if the dam is completed. A recent investigation by a state-nominated task force found that no land had been set aside for those who will be displaced by the dam.

Reprinted from a-infos, Jan. 19, 2000

US Prisoner

Washington State Decriminalizes Anarchy

Croatia

News from ZAP in Croatia

US Prisoner Needs Support

Ali Khalid Abdullah is a New Afrikan Anarchist prisoner incarcerated in Michigan. He has recently been denied parole again, as part of an effort to maximize the number of prisoners in jail so that the governor of Michigan can push ahead with building more jails (after all, if more prisoners are paroled, they don't need to build the six new prisons). As a response to this, prisoners eligible for parole, who, like Ali, get knocked back for trivial or previously unmentioned reasons, are now taking the parole board to court. Ali also wants to do this, but needs the cash to make it possible. A lawyer to file the papers will cost about US\$1000 to \$1500. Ali deserves our support in this. He is the founder of the Political Prisoners of War Coalition, an activist group inside prisons, mainly in Michigan, that fights for prisoners' rights and to raise the consciousness of those incarcerated. PPWC has also published many articles, not just on the prison situation and related matters of oppression, but also on the struggle of peoples all over the world for a better life and freedom and justice. Ali himself has written extensively on political, social and prisoner issues. Ali is also a member of the IWW, and in regular contact with ABC chapters all over the world. One of the reasons he needs to make this appeal for outside funds is that he has put any money that has come his way into this political work.

Washington State Decriminalizes Anarchy Wobblies of the world, relax. It's OK once again to be an anarchist in Washington. Gov. Gary Locke on Wednesday signed Senate Bill 5671, repealing an 80-year-old law that had been passed in reaction to the home-bred Industrial Workers of the World, radical labor activists better known as the Wobblies. Under the law, it was illegal to advocate anarchy, defined as "the doctrine that organized government should be overthrown by force or violence." "It was also illegal for people to "assemble for the purpose of advocating or teaching the doctrines of criminal anarchy," or even to possess or display "emblems of seditious and anarchistic groups." Displaying the letter "A" surrounded by a circle, for example, was a felony punishable by up to 10 years in prison. The law was passed in 1909 and updated in 1919. It never mentioned the IWW, but the union movement was the clear target. "People couldn't distinguish between a Communist and a Wobbler," said Tacoma historian Ron Magden. "There was a great fear in the general public -- especially in the West -- because they could blow you up. The law made them feel safer." It didn't help that the Wobblies were central to two of the more notorious incidents in state history. In 1916, a contingent of Wobblies was met at the dock in Everett by a sheriff intent on keeping them from helping striking shingle weavers. The Everett Massacre left seven dead and 50 wounded. In 1919, IWW members and American Legionnaires faced off in a gun battle now known as the Centralia Massacre. An IWW member was later pulled from jail and lynched. After the bill was approved, though, the Wobblies paid little attention to it, and there were few prosecutions. Sen. Adam Kline, D-Seattle, could find only four cases that reached the state Supreme Court, the most recent in 1941. But Kline said that even though the statute was an unconstitutional violation of the right to free expression, it was better to get rid of it -- because it might get used. "The law goes after speech, the display of emblems, parades," Kline said. "The right and the left have a right to do it." "Call me a paranoiac, but history is cyclical."

Dear International Friends and Comrades,

We hope you remember our newsletter Zaginflatch which we published since 1995. At present, our group can't produce a regular paper in English, so that is the reason many of you have stopped receiving it. Besides working on our magazine Comunitas, we are staying active on the local level. We have just published a booklet on Emma Goldman, and our info-shop is growing. If you can spare materials, please consider sending them.

Ark/ZAP --
Zagreb Anarchist Movement, Gajevo
55, 1000 Zagreb, Croatia;
e-mail: zap_zg@geocities.com

Anarchist Black Cross

The Anarchist Black Cross Federation has initiated a program to send monthly cheques into those political prisoners who have been receiving insufficient, little or no support during their imprisonment. Currently, with each member giving \$5.00/week, we are able to support 3 prisoners with cheques of \$60.00 each per month.

With guidance from the prisoners, a list of those in most need of this assistance is being compiled. We already have more people on the list than we have resources. We are asking other anarchists and concerned individuals to contribute \$5.00/week (\$20.00/month) (or whatever you can afford) to this effort. A newsletter is being published which documents all moneys received and to which prisoners it went. Prisoners' addresses will be included so that contributors can write and ensure that the money is actually reaching those for whom it is intended. Sekou Odinga, who is currently receiving a monthly cheque, writes, "Thanks very much for the support you've been organizing... After not having any or very little support for so long, it now seems like (people) have all of a sudden realized that I'm alive."

Contact: Washington DC ABC, PO Box 77432, Washington DC 20013, USA. In Canada: Moncton ABC-SG, PO Box 25103, Moncton, NB E1C 9M9.

Contributions can be sent to:
Cynthia Ritsher, PO Box 554, Lincoln,
MA 01773 USA;
or alternatively, as a cashier cheque or postal or bank money order to Ali Khalid Abdullah #148130, Saginaw Correctional Facility, 9625 Pierce Road, Freeland, Michigan MI 48623, USA. (Put Ali's full name and prison number on the cheque).
Or in Europe, send to PO Box 17773, London SE8 4WX (make payable to Red & Black Club and specify it is for Ali)

from: black flag
<blakflag@dircon.co.uk>

from A-Infos News Service
<http://www.ainfos.ca/>

ICOPA

The ninth International Conference on Penal Abolition is being organized for Toronto, May 10-13, 2000.

With the theme A Call to Transformative Justice: New Questions, New Answers, this conference will examine the links between corporate dominance and the growing prison industry. Since the first such Conference in Toronto in 1983, ICOPA has grown to become a world-wide movement to challenge the existing system of "justice" and imprisonment. From the first, ICOPAs have been venues where activists and theorists can come together, share their experiences, build their movement, and strategize ways to further their efforts.

To find out more, contact ICOPA at:
ICOPA,

c/o Rittenhouse - A New Vision, 157 Carlton Street, Ste. 202, Toronto, ON M5A 2K3. Phone 416-972-9992. Fax 416-923-8742.
E-mail <ritten@interlog.com>.

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- Occasionally, KIO will trade our mailing list with other anarchist projects. This helps both us and them reach out to new readers and supporters. Please check here if you **do not wish your name** given to other projects.

Book review

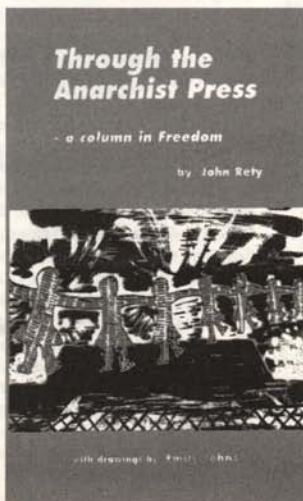
Through the Anarchist Press – a column in Freedom
by John Rety, with drawings by Emily Johns
published by Freedom Press, 84b Whitechapel High Street,
London E1 7QX, UK; 1996
price £3.60

Reviewed by bob melcombe

In 1994, John Rety made a New Year's resolution that he would for the coming year rely for news solely on the anarchist press. He wrote a column in each biweekly issue of *Freedom* newsheet, discussing issues and concerns that arose through his reading. At the end of that year, he decided that he not only hadn't missed anything of importance, but had actually "benefited enormously," and decided to continue indefinitely.

Rety's column was called "Through the Anarchist Press," and this book is a collection of two years' worth of his columns. Emily Johns' drawings add another dimension to the book, commenting on, rather than just illustrating, the text.

There are some 40 columns gathered in this collection. They range in length from a few paragraphs to a few pages, and in format from short jottings on a variety of subjects, to personal re-



flections, to deeply insightful essays on matters relating to anarchist ideas and activities. Subjects touched on or explored in detail include just about everything an anarchist could think of.

Of course, as is always the case with such a collection, a few of the columns fall flat. But most of the columns include enough food for thought that I found the book an interesting and enjoyable – and, at its best, a thought-provoking – read. Gathering them together in a book gives them a cohesion that reading them over time in their original format couldn't. All in all, this is a book I'd recommend.

“NOT for SALE”

The Caldwell Band's struggle to buy land

Inevitably, it seems, when Aboriginal communities make progress in negotiations with the Canadian federal government to advance self-determination, a localized citizens coalition develops, claiming their interests have not been recognized in the process. Stoney Point and Mississauga First Nations are just two examples where citizens groups organized campaigns to harass Band members and lobby against Native land settlements. As a trend, anti-Native groups consist of landowners, cottagers, recreational industry users, and "outdoor sportsmen." Ironically, these extreme-right networks identify themselves with names of "freedom", "equality" and "community," spouting off government policy rhetoric of "freedom of expression", "democracy" and "justice" to justify their anti-Native, colonial actions.

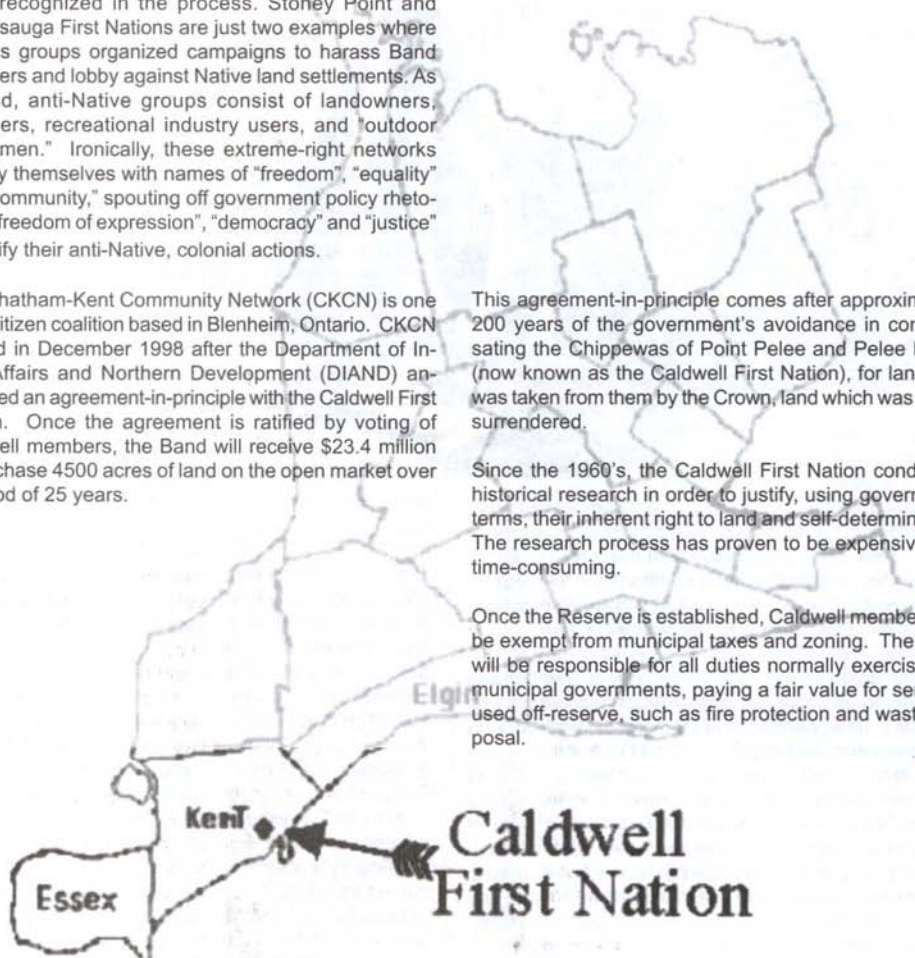
The Chatham-Kent Community Network (CKCN) is one such citizen coalition based in Blenheim, Ontario. CKCN formed in December 1998 after the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (DIAND) announced an agreement-in-principle with the Caldwell First Nation. Once the agreement is ratified by voting of Caldwell members, the Band will receive \$23.4 million to purchase 4500 acres of land on the open market over a period of 25 years.

by Heather Wiley

This agreement-in-principle comes after approximately 200 years of the government's avoidance in compensating the Chippewas of Point Pelee and Pelee Island (now known as the Caldwell First Nation), for land that was taken from them by the Crown, land which was never surrendered.

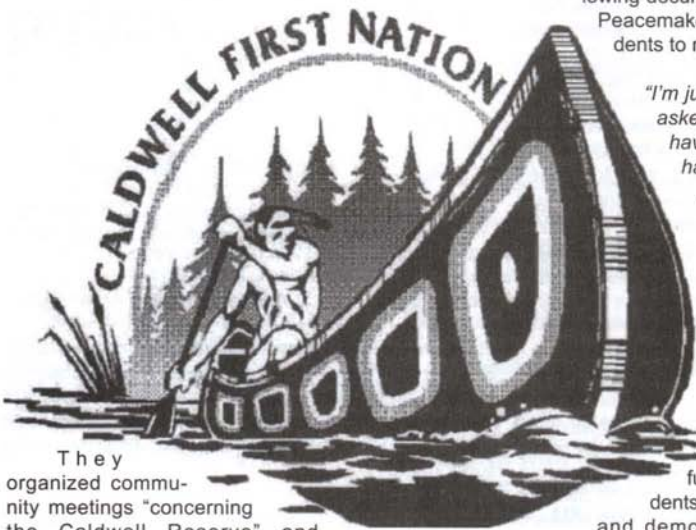
Since the 1960's, the Caldwell First Nation conducted historical research in order to justify, using government terms, their inherent right to land and self-determination. The research process has proven to be expensive and time-consuming.

Once the Reserve is established, Caldwell members will be exempt from municipal taxes and zoning. The Band will be responsible for all duties normally exercised by municipal governments, paying a fair value for services used off-reserve, such as fire protection and waste disposal.



The announcement of the agreement-in-principle was welcomed by other Aboriginal communities as a victorious step towards self-government. As presented in a report to the United Nations by Caldwell Chief Larry Johnson in July 1999, "The land settlement does not really compensate us for wrongs done, but it is an opportunity to revive our community and our culture."

Immediately after the announcement, CKCN opened a staffed-office in downtown Blenheim. They also designed a website to disseminate paranoia and to communicate with other anti-Native citizens. CKCN mainly consists of local politicians, commercial farmers and landowners.



They organized community meetings "concerning the Caldwell Reserve" and launched petition campaigns to the federal government demanding that a reserve not be established in Blenheim area. They also coordinated a massive campaign of posting "not for sale" signs on hydro poles, mailboxes, trees and municipal posts to display their unwillingness to sell land to the Caldwell First Nation.

Theresa Johnson, Delaware First Nation Member and wife partner of Caldwell Chief Larry Johnson, along with her two sisters, decided to attend one of the CKCN organized community meetings. Stan Uher, CKCN member and commercial farmer, and Hank Vanderpol, CKCN member and commercial mushroom and vegetable farmer, were conducting the meeting. Upon entry of Theresa and her sisters, Stan and Hank said "We welcome our Native neighbours - now leave." A woman in attendance stood up and stated that they [Theresa and her sisters] had every right to be at the public meeting. Stan and Hank rebuked, saying it was a private meeting. At which point, six minutes into the meeting, everybody left.

This reaction shows a distinct divide in anti-Native citizens coalitions. There are some members who strongly believe in the state-run democratic system and are solely concerned about their property interests. There are other members, like the vocal members and organizers of CKCN, who fundamentally believe in Conqueror's Rights to the land; expecting Aboriginal People to assimilate with the values and systems of the dominator. Either way, the notion of forcefully denying Aboriginal communities their legal right to resources to progress self-government is paternalistic and inherently racist.

The neighbours' sentiments are exemplified by the following documented responses when the Christian Peacemaker Team encouraged Blenheim residents to remove the "not for sale" signs:

"I'm just being neighbourly...my neighbours asked me to put up a sign and neighbours have to stick together so I put up a sign. I have nothing against the Caldwell."

"I don't want an Indian reserve here...I'm not being racist, but you know what reserves look like - full of junk and shacks and dirty kids. They'll drive the value of my land way down."

"I don't want a reserve here. The Caldwell's purchases are driving land prices sky high."

These responses illustrate the confusion and stereotypes non-Native residents have regarding the Caldwell Reserve, and demonstrates how individual property ownership and community homogeneity perpetuates racism.

The above sentiments from the Blenheim community have escalated into violent attacks towards Caldwell members and those supporting the Caldwell First Nation. Theresa Johnson explained to me, instances of around-the-clock stalking, harassing faxes/phone calls, children being sprayed with pesticides, dead animals placed on properties and a laneway being snowed in by a snowplough worker. At school, Theresa's 8-year old granddaughter, Kayla Jacobs, was told by a classmate that her house was going to be burned down. The terrorism that Caldwell members, and People of Colour experience daily from Euro-neighbours living in Blenheim, is telling by a comment that a highschool student was quoted as saying: "We already have the niggers coming in the summertime [referring to the influx of migrant agricultural workers coming from the south], now we have to worry about the Indians coming, too!"

One night, on or around January 27, 1999, vandals destroyed Theresa and Chief Larry Johnson's mailbox, spray painted the new Caldwell community centre with "CONDEMED"[sic], flattened the tires on a truck, and attempted to destroy the centre and the baseball backstop. Moreover, they had stolen the tools they used.

On the Friday after, a neighbour was sent over by KCCN with a new mailbox for the Johnson's. Theresa immediately sent it back saying she "didn't want a damn thing from those people."

The police reported the damage as a "hate crime", however Theresa and Chief Larry Johnson have not received a verbal or written investigations report. Thus far, no charges have been laid. Since the vandalism, Caldwell members and supporters have been rotating night security shifts to ensure their own safety.

These intimidation campaigns towards Caldwell members are a direct result of KCCN's influence on public opinion at community meetings, over their website and through their press releases. KCCN has linked their website to Upstate Citizens for Equality (UCE), a coalition that is opposed to the land claim granted to Oneida Indians in Upstate New York. Allegedly, KCCN's press releases are becoming similar to UCE's releases, claiming that their [colonial] livelihood is threatened; using false or exaggerated facts to support their arguments. Almost every press release will claim that KCCN members have tried to meet with Caldwell members. Theresa and Chief Larry Johnson have yet to receive an invitation to discuss KCCN's concerns.

KCCN is also eager to provide the media with the information of a recently formed litigation group against Caldwell Chief Larry Johnson. The group includes a few Caldwell and non-Caldwell First Nation members who are challenging the Chief's credibility and demanding a one-time cash settlement instead building a Reserve. These internal conflicts arise in land claim settlements and are meant to be resolved within the Band. However, the pro-KCCN media will highlight the conflicts as an illustration to justify that reserves are unstable and unpopular amongst Caldwell members. Knowing that journalists cannot verify the confidential identities of Caldwell members, KCCN will provide the press with names of the litigation group members and falsely identify them as Caldwell members. These false claims are an attempt by KCCN to divide Caldwell members in order to manipulate the ratification vote on the agreement-in-principle.

An email that was posted in December 1998 on the KCCN website by George Perry included the statements, "Have heart. It is dark and there are many noises to scare and confuse...Soon the sun will be rising and we

Some Background on the Anti-Native Movement in Canada

Unfortunately, KCCN is only one of many anti-Native organizing groups in Canada. Ontario Federation for Individual Rights and Equality (ON F.I.R.E.) formed in October 1995 as a resistance to the re-occupation by Aazhooenaang Enjibaaig (a.k.a. the Stoney Point People) of their traditional territory, now known as Ipperwash Provincial Park. ON F.I.R.E. now consists of 1300 members in the Lambton County area. In addition to harassing Native People, ON F.I.R.E. lobbies the federal government and the O.P.P. to remove Stoney Pointers from the park and demanding that ON F.I.R.E. is granted third party status in government negotiations with First Nations regarding the park. ON F.I.R.E. reasons that they protecting the tourism industry in the area. There are other F.I.R.E. chapters in British Columbia, Saskatchewan and Manitoba and a federal organization, CAN F.I.R.E.

In existence since 1928, the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters (OFAH) is considered a prominent "conservation" lobby group consisting of 74,000 members in the Grey-Bruce area. OFAH campaigns against First Nations' hunting and fishing rights. They have connections with the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and, according to Anti-Racist Action, have close connections with the fringe right and organized racists.

The federal government's negotiation process of Aboriginal land claims takes an average of 15 to 20 years to settle. Moreover, the government holds a tight control of information relating to Aboriginal land claims, with 12,500 boxes of classified and non-accessible archival materials being stored at Archives of Canada (Warry, pg. 44). The State and its supporters, adamantly try to maintain their control over Aboriginal people by withholding resources and information, enforcing state-made laws, and actively participating in intimidation campaigns.

-h. wiley

Take Action against CKCN!

contact CKCN and tell 'em what you think about their actions:

62B Talbot Street, Blenheim
519.676.6717 fax: 519.676.0988
ckcn@blenheim.webgate.net
www.blenheim.webgate.net/~ckcn

email Chatham Kent councillors
Addresses can be found at:
www.city.chatham-kent.on.ca/coucil

Write a letter to the Editor of the "Windsor Star":

Windsor Star
167 Ferry Street
Windsor, ON N9a 4M5
(519) 255-5711
letters@win.southam.ca

Send letters of support to:

Caldwell First Nation
10297 Talbot Trail, RR #2
Blenheim, ON N0P 1A0
caldwel1@ciaccess.com

Participate in the anti-Racism march on
April 17 going through Blenheim
contact Caldwell First Nation for further details

will see that we are not so alone and we will see our way to a better place than we are today." This cryptic statement is believed to be a call out to the Ku Klux Klan. The email further claims that once they get organized with thousands of Canadians, "the government will be facing a storm of accountability that will remind them of Meech Lake and the Charlottetown Accord." The email has since been removed from the site.

CKCN receives emails from across North America offering information and support to CKCN. Some individuals will volunteer their expertise and influential connections. Art Stirling, national communications manager for agricultural company Pioneer Hi-Bred Ltd., offered his public relations skills; he is now the CKCN Spokesperson. Recently in a radio interview on CKSY FM, Art announced a veiled threat that CKCN was going to stop the Caldwell land claim legally or OTHERWISE [emphasis].

There are others who are willing to utilise their political position to advance CKCN's colonial agenda:

•MP Jerry Pickard commissioned a report to claim that the Caldwell First Nation was not an independent Band in the 1790s in order to justify withholding federal compensation;

•MPP Pat Hoy is attempting to track down documents that the Ontario Attorney General's office based its decision to previously reject the Caldwell land settlement;

•Frank Vercouteren, City Councillor and Chatham-Kent real estate agent, formed the "South Kent Development Company" and approached neighbours to sign a "First Right of Refusal", a legal document ensuring that the Development Company receives the first offer to bid, should the neighbour decide to sell their property; a tactic which makes it difficult for Caldwell First Nation to purchase land.

Theresa Johnson believes that CKCN is funded by W.G. Thompson, an international agricultural corn and soybean producing company. W.G. Thompson owns the most land in the area, is the wealthiest farmer and has a vested-commercial interest in the land purchased by Caldwell First Nation. W.G. Thompson rubs shoulders with the political and academic elite, sitting on various Ontario Agricultural Research Committees. W.G. Thompson's colleagues include representatives from University of Guelph, University of Saskatchewan, University of Ottawa, Province of Ontario and others from major grain producing companies.

While CKCN performs the anti-Native community organizing function, a Municipality-funded "Task Force", launched in April 1999, performs the legal functions to resist the Caldwell Reserve. The Task Force's mandate is to research and advise legal, financial, agricultural and other concerns regarding the impact of the Reserve. The Task Force must communicate findings, conclusions and the municipality's views to the federal and provincial governments, interested community groups and the media. Reportedly, the municipality has already expended \$300,000 to maintain the Task Force, although others report higher figures.

With the help of the Task Force, CKCN launched a lawsuit in January 2000 against the federal government in a bid to overturn the agreement-in-principle decision, alleging that former minister of Indian Affairs, Jane Stewart, erred when negotiating the settlement by failing to consider and address the interests of existing communities. The Task Force also launched a legal suit in January 2000 on behalf of Municipality of Chatham-Kent to obtain documents the court used to reject the Caldwell settlement in the past. The Task Force warned CKCN that any show of bad faith would diminish their chances of winning the cases. The Task Force encouraged neighbours to remove the "not for sale" signs, since it is a glaring show of bad faith. Despite their suggestion, many signs remain.

If CKCN and the Municipality of Chatham-Kent win these legal cases, a precedent would be set to give businesses and non-Native residents the power to determine where Aboriginal land settlements are situated and how Aboriginal communities are compensated for ill-intentioned or non-existent treaties.

Theresa and Chief Larry Johnson have taken down "Not for Sale" signs, written letters to the head offices of franchises who post the petitions, launched complaints to the Union Gas, University of Ottawa and other organizations about employees using the company email to support CKCN, and boycotted local CKCN supporting businesses. They have paid for advertisements in the Windsor Star to raise public awareness, since articles or letters favourable to the Caldwell Band are rarely published.

When asked how she is coping, Theresa replied "I just keep going...luckily I am an outspoken person." Kayla is aware of the meaning of the "not for sale" signs and why they are there. As Chief Larry Johnson stated in a previous interview "every child deserves care, support and an even break and it hurts to see the atmosphere under which our granddaughter has had to endure."

In rural areas, mailboxes are a popular medium for announcing one's opinion. In the midst of the abundant "not for sale" signs, a neighbour's mailbox states "In Support of Native Land Rights" and Theresa and Chief Larry Johnson's mailbox states "Canadian racism can be beaten."

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History of the Caldwell First Nation

Reprinted with permission from the Caldwell website

The Chippewas of Point Pelee and Pelee Island, also known as the Caldwell Band, is the only federally recognized Indian Band in Southern Ontario without reserve land of its own.

In 1895, the Department of Indian Affairs, workign with Chief Robert Caldwell and with the Minister of Justice, developed a plan to buy about 500 acres of local farm land for \$18,000. This together with the marsh lands of Point Pelee, would be offered to the "remnant" of the Band "in compensation for full surrender of Point Pelee." The plan included recognition that Pelee Island had not been surrendered and that the Caldwell Band was the proper entity to deal with.

Before this plan could be carried out, though, there was a change in government. Meanwhile, John Caldwell had moved from Muncey to Walpole Island. He wrote Indian Affairs to ask about the surrender of Pelee Island.

The Department once again became confused between John and Chief Robert Caldwell. The Superintendent General Wolfe wrote: "If the Caldwell is living on Walpole Island the rest of his outfit should be persuaded to do the same thing and that will get over the difficulty. From reports made of these Indians I take them to be a wretched worthless drunken vagabond lot and we should take them in hand and place them on the Island and if they are not content to stay then have quit of them altogether."

Chief Robert Caldwell was stunned by this response, he had been waiting for confirmation of the Point Pelee Reserve.

The 1895 plan to settle the Caldwell Band permanently at Point Pelee was abandoned, partly because the Department couldn't tell the difference between Chief Robert Caldwell and his cousin John, and partly because it was considered to be too expensive.

In 1897, the official position of the Government of Canada switched again, Indian Affairs decided that Pelee Island had been included in the 1870 surrender by Walpole Island after all, and that therefore, "...the claim by Chief Caldwell and his people for compensation for Pelee Island is hardly deserving of consideration."

But when Chief Robert Caldwell wrote in 1905, asking for a copy of the treaty conveying the Indian rights to Pelee Island, the Department replied simply that it was "unable to comply" with the request. In the margin of the Deputy Minister's copy of this letter is the note: "No surrender by Indians of Point Pelee."

During the First World War, Caldwell descendants continued to press for recognition of the claim to Pelee Island. The Government replied that "there is no foundation for the Caldwell claim." It relied on the Order in Council that authorized the patent of the Island, but omitted mention of the condition that the Indian title to the Island be surrendered first.

In 1922, members of the Caldwell Band, to reaffirm their rights, moved to Point Pelee, which had become a National Park. Indian Affairs told the Parks people that "there are no unextinguished aboriginal rights in that part of the county. Indians who camp there should therefore be treated as trespassers, and should not be allowed to annoy your Superintendent. They may be treated as ordinary squatters."

The press inflated the numbers of Indians involved, from the fifteen who were camped at the Park to "over three hundred", with rumours taking the number over a thousand. Regular RCMP patrols kept the Caldwells under observation. Newspapers warned that "a sanguinary struggle for the maintenance of law and order may have to be waged." Instead, the Chippewas presented a petition to the Government and camped at the park peacefully through the summer, leaving again in the fall.

In the 1920's under Chief Archie Dodge, and with the help of local politicians and the Indian Agent, Roy Abraham, there was another significant move toward getting land for the Caldwell Band.

In late 1922 and early 1923, the Kent and Lambton County Councils passed resolutions urging the provision of a permanent home for the Caldwell Band. The Department of Indian Affairs replied: "this matter is receiving the attention of the Department and it is hoped that a satisfactory settlement may be arrived at. I may add that these Indians are somewhat difficult to deal with and it is not easy to take up a fixed abode."

In fact, the Deputy Superintendent General - the same man who had nearly arranged the purchase of a farm and the setting aside of the Point Pelee marsh in 1891 - had met with Chief Archie Dodge and the Band and found that they were "willing" to accept any reasonable relief measure that would be provided by the Canadian government. They would not move to the Walpole Island Reserve, though because all the land there had already been allocated to other Indians. He suggested that St. Ann's Island, besides Walpole Island, should be drained and set aside.

In January 1923, James Murdock, the Minister of Labour declared that "the treatment of this unfortunate band amounted almost to a blot on the civilization of this country" and pledged his help and influence. The following month, the Deputy Superintendent General of Indian Affairs wrote that "my Minister is desirous of doing something for these wandering people, if it is at all possible to do so."

By October 1923, a detailed submission for the settling of the Caldwell Band on St. Ann's Island had been prepared. The local Indian agent estimated the cost of the St. Ann's Island settlement at \$88,000. In 1924, the Caldwell descendants at Muncey, under the mistaken impression that the claim to Pelee Island was about to be settled, objected to the Caldwells who did not live on any reserve getting compensation. The Walpole Island Council also objected to a Caldwell settlement on St. Ann's Island, since they had not consented to it.

Indian Affairs argued in support of the settlement of the Caldwell on St. Ann's Island. The settlement of this homeless and wandering band, numbering in all about one hundred persons, will place them under the direct administration of the department. Homes will be provided, agriculture facilities given for the education of their own children and the general improvement of their land. [We] are convinced that the fulfillment of the present plan is the best and only possible solution of a long standing difficulty."

In July 1924, the local Indian Agent announces that the first 10 Caldwell families would be settled by the summer of 1925. Chief Archie Dodge expressed his belief that this government was sincere in its effort to help the Band unlike previous governments which had not kept their promises.

In September 1924, though the Department decided to postpone the proposed settlement. In 1925, it concluded that the St. Ann's Island scheme was too costly and dropped it completely. By the end of 1925, the Department turned down three alternate plans because they were too expensive. The efforts of the 1920's ended with the untimely death of Chief Archie Dodge.

In 1951, the Minister of Indian Affairs put the Caldwell Band under the Indian Act "elective" system of government, which requires that only reserve residents may vote. Since Canada also maintained that the Caldwells had no reserve, the move effectively blocked the formation of a recognized band government. The order was lifted in 1978.

In 1974, Chief Carl Johnson made a public announcement of the Band's continuing rights in Point Pelee and Pelee Island.

Without having seen the Caldwell Band's documentation, the Department of Indian Affairs rejected the claim, citing the 1870 surrender of the islands in Lake Erie and the 1866 patent to the McCormicks as support for the position that there was no Indian interest in Pelee Island. As for Point Pelee, the Department said the Indian rights had been extinguished in the 1790 surrender. The Chief replied that no formal claim had been made and that the rejection was both unreasonable and premature.

During the 1970's, the Caldwell Band continued to exercise its rights in the Point Pelee area by hunting and fishing at Point Pelee and by using traditional burial grounds there.

In 1987, the Band once again made a formal claim to the Government of Canada. The claim is to Point Pelee as the traditional home of the Chippewas of Point Pelee and to Pelee Island, which was never surrendered.

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NOAM CHOMSKY

in Conversation with the Student Activist.

In February 1999, Noam Chomsky came through Guelph, Ontario, and gave talks both for the wider community and for the academic convocation at the University. Some folks from the Student Activist were lucky enough to grab some of his time, and ask a few important questions surrounding student activism today. The Student Activist - Canada's radical student paper is the publication of the Direct Action Media Network.

In the past thirty years, the role of student activism in general has changed a great deal. In comparison to thirty years ago, it seems to be a much more fragmented and less visible community. We are now seeing a corporate infiltration of campuses that was previously unthinkable, including sponsorships; the naming of new buildings; and heavy corporate influence in the curricula. What strategies do you think students need to adopt in order to combat this form of intellectual imperialism? From your perspective, what are the relative strengths and weaknesses of the student movement?

To begin with, I think you would paint a much more realistic picture if you don't go back thirty years, but if you go back forty years, or fifty years, or even sixty years. The fact is that the sixties were an unusual period, so to compare recent student activism with that of the sixties is misleading. Furthermore, even during the sixties, student activism was a very narrow affair in time. The main focusing of student activism came mostly during the late sixties. There were a few things during the early sixties, the civil rights movement and so on. The major activism of the sixties was in the late sixties, even the early seventies, so you are looking at a very brief period which was part of a general change in the society.

There was a large-scale change, of which students only played one part. So there was a whole range of attitudes, perceptions, and understandings that changed radically. Gender issues, ethnic rights and Native American rights, the environmental movement, all of these things came out of the climate of the sixties, in which students played an important part. How



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ever, to sharply focus on specifics, in general, student activism has probably increased since then.

During the eighties, students were involved in all sorts of things; activism was swamped with other issues. So if you pick, say, Central America in the eighties, student activism played a very significant role, much more so going down to Central America, people under attack or whatever, you are more likely to find people from the Bible belt involved than University students. This is a good thing. It was definitely more deeply rooted in soci-

“The major goal of corporate propaganda is to make advertising, media, entertainment ... to keep people separated, to keep each individual focused on their own needs.”

ety at that point. The anti-apartheid movement was on campus and in other places too. They are on campus, but they are elsewhere as well. You are right, students are fragmented, but that is a reflection of something much more general. Activism in general is fragmented.

Why...?

We are fragmented. The major goal of corporate propaganda is to make advertising, media, entertainment (it's huge - it's the biggest propaganda system in history) its main goal is to keep people separated, to keep each individual focused on their own needs. Invented needs, incidentally. They are all fabricated needs. You and the tube, that's supposed to be the supreme social unit, nobody else. Even in a family, the ideal is that everybody goes and watches their own televisions. Any form of human interaction is understood to be dangerous.

That is well understood. If you get people who talk to each other, exchange experiences and problems and so on, it can lead to problems. So, the best thing is to atomize people, separate them from one another. Get them focused on invented wants, like buying fifteen pairs of sneakers, maybe, instead of their real concerns. I don't watch television, but I would guess that there aren't many programs that are concerned with the fact that the typical family has to have two people working for far more hours than twenty years ago, whereas people's wages are stagnating even further without support systems and so on. These are not the topics that get discussed. I would be very much surprised because you are not supposed to see the world the way it really is, because these programs are not about the problems. These are not the topics that people are supposed to pay attention to. Or

anything ... -and that has an effect. There has been reaction to it.

Part of the effect is that the general activism has increased. My suspicion is, there is no way to measure but I think it's as high as... it's certainly way higher than the fifties, and it's probably greater than the sixties, if you kind of add it all up. Nevertheless, it is very fragmented, fractured, and not just among students. So how do you get around this? For one thing, you need systems of communication. Activists need communications systems with other organizations. They need to establish links with other groups, but these links cannot be forced - they have to grow out of people's perceptions of what the problems are. They need to organize and educate and interact and learn the skills and so on. That leads to social change....

There is no answer to the question "what's the right strategy?" That depends on where you are, who you are, and where you live, and the kind of instruments you have for understanding. You should not be asking me, I should be asking you. You know what your problems are and that is what is striking. I have noticed this around the world. [When you go to places, when you go to the poorest countries, (say the countryside on the West Bank, the Haitian slums, or the Brazilian countryside with indigenous workers). No one really asks, "What should we be doing?" They tell you what they are doing.] Maybe they ask for a reaction, but they basically just tell you what they have been doing. The only place where people ever ask what they should be doing is right here, with us, for whom the options are wide open. It's not going to be easy; the options are going to be quite hard. Say if you're a landless peasant in Brazil, there it's very difficult. There are big problems - they can get murdered, and they do. They have to work out strategies related to the conditions, as they perceive them. If there is any advice given, they are smart enough not to take it. We have all the options open. Yes, you can get pepper-sprayed, but compared as to what most people in the world face... maybe you may not get as good a job, but again, we're very fortunate, we're very wealthy, we have a huge number of options. We happen to live in societies where enough popular victories have been won so that the state is not very repressive. The state is quite limited in its redresses and denials to privileged people.

There are all kinds of options. That does not make it any easier to follow some of them. You have to decide what issue you want to concentrate on, what achieve-

ments can be made, perhaps the way in which universities are being corporatized is an issue, the university is a small group of people. MIT was first a vocational school then it was an engineering school, so it was drawing from the general population. When I got there, there were almost no women, no minorities, and it's been just in the last thirty years it's changed. Today there are much better human relations between and among faculty and students and students themselves, and much more activism, incidentally. Now corporatization means that there is much more pressure, more secrecy, more subordination and so on.

Another issue, another option would be, for example, the living wage programs in municipalities. These require that any public job (it should be any job, but public

Street. A huge battle was fought against the propaganda system. There were all sorts of falsifications about it, and so on and so forth. And there are, as always, victims. Let's take the MAI. It's not finished, by any stretch. If you look at the forces that were counterpoised, on one side you have the OECD [the Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development], which includes the international financial institutions, the whole corporate business, and all the media. The biggest concentration of power in history was all on one side. On the other side, there are people like Maude Barlow, activists, labour organizations and so on. These activists succeeded in forcing the MAI back, or at least forcing them to look for other paths to sneak in somewhere else looking for economic domination. It is a pretty astonishing victory. People ought to recognize it for what it was. A remarkable

victory of popular organizing and information sharing against tremendously concentrated authoritarian power. Things can be done, things can be changed.

Now social programs are in trouble. We need to defend them, to improve them. If you go back fifty years, there were not any social programs. How did the country get this far? There were political parties, the NDP [Canada's New Democratic Party] did worthwhile work organizing, starting at the provincial level. It was not easy and it was achieved through a lot of struggle. Now we are much better off. We are in a situation where we are trying to protect something. That's much better than not having anything to protect.

We saw the students in Indonesia, and how they were able to create change. What do you think the impact of the democratization of Indonesia will be, especially considering the upcoming elections?

The Indonesian student movement is, I think, operating under many illusions. For example, they are under the illusion that the IMF [International Monetary Fund] is an instrument of positive change. I know that that was a strain in the student movement, one that is wildly wrong. The IMF is an institution whose goal in the world is to make sure that investors can make a lot of money out of risky investments, without having to face the risk. If there is a risk, it will be borne by the taxpayers. The IMF is not

Student Activist

A PUBLICATION OF THE DIRECT ACTION SOLIDARITY NETWORK

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WE HAVE NO FUN!
BACK TO WORK!

October 1998

jobs are more easily regulated) at least pay a real wage, enough to keep a family with two people working above the poverty line. The minimum wage used to be a living wage; however, this has changed radically since the sixties. If you go back thirty years, minimum wage has fallen since. The living wage campaign is an attempt to raise it back up to where it was thirty years ago. That's not a radical idea - getting back to where you were in a country which is much richer than it was in the 1960's.

The issues involving activism are virtually endless, for example, take Social Security. In the United States it is a major issue. It hurt a lot of people when Social Security was handed over to money managers and Wall

Noam Chomsky

an instrument of democratization. In fact, the student movement, which has played a very important and courageous role in getting rid of Suharto, was helped by the fact that the Western powers turned against him. They turned against him for the very simple reason that he was not doing his job. He was not following IMF orders; he was not suppressing the population. At that point, they [the IMF and the Western powers] do away with dictators who are not doing their job. The student movement played a very significant role in setting the basis for what might turn out to be solution.

For years, Indonesian activists, the labour movement, were pleading with the West to live up to their commitments on the human rights situation. Finally, the fraud was exposed, and it collapsed. It was impossible to cover up the corruption, repression, and the speculative capital that had fled the country and so on. Until recently, the Indonesian student movement was in favour of the worst kinds of atrocities. How many Indonesian students were opposing the atrocities in East Timor? Or even knew about it? I'm still getting email from some of the students in Indonesia (students active in the student movement) who are telling me about how Indonesians are getting oppressed in East Timor. That's what students in Indonesia are hearing. It is not totally false of course; there is no propaganda that is totally false.

When considering individual journalism, to what degree do individual commitments to ideals of objectivity and balance help to alleviate problems within the current media system?

It is not so easy, trying to face the pressure. The closer you get to the real power's interests, the heavier the pressure is going to get. Some people are better at this than others. I have good friends who are media stars, many are investigative reporters, critical journalists, and most are awfully more cynical about the media than I am. They have to face it day by day. Some of them get tossed out, some of them get discouraged, while others find a way to continue, and some do terrific work. However, it is not easy, you are working within institutions that are not favorable to original individualist work. In fact, the limits that you have placed upon you depend on the amount of public interest and interaction. If journalists provide information, it gets the public concerned. Public and organizational pressure also gives status to those in journalism. It's interactive. That would be true even in a totalitarian society let alone in a 'free' country.

So it is not necessarily the efforts of individual journalists, it's also the context...

Journalists create a support system which helps give them room to maneuver. It gives them some protection.

There are going to be several hundred people here tonight. Obviously not all of them are active; or else, we would be a lot further along in this movement than we are. How can we better unite theory and practice? I mean, do you do these speaking tours all the time to these people and know that they are just there for the theory?

If they are just there for the theory aspect, they can go home. Everything we know about human affairs is on the surface. There are people who pretend to have theories, but that is mostly self-interest. I do not think there is much in these theories that merits being called a theory. Everything that we're talking about, anyone who spends all their time thinking about how to understand it still has much more to understand.

Though the question still stands, how do you bridge the gap? For people to become committed involves personal sacrifice. There are also personal gains, but you cannot deny the costs. Say you're a labour organizer, maybe the people you're working with will win, but you will probably lose. I mean lose by ordinary standards, by material standards. So, if you want to put yourself out by becoming an activist and organizer, there are plenty of things to lose. It depends on what your personal values are. I mean, if the values you are trying to achieve are wealth, you know, a swimming pool in the backyard, a fancy car, prestige, or hanging out in the faculty club, if that's what you want, you better not become an activist. These are not easy choices for people to make, especially in this society, where you have been brought up since infancy, with the first picture, that this is success, and have had it drummed into their heads that that's the only picture, the only way to be happy. You have to break out of that, and that's what activists try to do. Help people get out of it and to learn more themselves. You are not there to teach you are there to learn more yourself.

I have traveled endlessly, all over. I will give talks at Universities, mostly to pay the travel expenses. Sometimes it is a waste of time. Mostly it's not. It depends on the local group. If they set it up so that people can come to a meeting, and a thousand people show up, and go home and go on doing what they were doing before, it's a waste of time. If it's set up in such a way that they're organized in advance, so that they're going to get people involved in things, offer them an opportunity to get involved, handing out literature and having sign-up tables, there's that kind of surroundings, and that's what the meetings are for. The meetings are mostly to bring people together so that they can see that others think the same things and maybe to do something. There has to be a follow-up, and that requires preparation. Otherwise, there's no point.

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“ The question is not what goal is envisaged for the time being, by this or that member of the proletariat, or even the proletariat as a whole. The question is what is the proletariat and what course of action will it be forced historically to take in conformity with its own nature.”

: Karl Marx from *The Holy Family*

Council Communism

by Niel Fettes

For much of the twentieth century the theories of a classless society, sometimes identified as “Communism” have been associated with either the various Police State regimes in underdeveloped parts of Europe, Russia and Africa, or with the practice of “Leninist” organizations in the West. Under a state sanctioned ideology known as Marxism-Leninism these “Communist” governments, with varying degrees of success, developed state capitalism on their soil using methods every bit as brutal as any openly capitalist power. On the other hand the Leninist parties, in whatever their guise, be it Stalinist, Trotskyist or Maoist, functioned either as social democratic organizations (for example in Italy and France), or as small irrelevant sects, often aspiring to be social democratic organizations. A detailed critique of Leninism from a Council Communist perspective would require a much longer article than this one, but it ought to be sufficient to note that the course of history has generally run the other way from the proponents of the Leninist model.

For more than half a century “orthodox” Leninist groups have been trying to build “vanguard” parties that would ‘lead’ the working class to power. For it’s part, when the working class has moved to challenge capitalism, most notably in Hungary in 1956 and Paris in 1968, it has steadfastly ignored its would-be leaders. While Leninism figured as a communist orthodoxy since the 1920’s, there were currents which also identified with the communist project but which sought to place the creative powers of working people at the heart and centre of the revolutionary reconstruction of society, rather than relying on a revolutionary party. They knew it was the task of working people, through the organizations they would themselves create, to open the gateway to a new and better society.



Poster, Paris, May 1968

The theory of Council Communism, which holds that socialism can only be achieved through the active participation of the broad mass of humanity, is scarcely known today. Yet in the early part of this century, as a revolutionary wave rolled across Europe, it was a significant force. Many of those who would be prominent in the "left" communist circles, as the Council Communists were first called, had long histories as dissident and ultra-left radicals. Among those who would figure in the movement prominently were such important pre-war radicals as Dutch revolutionaries Herman Gorter and Anton Pannekoek, and Germans Otto Ruhle and Karl Schroder. Pannekoek is known today largely through two mentions in Lenin's writings: a complimentary, although not uncritical reference in "State and Revolution" where Lenin admitted that Pannekoek had been right against Kautsky on the question of mass action and revolution, and a second scathing reference in "Left Wing Communism", where Lenin attacked Pannekoek (identified under his pen name of Karl Horner as an ultra leftist. Yet before the First World War Pannekoek's name was better known than any of the Russians, and he was to develop a deeper and more insightful critique of the Second International than Rosa Luxemburg.

Those who would later develop Council Communist ideas and organizations greeted the Russian Revolution with enthusiasm, as did many Anarchists, who perceived, albeit from a distance, in Lenin's writings and apparent Bolshevik practice, a similarity of views. By the time of the founding of the Communist International in 1919, however, it was quite clear that there was a serious divergence in theory and practice. By the early 1920's many of the 'left communists' had begun to regard the Bolshevik regime as a state capitalist society, but initially after their separation from the Communist International retained formal

Poster, Paris, May 1968



views on organization. Many organizations, most notably the Communist Workers Party of Germany (KAPD) sought to build new revolutionary organizations which would be in the words of Herman Gorter "as hard as steel, as clear as glass." As the post war revolutionary wave receded, the left communist organizations split and fragmented. The KAPD split into separate groupings which argued respectively for and against the organization of revolutionaries separate from the factory. By the end of the decade the Council Communists existed only in tiny groups, although they continued to have an influence. When the Nazis occupied the Netherlands, Pannekoek's name featured prominently on their arrest lists.

Instead of disappearing or concentrating on turning out turgid manifestos, the Council Communists began to try and analyze the society in which they lived. Part of this analysis involved the question of how capitalism maintained control over society, and what exactly were the tasks for revolutionaries. The Council Communists functioned through small organizations sharing a common perspective, but rather than attempting to develop an alternate leadership, they sought to clarify and publicize the issues of the class struggle.

In contrast to orthodox Leninist organizations, which saw class consciousness as something external to the working class, and which would have to be injected by a bourgeois intelligentsia (hence the doctrine's popularity among intellectuals), the Council Communists developed a theory of class consciousness which saw working people and their allies moving into struggle as a result of actual conditions, not because of the intervention of small groups of revolutionaries.

As Council Communist Paul Mattick put it in 1943:

The consciousness to rebel against and to change society is not developed by the 'propaganda' of conscious minorities, but by the real and direct propaganda of events ... So long as minorities operate within the mass, the mass is not revolutionary, but neither is the minority. Its 'revolutionary conceptions' can still only serve capitalistic functions. If the masses become revolutionary, the distinction between conscious minority and unconscious majority disappears, and also the capitalistic function of the apparently 'revolutionary' minority.

- Mattick from *From the Bottom Up*

At times when the masses were not in motion, the propaganda of small groups was ineffective and worth



less. In this way the actual practice of Leninist and Council Communist groups was little different, except that the Leninist groups saw themselves as something different and intervened into struggles to try to win the masses to their programme. In contrast to Trotsky, who when he wrote in 1938 that "the crisis of humanity is the crisis of leadership" was referring to his own organization, the Fourth International, the Council Communist groups realized that the building of socialism did not depend upon the building of their organization. Pannekoek was to argue in the 1940's that there was an internal contradiction in the term "revolutionary party." While the "vanguard party" sought power, the duty of the revolutionary socialists was to try and aid the political and economic development of the working class. The Council Communists expected this development to take place through an escalating series of class actions leading to the establishment of worker's councils. Nevertheless they realized that this expectation could not be a dogma imposed regardless of situation. Rather, the key aspect of their analysis remained the theme of worker's self emancipation.

The Council Communists saw trade unions as a part of the capitalist methods of control. Trade unions are bargaining agents for the sale of labour power. As such they are a part of the capitalist system, but they are also responsible for getting a better price for labour power. If this were not true, no one would join them.

The Council Communists simply recognized this fact, and insisted that demands to make the unions "fight" or to leave the unions to set up 'red' unions was fruitless. Workers would remain in unions as long as they saw them as necessary. When they were no longer necessary, or did not serve the workers' needs they would be cast off. In the 1930's and beyond, the wildcat strike was seen as a herald of this kind of development.

For the same reason appeals for and against parliament were also deemed worthless. In contrast to those who argue to vote for social democratic parties, like the New Democratic Party, but to fight for a socialist alternative within the party, workers vote and do not vote for the NDP to the extent that they perceive the party as corresponding to their interests. Those who abstained from voting in parliamentary elections did so because they saw no reason to participate; however those who maintained parliamentary illusions could just as easily participate in wildcat strikes and militant actions when they saw it as necessary.

For much of the so-called revolutionary left there is indeed a crisis in the workers' movement presently. Their organizations are small and without

roots in the class many of their militants genuinely wish to liberate. This situation appears unlikely to change in the near future. Yet class struggle continues to take place on both a global and a local scale. For those organizations which are influenced by Council Communist ideas the future is not so bleak. The fate of these organizations and journals rests upon the evolution of the class struggle, not on their ability to develop to "win the masses to their banner." It would be foolish to simply imagine that the ideas and theories developed by the Council Communists half a century ago can be mechanically applied to the world of today; perhaps even as foolish as trying to apply the ideas of a faction of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party. The Council Communists were aware that many of their ideas were situation-specific, and without a doubt much of their writings have been passed by through the course of capitalist development. Nevertheless the council form continues to appear in revolutionary situations and the belief that the key to human emancipation is not State or party, but working people themselves is surely still important to the world of today.

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Black Autonomy & Revolution:

Lance Morgan
interviews

Lorenzo Kom'boa Ervin



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Lorenzo Kom'boa Ervin is a former member of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) and the Black Panther Party. He is no stranger to political repression at the hands of the United States government, having spent 15 years in prison for his beliefs and his activism. In November 1998, Lorenzo came to Canada for a four-city speaking tour. Stops included Guelph, Toronto, Montreal and Quebec City. What follows is an excerpt of a radio show interview by Lance Morgan for CFRU 93.3fm in Guelph.



You are one of the "Chattanooga Three", maybe you can give some history as to how you got that "title" and what's going on?

Well, Chattanooga Tennessee is a town in eastern Tennessee, just on the boarder with Georgia, and it's about 175,000 people. It has had a long history of racist violence either by the Ku Klux Klan or by the police force. The police force in that city, at least the campaign that we have been involved in, our investigations disclosed that 35 persons in the last decade and a half have been shot and killed, or hung, or beaten or whatever in local police custody. This in a city of moderate size, not much bigger than Guelph actually, but with a long history of a brutal police force, and racist violence by the Ku Klux Klan. I had been part of a movement that started ten years ago, actually, called "Concerned Citizens for Justice", which had been fighting against police brutality. It was created in the wake of the murder of a sixty-six year-old African American male there named [W.S.], and so I had become known as an activist over the years fighting police brutality. Well, the latest incidents took place in May of '98, where within the course of a week there were two police murders. May 1st, a young Black man was shot and killed, by a police officer who alleged that he had a gun and had fired upon him. Well, it turns

out that the cop had a "throw down gun", as they call them, which they use when they commit a murder against an unarmed person. They will throw a gun down by your hand and say that you fired upon the cop, or that you had a weapon. The other incident took place a week later, and this fellow name was [K.M.] who was murdered at his work site. He was shot through the heart. Three police officers, two sheriffs and one local cop went up to his work site, apparently some argument had ensued, and the police wound up shooting and killing this man. They justified it by saying that he had picked up a wrench to beat one of them in the head or some thing like that. Well, the crazy thing about all that of course is that this was an automobile detailing shop, and you'd expect that there would be a work implement like that laying around.

He would just have tools kicking around as part of his every day job?

Ya. It was just a set up and murder. But at any rate, we held demonstrations down at the city hall in Chattanooga. That was May 19th that we called for demonstrations down there, and we were supposed to be on the agenda to present a proposal to the city council for community control of the police. A community con-

trol board. We had been promised, at least members of the so-called "Coalition Against Police Brutality" had been promised, that we would in fact be on the agenda, and had been approved to be on the agenda. But, when we got down there, they refused to allow us to speak, they just ignored us. So I got up and just started giving the presentation anyway. I said, what the, you know, what's going on here? I just started giving the presentation. While in the course of the presentation the cops came in. They were trying to grab me and get me out of the place, so two other members of the Black Autonomy [Anarchist Movement] were standing in the way, on the side so that they couldn't get to me. They didn't knock the cops down or anything, just stood there, and the cops tried to run over them. I was able to give my entire presentation. The city council jumped up and out of the room. As a result of this we were arrested and charged with disrupting a meeting, which is an old charge that was used against the Civil Rights Movement back in the sixties. Similar charges were used in various states to intimidate and break up activists. In fact, that was the kind of charge that was used against Martin Luther King, Jr. himself. This is an old charge that has been used as an act of political repression. This was the second time that they have used it against me. I was involved in other protests back in 1994. It is a clearly unconstitutional law which allows the cops to select whom they wish to arrest. It also allows the state to arrest you on the basis of "unreasonable noise."

Unreasonable noise, that's a little vague isn't it?

It's extremely vague, and really couldn't stand up to any court scrutiny, if there were some constitutional scholars or whatever. They are aware of that fact, but their thing is that "well, we can just arrest them to remove them", and at that time they were talking about charging me with incitement to riot, which is a felony offense. In the United States now, many states have "three strikes and you are out laws", as they call it. They allow enhanced criminal penalties, where you would receive life in prison for any three felonies. At any time in your life. You could have got two when you were a teenager, and some sort of felony later, a minor felony, anything, yet under these new enhanced sentencing provisions they can give you life in prison without parole. So that is what I was facing. After we were charged with this we started an international campaign for the "Chattanooga Three". We're at the stage now where the Grand Jury has dropped the most severe charges, thankfully, because of the protests and letters from all over the world, and so forth, to the local officials. They're talking about finding some way of dropping the charges all together. Although that has not happened [as of November 1998].

Most recently you're involved, one of your many projects (you're always on the go, it's inspiring), is involvement with Black Liberation Radio. Now, you've been here a couple of days, and we've been talking about radio and CD's and what not, and I think a lot of people here at CFRU don't understand how good we have it, with some of our music, some of our CD's, and just the fact that we have a fairly progressive station. But you were telling me about some of the stuff that is going on in the States with Radio. Perhaps you could tell us what's going on there.

Short Proposal for the Black Panther Movement

by Lorenzo Kom'Boa Ervin

Reject militarism

The new Black Panther Movement should totally reject all attempts to steer the new Panther movement into the direction of urban guerrilla-ism, or the kind of mindless violence by the so-called "Black Guerrilla Family" based in the California prisons. In addition, the "Black Panther Militia" set up by a Black politician, Mike McGee, in Milwaukee seems to be nothing but an opportunist scam to keep him in office through threats of violence, and his militia seems to be nothing but another phony Panther outfit. But this misleadership could be fatal to a revival of the Panther Movement, and could lead to repression before the movement could get on firmer ground. It is not the movement which should be armed, but rather the people. And we should arm them not just with guns, but with revolutionary ideology. They make the revolution, not a vanguard underground force. There are no heroes or condescending saviors; we must act as our own liberators. That is one very important lesson for us to learn.

Reject personality cultism

The new Movement should not repeat the errors of central leadership style and dictatorial control by one person or small group of persons. Although Huey P. Newton and Bobby Seale made a great impact historically, many of the errors of the party leadership can be laid at their feet. Yet the membership idolized Huey especially, and placed him above question or criticism, even after it became obvious that he had serious personal problems and began to act in an unstable manner due to drug and alcohol use.

The lesson has to be: no one person or vanguard organization will ever be able to lead us to freedom. The masses will free themselves, and we should not wait on leaders to decide our fate. The sooner that we understand this, the sooner we will be on the road to liberation. We don't need leaders or party bosses to tell us how to make a revolution, we just need to organize the community to fight in its own interests.

We must build a movement with a more libertarian structure and ideology

The BPP of the 1960's was based on Marxism-Leninism, which is inherently authoritarian and undemocratic, even though it gives lip service to so-called "democratic centralism." This rigid structure prevented anyone from challenging Newton without being branded as a "traitor", and then being summarily purged from the group. This accounted for the centralized leadership style by

Oakland, which closed out persons like Geronimo Pratt in Southern California and Fred Hampton in Chicago from the national leadership. It also affected the direction of the party and its policies. No individual or clique should ever be invested with the fate and entire direction of a political movement affecting the lives of thousands (maybe even millions, by extension) of persons. The cadre system was also exposed as allowing nothing but obedience to authority, rather than revolutionary initiative, and should be junked along with the party structure.

The new movement should not adopt the bourgeois structure of a political party at all, and should reject Marxism/Leninism as an ideology which has proven itself to be both oppressive and ineffective after seventy years of State Communist rule all over the world. Anarchists call upon the Panthers to adopt Libertarian Socialism as its ideological doctrine, and to build a mass communal movement, rather than another vanguard party. The vanguard philosophy is part of what led the party to errors which confronted or tried to take an offensive against the State military and security units, as well as leading to its political isolation. But even so, it was the masses that kept the Panthers from being totally liquidated by armed police invaders, when they encircled the party headquarters in Detroit, Los Angeles, New Orleans and other cities, rather than the fighting power of the Panther cadre itself. Clearly, if the time has come for the re-emergence of the Panthers, it should be as a catalyst to a mass movement, rather than a sectarian political party. My pamphlet, *"Anarchism and the Black Revolution"* explains how the Panthers could adopt new ideology and political strategy, and could engage in community struggles on a broader scale. I am hopeful that someone within the Panther Movement will give it a serious read.

Reject vanguardism, build a mass movement
The Panthers isolated themselves - both within the Black movement by making enemies with those other militant Black nationalists and progressive reform organizations which might have made up a Black Liberation Front. It also failed to cement its ties within the White radical and labour movements, and it did not really form strong coalitions with other oppressed nationalities. For instance, its alliance with SNCC in 1967-69 deteriorated into acrimony. Its venture into bourgeois politics in the early 1970's signed its death warrant, and signaled the way for widespread political reformism. So by the time it was militarily attacked in the late 1960's, the forces were not there to defend it on a mass scale. After the BPP was suppressed, the void in the po-

Well, the corporations and the government have taken over, I mean have literally taken over all forms of progressive media. First in 1978, the Federal Communications Commission, which is the federal policing agency for broadcasting, did away with a whole category of "class D" community radio stations. That has allowed them to "upgrade", as they put it, all programming to upwards of 100 watts. It used to be that you could get a 10 watt station. A community group, a non profit association could do that. Not any more. Because of the corporations, commercial broadcasters, and the so-called non-commercial broadcasters, even those attached to universities. All they broadcast, with the universities especially, is this insipid dead jazz, classical jazz and European symphony music. They do not do any broadcasting about local political issues at all. If there is something going on in the Black community, or even on campus, something that is controversial, they will not broadcast it. The Black stations, the historically Black stations (they are all-Black programming stations), have been taken over by right wing Christian fundamentalists. The Christian right, you know, the Black agents of the Christian right. There has essentially been no voice for the Black community there to talk about the conditions that effect them, to talk about racism, to talk about police brutality; to more or less create a village ideal. You need a place where you can put your ideas, call up and say, this is my take, here's what I think and so forth. It is extremely important. To have it where only the rich, or agents of the rich, (and only rich Whites at that) can express their point of view, or only the authorities can express their point of view, leads to thought control - the situation in the United States. They posture as if this is the best of all possible worlds, but the reality is that only the corporations, only the people who are in line with the existing status quo, and only agents of the right get their right to speak. So we created Black Liberation Radio, as one of a number of underground stations. Actually, there are a thousand or so such stations now in the United States, according even to the authorities themselves. A thousand unlicensed, underground low-power FM radio stations in the United States right now. Most of them have come into existence in the last five years. They have come into existence because of the concentration of media sources. The commercial corporations are buying up media up left and right. Buying up radio stations all over the country. You've got some companies that have five and six and seven hundred stations that they own.

We see the same thing in Canada with newspapers here recently. The newspapers are buying each other up, and it is just getting to be one guy, one editor, one thought.

That is happening there also, but radio and television is even more blatant you know, because you can actually come out with your own newspaper pretty easily, you and a number of people could do that. Radio, up until this point, had been very difficult to do. It was almost impossible. Now new forms of technology have allowed low-power FM transmitters to be reduced to the size of a brick! The equipment in Black Liberation Radio in Chattanooga, all the equipment fits on one desk in the front room of my house. It's just amazing to me. From that little vantage point, from that little area, we are able to broadcast to most of the city, which is a pretty spread out city. We're able to reach ten to twelve miles. Actually we could reach further if we would increase our antenna height. It's

extremely important because it gives the Black community, or activists within the Black community, the opportunity to tell people what they are thinking, to let people know about events and things that they are a part of, to 'counter program' people's minds about the lies and the propaganda that they read about in the main stream media. It's extremely important to have that as an alternative viewpoint. So we started Black Liberation Radio in 1997, at least in my city. The original Black Liberation Radio station was started in Springfield IL. and there now are a number of Black Liberation Radio stations. It was started in 1996 by a Black man named M'banna Kantako, and he's been going strong for a long time, over a decade now. These stations are becoming more popular as the days go by. As people learn that they can do it, and do it very easily, many more people will get involved.

How have you been received by the community?

In my particular community it has been slow. There is a lot of fear in that town. That's a town that has been dominated by the Ku Klux Klan for years, and its a conservative community, so there has been slow acceptance. People will listen in fear because they think that the authorities will somehow come and get them. The authorities have been spreading this story, which it sent out on the local news media, that you'll get in trouble, or that it's some kind of offense to listen to unlicensed radio stations, or pirate stations. Because of that they are afraid to call in, they figure that the police are monitoring the station and so forth. Then, the views that we express on there are really hardline views about a lot of things in relation to the city, racism, police brutality and all that. Things that should have been said long ago, but people were afraid to say except in the silence of their own living rooms.

So, what else have you been up to?

I am also working with an organization, well actually I am one of the co-founders of a new movement, called the Black Autonomy Anarchist Movement. This group was started actually two or three years ago now. Like many fledgling groups we are trying to give a perspective on many of the issues and the ills that befall Black people, not only in the United States (since we don't recognize international borders), not only in what is called the United States or Canada, but all over the world. So I do a lot of traveling and hook up with Black activists and so forth all over the world, and Black Movements. I was in Australia last year at this time in fact, well last summer (and that's a story in itself). I'd been to 22 countries last year, most of them in Europe. I am due to go to Africa and parts of Asia next year. I am a revolutionary. I've been a revolutionary for a long time, and because of my background, having been part of the Black Panther Party in the 1960's and even before that in the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee which was the Black Power organization of that period in the late 1960's. Because of this and because of my being radicalized at a young age in Chattanooga Tennessee, when the student sit-in's started in the south, I guess I was sent on a road that would make me the way I am today. I have been this way all my life, as an activist. It sure as hell don't pay, but what it does do is give you some satisfaction in knowing that we're that much closer, or at least hopefully we are getting that much closer to freedom as a people. When you travel, or have the ability to travel as I have,

litical movement was felt for over 25 years. No one has been around to speak and fight for the rights of the poor and the working class. A succession of opportunistic politicians like Jesse Jackson and phony leaders like Muslim Minister Farrakhan have been the only forces, weak though they are, to represent the Black working class on any scale. The Panthers certainly made mistakes in the 1960's. More importantly, it was not able to build a sustained mass movement which would have taken over after the demise of the old reform civil rights movement lost its steam. Even though the Black Power movement had radicalized large sectors of the Black community, the Panthers failed to win over large masses of Blacks to Party programs. This is not to say that the party itself was ineffective, but that its objective was to build the party, not a mass movement. It is time for the Panthers to build a mass movement which can challenge the Capitalists for power, and can build a liberated zone in the belly of the beast, rather than go back to small group politics or adopt a sectarian line in the coming years.

Build a movement to free BPP political prisoners

With the destruction of the Party, hundreds of its cadre were railroaded to prison on a succession of frame-up criminal charges, where over 20 years later, many of them still remain: Herman Bell, Anthony Jalil Bottoms, Marshal Eddie Conway, Geronimo Pratt, Mumia Abu Jamal, Albert Nuh Washington, Sundiata Acoli, Sekou Odinga, Rice and Poindexter, and so many others. No movement which wants to have any credibility at all will try to forget those who made the heaviest possible sacrifices. With that in mind, I call on the new Black Panther Movement to devote a serious amount of its resources to obtaining the freedom in short order of those ex-Panthers in prison, and to freeing all political prisoners. There should be Black Cat collectives all over the country working to free political prisoners, not just in New Jersey. There is no more important work, and this can help rebuild the revolutionary movement as nothing else can. We need to let the world know what crimes the State committed in suppressing the Black revolution of the 1960's

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Black Cat Collective, New Jersey.

had the privilege or whatever... I have been able to make some assessment of our condition and make some comparisons, especially in the west. Our conditions are not drastically different. What is happening to Black people in the United States, is happening to them in Canada, and what is happening to them in other countries, Australia, someplace else. It's so very similar because they are all crying against the same things, police brutality, and excessive use of force, in these White dominated societies. They are talking about poverty and gross economic exploitation. They are talking about infant mortality. They are talking about being down at the bottom of society - the dregs of society. These are white dominated societies. Wherever, it is a universal condition so we had originally started our organization out as an international organization. It is Black Autonomy Interna-

ers, or any other intermediary, but power in the hands of the people themselves. 'Cuz it's the people that is the motive force for all change in the world. Therefore, we involve ourselves in grassroots struggle. We're involved in struggles against police brutality. We're involved in struggles for instance, in the United States they have got what they call "right to work laws" and the right to work laws are essentially anti-union laws, but not just anti-union laws, they are anti-labour laws

We are seeing some of the same things in Ontario here.

Exactly. There are 21 states in the United States right now that have them, and most of them are situated in the southern United States. For good reason, because that's where Black labour developed and so on. They created the dual tier economy, which exists to this very day. So one of the things that we're doing is that we are leading a campaign on the grass-roots level to link up Black revolutionary community forces with progressive forces in the labour movement, such as there are these days, to try and fight against these conditions. We are also trying to create alliances between the homeless and the poor, and labour forces to build a mass movement. One of the things that we want to have by the year 2000 is some sort of a major protest in Washington DC to shut that sucker down, you know what I am saying, not just to go up there and pray and what not. We want to shut that sucker down.

The "million man march" and all that.

Which raises an interesting question that a young brother in Black Autonomy had done some serious analysis about. He said that if you looked at the "million man march", which was led by my Minister Louis Farrakhan and the Nation of Islam. If you looked at that march, and if you said that was the pivotal event of the 1990's which politically educated masses of Black people, including Black youth, you'd be mistaken, because the pivotal event which did in fact, was the 1992 rebellion in Los Angeles. It not only radicalized people, it actually had for a time created a serious force for change. There were movements doing things in the community. It also jumped across boundaries into Canada, France and other places. It was like a class rebellion, and we learned a lot from that. So we're not snookered by this idea that the "million man march" was the actual best expression of radicalization during the 1990's. We're not snookered by that at all. We know that in fact the mass rebellion which challenged the authorities, and was a class rebellion, and had revolutionary potential, that rebellion was in fact the major event of the 1990's, it actually challenged White power, the White power state.

They brought the National Guard out into the streets of Los Angeles.

And the regular military forces in fact, we must point



tional. The Black Autonomy Anarchist Movement is like the North American affiliate. It is not a strong organization yet. It's actually a stronger organization internationally that it is within North America, because it is so new. Our ideas are fresh in the sense that we are not the typical Black Nationalist group looking to build some independent kingdom somewhere. We see that the Black working class is a revolutionary vanguard force to reconstruct society, you know what I'm saying, and the Black community has the deepest grievances. It's subjected to the worst kinds of super exploitation. So it has the most incentive to do these things. So what we are saying is that we are a revolutionary movement. We are not trying to reform society in the sense that we want the existing status quo to remain. We are not trying to actualize some kingdom for some Black folks who will rule over us in the same condition that the White overlords have ruled over us, replacing a White oppressor for a Black oppressor. We're looking for freedom. We are looking to put power in the hands of the people themselves. Not in the hand of leaders, kings or preach-

that out also. Regular military forces were in fact out in Los Angeles too, including military advisors just like they use in foreign countries. The United States Government was forced to do that. Rebellions also broke out in Toronto and other cities around the world. This was a popular rebellion. The "million man march" was very stage managed. It had this appeal of not saying anything to disrupt the authorities. The whole amorphous religious mysticism reminded me so much of the 1960 march on Washington, and how they moderated the comments of the head of SNCC, who was going to attack the Kennedy administration and the federal government's refusal to defend the rights of the Black people in the South. They wouldn't even allow him to speak until he was forced to retract so many things in his speech that is was just touchy feely from then on out. "The million man march" was the same sort of garbage. What we really need right now is sharp minded revolutionary politics. So, what I'm doing with Black Autonomy is working with other forces in what we're calling the Black Panther United Front, trying to create a new Black Panther movement in the United States. In fact, this time we are trying to have it be an international organization from its very inception, because we recognize that at this stage the tone of jiving around religious escapism and spaceships, and all this other garbage, and the time of all these dogmatic so called "leaders" and all this garbage has got to go. It's got to be removed, and the revolution has to raise its head once again. Until we do that, we are going to be stuck constantly in the place where we are now, where we are the victims of police brutality and all these things. The so called national and international leaders, that have the authority to speak out against these things, are not doing anything, and they

are giving us double-talk, so we've got to challenge them as well as the White governments. We need an international Black revolution. Black led revolution, we don't think that Black people can lead the [whole] revolution themselves, or be the revolution [itself], but certainly they can be that force for revolutionary social change. That is what we set our sights on doing. We are alone in that respect, in terms of the so-called Nationalists and radical groups that exist now. Many of the so-called White radical groups are steeped in 1917 politics around the Russian revolution and the Leninism that came out of that, or some variant thereof. You've got Black Nationalist groups that are even more counter-revolutionary and reactionary than they were before now, because now they're talking about building some five state kingdom in the south and all this other garbage. So with all those sorts of things that are going on, it's extremely important that people with sharp perspective and clear understanding form an organization of organizers who understand that they have to go into communities and organize around the actual conditions that are befalling people. The White government that exists is who we have to fight against, not some touchy feely "the White man" in some mystical fashion. That is not our enemy. Our enemy is the White government, Wall Street and all of it's agents, not all of whom are White.

If the United States government executed Mumia Abu Jamal, what, in your opinion would it show us?

In my opinion, if they can execute Mumia Abu Jamal, it would show more than anything that you can think of, that the so-called Left in the world, the Western Left, is totally weak and has no power whatsoever to effect any sort of change. It would show that the American government is not going to listen to any reasonable demands at all in the cases of political prisoners, and that new tactics would have to be adopted, by any means necessary. It would also show that, in point of fact, that this is a deeply racist and corrupt regime in the United States, and that clearly we are going to have to get all people of consciousness involved in a mass movement against government regardless as whatever you see yourself as, whatever variation of socialist ideas, whether it is anarchist or Black Nationalist, whatever you call yourself. We need to get people active in a mass movement against the government that produced Mumia Abu Jamal and put him on death row. That government should be put up against the wall whether he is executed or not in my opinion.

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Nietzsche, Anarchism, and History: A Critique of "Lifestyle" Anarchism

by Allan Antliff

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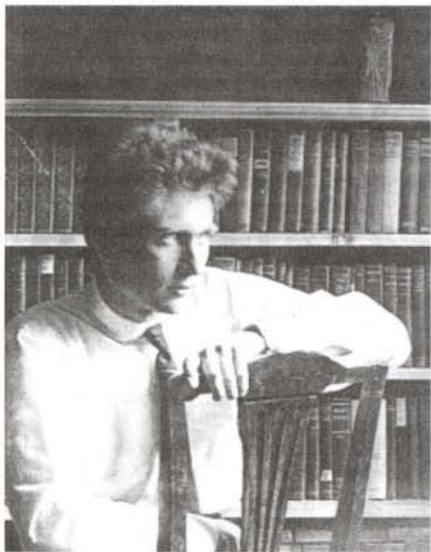
In recent years, Murray Bookchin, founder of the school of anarchism known as social ecology, has argued there is an "unbridgeable chasm" in the contemporary anarchist scene between "social" anarchism and "lifestyle" anarchism.⁰ Lifestyle anarchists, we are told, are arch-individualists who, historically, have expressed their opposition in uniquely personal forms, especially in fiery tracts, outrageous behaviour, and aberrant lifestyles in the cultural ghettos of fin-de-siècle New York, Paris, and London. As a credo, individualist anarchism remained largely a bohemian lifestyle, most conspicuous in its demands for sexual freedom ("free love"), and enamoured of innovations in art, behaviour and clothing. It was in times of deadening social quiescence that individual anarchists came to the fore of libertarian activity—and then primarily as terrorists.¹

Today's "reactionary social climate" is again leading young anarchists to forego "social action and revolutionary politics" in favor of lifestyle individualism, Bookchin warns.² Sounding the alarm, he asserts that this trend is "steadily eroding the socialistic character of the libertarian tradition" and thus, bringing the future of the entire anarchist movement into question.³

Given that these claims have gained some currency, I have resolved to scrutinize this "lifestyle" thesis. The subject of my article, Carl Zigrosser, was a turn-of-the-century activist in New York City who cleaved to a markedly individualist anarchism based on the writings of Friedrich Nietzsche. Zigrosser was a paradigmatic *fin-de-siècle*, art-oriented "ghetto" anarchist; however, far from fomenting a retreat from social action and revolution, he was at the forefront of social struggles during the World War 1 era. In sum, his legacy is a vital part of the "libertarian tradition" Bookchin claims to be defending, and this, in turn, begs a question: is Bookchin strengthening activism or undermining it by fomenting misunderstanding and controversy about individualism in the contemporary anarchist movement? I will address this issue in my closing comments.

A Radical Educational Center

Carl Zigrosser was born into a family of immigrants in 1891 and, in the fall of 1908, entered Columbia University, where he studied with Bayard Boyesen, lecturer in the Department of English and Comparative Literature.⁴



Carl Zigrosser, 1916. University of Pennsylvania

Zigrosser described Boyesen as the most "sophisticated literary intelligence" he met at Columbia: he was also a political militant destined to be forced out of the university in 1912 because of his support of syndicalism, the birth control movement, and anarchist cultural activities in the arts.⁵

In addition to teaching, Boyesen was a mainstay at New York's Ferrer Center, named after the Spanish anarchist educator Francisco Ferrer. In 1909 the Spanish monarchy's execution of Ferrer outraged world opinion and brought his ideas for rational, non-sectarian children's education—put into practice in a number of "Modern Schools"—to the attention of a wide range of radicals. In New York, Boyesen, Emma Goldman, Alexander Berkman, Leonard D. Abbott (sexual libertarian and writer), Harry Kelly (friend of Kropotkin), and Hutchins Hapgood (art critic) came together with other anarchists and sympathetic radicals to found the Ferrer Center and Modern School for children, which opened on January 1, 1911.⁶ From its inception, the Center was an important meeting place for anarchist events and organizations, with a large network of support in the radical community, courses for adult and children, and a periodical, The Modern School, to propagate its activities.⁷ After Boyesen introduced him to the center, Zigrosser taught English to adults and, eventually, took over editing The Modern School in 1917.

Artistic Anarchism

An integral part of the center's enriching intellectual and political mix was an art class taught by the anarchist painter, Robert Henri. Here, wrote Goldman, students found "a spirit of freedom which probably did not exist anywhere else in New York," where students experimented in the full range of modernist styles.⁸ The public inauguration of Henri's class took place on March 18, 1912, and featured a rousing speech by Boyesen on "Artists' Hope in Anarchic Ideas."

"All genuinely inspired artists have stood for absolute freedom of consciousness," he argued.⁹ Boyesen read a list of writers, artists, and musicians who had suffered at the hand of governments and ended with a question—"What does this mean?". "It means," he asserted, "that the artist demands absolute freedom for the free play of the inspiration that dominates him and drives him on, and right there he joins hands with philosophic anarchy."¹⁰

Boyesen then described the artist's state of mind during pitched moments of creativity. "What the artist does," he argued, "is project out of himself the highest idea it is possible for him to conceive." True art was "above all unrespectable and unrespecting" of social constraints.¹¹ "Only in revolutions has there been an open door for idealistic art," he reasoned. Given that artists such as

Henri were now contributing to contemporary social unrest, capitalism's downfall could not be far off.¹²

Later that year, in November 24, 1912, Boyesen gave a second lecture at the Ferrer Center on "Anarchism and the Imaginative Spirit." He began noting the tendency among radicals to lapse into "dogma" and argued that anarchists should accept "nothing because it has the authority of tradition or reason."¹³ In a dig at the American Socialist Party, he described his experience lecturing to a socialist gathering, where the audience sought, in the post-lecture discussion, "to fit his ideas into their socialist philosophy."¹⁴ Rather than emulate these socialists, Boyesen called for anarchists to pursue "the imaginative side of man as the expression of personality."¹⁵ As recorded by Zigrosser, Boyesen suggested anarchists should:

*evaluate life constantly, and not let what one did or thought yesterday, interfere with getting the utmost realization of life at the present moment. What some artists (such as Van Gogh and Matisse in painting or Picasso in sculpture) had done for art, namely to vindicate the right to reconstruct and refashion art absolutely in imagination, he would do for life. He carried anarchism to its absolute extreme.*¹⁶

Boyesen's ideal anarchist was modelled on Nietzsche's concept of the transvaluing individualist, who willed into existence values constructed solely on the basis of his or her unique needs and aspirations.¹⁷ Nietzsche argued that true liberation entailed a continuous "will-to-power" in which the individual negated or affirmed life, accepting, destroying, or creating values in the process.¹⁸ When Boyesen characterized the anarchistic state of mind of such individuals as artistic he was again following Nietzsche, who argued creative artists were exemplary practitioners of transvaluation.¹⁹

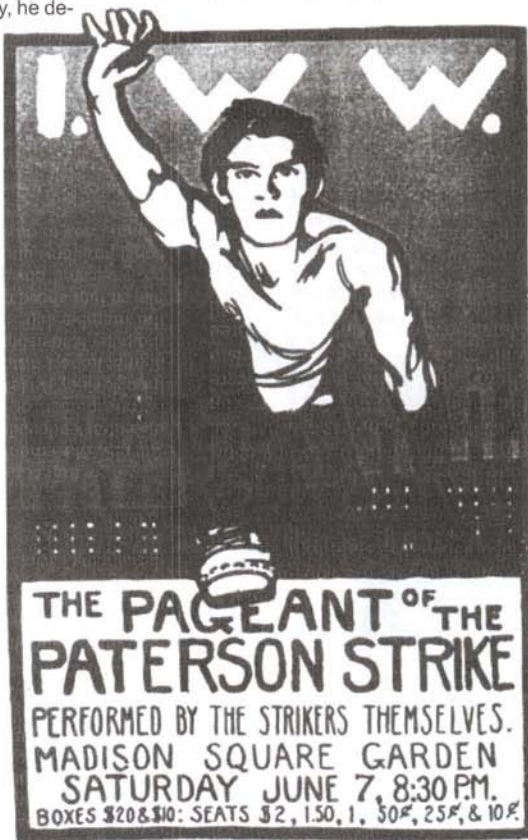
After the lecture Zigrosser and Boyesen walked over to Columbia University where they continued the discussion. Here Boyesen expanded on his notion of an anarchist "imaginative spirit," giving his analysis a class reading by suggesting the upper classes were incapable of achieving such individualism because "the bourgeois could not manage to get away from his conventional everyday ideas and valuations long enough to live imaginatively."²⁰

Labour Struggles

In late 1912 Zigrosser immersed himself in Nietzsche's writings, reading *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, *The Will to Power*, *The Gay Science*, *The Birth of Tragedy*, and *Ecce Homo*.²¹ He left no other record of his theoretical progress, however his commitment to Boyesen's individualist brand of anti-bourgeois anarchism did emerge the next year in a June 11, 1913, article entitled "Sunday at Haledon" which he wrote for the socialist *New York Call* newspaper (the *Call* readership numbered approximately 70,000).²²

Haledon was a small village just outside the town of Paterson, New Jersey, where the anarchist-syndicalist IWW was leading a bitter strike for a raise in pay and improved working conditions in Paterson's silk factories.²³ The police and city government of

Paterson repressed the strikers and denied them the right to public meetings, forcing them to gather in Haledon, where the left-wing city council was sympathetic to their struggle.²⁴ From March to July thousands of strikers periodically met to hear speakers ranging from the Italian anarchist-syndicalist Carlo Tresca to Max Eastman, editor of the socialist magazine *The Masses*. New York's Greenwich Village radicals, including the anarchists of the Ferrer Center, streamed to Paterson.²⁵ That summer many of the New Yorkers helped organize the strikers' staging of the famous June 7, 1913, Paterson Pageant in Madison Square Gardens.²⁶



In his first-hand account of one of the Haledon rallies Zigrosser characterized the Paterson strikers' consciousness as individualist and artistic.²⁷ Released by the strike from the oppressive drudgery of the factory routine, the workers had discarded "all the artificial valuations of society" and recovered their "individual rather than social values." The resulting assertion of individuality enhanced "the mass feeling by injecting a certain spontaneity into it and providing a common background of mutual sympathy." In the course of their struggle, "with all its moves and countermoves," the strikers were being stirred by "the emotion of heroism, of daring and perseverance—all of which are synonyms for artistic expression." Freed of hidebound social values and fired by this artistic spirit, they were now engaging in direct action to meet their shared needs. The workers had "gathered together and passed a law regarding the eight-hour day" and were preparing to conduct a strike pageant, "without preparation and rehearsals," in which "the spontaneous impulse of the proletariat will find expression in this new field." For Zigrosser the perfect symbol of the anarchist spirit at Paterson was the pageant poster showing "a worker rising up from the mills at last becoming conscious not only of his strength and power but of his art."²⁸

War Against War

When World War 1 broke out in the summer of 1914 the majority of Europe's Social-Democratic parties and prominent "social anarchists" (to use Bookchin's parlance—among them were a number of anarchist communists and the leadership of France's CGT anarchist-syndicalist union)—turned nationalistic. The Ferrer Center collective reacted to these events with an editorial in *The Modern School* expressing horror at the carnage and denouncing former leftists who now rushed "joyfully unhesitatingly to arms."²⁹ American anarchism's preeminent artist, Henri, also weighed in against the conflict with a major anti-war statement in the *New York Call* (the article appeared in two instalments). In part one, "Our Little Nationalism," Henri wrote that real artists were anti-patriotic "rebels" and "universals" who had liberated themselves from the ties of family, nation, and race that make up "our little nationalism."³⁰ They offered the masses "the way to beauty, to a true culture" through "direct vision of the truth." The powers-that-be feared what the liberated artist represented and sought to curb unfettered expression using institutions of oppression such as art academies.³¹ Hostility to freedom in the arts and every other sphere, Henri concluded, brought about "all the disaster the world holds."³²

In the second instalment, "The War Machine," Henri declared his own "love of mankind" to be "individual, not national."³³ The life force of each individual mirrored the natural order of the universe. This was an order analogous to the harmonics of the musical scale, the

laws of proportion in sculpture, or the color harmonies of the rainbow.³⁴ It was "failure to see the various phases of life in their ultimate relation," wrote Henri, that brought about "militarism, slavery, the longing of one nation to conquer another, the willingness to destroy for selfish, inhuman purposes."³⁵ On the other hand, revolutionaries who built insurrectionary mass movements were "men with a vision of order" who founded their own well-being on humanity's.³⁶ They championed social liberation and opposed "institutionalism"—the conservative, authoritarian forces of government, laws, and the military that enabled the few who ran the "war machine" to exercise their rule over the many.³⁷

While Henri and other anarchists agitated against the war Zigrosser did not remain inactive. Viewing all war as "organized murder and colossal imbecility," he participated in demonstrations and worked with various anti-war organizations throughout the duration of hostilities.³⁸ Just as he analyzed the Paterson strikers' revolutionary consciousness in individualist, artistic, and Nietzschean terms, so Zigrosser gave his opposition to the war a Nietzschean anarchist-individualist foundation. In an unpublished essay he evaluated the war as "the downfall of individuality and the apotheosis of the herd instinct."³⁹ Here he drew on *The Gay Science*, where Nietzsche wrote:

*Consciousness does not really belong to man's individual existence but rather to his social or herd nature. . . . Our thoughts themselves are continually governed by the character of consciousness—and translated back into the perspective of the herd. Fundamentally, all our actions are altogether incomparable, personal, unique, and infinitely individual; there is no doubt of that. But as soon as we translate them into consciousness they no longer seem to be.*⁴⁰

Nietzsche regarded the herd instinct as an enduring aspect of human nature, but not an insurmountable one. The values, concepts, and conventions bound up with "consciousness" could be overcome through the exercise of the will-to-power as a process of self-affirmation.⁴¹ Zigrosser picked up on this theme, writing that the indiscriminate repression of those who opposed the pro-war majority was an example of the animalistic "will-to-power through social classification" running roughshod over the prerogatives of the individual and paralyzing "all independent thought and action."⁴² With the outbreak of war, resisters were labelled as aliens in league with the enemy, irrespective of the individual merits of each case.⁴³ "This vast power which the group collectively possesses," wrote Zigrosser, "is all the more disastrous in that it is split up into separate national groups which react viciously upon one another."⁴⁴ "For this reason," he concluded:



**Robert Henri,
Patrick, 1913.
Oil on canvas,
32 X 26"**

*Collection of Mr.
and Mrs. Louis
Sosland, Shawnee
Mission, Kansas*

I am opposed to all state-waged wars—all warfare organized and conducted by national governments. Such warfare is merely violence on a large scale institutionalized and made efficient by the state. It is legalized murder, the shifting of a grave responsibility from an individual to an abstract and therefore soulless corporation. . . . I am unwilling to give up in any crisis my privilege of free speech and intelligent criticism. It is only by the most relentless vigilance and examination that the elements of civilization are refined and progress is assured. And it is only by an absolute stand against war that the path for abolishing it can be cleared. There are some things about which there can be no compromise.⁴⁵

In May, 1916, a group of Ferrer Center anarchists responded to government proposals to enact universal draft registration by forming the No-Conscription League.⁴⁶ Sometime after the League's founding Zigrosser joined it, served on its organizational committee, and took part in the March 24, 1917, election of the League's executive board.⁴⁷ The No-Conscription League quickly grew, and a series of meetings were held in New York and other cities during 1916-1917. At the same time local, state, and federal authorities intensified their repression of the anarchist movement with the forcible closure of meetings, police raids, arrests, and physical intimidation involving police, soldiers, and civilians.⁴⁸

The last pre-registration meeting of the New York City No-Conscription League on the night of June 4, 1917, provides us with a sense of the hostility with which Zigrosser and his fellow anarchists had to contend. This meeting took place on the eve of the first registration for universal conscription in America's history: Berkman and

Goldman were scheduled to speak, and it was chaired by Leonard D. Abbott.⁴⁹ Among Zigrosser's papers is a poster advertising the June 4 "No-Conscription Mass Meeting on the Eve of Registration." On the back he penned a series of terse notes:

April—Congress passes resolution: State of War. Congress passes Selective Draft Bill, May 16, 1917. President Wilson signs, May 18. 10,000,000 men register under Draft law, June 5.⁵⁰

In his memoir Zigrosser described the besieged atmosphere at the rally. When he arrived he joined a crowd of 15,000 militants who were "barely kept in order" by squads of mounted police armed with heavy clubs and revolvers.

The police forced the radicals to remain outside while soldiers and pro-war agitators streamed into the meeting hall, where roughly 5,000 anti-war activists had already managed to gain entrance.⁵¹ The crowd outside was in an "ugly mood" and the police were "ready to kill," while inside the building the Anarchist Squad of the New York City Police Department and officials from the Federal Department of Justice mingled with uniformed soldiers and other pro-war thugs intent on disrupting the event.⁵² The stenographic record of the proceedings, seized by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, is punctuated by interruptions from these *agents provocateurs*. During his speech Berkman protested against "glasses and bricks" being thrown at the stage and had to repeatedly parlay with abusive interruptions. The glass on the speaker's table was shattered and a stage light was broken. When a group of soldiers attempted to storm the podium, Berkman's supporters intervened, and fighting broke out. At this point Goldman rushed onto the stage and calmed everyone down.⁵³

Once the fighting had subsided, she delivered an intense, defiant anti-war speech:

I am an anarchist, and do not believe in force morally or otherwise to induce you to do anything against your conscience, and that is why I tell you to use your own judgement and rely on your own conscience [when deciding to register for the draft]. It is the best guide in all the world. If that is a crime, if that is treason, I am willing to be shot. It is a wonderful death to die for your ideal, but I impress it upon the minds of the patriots present, that for every idealist they kill thousands will rise and they will not cease to rise until the same thing happens in America that has happened in Russia [Goldman is re

fering to the February, 1917 revolution which overthrew the Tsar! . . . All you can do is take my life—you can never take my ideals. Neither the police, nor the soldiers in the United States government nor all the powers in earth will take my ideals. My ideals will live long after I am dead.⁵⁴

Goldman closed the meeting, and the anti-war activists left the hall singing the "Internationale."⁵⁵ Shortly afterwards Goldman and Berkman were arrested and charged with agitating against conscription. They were sentenced to two years in a federal prison (Berkman served seven months in solitary confinement) and then deported, as alien anarchists, to Russia in December, 1919.⁵⁶

Conclusion

In this article I have focused on the individualism of Zigrosser, but as this last passage suggests, his stance was not exceptional—such views were pervasive in the early twentieth-century anarchist movement.⁵⁷ The reason is simple: Zigrosser, Henri, Boyesen, Goldman, and their comrades were all convinced that individual liberation was central to any anarchism worthy of the name. How does Bookchin's condemnation of "lifestyle" anarchism stand up in the light of this history?

The central claim of *Social Anarchism or Lifestyle Anarchism*—that individualism is antithetical to social activism—is a falsification of the historical record and a misrepresentation of the tradition Bookchin lauds as his own. And it is no coincidence, given this profound flaw, that Bookchin's polemics have generated confusion and divisive infighting, rather than strengthened and built solidarity across the full spectrum of our movement.⁵⁸ Ask yourselves, do *Earth First!* anarchists pursue a "lifestyle" when they put their lives on the line to halt the destruction of the environment? Is the struggle of gay comrades to realize a society in which they are no longer oppressed and put down anti-activist "lifestylism"? Are the anarchist punks at the front ranks of anti-poverty demonstrations clothing-obscured "lifestylists" in full retreat from social issues? Am I, for that matter, a recalcitrant "lifestylist" bent on "eroding the socialistic character of the libertarian tradition" by writing articles such as this?

It is high time that anarchists of every stripe, including social ecologists, called Bookchin to account and refused to traffic in his counterproductive discourse. Make no mistake—individualism and anarchism are integral parts of the same history, a history with a rich legacy of personal commitment, social activism, and libertarian revolution deserving of respect and emulation.

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Notes:

- 0 Murray Bookchin, *Social Anarchism or Lifestyle Anarchism* (Edinburgh, Scotland: AK Press, 1995).
- 1 Ibid., 8.
- 2 Ibid.
- 3 Ibid., 9.
- 4 Carl Zigrosser, *My Own Shall Come to Me: A Personal Memoir and Picture Chronicle* by Carl Zigrosser (Haarlem: J. Enschede en Zonen, 1971), 16, 28-31.
- 5 Paul Avrich, *The Modern School Movement: Anarchism and Education in the United States* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), 70.
- 6 Ibid., 69-70.
- 7 Leonard D. Abbott, "The Ferrer School in New York," *Everyman* 10 (December 1914): 7.
- 8 William I. Homer, *Robert Henri and His Circle* (New York: Hacker Art Books, 1988), 174, 285.
- 9 "Sees Artists' Hope in Anarchist Ideas," *New York Times*, 18 March 1912, 8.
- 10 Ibid.
- 11 Ibid.
- 12 Ibid.
- 13 Carl Zigrosser, "A Commonplace Notebook to be kept with my Manuscripts," entry, November 24, 1912, Carl Zigrosser Papers, Archives of American Art, microfilm roll 4664, frame 708.
- 14 Ibid.
- 15 Ibid.
- 16 Ibid.
- 17 Gilles Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy* (London: Athlone Press, 1983), 171. In Nietzsche's words, "Valuing in itself is nothing save this—the will-to-power." See Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Will to Power: An Attempted Transvaluation of All Values* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1910), 2: 146.
- 18 Ibid., 54.
- 19 Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, 2: 239.
- 20 Zigrosser, "A Commonplace Notebook," microfilm roll 4664, frame 709.
- 21 Zigrosser, *My Own*, libid. 52.
- 22 Carl Zigrosser, "Sunday at Haledon," *The New York Call*, June 11, 1913, 6.
- 23 Ann Huber Tripp, *The I.W.W. and the Paterson Silk Strike* (Urbana, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1987), 68.
- 24 Ibid., 70-72.
- 25 Steve Golin, *The Fragile Bridge: Paterson Silk Strike, 1913* (Philadelphia: Temple Univ. Press, 1988), 135-150.
- 26 Ibid., 157-178.
- 27 Zigrosser, "Haledon," 6.
- 28 Ibid.
- 29 Ibid.
- 30 Harry Kelly, "War," *The Modern School* 1 (September 1, 1914): 6-7.
- 31 Robert Henri, "Our Little Nationalism," *The New York Call* magazine section, Sunday, June 27, 1915, 3.
- 32 Ibid.
- 33 Ibid.
- 34 Robert Henri, "The War Machine," *The New York Call*, magazine section, Sunday, July 4, 1915, 11.
- 35 Ibid.
- 36 Ibid.
- 37 Ibid.
- 38 Ibid.
- 39 Zigrosser, *My Own*, 56.
- 40 Carl Zigrosser, "Essay on War," Carl Zigrosser Papers, Archives of American Art, microfilm roll 4664, frames 1321-1322.
- 41 Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science* (New York: Vintage, 1974), 299-300.
- 42 Ted Sadler, "Postmodern Politicization," *Nietzsche, Feminism, and Political Theory*, ed. Paul Patton (London: Routledge, 1993), 234-235.
- 43 Zigrosser, "Essay on War," Carl Zigrosser Papers, Archives of American Art, microfilm roll 4664, frame 1321.
- 44 Ibid.
- 45 Ibid.
- 46 Ibid., frames 1321-1322.
- 47 *Life of an Anarchist: The Alexander Berkman Reader*, ed. Gene Fellner (New York: Four Walls Eight Windows, 1992), 154.
- 48 "No-Conscription Alliance," March 24, 1917, Carl Zigrosser Papers, Archives of American Art, microfilm roll 4635, frame 552. The "alliance" and the "league" are one and the same organization. Historians routinely identify the organization as the *No-Conscription League*, and I have followed suit.
- 49 Emma Goldman, *Living My Life* (New York: Dover Press, 1972) 2: 597-623.
- 50 The Federal Bureau of Investigation seized a stenographic record of the June 4, 1917, meeting, and these minutes entered Goldman's burgeoning F.B.I. file. Abbott is identified as the chairman and gives the first speech. "Meeting of the No-Conscription League, June 4, 1917," *Emma Goldman Papers* (Alexandria, Virginia: Chadwyck-Healey, 1990), microfilm roll 48, frame 1. The June 4 meeting was followed by the arrest, trial, and conviction of Emma Goldman and Alexander Berkman in July, 1917 on the charge of fomenting "a conspiracy to defeat military registration under the conscription law." Leonard D. Abbott, "The Trial and Conviction of Emma Goldman and Alexander Berkman," *Anarchism on Trial: Speeches of Alexander Berkman and Emma Goldman before the United States District Court in the City of New York, July, 1917* (n.d.), 10.
- 51 No-Conscription Mass Meeting on the Eve of Registration, Poster, "No Conscription Alliance," Carl Zigrosser Papers, Archives of American Art, microfilm roll 4635, frames 562-563.
- 52 Zigrosser, *My Own*, 58.
- 53 Ibid.
- 54 "Meeting of the No-Conscription League, June 4, 1917," *Emma Goldman Papers*, microfilm roll 48, frames 17-22.
- 55 Ibid., frames 27-28.
- 56 Ibid., frame 33.
- 57 Both were indicted as alien anarchists while in jail. They were released on bail a few times before being deported. The entire saga is outlined in Goldman, *Living My Life*, 2: 614-709.
- 58 See my book, *Anarchist Modernism: Art, Revolution, and the First American Avant-Garde* (forthcoming, University of Chicago Press).
- 59 Examples are legion, but most recently "lifestylism vs social anarchism" has been poisoning

Open letter to the Seattle trashers, the unions, the peaceful protesters, and the nonviolent resisters

December 7, 1999

This critique will not deal with the moral or ethical questions of "peaceful protest" vs. destroying property. So far the major critiques of the trashing, and the defenses: ("Black Block" and "Activists Show Support For Anarchists" by Ward Churchill, et al) - have been political in nature. This will focus on tactics, strategy and consequences. It is written by older movement veterans who warn against repeating our past mistakes. In so many ways, the carnival of resistance against the World Trade Organization scored an historic and amazing victory.

First, tens of thousands of people were mobilized to participate in the direct actions and the marches despite the pro free trade propaganda from the media. The youth made us proud, and served notice to the ruling class.

Secondly, there has been a broad-based unity of multiple sectors from Philippine indigenous peoples, to Canadian health care consumers, healthy food lovers, French farmers, environmentalists, the AFL-CIO, punks, grannies, students, etc. Historically, this unity between the unions and the broad-based progressive movement in the U.S. is a needed break with the recent past of reactionary cold-war unionism.

Thirdly, we have been rapidly increasing consciousness about capitalism, globalism and free trade, while proposing alternatives towards a civil society that values global solidarity, eco-sustainability, and justice. Many of the forums leading up to Seattle, and the counter-summit in Seattle, were excellent and well attended.

Fourth, the days of protests in Seattle proved that victory is possible with ordinary people who are creative and inspired; and that we can face our fears of State repression while doing ongoing direct-action. HOWEVER, the actions of the few property destroyers, and the reactions from the majority of protesters has emerged as our major controversy. (Strangely, there has been silence about the overwhelming whiteness of the direct-action participants, and little discussion about organizing strategies to move us forward).

Were the property trashers committing violence?

Violence is an act against living beings and the earth. Destruction and vandalism against corporations is simply that. Poverty is also violence as the victims are people, but corporations are not living beings.

The overwhelming violence during the protests came from the State - sending the police to attack us with tear gas, pepper spray, concussion grenades and rubber bullets which incited a number of regular

protestors and non-involved Seattle residents to throw bottles at the police, burn dumpsters and smash windows.

Were the property trashers raising consciousness?

Not very much, and arguably some of the actions might have shut out good opportunities at consciousness raising. A net assessment of some of the window breaking and destruction at Gap, Nike, or Starbucks' outlets has to take into account how some of these actions might have contributed to turn off average people from the crucial central message that these corporations are the real vandals and violators.

Also, the credibility of some of the actionists was destroyed by their own apparent lack of prior consciousness, such as the man wearing Nike shoes destroying a Nike sign, a fact the corporate media highlighted. Other types of action, such as creative redecoration or theatre along with an invitation to boycott, could have done a lot more to sensitize the public to the crimes being committed by these corporations.

Did the property destruction raise the profile of resistance against the WTO?

Yes, but probably only a small amount. The large and successful street blockades and union-organized march, combined with the dramatic police response, raised the resistance's profile way over the threshold. The trashing allowed media to replace coverage of mass mobilization with fringe vandalism.

Did the property destruction raise the costs to free traders?

Not nearly as much as their fear from tens of thousands of ordinary people from various walks of life uniting in a coherent and effective opposition.

Are the unions and non-violent protesters hypocritical by complaining about the property trashers?

Some union leaders and peaceful demonstrators failed to differentiate between systemic and massive corporate/state violence, and retail property damage in the streets. Violence as defined by ruling elites (i.e. any attack on their privileges and property) has to be questioned. It is naive at best, and hypocritical at worst, to publicly denounce a few window smashers while ignoring the very real death and destruction rained on our sisters, brothers, and the earth's creatures by the corporations represented in downtown Seattle, and the nearby war lovers at Boeing, McDonnell-Douglas, etc. Let's put some vandalism in perspective.

Were the trashers exhibiting bravery in the face of police violence?

No. It was the street blockaders who were on the front lines, absorbing most of the police violence. Not only did they hold the blockades and prevent the WTO meetings on the first day, but their numbers increased tenfold. Their actions hark back to the civil-rights days of the brave SNCC (Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee) resistance against lethal state brutality that so inspired broad public solidarity.

The property destroyers took advantage of the police's preoccupation with the direct-action blocking the WTO. They piggybacked their agenda, against the common agreed tactics and goals, onto the well organized day of resistance. This was done without consultation or agreement with the organizers. If the trashers had more courage, they could have done their action at a distant time afterwards.

Are the property smashers advancing the revolutionary cause?

We must conclude the opposite. While they claim to be attacking corporate capitalism, what's a few broken windows now and then? It was a symbolic act at a time when symbolic action only showed our weakness. The complete blockade and marches proved we can act as a powerful mass movement so let's take ourselves seriously.

The trashers have no possibility of toppling the powerful system by themselves. Revolutionary change will only come through massive public participation.

The smashers' strategy refused tactical collaboration with the unions and the popular protesters. It is a thoughtless strategic blunder to anger and turn off potential allies in the unions, who are now becoming a major resource and force for social change, and it is even more thoughtless to alienate natural allies in the popular movement.

All successful revolutionary movements use a unified strategy, even if their tactics differ. The various elements are responsive to each other, and the dialectical needs at the time. A minority element that sabotages the struggle in the eyes of the majority, sabotages progress.

Are the trashers police agents out to divide and discredit the movement?

It is an irresponsible charge by many unionists and veteran organizers to claim that the trashers are police agents. While we should not put it beyond police tactics to plant provocateurs (ample historic examples can be found, including COINT'ELPRO-like programs against various movements in the last few decades), there is yet no proof that any of them were under the control of the police.

However, by confusing and pissing-off many in the movement, grabbing the lion's share of publicity, and sabotaging the organizers' message for the day of resistance,

the smashers' actions could be considered consistent with some goals of agent provocateurs. We need to think and organize in ways that do not make us vulnerable to undercover tactics, while avoiding any kind of witch-hunts and speculations that can be very destructive for our organizations and mobilizations.

The ruling elite's goal is to divide and weaken us, while scaring away our supporters. The State treated the unions with kid gloves. Despite ample opportunity during the live-televised gassing and trashing during the evening, the police didn't arrest the trashers. Some maintain the police were purposefully stimulating and prolonging the trashing and gassing so the corporate media could show about how "dangerous" the protests were. Then they went after their real threat-the non-violent activists - arresting over five hundred during the next few days.

Conclusion

We understand the rage and frustrations leading to the trashing. Our message is that strategy calls for much more than mere release of pent up emotions. Being political means going beyond symbolism and a personal need for catharsis. Self-righteousness by both the non-violent and property trashing activists prevents clarity. It is vital that we in the popular resistance examine ours' and others' actions critically. What tactics and strategies are mobilizing people, and which ones are de-mobilizing?

In the Battle of Seattle, the organized trashing was tactically wrong. So was the union leadership's attempt to separate their marchers from the direct-action blockade. Fortunately the beauty and strength of the movement won the battle in spite of these blunders. To work together, we must respect each other. Keep your eyes on the prize.

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***Please consider responding to this open letter or provide your own comments on the events in Seattle. Send them to The Long Arc at P.O. Box 73620, 509 St. Clair Ave. W, Toronto, ON M6C 1C0

This letter reprinted from the January 2000 issue of The Long Arc.

KreiSHA

I was accompanied by two recently made political associates from Edmonton. The three of us had decided to take four days off from work, rent a car and drive to Seattle to participate in the anti-WTO demonstrations. I had been notified of these planned citizens actions as far back as May by my sister who worked for a British Columbia NGO seeking delegate status to the conference. I was already familiar with the practices and principles of the World Trade Organization. Only something as global and powerful as the WTO could motivate such massive opposition from such diverse interests. Only something as global and powerful and unaccountable could affect so many, in the name of Profit. Activists from around the globe should acknowledge the WTO for bringing us together under one banner: "STOP THE WTO! PEOPLE BEFORE PROFITS!!!"

We stumbled across the tail-end of the approved labour march threading its way down Pine St. The atmosphere was celebratory but anti-climactic. It was barely noon, this couldnt be the extent of the daily actions. We found two other wandering souls, Darius, who was last seen sitting five feet from a police line, scarved and drumming, and Emily, who had hitch-hiked alone from Arizona in order to protest. Together, we entered Nike Town, a site of controversial vandalism and looting.

A curt scent tinged the air, something distinctly chemical and potentially nauseating, synthetic and sour. We passed countless faces and came to a standstill at an intersection. Somebody was trying to say something. Suddenly, walls of people moved. At first we thought it was just a blufferpercussion bombs maybe. We just stood there. The smoke started to rise and the sound of more projectiles and scatter guns rattled the streets. A woman screamed and turned toward us. Her face was bloody. One of my associates started choking, uncontrollably, she couldnt breathe and doubled over. The gas was rude and invasive, targeting every exposed orifice. I gathered my other associate and together we led our asphyxiating friend away from the concentrated area. People spoke "Dont run", and this helped calm the situation. I kept my eyes half closed and a cloth pressed against my mouth and nose. Finally, at a safe distance, we rested and people brought us water to wash our faces. We had lost Emily.

A curfew was imposed at 7:00 p.m. and the riot police gassed us out of the area. People pushed over dumpsters and set piles of garbage on fire, whether to block traffic, block the oncoming police or to stay warm in the wet, dark night, the fires were a welcome display of resistance to the violence and bullying. We were already far outside the downtown area but this did not stop the police or the tear gas. A resident of the neighborhood offered us a peace pipe and sanctuary. Later a woman managing an apartment building brought us down some cookies. A little boy no more than 12 sought encouragement to throw rocks at the police. The police battalions kept coming, some now from behind us, and I beat my djimbe to their offbeat to signal. By 11:30 p.m., sick of teargas, rain, and the never-ending police onslaught, we withdrew into a nearby bar where we met Zack who put us up for the night.

In the morning, news stations broadcasted dozens of arrests, the calling of the National Guard and the imposition of a "NO PROTEST ZONE", which was enlarged in mid-broadcast. By 10:00 a.m., Dec. 1, we hit the street again - Zack left his wallet behind in case of arrest. Police blockades appeared on every street discouraging entry to the core by anyone not on official business. I spoke with a 15 year old National Guard-boy who appeared very proud to be protecting his country from its public citizens. The public intimidation tactics were working.

By noon, handfuls of people had linked up and marched, catching glimpses of other groups on the other side of the blockades, hoping to link up. A mass collected at a free intersection and were directed to the Labour Union Headquarters for support. At Labour Headquarters, the Union told us to meet at the Pier at 1:30 p.m. and we would march in solidarity. At the Pier, my friends and I quickly grew frustrated by what appeared to be a diversion from the downtown area. I was upset and anxious to make the most effective use of our time. We were discouraged. Soon a man on a bicycle rode up to us and said "Theyre gathering at Virginia and 3rd"! We headed that way, and within minutes we saw a large group standing toe to toe with a police blockade. I beat my drum and some of the crowd turned. Over their heads, I saw the police line ease and recede, retreating. The front of the crowd surged forward, occupying the space the police had relinquished, but, to my horror, the police came back from around the same corner, running and waving their clubs. The crowd retreated. Scatter guns were fired and there were people everywhere. With some effort we stayed together and marched as a unit until we saw another blockade ahead of us. We turned right and headed south down Pine St. and spilled over onto 2nd Ave. For a brief moment, with the busy traffic and happy shoppers the march took on the feel of an impromptu carnival with chants of "Peaceful Protest!" filling the air. I noticed the protesters exercising great care in preventing their placards from hitting any cars. Some of the inconvenienced drivers even honked in support. It was pure celebration! Another blockade loomed directly in front of us, but happily, a massive cry could be heard from around the corner. Whether it was Fate, Jah or brilliant organization and timing, our group was reunited with the Union march arriving from the Pier. Drumming on the corner of that pivotal point was the peak of my whole experience in Seattle. I choose to remember this and to forgive the ruthless tear gas attack that immediately ensued. Crackling sounds immediately filled the air, interrupting our celebration. Tear gas canisters were shot in chorus, sustained and relentless. People escaped through the streets and regrouped. The gas kept coming. A woman sped by with her child in the stroller. The bombs kept coming. My friends and I fled to the Pike Street Market where we could get down to the pier. The bombs kept coming. We were blocked off in every direction but the pier. Is our solidarity so threatening that officials would willingly and knowingly jeopardize the health and safety of their conscientious unobservants?

We fled to the pier levels. Drained, unfed, but somehow fulfilled, we decided to make our way back home, to Canada. When we surfaced south of Pike, we found Emily again. She was sick after an act of passive resistance during the last round of tear gas, absorbing too much of the fumes. She had simply gotten tired of running away. We were all tired of running away.

Back home, people have asked me if the WTO Protest was successful. To them I ask, do you determine success according to wealth or according to experience? Do you determine violence according to loss in profits and property damage or according to demonstrable premeditated personal physical injury? The Seattle Protest was successful not just because it raised awareness, or because it impeded the WTOs ability to ratify an agreement that would exploit the worlds citizens. The Seattle Protest was successful because it happened. Because it continues self-determination, by the people and for the people. Those who went to Seattle, or who joined in local activist campaigns, constitute a growing and conscientious global culture who will not stop until Equality and Sustainability become Reality, and corporate colonization becomes a delusional dream of the over-privileged. It is this pro-creative and critical society that must become the New World Order. Then and only then will the success of Seattle be confirmed.

From Protest to Resistance: the Vancouver five Remembered

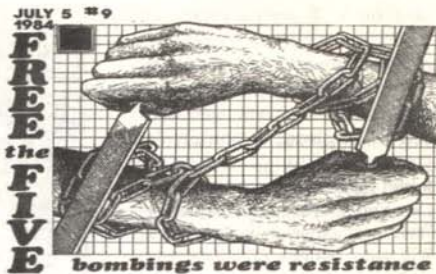
by Jim Campbell

Linking anarchism to deliberate acts of violence might seem very natural to most people if they think about anarchism at all. But for most younger anarchists, it must be difficult to imagine that in the early 1980s armed struggle in Canada not only seemed possible, but a small group coming out of the anarchist community in Vancouver actually engaged in it. Moreover there was small but significant support for all three actions claimed by Direct Action and the Wimmin's Fire Brigade.

Political struggle didn't end in the early 1970s with the end of the Vietnam war. The anti-war, and other movements had pulled back, but militants had gone underground to wage war against the system. Insurrection in Europe seemed possible as the Red Army Fraction and the Red Brigades assassinated and kidnapped politicians and corporate executives. In the U.S., the Black Liberation Army, formed when the Black Panthers went underground, was active until 1981. The United Freedom Front (UFF) and the Armed Resistance Movement were active into the early 1980s, bombing government buildings to protest American military involvement in Central America and attacking corporate targets to protest their involvement in South Africa.

On the American west coast, a multitude of small groups robbed banks, set off bombs and one group kidnapped Patty Hearst, a wealthy heiress. Some of these were explicitly anarchist or anti-authoritarian groups. Bill Dunne and Larry Giddings, for example, were anarchists who continue to be imprisoned in the U.S. today for trying to break a friend out of jail. The George Jackson Brigade was anti-authoritarian, pro-woman, pro-gay and lesbian and advocated collective as opposed to party politics. Even though all of these groups were eventually crushed, they did offer a political alternative to organizing demonstrations and putting out papers.

The Canadian anarchist papers, *Open Road* in Vancouver, *Bulldozer*, in Toronto, and *Resistance*, which started in Toronto and then shifted to Vancouver, covered the armed resistance in the U.S. and in Europe and the subsequent repression. We published communiqués explain-



ing actions, provided supportive coverage of trials and offered an outlet for the writings of the captured combatants and their supporters. Revolution, or at least a protracted struggle, seemed quite possible. Direct Action and the Wimmin's Fire Brigade were part of this wave of armed struggle in North America, part of a broader anti-NATO, anti-war machine politics. The perspective was very much internationalist even if it was understood that it meant working within one's own local and national situation.

In the spring of 1982 a bomb destroyed the nearly completed Cheekeye-Dunsmuir Hydro substation. Its construction had been strongly opposed by local residents on environmental grounds. It was thought that it would lead to the industrialization of Vancouver island and the construction of nuclear power plants for export sales to the U.S. Several hundred pounds of dynamite stopped that plan in its tracks. There was a lot of local support for the action. It wasn't clear whether or not Direct Action, which had claimed the action, was an anarchist group, in a sense it didn't make any difference. The action had raised the political stakes in Canada. But as the bombing had taken place in the wilderness, it was easy to ignore. The next action wouldn't be.

In the late evening of October 14, 1982, a truck exploded outside the Litton Industries plant in Rexdale, in the northwest corner of Toronto resulting in million of dollars in damages. Seven workers were injured, one permanently. After a few days, Direct Action issued a communique claiming responsibility. As a political piece, the communique is as relevant today as it was in 1982, the only change being that the cold war is over. In a second written statement, they took responsibility for a series of errors which resulted in the injuries, especially for seeing the cops and security guards as super heroes. They weren't.

To ensure that the bomb would be taken seriously, they drove the van in front of a glass-enclosed security booth and parked in front of the factory. The guards didn't notice the truck even though the van driver could clearly

see them. Then the phoned-in warning was not understood. But at least it drew the attention of the guards to the van. Unfortunately Direct Action was a bit too clever. They had placed a box painted fluorescent orange outside the truck, easily visible from the security booth. On top of the box they placed a sheet of paper with information and instructions. They expected the guards to come over to the box once they received the phone warning. To emphasize the seriousness of the situation, they placed a stick of unarmed dynamite on top of the box. The guards avoided the box, given that they didn't know that the dynamite on the box was unarmed. In spite of the obvious threat, they didn't start to evacuate the plant until 20 minutes after receiving the warning! And then the bomb went off early, probably set off by radio signals from the arriving police cars.

The bombing took place at a time when the possibility of nuclear war was very real. Both sides of the Cold War were attempting to achieve first strike nuclear capability through new weapons such as the Cruise and Pershing Missiles, the Trident Submarines, and the Neutron Bomb. In response, a peace movement developed in Europe, North America and elsewhere. Canada's agreement to let the U.S. test the Cruise over northern Alberta and the Northwest Territories was seen as a particular affront by peace activists. Litton had been the focus of extensive protests by peace groups since they were producing the guidance systems for the Cruise. But the protests were going nowhere.

The initial reaction of many radicals and activists was joyful on first seeing the headlines in the paper. But this changed on more sober reflection as the implications were thought through. The bombing wasn't just a threat to the militarized state, but to the peaceful coexistence so many activists have with the system. It is clear that even with the injuries, there was not much reaction to it by the average person. For most people the bombing was only another spectacular event in a world gone mad.

It certainly was a major event for the anarchists and the pacifists. The anarchist-communist paper, *Strike!*, which came out of Toronto, initially condemned the action because it would discredit the movement. It repeated the usual critique that such actions could not by themselves do anything. Direct Action never claimed that it would.

FREE THE FIVE NEWSLETTER MAR. 1ST/85



"WE ARE POLITICAL PRISONERS..."

To quote the communique, "while we have no illusions that direct actions, such as this one, can by themselves bring about the end of Canada's role as a resource based economic and military functionary of Western Imperialism, we do believe that militant direct actions can have a constructive function as a springboard to the kind of consciousness and organization that must be developed if we are to overcome the nuclear masters."

A more sophisticated critique was issued anonymously by anarchists around *Kick It Over*. They complained that, "the bombing at Litton can not be

said to have increased the self-activity of either the community or the employees at the plant." Fair enough, though the same point can be said about putting out newspapers and most other things we do. These anarchists didn't condemn Direct Action for being violent, rather they put the violence in the context of state violence. Though wrongly labeling the bombing as "Vanguard Terror", it was valid to say that "clandestine organizations tend to become isolated from the people" and see their continued existence as becoming a goal in itself. Again this problem is not unique to underground groups.

In early November, less than a month after the bombing, the *Toronto Globe and Mail* ran a major front page article linking the Litton bombing to the Vancouver anarchist community. It quoted unnamed anarchists who drew out the similarities between the politics of Direct Action and the Vancouver anarchist scene. In a later, more sympathetic article, other anarchists provided some background information as to what the purpose of the bombing might be without explicitly claiming that it was an anarchist action. This article was condemned by many anarchists in Toronto but it did help to get the ideas to a wider public.

In mid-December, the offices of the main peace groups in Toronto were raided along with the homes of some of their prominent members. Activists in Toronto and Pe-

terborough were picked up and harassed and threatened by the police. It has never been clear to what extent the police actually thought that these pacifists were really suspects or whether the raids were simply used to disrupt their work against Litton. Some pacifists tried to put as much distance as possible between themselves and the bombers. But there was enough support from other pacifists to show that there need not be a total split between militants, whatever their position might be on the use of violence. The largest demonstration ever to occur against Litton happened on November 11, 1982 less than a month after the bombing. As we said at the time, armed actions can make other forms of protest more visible, rather than less credible.

Litton lost a major contract shortly after the bombing. As Litton President Ronald Keating put it, "(t)hey (the protesters) are an irritant, they get a lot of publicity, and the Americans read every damn bit of it. Pressure from these people is making the Americans look twice." He added rather sadly that, "no one else has been bombed."

In early November, in Vancouver, the Wimmin's Fire Brigade firebombed three Red Hot Video stores. This American chain built up an inventory of video tapes pirated from hard-core porn films. According to *Open Road*, "(m)any of the films depicted not only explicit sex scenes, but women being trussed up, beaten, raped, tortured, forced to undergo enemas by armed intruders and other forms of degradation." Women's groups had been fighting for six months against Red Hot Video, but there was no response from the province. Within a few weeks, scores of women's groups of all stripes had issued statements of sympathy and understanding for the action, demonstrations had been held in a dozen centres across the province, and six porn shops had closed, moved away or withdrawn much of their stock out of fear they would be the next target. Within two months the first charges were laid for combining explicit sex with violence.

The Wimmin's Fire Brigade action was so successful because it was so well integrated into, and complimentary to the public campaign. As *B.C. Blackout*, a biweekly autonomist newsletter put it, the action of the Wimmin's Fire Brigade could only have the impact it did because of the months of spade work by many groups and individuals educating themselves, doing research, making contacts, pressuring the authorities, documenting their case — in short, building the infrastructure for an effective, grass roots, above-board movement.

On January 20, 1983, near Squamish, B.C. the Five were returning to Vancouver from target practice in the mountains. The police, dressed as Department of Highway workers, stopped their van and in a violent attack pulled them out of the van and arrested them at gun point. They were charged with 12 to 15 counts, including Red Hot Video, Cheekeye-Dunsmuir, conspiracy to rob a Brinks truck, as well as conspiracy to commit more bombings. Immediately after the arrests, the police had a news conference at which they displayed the extensive weaponry which they claimed had been seized from the Five. This was the beginning of what came to be called, "Trial by Media", as the police and prosecution used the media to try to contaminate public opinion, not only against the Five, but against the anarchist movement in general. Newspaper headlines screamed about "police netting terrorists" and a "national network of anarchist cells." The police raided 4 homes in Vancouver the morning after the first support group meeting. No arrests were made, but typewriters were seized and people were subjected to verbal abuse.

The official police story was that the break in the case came when a reporter from the *Globe and Mail* showed anarchist papers to the Toronto police who, noticing the Cheekeye-Dunsmuir communique in Resistance, sent the Post Office Box address to Vancouver. The cops there supposedly put the box under surveillance and were



eventually able to track down the Five through a series of contacts. The story was convincing enough that the reporter was going to apply for the substantial reward before being talked out of it by more conscious and principled friends.

This story was a cover, for the police were already very aware of the Five. They had been under police surveillance for one reason or another since well before the first action. Brent Taylor and Ann Hansen in particular were pretty notorious in Vancouver. A cop didn't have to be too bright to consider them as possible suspects. Activists who didn't even know them thought they probably had something to do with Direct Action. They were the only ones who regularly went to demonstrations all masked up, looking much more prepared for demonstrations in Germany than in Vancouver.

It is quite likely that the security police had actually watched them do the Red Hot Video actions. This became very relevant at the trials. The Vancouver police obtained warrants to tap their phones and bug their house in order to investigate Red Hot Video. Such warrants are only supposed to be issued as a last resort when all other means of investigation have failed. But these were issued shortly after the firebombing happened. Moreover, they were not needed if the police already knew who had participated in the attacks. The RCMP security service had watched them commit other crimes and had them under observation at the time of Red Hot Video. But there were no surveillance notes covering the period of the actual attack. It was assumed that the wire taps were actually needed by the police to connect the Five to Litton, for which it would have been more difficult for the Vancouver police to obtain a legal warrant. The evidence obtained through these bugs provided the bulk of the case against the Five which is why the first part of the eventual trial dealt with the legality of wire taps.

On June 13, 1983, the *Bulldozer* house in Toronto was raided by the local Litton squad. The warrant, which included the charges of Sabotage of Litton, Seditious Libel, and Procuring an Abortion allowed the police to specifically seize anything related to *Bulldozer* magazine. They took layout flats, letters, articles, magazines, and the mailing list. We finally got all this stuff back after a year of legal fighting.

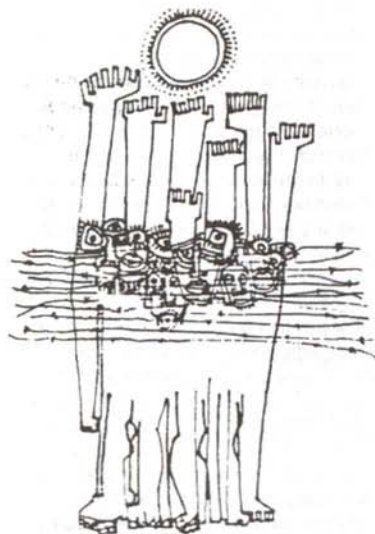
The Seditious Libel charge was apparently related to a leaflet entitled "Peace, Paranoia and Politics" which laid out the politics around the Litton bombing, the peace movement and the arrests of the Five. Seditious Libel apparently involves calling for the armed overthrow of the state. The last time the charge had been used was in 1950 against some trade unionists in Quebec. Our lawyers eagerly anticipated defending us on this charge, but nothing ever came of it.

The Procuring an Abortion charge came about when an alleged menstrual extraction performed by a midwife, Colleen Crosby, on a member of the *Bulldozer* collective, had come to the attention of the police through phone taps. Crosby was picked up a week later by cops who drove her around for several hours, threatening to charge her with the Procuring an Abortion charge unless she told them about any links between *Bulldozer* and the Litton bombing. Crosby would have refused to cooperate anyway, but she had no information to give. It took a couple of years and thousands of dollars in legal fees before the charge was eventually dropped.

Our political weakness — referring to both the Five and their supporters — became apparent during the trial and the support work we did around the trial. The Five assumed that they would go down in a hail of bullets. Instead of the relative glory of the spectacular death, they had to deal with the much more pedestrian reality of sitting in jail awaiting trial. This lack of political and personal preparation for the almost inevitable consequences of their actions was compounded by a lack of preparation by their supporters. It is straightforward to reprint communiques from underground comrades. But it is much more difficult to handle raids and lawyers, harassing arrests, and watch friends and comrades distance themselves just when support and work is needed the most. One must be able to handle high-stress politics for what could be a period of years, while advancing politics that may not even be supported by one's own friends and political associates, let alone the wider society. Yet competent and principled above ground support is crucial if underground actions are to have any long term impact. The community in Vancouver was able to maintain a presence outside and inside the courtroom during the trial in spite of differences in strategy as to how to support them. In Toronto, we were able to keep the ideas in circulation, but had little public impact.

In the initial confusion, the right to a fair trial became the main demand. Since it seemed possible that the room bugs which provided the main body of evidence might be thrown out, this strictly legal course was hard to resist without prior political clarity as to how trials should be conducted. The right to a fair trial must not be ignored if the battle is going to be fought on the legal terrain at all. But it is the state's battleground, and their first weapon is criminalization. The Crown split the indictments into four trials, the first of which was on the least overtly political charges, weapons offenses and conspiracy to rob a Brinks truck. While it may be obvious to those who have a certain political understanding why guerrillas need weapons and money, television pictures of a desktop full of weapons, and reports of meticulous planning for a raid on a Brinks truck, were calculated to defuse claims that the Five were principled political activists. The fight for a fair trial did draw support from ac-

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tivists, progressive journalists and lawyers and human rights activists. But it can create real problems if the trial is made to appear legally "fair". Or when, as happened, the Five eventually pled guilty. Some people who did support work felt manipulated into supporting guilty people even though we tried to be clear that there is a difference between pleading not guilty and being innocent.

The "trial by media" strategy fell apart when the court ruled that the wire tap evidence was admissible. The first trial for the weapons and conspiracy to rob the Brinks truck began in January 1984. The evidence of the first 4 months mainly involved the surveillance prior to their arrests. In March, Julie Belmas and Gerry Hannah entered guilty pleas, including Red Hot Video, and for Julie, the Litton bombing. In April, Doug Stewart was ordered acquitted on the Brinks charge but found guilty of weapon offenses. In June, he pleaded guilty to Cheekeye-Dunsmuir. The jury found Ann and Brent guilty of all the charges from the first trial. In June, in a surprise move, Ann pled guilty to Cheekeye-Dunsmuir and Litton.

Brent was brought to Toronto for a trial around Litton and eventually pled guilty. Recognizing our own weakness, we told him that little could be gained politically in Toronto if the trial was to go ahead. In our relative isolation it was difficult to imagine taking on what would have to be a major effort to present the politics behind the bombing through a hostile mass media. Yet not doing so meant that there was never a longer-term focus nor sense of direction for those who might have been willing to come

forward with more active support. It was not our most glorious moment.

To sum up this section, let me quote from Ann's sentencing statement,

"(w)hen I was first arrested, I was intimidated and surrounded by the courts and prisons. This fear provided the basis for the belief that if I played the legal game, I would get acquitted or less time. This fear obscured my vision and fooled me into thinking that I could get a break from the justice system. But this eight months in court has sharpened my perceptions and strengthened my political convictions to see that the legal game is marked and political prisoners are dealt a marked deck."

Doug Stewart was sentenced to 6 years, and served the maximum 4. Gerry Hannah got ten years, but was out in 5. Julie, only 21 at the time of sentencing, got 20 years. She appealed and got five years off when she turned against Ann and Brent, effectively sabotaging their appeal. Many people were really pissed at this betrayal by Julie. But Julie's testimony was not the reason why Ann and Brent were convicted. If Julie really wanted to make a deal, she could have implicated other people by lying. This she didn't do.

Brent got 22 years, and Ann got life. The sentences, especially Julie's and Ann's were considered unduly harsh. But the state wanted to stamp out any incipient guerrilla activity. The prison system, though, controls how long people actually served. Ann and Brent were both out before 8 years were up. In comparison to what happens to American guerrillas, this was almost lenient.

Doug Stewart wrote in *Open Road* after their conviction that the size of the bombs was problematic. He suggested that medium-level attacks such as arson and mechanical sabotage are easier to do than bombings and large scale actions virtually demand going underground. Direct Action understood that they had to break off contact with other political people; that to do actions in one city, they should live in another. But this demands enormous emotional and personal sacrifices. It was the failure to completely cut off ties with friends and lovers that left a trail for the local police. Smaller actions are technically simpler and allow, as Stewart says, "a group to come together easily and quickly around a particular issue."

Medium-level activity also, has a much less intense impact on one's personal life. If you are not underground, you are less emotionally isolated, and the overall stress level is very much lower. Capture for a medium-level action would be much less devastating in every way. A two or three year sentence is no joke, but it is substantially easier to deal with than a ten or twenty year one.

To summarize, let me quote from an article in Prison News Service written ten years after Litton:

Overt political actions such as these bombings, propaganda by deed, as they are known, are not understood in a non-political society. Even though few people will understand the motivations behind the attack, the positive side is that there won't necessarily be a major reaction against it either. It is an error to think that something like the Litton bombing will be a wake-up call for people to do something about a critical situation

facing them. But properly explained it can make a difference to those people who are already concerned about the situation and who have become frustrated with other methods of dealing with the issue.

Guerrilla actions are not an end in themselves; that is, a single act, or even a coordinated series of actions, has little likelihood of achieving little more than some immediate goal. Such actions are problematic if it is assumed that they can be substituted for above ground work. But if they can be situated within a broader politics, one tactic amongst many, then they can give the above ground movements more room to maneuver, making them both more visible and more credible. At the same time, activists are given a psychological lift, a sense of victory, regardless of how fleeting, so that they go about their own political work with a renewed enthusiasm...

For most North American activists, armed struggle is reduced to a moral question: Should we, or should we not use violent means to advance the struggle?

Wimmin's Fire Brigade Communique

Reprinted from Kick It Over #6 February 1983.

We, the Wimmin's Fire Brigade, claim responsibility for the fire-bombing of three Red Hot Video outlets in the Lower Mainland of B.C. on Nov. 22, 1982. This action is another step towards the destruction of a business that promotes and profits from violence against women and children.

Red Hot Video sells tapes that show wimmin and children being tortured, raped and humiliated. We are not the property of men to be used and abused.

Red hot Video is part of a multi-billion dollar pornography industry that teaches men to equate sexuality with violence. Although these tapes violate the Criminal code of Canada and the B.C. guidelines on pornography, all lawful attempts to shut down Red Hot Video have failed because the justice system was created, and is controlled, by rich men to protect their profits and property.

As a result, we are left no visible alternative but to change the situation ourselves through illegal means. This is an act of self-defense against hate propaganda. We will continue to defend ourselves!

Though this is relevant on a personal level, it only confuses what is really a political question. Most radicals, at this point in time anyway, are not going to become involved directly in armed attacks. But as resistance movements develop in North America – and they had better or we are all lost – it is inevitable that armed actions will be undertaken by some. The question remains if these armed actions will be accepted as part of the spectrum of necessary activity. Much will depend on whether people suffer harm or injuries. Far from being "terroristic",

the history of armed struggle in North America shows that the guerrillas have been quite careful in selecting their targets. There is a major difference between bombing military or corporate targets, or even assassinating police in response to their use of violence, and setting off bombs on crowded city streets. The left in North America has never used random acts of terror

against the general population. To denounce any who would choose to act outside of the narrowly defined limits of peaceful protest in order to appear morally superior, or to supposedly avoid alienating people, is to give the state the right to determine what are the allowable limits of protest.

Repression is most effective when it is able to keep the radical ideas from being transmitted to a new generation of activists. If the ideas can be passed on, then the next wave of activists develop their politics from the base that has already been created. Fortunately, a relatively small, but very active milieu of young activists adopted many of the politics around Direct Action and developed them through such projects as *Reality Now*, the Anarchist Black Cross and *Ecomedia*. Their work in the peace, punk and native support movements, helped ensure that such politics did not end when the Five went to prison.

This is an edited version of a talk that Jim gave during the Spring 1999 Anarchist Lecture Series in Toronto.

From the Archive: **Interview with the Vancouver 5: Resistance vs. Protest** Ann Hansen and Brent Taylor edited and reprinted from Kick It Over 8, September 1983



KIO: Do you feel that pacifism in future years will create meaningful social change as opposed to reformism? Do you see pacifism as a tactic in relation to a revolutionary resistance perspective?

First of all, pacifism is not simply a tool or a tactic. Pacifism is actually a fundamental set of moral beliefs which determine how one lives one's life, and therefore, how one acts politically. Pacifism should be respected as an individual choice. However, pacifism has been elevated to a theory for revolutionary social change and is adhered to as the [only] process and the [only] means we must adhere to. When assertions are made that only a pacifist movement will enable us to create a better world, our understanding of historical and present day reality compels us to disagree.

In the "Peace Movement" in North America, the ideals of pacifism are being applied very dogmatically to a mass social struggle, and have become entrenched as "ideology of non-violence". Often times, adherence to the ideology appears to actually take precedence over the realization of the goals we are seeking...

Granted, it would be much nicer if revolutionary change could come about according to pacifist practice. Unfortunately however, it is doubtful that is the case, and thus, it is wrong to base our future on such assumptions.

Nevertheless, there is a great deal of potential for effective use of non-violent tactics in the liberation process. It is, in fact, absurd to imagine that a revolutionary movement could ever exist without mass participation in non-violent mobilizations....

However, the same can not be said about pacifism. If we, as a movement, restrict ourselves to non-violent tactics only—in other words, if we are a strictly pacifist movement—we will continue to make definite advances from here, but eventually, we will find ourselves prevented from going any further by the repressive forces of the state....

This does not mean that the ends justify any means. The process that we follow is extremely important, and most certainly we must at all times be guided by strong moral concerns and true reverence for life, yet sometimes reality necessitates certain means. We live in a world of violence but it is critical that we always recognize that such violence is not of our choosing. In this sense, reality also justifies the use of certain means; even those means which go beyond the limitations of pacifism.

It is too simplistic to reject revolutionary violence along with the horrible indiscriminate magnitude of reactionary violence [of the state etc.], just because both are violence. To equate both so simplistically removes them from the context of social

reality, and in doing so ignores the essence of each—the meaning and purpose for which they are employed. To then determine the limits of our own practice on the basis of such an artificial equation is obviously wrong....

The way we hope to live in that future is not necessarily a realistic way to live now....

It is true that all revolutionary movements in power have become Statist regimes, but it is false to conclude that this is because violent tactics were used during their liberation process. Instead, it should be attributed to the fact that such movements operated according to authoritarian Statist ideology.

KIO: When you speak of the need to reject industrial civilization, is it not possible to utilize such technological advances for the good of the Earth's people and the Earth itself? If you believe that such is not the case, please explain your position.

Further technological advancements are not necessary for the good of the Earth's people or the Earth; in fact, under the present world order, any further advancements will only benefit the profits of the corporations and the men that run them.

For many, many centuries human beings have survived and developed civilizations on this Earth that were rich spiritually, intellectually, and culturally without industrialism or advanced technology. As well, their survival was not at the expense of hundreds of animal species and environmental destruction. Somehow people managed to hunt, fish, and grow food without General Foods or Safeway. Dances, music and stories flourished without RCA, Sam the Record Man and Harlequin Romances....

The work with machines offered by industrialism alienates people from each other and from the natural functions of the Earth. Whether industrialism exists in the socialist or capitalist bloc, the work still remains alienating and the Earth must constantly be disemboweled so that machines, fuels, and products can be made. The only real difference is that profits in socialist countries are more equally distributed than in capitalist regimes....

KIO: When you refer to the need to build an active resistance, would you define in what manner it should appear?

We don't envision one particular form in which an active resistance movement should appear, but believe that what needs to happen is for a resistance mentality to take root among activists in Canada. From this radical consciousness, active resistance will then appear in various forms and many different struggles.

To a great extent the movement now operates with a protest mentality which unfortunately fosters wide spread reformist illusions about what kind of struggle is necessary to realize the goals we seek. Protest attempts to influence the decisions of those in power by showing public disagreement with their policies. Because we imagine that through protest the powerful will eventually be pressured to change, we are mistakenly wholly engaged in a form of struggle in which the outcome is ultimately left in the hands of those we oppose....

A resistance mentality is based upon the premise that the powerful will ignore our protests, and therefore that we must build a movement with the commitment and determination to utilize means of struggle by which we ourselves can stop the projects that we oppose....

A resistance movement would not be limited by legalities when there is a need for direct action confrontation: such a militant approach is definitely necessary when we are confronted with life-threatening situations; in particular, the on going destruction and polluting of the environment or the build up of nuclear arsenals and the war machine....

• • • In Brief • • •

If you or your group have any announcements that you think people ought to know about then give us a shout, and we will gladly help spread the word. Upcoming conferences, special anniversaries, forums, publications, proposals for direct actions, weddings, free-schoools, projects of all descriptions are welcome. Drop us a note via e-mail <kio@tao.ca>. Make sure that you write "KIO Announcements" in the subject line. Or write to us at Kick it Over, Box 1836, Guelph Ontario, N1H 7A1, Canada. Or just fax us at (519) 822-7089. Just don't let this stop you from simply dropping on by!

The Student Union of Yugoslavia is a group of young prodemocratically oriented people (students mostly) who have spent the best years of their lives trying to change some things in Serbia, to create a more democratic society were people would be able to have freedom of speech without being afraid of getting arrested, beaten, tortured etc. Their aim is to offer readers an independent view of all the aspects of this crisis, at the peak of the propaganda of the media on both sides, and to finding a peaceful solution and to get it started. They feel that the possibilities for a political solution are numerous and it is still not too late to reach them. To find out more about them, and many others, check out the Other Voices from Serbia web site at <<http://welcome.to/freeserbia>>

As the eleventh hour approached, and a very unhappy MayDay eviction seemed imminent, the Lucy Parsons Center pulls on through! Their new address is now: **Lucy Parsons Center, 549 Columbus Ave., Boston, MA. 02118-1125** The move will nearly triple their space, reuniting the Lucy Parsons Center and the Prison Book Project yet again. Way to go! They also have a shmancy fancy website at <<http://www.tao.ca/~lucyparsons>>

An Anarchist Frequently Asked Questions webpage can be found at <http://www.geocities.com/CapitolHill/1931/> The website provides an in-depth introduction to anarchist ideas and history. Find out why anarchism is opposed to hierarchy, the state and capitalism. Find out why anarchists oppose the present system and what they aim to replace it with.

A new electronic mailing list has been created by and for Chicano/a, Mexicano/a Anarchists. This list is open to all regardless of their ethnicity, but please respect that this is a Chican-/Mexican- list and if you are not of this background please do not post. To join, send a blank message to: yabasta-subscribe@egroups.com.

Viskaforce Revolutionary Feminists are planning an international gathering for revolutionary feminists, June 2000 (women only). The gathering turns to already ac-

tive feminists and the idea is to make it into a platform for exchanging experiences. The purpose is to create a well working international network for future co-operation. They would like all participants to plan and form the gathering together. For info, questions and ideas: feminism2000@hotmail.com

The Biblioteca Social Reconstruir (The Library of Social Reconstruction), is an anarchist space located in downtown Mexico City and was founded in 1978. The library currently contains 3,000 books, of which 850 are anarchist, 4,700 magazines including important Mexican anarchist publications. They have been experiencing extreme financial difficulties, and without help will likely close its doors forever. Please send money or write for more information to: Biblioteca Social Reconstruir, Morelos 45 Despacho 206 Col Centro, A.P. 9090 C.P. 06002, Mexico 1 D.F. or email libend@mail.internom.mx or visit: www.libertad.org.mx

The Afrikan Network distribution list disseminates by, for, and about worldwide liberation struggles, police brutality cases, updates on political prisoners/POW's, and other pertinent information to people of colour and to anti-imperialist groups and activists around the globe. Subscribers receive news via Sis. Marpessa Kupendua — contact her at nattyreb@ix.netcom.com for subscription information. Volume is heavy — about 10 to 15 messages per day. Some information is also posted on the AFN web site: <http://www.afrikan.net>. Subscriptions and unsubscriptions are done manually, so please do not do this 'lightly'.

The general international mailing list of the Black Radical Congress (BRC), open to all BRC members "and our allies". Intended to 'define Black politics at the cutting edge of the new information age'. Postings encouraged "on any matter...relevant to our people here in the USA or around the world". Intended for "lively debates, discussions, and polemics about facts, theories, events, and whatever else... is relevant to our peoples' struggle". Moderated by "a team of moderators form the national cyber organizing committee". To subscribe, send an email to <majordomo@igc.org> with the message saying "subscribe brc-all".

The nebraska 'zine about criminal justice issues in the US, with a special emphasis on political prisoners, and a very special emphasis on Nebraska's two PPs: Ed Poindexter and Mondo we Langa, who have languished in jail for 27 years now. To subscribe, send an email to Gloria at <globartx@aol.com>, **Buffalo Chip, 1314 S. 9th St., Omaha, NE 68108.**

On April 26th 1999, Gardenburger announced that they have cut ties to NORPAC, and will distribute their own product in the future. This victory is in a large part due to the efforts of thousands of supporters nationwide to get Garbenburger products out of their universities, retreat centers, restaurants and stores. Don't let anyone tell you that you can't make a difference! With Gardenburger's decision, NORPAC has now lost an account which represented a substantial source of income for them.

"The Story of Colours" is a folk tale about how the Mexican gods took a grey world and filled it with colours. This award winning children's book was written by Subcommandante Insurgente Marcos. Many controversies have surrounded this book and the

There will be a panel discussion at Toronto City Hall on aboriginal land, treaty, resource and cultural rights and human rights on March 18 starting at 3:30. Panelists include Warren Allmand or Iris Almedia, Marilyn Buffalo and Carlos Chen Osorio.

The ninth international conference on Penal Abolition will be held in Toronto Canada at the Ryerson Polytechnic University and the Metropolitan United Church. The three day conference will be held May 11, 12, 13 2000. Contact Ruth Morris or Giselle Dias (416) 972-9992 or fax (416) 630-7581.

Seven new army service objectors in Finland, are spending their spring behind bars. If anyone feels like sending them a postcard, they'd really appreciate it:

Teppo Salonen
Helsingin tyosiirtola
PL 36

01531 Vantaa (16.11.98-2.6.99)

Juan Meneses
Suomenlinnan tyosiirtola
Suomenlinnan C 86

00190 Helsinki (22.2.99-7.9.99)

Mikko Suonpaa
Suomenlinnan tyosiirtola
Suomenlinnan C 86

00190 Helsinki, (29.3.99-3.9.99)

Mikko Juhanantti
Uudenmaan avovankilaosasto

PL 20, 05401 Jokela

Mika Iisakka
Iskolan avovankilaosasto
PL 2

74345 Kalliosuo, (27.1.99-29.6.99)

Kai Hall
Suomenlinnan tyosiirtola
Suomenlinna C 86

00190 Helsinki (4.1.99-29.6.99)

Harri Mulari
Keravan nurisovankila
Lahdentie 711
04201 Kerava (6.4.99-19.5.99)

There is a new video from Rebellion Productions available for \$5 entitled "Yugo To Rwanda". It is a 30 min. video, utilizing original news footage from the genocide in Rwanda in 1994 and the NATO war against Yugoslavia in 1999 exposing the duplicity, hypocrisy and hidden agenda of the US Government and the arms/war industry. Write to N. Gordan Rebellion Productions 627 Montclair Ave, Oakland California USA 94610.

People's Global Action Against Free Trade and the World Trade Organization was founded in Geneva in February 1999 by folks from 5 continents to launch a world wide coordination of resistance against the global market. Their manifesto has been published by fzs, Reuter str. 44, 53113 Bonn Germany. You can visit their website: <http://www.agp.org>

We often get letters from readers who are new to anarchist ideas and want to know of other newspapers and journals dealing with anarchism. Happy reading!

Workers Solidarity, paper of the Workers Solidarity Movement. 75p outside Ireland. WSM PO Box, 1528, Dublin 8. Ireland.

Fifth Estate, \$2. (published since 1965) 4632 Second Ave. Detroit, Michigan, 48201 USA.

Freedom, anarchist fourthnightly, 50p. 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX England.

Catholic Worker, 1c. 36 East First Street, New York, New York, 10003, USA.

Anarchy, a journal of desire armed, \$4.95. PO Box, 1446, Columbia, MO, 65205-1446, USA.

Perspectives, on anarchist theory. (Published by The Institute for Anarchist Studies...some of my favorite anarchists) \$2.50. PO Box 1664, Peter Stuyvesant Station, New York, New York, 10009, USA.

Anarcho Syndicalist Review, anarchosyndicalist Ideas and discussion, \$3.50. PO Box 2824, Champaign IL. 61825, USA.

Earth First! journal, \$3.50. Po Box 1415, Eugene OR, 97440, USA. Off Our Backs, a women's newsjournal, \$2.50. 2337b 18th Street NW, Washington DC, 20009 USA.

On Indian Land, support for native sovereignty, \$3.00. PO Box 2104, Seattle WA, 98111. USA.

Organize! for revolutionary anarchism, 1 pound sterling. ACF c/o 84b Whitechapel High Street, London, E1 7QX. England.



Forbidden Passages

WRITINGS BANNED IN CANADA

Forbidden Passages: Writings Banned In Canada Reviewed By Kristyn d'oino

Forbidden Passages: Writings Banned in Canada is a collection of texts which are either sexual fictions, or works about sexual fictions. As indicated by the title, all of the pieces are parts of larger texts which have been declared "obscene" and therefore banned in Canada.

An historical overview of the Canada Customs censorship battle by Janine Fuller of Little Sisters' Bookstore in Vancouver documents the recent attacks on queer or 'fringe' sexual texts and, even more specifically, those texts bound for gay and lesbian bookstores in Canada. The ironies and hypocrisies of Customs' seizures combined with the slapstick of Canadian court decisions are entertaining, albeit in that sick-to-your-stomach-bitter laughing kind of way. For example, Fuller cites that the banned book "Hot, Hotter, Hottest!" is in fact a chili pepper recipe book and not the steamy porn bit assumed by certain Customs officers.

Other introductory remarks by Pat Califia (leather dyke, SM pervert, pornographer, author, editor, and now relationship counsellor) come highly recommended. Her hopscotch down memory lane pulls together the threads of a conspiracy web; lesbian and gay texts (no matter how sexually explicit or vague) have faced obscenity charges by homophobic reactionary forces since time began. Her insistence on declaring our complicity in the censorship

battles is especially noteworthy. Califia urges each of us to mercilessly root out the censor within, in order to clearly locate not only the censoring impulse, but also the intrinsic power of the pornographic (or in this case, any material suspect enough to be deemed pornographic by the Laurels and Hardys at Canada Customs). Her attempts to rouse lethargic yuppie gays and lesbians from their despotic tendencies, to force a recognition of our own historic labeling as "pornographic" is certainly commendable. However, Califia's inclination to wax overly poetic about the boundless beauty of porn is a bit nauseating, particularly given the sad fact that most readily accessible porn is still schlocky, repetitive, dick-dominated, racist imagery, featuring victimized sex-pots with really big boob jobs. Nevertheless, her remarks are inspiring over all and certainly demand a call to arms for libertarians, freethinkers, ad queers alike.

The actual excerpts are a careful cross section from the large numbers of confiscated or contentious material. Most contributors, including Jane Rule, bell hooks, Marguerite Duras, Dorothy Allison, Diane Dimassa and Kathy Acker amongst others, are by no means literary 'light-weights'. Neither do they generally focus on sexual themes solely for the purpose of sexual entertainment in their writing careers. In fact, they are downright "respectable", often academic writers. All the more reason for Canadian readers to feel a sense of outrage! Oh- don't worry, there also is a smattering of juicy passages included. And I confess I was stirred to more amorous activities on several occasions, thanks to this book. However, after a few reads, these sexual fictions are probably of less interest than the texts which approach the subject in less demonstrative ways.

Each author breaks silence on any number of taboos- from inter-racial desire and intimacy, to SM-sex, sex during and after pregnancy, anal pleasure, incest fantasies, even murder. In so doing, readers have a springboard from whence they may dialogue on these very subjects. You don't have to like what's here. You don't have to be turned on by it. (You may well be!) The point is, any given text should be made

sense of beyond a flat acceptance or rejection of it. Our extremely personal responses to sexual imagery are so varied and so mediated by the very socially constructed fears, shames, and cultural taboos which are examined, analyzed or exploited in the actual texts. What is important too, is that our responses are not 'fixed', immutable (Neither are those of the Canadian Customs officers!).

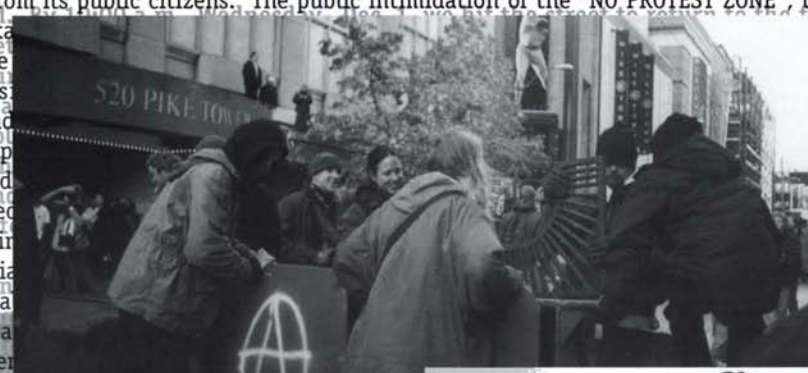
What I like best about this particular anthology is that each piece, in its new context, is more relevant due to the presence of the others. The authors converse with one another, seemingly, and the result is added meaning and reassurance for the reader.

During the art collective Kiss and Tell's photo exhibit "Drawing the Line", female viewers were asked to respond to a series of sexual images graffiti-style, literally drawing a line where they perceived "erotic" images gave way to "pornographic" images. Read: images I like and am comfortable with versus images that frighten, disturb or seem irresponsible to me. In effect, the editors of Forbidden Passages are inviting readers to draw our own lines within the pages of this anthology. Furthermore, they invite us to reflect on our own reactions. The contributors give us sexual texts and, even more, they give us tools with which to assess these sexual texts and others. This careful collection provides different ways of thinking about sex and pornography, and their roles in our cultures.

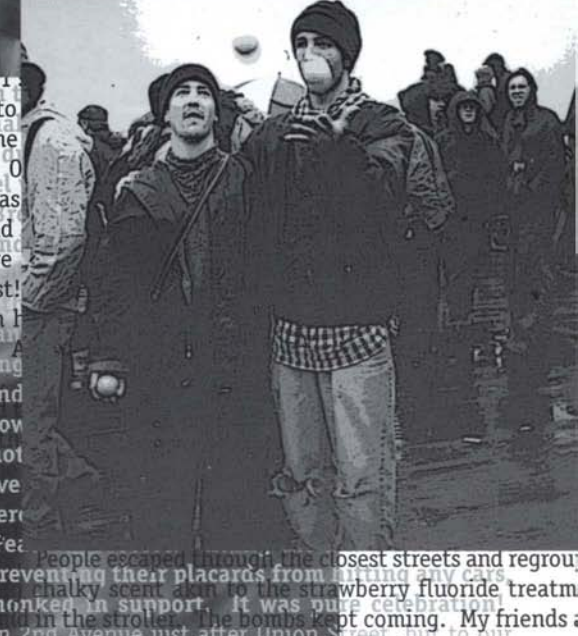
I realize that censorship may seem an 'old' issue to many activists- and timeless it is- but a refresher course in the continued implications of textual silencing is never a bad idea. And, to you uptight anti-sex lefties, it's about time to recognize this as a legitimate cause for alarm. Censorship is a 'real' issue; sex is a 'worthy' cause for which to fight. To all those who just don't see yourself as the type who would read sexual fiction, this is the book that will challenge your assumptions (and just maybe change your mind).

Incidentally, this anthology is actually a fund-raiser for Little Sisters' court expenses, so if you can afford it, [20.95 + tax], by all means please buy a copy.

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 and all of a sudden there were people everywhere. O
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All photos mainly MISKINS

KICK IT OVER 92



KICK IT OVER 92

