

# Open Road

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WHITE LAW VS. INDIGENOUS RIGHTS



## Once More, The Five

They were variously known as the Squamish Five, the Vancouver Five, or simply, the Five. They called themselves Direct Action.

It has now been nearly eight years since five young political activists were arrested by the Mounties near the small British Columbia community of Squamish and charged with a series of political bombings and conspiracies.

Among the bombings cited were the dynamiting of an eco-unfriendly power station on Vancouver Island, and damage to a Litton cruise missile plant in Toronto. As well, they were charged with the firebombing of several porn video stores in the Vancouver

area.

It was the biggest urban guerrilla case in English Canadian annals -- well familiar to readers of *Open Road* -- and raised many issues over tactics and strategies. The five eventually pleaded guilty and received long sentences, ranging from six years to life.

Where are they now?

After spending up to eight years behind bars, most of it in heavy security institutions, all five are now on the streets, although some still face many years of parole restrictions. Specifically:

\* **Gerry Hannah** (10 years); served five years, and is now a musician and a construction worker.

\* **Anne Hansen** (life); moved to a halfway house this year and is now working as a carpenter.

\* **Doug Stewart** (six years); served his full term, and is now working as a carpenter.

\* **Brent Taylor** (20 years); served his full term, and is now working as a carpenter.

The fifth member of the group, **Julie Belmas** (20 years, reduced to 15 on appeal), is no longer in contact with the others. At her sentence appeal, she testified against her former comrades.

Except for Belmas, they retain their sense of social justice. As a friend says, "They were not crushed by prison. They came out with their ideals intact."

## Bonanno & Stasi

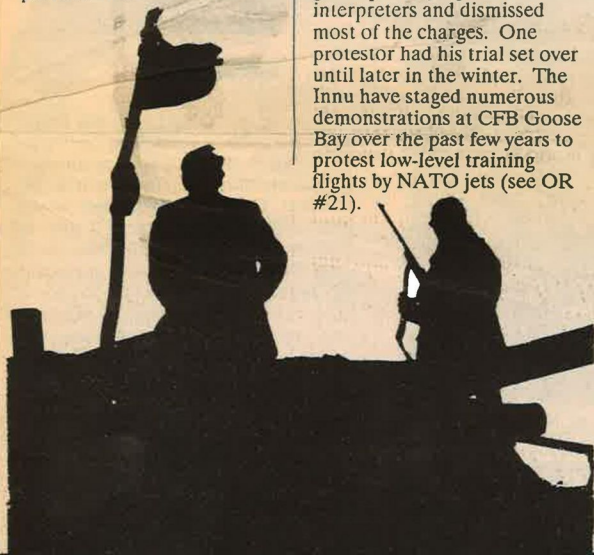
BERGAMO -- Alfredo Bonanno and Giuseppe "Pippo" Stasi are still in prison in Bergamo, Italy. They were arrested during a robbery of a jeweller's store in Bergamo more than two years ago. Alfredo was sentenced to five years and six months, and Pippo was sentenced to four years and eight months. Other accusations were laid against them in reference to a murder that took place in Bergamo in April 1987 and another robbery which took place in March 1985. These latter charges are completely unfounded and were only laid to further

criminalize the two men, both active and outspoken anarchists. On appeal their sentences were reduced: Pippo's to four years, and Alfredo's to four years and eight months. A year ago now, Alfredo was sentenced to a further eight months by the appeal court for "instigation of a crime and apology for a crime" as a result of articles that appeared in the anarchist journals *Anarchismo* and *Provocazione*, which he edits. The comrades can be contacted at the Carcere de Bergamo, Via Gleno 61, 24100 Bergamo, Italia.

## Innu beat the rap

GOOSE BAY -- Charges against 96 Innu natives were dropped after they refused to speak English and a judge couldn't find anyone to act as an interpreter. Ninety-nine Innu were facing various charges after a series of protests at Canadian Forces

Base Goose Bay. But after a full day of wrangling in court, only two of the Innu were found guilty of mischief after the court heard evidence that they spoke English well. The trial continued late into the night until the judge finally gave up on trying to find interpreters and dismissed most of the charges. One protestor had his trial set over until later in the winter. The Innu have staged numerous demonstrations at CFB Goose Bay over the past few years to protest low-level training flights by NATO jets (see OR #21).



OTTAWA -- Canadian Native people should establish their own national army for confrontations like last summer's Oka crisis, the Assembly of First Nations has been told. Chief Roger Jones of the Shawanaga reserve told other leaders that Native people across the country must be prepared to respond with their own military in future clashes with the Canadian government. Another chief, representing a coalition of Manitoba chiefs, cited the formation of a provincial Native para-military squad, in support of the idea. Native people, said Ovid Mecredi, do not want to be caught unprepared the next time the Canadian government utilizes its army against them. "We were naive at Oka. We never thought they would use the army against their own citizens. They will never invade our lands again without a response."

## Demand the Impossible

SYDNEY -- Australia has a reputation for generous benefits for workers, but one union has outdone itself, asking that its members be paid up to the equivalent of \$30,000 (US) a week -- for less than two hours work.

The National Union of Workers said it has made the demand on behalf of 10,000 labourers in the rubber, plastic and cable-making industry. The union wants rest breaks of two hours and 20 minutes, a

wash-up period of two hours and 20 minutes, and two hours of job training a day -- in addition to an hour for lunch -- within an eight hour day. That would leave 20 minutes a day, or less than two hours a week, of work. The union proposal also calls for eight weeks leave, 23 public holidays a year, pension contributions of 50% of wages, childcare and 10 weeks pay for voluntary resignations.

## Be Realistic

INDIANAPOLIS -- Indiana has agreed to place a pamphlet, along with the gideons' bible, in state park hotel rooms that warns readers that the bible is a "violent, racist and sexist fable". The pamphlet, being distributed by the Freedom from Religion Foundation, cautions readers "Warning!

Literal belief in this book may endanger your health and life!" The pamphlet goes on to characterize the biblical god as "a macho male warrior who ... is partial to one race of people; judges women inferior to men; is a sadist who created a hell to torture unbelievers."

## STATEMENT TO THE INTERNATIONAL TRIBUNAL ON POLITICAL PRISONERS AND POWS

Upon my arrest on February 6, 1976, some of the first groups of people who came to show solidarity, along with my own People, in recognition of my political status as a Prisoner of War, were the anti-authoritarian groups of both Canada and the USA, as well as in other countries throughout the world. The respect, recognition, love and solidarity they gave not only to me but to my People is something I will always cherish and hold dear to my heart. This show of solidarity proved to me that not all Euro-Americans were our enemy.

Throughout the first months of our organizing the Leonard Peltier Defense Committee (PLDC), they were the people who gave us what knowledge, resources, and skills they had to build an effective organization. I questioned why they would help my People and myself, as at the time we believed all white people were *wasichus*: the evil ones, the greedy ones. They proved to us that this was not the case and that they too hated the *wasichus*. They too were resisting and fighting imperialist oppression being committed by their race, but not their People. They did not consider themselves to be part of a People to evil.

Now that my case has gained international attention and is becoming a cause to rally around, other Peoples are standing with us. But the first people who supported us, at least the strong-hearted ones, are still with us. These people, whom my own People call the good-hearted ones, were with me from

the beginning of my imprisonment. I was very concerned when I heard that some of them, who are also imprisoned warriors, were not going to be recognized as political prisoners or POWs. I made a solidarity decision that, if this were true, then I would not allow my name to be used in connection with any of these new organizations, such as Freedom Now!, which deal with political prisoners and POWs. Neither I nor my People want to work with those who will not recognize their own warriors. So I was pleased to hear that FN! and other such organizations have changed their views on this very critical issue.

From the beginning of these new organizations, one of the questions I repeatedly asked was how they defined political prisoners and prisoners of war. Some wanted to blanketly define all Indian prisoners are political prisoners or POWs. This I could not agree with. There is a certain truth to it; because of imperialist oppression, through socio-economic conditions or outright aggression against Indian Nations, all Indian prisoners are in a sense political prisoners. But I for one, along with all traditionalist and progressive Indians, cannot identify or justify in any way, someone who has, for example, raped a sister, molested a child, or murdered an elder. I decided I would have to withdraw my name from any organization which used this type of blanket definition. Again, I was pleased to learn that this was not going to be the policy of these organizations.

My greatest disappointment, in all my years of struggle, occurred just recently, when I saw the lack of support for the courageous warriors at Oka. The knowledge that some of my own People failed to stand up to protest the invasion of Oka broke some of my spirit as a warrior. But it also awakened me to the realization that I must work harder to build unity among my own People and their nations.

In today's world, we see nations whom many of us considered allies now turning into new imperialists to join the old. We are warriors, and our organizations, must build our own foundation of unity from which to struggle, to protect the environment, stop the spread of nuclear weapons, and to resist colonialism. There are still a few small nations holding strong -- but in truth, we now have to depend on *ourselves* for sanctuary in the struggle to free our homelands. We must build a unity so strong that no matter how oppressive our enemy becomes, they cannot destroy it.

Through this Tribunal, let us begin a new day, a new organization, a new movement. Let us hold our fists high, and put the oppressors on notice that we have just begun to fight, for not only our political prisoners and prisoners of war, but for our nations and for our freedom.

-- In the spirit of Crazy Horse,  
Leonard Peltier



## FIRST PEOPLE:

-- James Nyagh

(part of a talk given at the International Public Interest Law Conference, Oregon, 1990)

...What I'd like to do is comment on a couple of the difficulties I see in this movement towards a greater accommodation of the indigenous self-determination idea. These difficulties, basically, I divide into two spheres, although it might not be a very happy kind of division of these difficulties that I see, and my statement of the difficulties certainly does not suggest that these are the only ones. These are just two, that at this point, at this conference, I would like to set forth and perhaps have some discussion on.

The first sphere of difficulties I see are conceptual difficulties -- how do we conceive of rights, how do we conceive of this thing we call self-determination within the present world system of territorial states, and a world system of interdependent economies, interdependent ecologies, and a global environment? How do we conceive of rights that can accommodate this ideal of indigenous self-determination? The second sphere of difficulties that I'd like to point out is that difficulty presented by attempts to forge alliances with indigenous communities with other progressive movements to further this goal -- the difficulties that are presented by that effort to form alliances with other progressive movements.

First of all, as to the conceptual difficulties, I suggest that use of the term of self-determination itself, at some level may be more limiting that liberating. That might be a little bit heretical to say that, because movements have been centred around this ideal of self-determination. However, the concept of self-determination is squarely rooted, I think it's fair to say, in Western liberal thinking of the type that views the world as divided between, in a paradigm, that can be described as involving selfless individuals on the one hand and selfish states on the other -- this individual/state dichotomy that pervades Western liberal thinking and that is grounded in the Western liberal thinking that gave rise to and has been the context within which the idea of self-determination has developed. Self-determination of the individual, for example, represents certain rights of individual liberties -- the selfless individual. You can look at the writings of John Locke, you can look at the writings of Rousseau, Hobbes particularly to support that idea. Self-determination of the state means its freedom from outside intervention. Batel, the Swiss diplomat who in the 17th century wrote and developed significantly our modern concept of international law, developed this view of self-determination of the state, that is, its ability to guard itself from outside intervention. And in the name of that kind of self-determination, we see states committing atrocities. We see regimes like that of Hitler's in the early part of this century claiming a right of non-intervention to carry on their activities. We see that word self-determination and non-intervention being put forth repeatedly by countries in order to guard themselves from any international criticism about the atrocities that they commit at home. And examples abound.

If we take the better side of that word self-determination and look how its been applied to affect some real progress in the world, the decolonization movement, we still see that its been limited within this individual/state rights dichotomy. The term self-determination as applied to the decolonization movement effectuated not the liberation of the peoples that

existed in Africa and Asia prior to the colonization process. You didn't see the decolonization movement moving in and liberating those peoples, that is, the tribal peoples that existed prior to colonization. What you saw self-determination doing, or, what you saw that concept doing, was moving in and removing the colonial powers but leaving intact or creating states along these colonial boundaries. So that what we had was not necessarily self-determination of peoples, but we had a decolonization process in favour of new states. Again, an expression of this idea along the individual/state rights dichotomy.

Now that we are trying to use this term self-determination in the context of indigenous people, in the context of national groups in the Soviet Union, in the context of ethnic groups in other parts of the world, we're running up against these same conceptual walls that I have described -- a conceptual wall that sees the world divided between selfless individuals on the one hand and states on the other. Governments, for example, when they respond to the demands of indigenous peoples for self-determination, automatically assume that that means a right of independent statehood. And indigenous peoples, not wanting to be reduced to simple individuals, don't give up the right to independent statehood. That's all there is within this conceptual paradigm we have. You are either individuals or you are states. This conceptual paradigm has not been alive to these alternative groupings that exist. It has not been alive to tribal cultures, either domestically or internationally. And so we see this wall that we are up against, and we use the term self-determination. We see states saying "well, we can't allow self-determination because that means independent statehood". And we see indigenous peoples not wanting to be reduced into simple individuals, i.e., assimilationist model saying, "no, we want self-determination, and that means if we want to be states, we'll be states". There is this conceptual paradigm, or dichotomy, that is limiting by that term self-determination as it is understood today.

So, what is the answer? Do we trash the term? I'm not sure. Maybe at some point we do. But at the very least we need to understand this dichotomy and these conceptual limitations and start to think differently. And perhaps start to come up with new terms. At the very least we need to understand what it is that indigenous aspirations are. And understand that indigenous aspirations do not correspond, in my opinion, to this model, this Western liberal model of society -- the individual on the one hand and the state on the other. That while indigenous peoples have, and continue to have, great social and political organizations, those social and political organizations do not necessarily correspond to the thing we call the modern state. It's something else, and we need to understand that on its own terms. And our thinking needs to accommodate that. We cannot be trapped within this individual/state rights dichotomy that has existed.

Secondly, we need to acknowledge the interdependence that exists throughout the world community that includes indigenous peoples. Indigenous peoples do not want to be isolated from the rest of the world. Again, that might be a little heretical to some people, but I firmly believe indigenous peoples do not want to be isolated from the rest of the world, and never have been. There is an interdependence that exists among indigenous peoples just like among other peoples, so that any model of self-determination needs to accom-

modate that and understand that desire to be interdependent, while of course, not being dependent or oppressed.

And also, our conception of self-determination, or whatever we are going to call it, has to take into account that tribal or indigenous peoples are not static groups. They are not groups that can be characterized by some pre-Columbian notion of tribal peoples. They are groups that evolve, that are active, that are living, that take on new customs, that develop new customs, that change and respond to conditions as the world changes. Taking account of this, I think we can start to think of a conception of rights that begins to free us from this limiting dichotomy of individual/state rights that has persisted for so long, and perhaps at some point, that might require us to come up with a word other than self-determination. But perhaps it won't -- perhaps that word can be reformed and can be captured by a different and new thinking.

Let me get into this other difficulty that I have identified. The one of forming political alliances with other progressive movements, that is, political alliances between indigenous peoples seeking the realization of their aspirations and other progressive political movements. There have, as all of us here I'm sure realize, been conflicts and divergence of interests between indigenous peoples promoting their aspirations and other political interests. An example is the environmental movement. A lot of the environmental legislation, particularly that which has to do with endangered species, was promoted by environmental groups in this country without the minimal consideration of indigenous peoples' interests. The *Endangered Species Act* is one example. The *Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act* is another example. [ed: these are american acts] These Acts were promoted, and I am not questioning the good motives of the people promoting them, but they were promoted without consideration of the interests of indigenous peoples. And, just to take an example with the *Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act*, that Act prohibits the taking of bald and golden eagles. And as many here know, the eagle is -- for most tribes in North America -- the most revered of birds. And its feathers and other body parts are important to ceremonies, are extremely important, central -- if that means anything. Yet this Act prohibits that. And not only does the Act prohibit that, but you see environmentalists today continuing to promote the Acts' enforcement, even as against indigenous practitioners of religion that requires the use of these eagle parts. There is a divergence of interests there. Now, the answer in my opinion is not simply to have alliances of accommodation -- that is, have environmentalists team up with indigenous interests, for example, in the case of the Amazonian rainforest where such an alliance is based purely on utilitarian motives. "Now, oh, we want to save the rainforest...the Indians are there...so we can say we are in favour of indigenous rights...and we can save the rainforest at the same time...and save indigenous people at the same time...and we get all that movement on our side." That's not the model, the purely utilitarian one. And in fact, in my observation, that's the significant element of alliance between the environmental movement and indigenous peoples, it's the utilitarian motivation. There needs to be a true understanding, a true accommodation. And in the case of the *Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act*, I think such an effort at true understanding and accommoda-

tion would show that in fact the Indian approach toward the taking of the eagle is not in defiance of true environmentalist interests. In fact, it is dependent on environmentalist objectives. Another example I'll give of divergent interests is the way we've seen the so-called peace movement again take a utilitarian approach to alliances and indigenous aspirations and abandon indigenous interests when it is not convenient to peace objectives. A perfect example is the situation in Nicaragua. You saw the Indian people in that country being severely oppressed, severely oppressed by a government that was the darling of the political left of this country and of the world. And what happened? The political left of this country and of the world turned their heads to those people and today you can go to the villages of Nicaragua, now there's peace, relative peace, you can go to the Indian villages of Nicaragua. Old women and old children and young children and older men will look at you and tell what they suffered through. An old man will look at you with a tear going down his face and tell you how he was beat so severely on his right eye that he now tears and he can't control it. And old woman will show you the scars on her hands and tell you about how that came about. Young children will tell you how they spent months, or weeks, in the rain, in the cold because their villages were burned down. And yet we've heard none of this from the so-called peace activists who promoted the idea of peace in that region, and who have taken on the cause of the Indians in Guatemala because the Indians in Guatemala were persecuted by the right-wing regime. Again, the utilitarian alliance as opposed to the true understanding and convergence of interests. These are difficulties that I see that need to be resolved and that conferences like these can move us significantly towards resolving.

# INDIGENOUS RIGHTS



# How Green Is My Neighbourhood



-- Spud Durutti

The changing of the seasons can pass almost unnoticed in the concrete and steel of the big city, except when you have to add the anti-freeze or turn up the air conditioning.

But city people lucky enough to have a backyard garden can get more in tune with the natural rhythms.

Luckiest of all are those who have a community garden nearby. Harmonizing with nature, they also harvest the satisfaction of grassroots effort with other earthlings.

Among the tomatoes and cucumbers, a garden can offer fertile soil for participatory democracy, for empowerment and eco-awareness -- all those organic things that nourish the body politic.

This is the story of the greening of a community, formed by two neighbourhoods, in the most crowded part of Vancouver's inner city. The residents -- a few consciously anti-authoritarian, but most just hungry for results -- have cultivated an organic crop using an unlikely combination of seeds (beginnings); from self-help to cozying up to politicians.

The Downtown Eastside (pop. 10,000) is a neighbourhood of low-rent hotels, occupied mainly by single, older men who have worked the mines, woods and fishing grounds on the coast. Discarded by the society they helped build, they subsist now on disability allowances, old-age pensions or welfare.

Right next door, Strathcona (pop. 5000) is a neighbourhood of decaying single-family homes of Victorian vintage, now subdivided and populated in the majority by poor Asian immigrants working for minimum wage in local sweatshops or Chinese restaurants. A layer of downwardly-mobile whites -- refugees from success -- also nestles in Strathcona.

Both neighbourhoods have fighting histories: the Downtown Eastside in forcing City Hall to clean up the sleazy, firetrap hotels and beer parlors; Strathcona in killing a city plan to bulldoze everything in sight in the name of urban renewal back in the 60s.

They also have something else in common: a lot of residents who don't have a green patch to call their own.

For 60 years, a three-acre tract of reclaimed land in Strathcona called the False Creek Flats was used as a dumping ground by Vancouver industry, especially for construction

and demolition debris. Finally, the city banned dumping, but did nothing to clean up the mess, and soon it became an overgrown jungle.

Three acres is a lot of land in the middle of a city. Enter the residents. In '85, they approached the Parks Board, which was holding onto the site as a future soccer field, arguing the site was better suited for use as a community garden. A garden would make it available to more people than just weekend athletes. As well, the produce grown would help supplement meager food budgets.

The Parks Board agreed to a one-year no-cost lease, later extended to five years.

A community garden is not just an allotment garden where people come to hoe their individual plots. The notion of community means the garden must give to all residents. And not just sharing knowledge on how to turn dead soil or clay into a living habitat. All gardeners do that.

No pesticides or chemicals are allowed, so that requires consultation on organic methods.

There is no typical community gardener. But Eric Erickson at age 59 is representative in the love and learning he lavishes on his 8x12 foot patch.

He grew up on a farm on

"I like potatoes and squash. The price of vegetables goes up in winter. Yellow squash is a good source of Vitamin A, so I eat that in winter, instead of green vegetables like spinach and kale, which are imported from Mexico and are too expensive".

Eric stores the squash in a friend's basement. The potatoes he puts in gunny sacks and buries in his plot below the freezing level.

You can't just plant seeds in a community garden and expect a crop. When you are operating on a community scale, you have to fertilize it with money.

For instance, one truckload of gravel costs \$150. Just to build a proper irrigation and drainage system required 20 truckloads. That's \$3000 that had to be raised among people



northern Saskatchewan in the Thirties, but in his adult life had few opportunities to garden. Living in a single room the past few years made it impossible.

When the Gardens got started, Eric found he had to learn from scratch.

"I had not experience in this kind of soil," he recalls. "I was used to soil that had been under cultivation a long time. You turn it over and put the seeds in. At the Gardens, I blundered around at first. I dug up the plot, and the weeds came up. I dug it up again, and the weeds came up stronger."

Composting was a similar story. Eric collected food "waste" in gunny sacks from the back alleys of green grocers, slung the sacks across the back fender of his bicycle, and pedalled them back to his plot.

At first he got the wrong kind of bacteria in this compost, and it raised "an incredible stink". After a couple of years of reading and comparing notes with other gardeners, Eric's compost now has that ripe smell that gardeners love, and he has become a resource on the subject for newcomers.

A retired journalist and door-to-door salesman, he has to watch his budget, so the economic benefits of gardening are a major consideration. Winter produce is his specialty.

who were living on the economic margins to start with. Wheelbarrows are \$150 a pop as well, and shovels cost money, too.

The Strathcona gardeners have adopted a simple rule -- they'll take money wherever they can, as long as there are no strings attached. Some of the donations are easy to accept: donations of cash and tools from Carnegie Community Centre, for instance. Others are more in the grey zone: from seed companies, tractor outfits, and even City Hall (\$18,000). A "human potential" group donated 200 volunteers for a weekend to dig ditches, but they were told "no recruiting".

A local developer offered \$2000, but wanted his name on a plaque. This sparked some soul-searching. The gardeners are incorporated as a legal non-profit society that has an elected board of directors and hold regular monthly meetings. It's fairly structured, but that's the way the gardeners want it, so there are no misunderstandings. They make decisions by consensus whenever they can, but when it's not possible, they will resort to a majority vote to avoid endless wrangling and power-tripping.

Eventually, the gardeners told the developer, "How can we put your name on a plaque without recognizing all the thousands of others who donated, large and small?" The devel-

oper gave the money, minus the plaque.

Despite their funding sources, the Gardens and individual gardeners continue to be active in fighting development in the neighbourhood. They helped spark a five-neighbourhood coalition that successfully killed a city plan in the spring of 1990 to build a high-tech, environmentally-unfriendly garbage processing plant in Strathcona.



The most steady source of income the gardeners have is from gambling, specifically, from bingo. Under the government-supervised system in British Columbia, bingo is run in professional bingo halls for the benefit of "charities". Because of its legal status, the Gardens qualify as a charity.

The subject of bingo is a touchy one. Some residents say they shouldn't be encouraging gambling, and that bingo is in effect a tax on the poor. (This was the position of Open Road members a couple of years ago when approached by some gardeners about obtaining bingo financing).

The gardeners aren't so pure. They don't dispute the potential dangers, but the way they see it, bingo is a relatively low-cost form of entertainment for the poor, on par with catching a movie, or going to a club. Besides, bingo isn't going away, and local residents will continue to play. If community groups don't grab the cash, it will be scooped up by the establishment charities, like the Kiwanis and Lions, who take it out of the neighbourhood. (This is also the position of the Carnegie Community Centre, which finances everything from free christmas dinners for the neighbourhood to mass protest lobbies at City Hall out of bingo money).

Running a community garden is a self-help proposition. That can be a mixed blessing.

In the Strathcona Community Garden, the residents have a shed to house all their gardening tools with a single combination lock. All the gardeners have the combination. Inside the shed are the wheelbarrows, shovels and garden hoses. It's all held in common. After all, few of the gardeners can afford their own tools.

There is no fence around the Gardens, so there is a problem with pilferage from the plots themselves. This is a problem common to community gardens everywhere. In Strathcona and the Downtown Eastside, the situation is made worse by the hunger in the community, especially toward the end of the month before welfare cheques arrive.

Maybe ten percent of the total crop gets ripped off every year. An acceptable loss level, except that it's not a uniform phenomenon. It comes in bursts. A gardener will show up in the morning, and find a dozen lettuces ripped out, or a couple of entire tomato plants stripped clean.

Pilferage has actually decreased in the past few years, perhaps because the Gardens are considered more of a community asset to be respected than a treasure trove to be plundered. Also, there is more activity in the gardens, and the gardeners tend to keep an eye on each other's plots.

As well, the gardeners are getting crafty in protecting their crops -- like planting carrots among other, larger, foliage where it won't be so visible at night.

With three acres to work on, the gardeners have enough room to make their community mandate a reality.

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## CLAIRE CULHANE and some of her story...

The following is excerpted from an interview with Claire Culhane, a social activist for fifty years. She is known and respected by prisoners everywhere. Walking into her home you can see the proof on the walls; almost every inch is covered with artwork that prisoners have given her. She's got the wardens, bureaucrats and politicians jumping 'cuz, as she says, "They can't fire me and I'm outliving the bastards".

**Open Road:** When did you first become involved in prisoners' rights?

**Claire Culhane:** Officially in '75. I was giving a part-time course at Capilano Community College and the Women's Studies group there had spent a year trying to get in to the women at Oakalla. They had just succeeded in going through all the red tape and asked if I would like to give a course Friday nights. I said sure. I went in, through the system, as it were. The matron was taking me down the hall to the gym where the women were supposed to meet me...she was saying to them, "Get to the gym, get to the gym". And they were saying, "Fuck you, fuck you". That was my beginning. It took a couple of meetings before they'd even come. That was the year that the women's movement published the book *Our Bodies, Our Selves*. I brought it along with me and a couple of them started looking at it, they couldn't wait for me...and the book...to get back.

That was the year Mary Steinhauser was killed at BC Pen. I'd been participating in the demonstrations demanding a fair investigation into her death. [Mary, a prison social worker, was shot by a tactical squad during the Pen's most celebrated hostage taking on June 11, 1975. See Open Road #1]. In the end no guard was charged as they all threw their guns into a box and therefore remained unidentifiable when the case came to court. Then in July, for the second time that year, 130 male prisoners sat out on the sportfield at Oakalla to protest their abhorrent conditions and to draw attention to their demands. Support people were spending the night on a garage roof of a nearby house to bear witness...all the guys had their baseball bats and the guards had their guns...we were there to verify who started what if it came to that.

**OR:** Getting back to the hostage taking, do you know what's happened to Andy Bruce, Dwight Lucas or Claire Wilson? They were seen as instrumental in the hostage taking; each one a lifer due to be sent back to the SCU [Solitary Confinement Unit].

**CC:** Yes, I saw Andy in Renous [New Brunswick] a couple of years ago after it was first opened. It was almost funny, they had a CAC, Citizen Advisory Committee, wandering around and Andy went up to them and said, "If you really want to know what's going on in the prison you should get in touch with the Inmate Committee". "Oh thank you very much, where would we find them?" "They're all in the hole". And they said, "You look like a bright young man, why didn't you volunteer for it?" He said, "You just put your finger right on it!"

At that time he was chairperson of the brotherhood, he was concentrating all his efforts in that. Recently I got a copy of the first letter he's written to an official since his trial in '75 where he'd said he'd "never have anything to do with the courts, again because there is no justice there". He wrote to Commissioner Ole Ingstrup on the basis of the Mission Statement, which is like a bible; prisoners are supposed to be treated with dignity by the staff, but of course it's the wrong place for a bible to be practiced. He used that as his in and said, "It's the

first time I've seen something that looks as if it could mean justice for people like me and am writing to test you". Every so often throughout the letter, written between the lines is this: "I want to draw attention to the fact that the last act of violence I participated in was in 1978". This was in '89; he'd done 27 years, twelve of them in the hole.

Latest news on Andy is he just had his third eight-hour Citizen Escort pass, which happened to be with Alma Brooks who is an elder with the native women's group. They went to the reserve in Dorchester, NB.

Claire is still in Dorchester getting nowhere with no passes.

Dwight Lucas has just had his 15-year judicial review (actually he's done 17 years of his 20-year sentence). The jury recommended immediate parole release. However, it will be another year before he completes halfway house and other requirements, and then MAYBE the jury's recommendation will be honoured.



**OR:** Have you heard from Gail Horii lately?

**CC:** Yea, sure, I visit her all the time. She's in Matsqui [a men's prison], in the medium unit because Lakeside [the provincial women's unit] won't have her. [She's carrying on with her studies, tutoring the men, and is a member of the Lifer's Club. She gets to visit with her husband and family so she's better off than she was in Kingston. She is about to request a transfer to Ferndale [minimum].

**On Prisoner's Rights Group:** It's been 15 years I've stayed with it. It isn't any membership movement. It's myself and half a dozen others who volunteer. I've got a telephone, I've got an address, I've got a typewriter and I'm in business. Prisons are a part of society, you aren't going to change prisons, you're going to change society. It doesn't matter which stripe of government -- left, right or centre -- every government, in order to remain in power, must control the army, the police, and the prison system.

When you are in a jungle you don't look for street signs...the thing to do is have some strategy and fight to win, not to lose...[Like] in Peterborough, Ontario, a halfway house there has a recycling business hiring 42 people with the condition that eight parolees always have top billing".

**Funding vs. Poverty -- Whose Rights:** People are watching Eastern Europe and realizing that there are different ways of doing things than a hundred years ago, for us too. So, when you go to the prisons now, without any publicity you find, I'm told, 40 more cells at Mountain, 40 more at William

Head, 80 more at Kent. They're beefing up security -- places where they just had windows they now have bars like at Mission. My theory is, it's not for rapists and bank robbers, it's for the hundreds of thousands of Canadians who are facing long winters with no jobs and no security who aren't going to take it lying down.

I have three court challenge cases coming up, using Section 15 on discrimination, of the Charter of Rights. One on behalf of native prisoners denied humanitarian passes to attend family funerals; one on behalf of prisoners with AIDS; and, the other on behalf of Inuit prisoners held far from their homes.

**Claire on her case in court for visiting rights:** Two things my efforts have produced that I beg other people to do the same and make use of. I was barred from prison for the good and welfare of the institution. I was barred provincially when I was presenting a brief at the Patricia Proudfoot Commission on female prisoners at Oakalla. The lawyer who was the counsel for the Commission said, "We hear that both prisoners and guards are being threatened with reprisals for things they are saying at these hearings". He wanted a guarantee nobody had to worry, that everybody was free, that it is a democratic country. I got up and gave my talk and said, "There's no such thing as knowing what is a reprisal. What are you going to do about it?" Nobody's going to be charged for it, but two months from now they'll spill a cup of coffee and the guard will say a prisoner threw a cup of coffee at them and [those prisoners will] lose all their privileges and who's to say it'll have anything to do with what was said here?" Two hours after that signs were up at Oakalla saying "Claire Culhane is not allowed in and no one is allowed to speak to her on the phone". Proudfoot make 57 recommendations but none of them referred to the rights of people to visit.

The case in provincial court was lost, 2 to 1. An appeal was filed in the Supreme Court of Canada and that was as far as it went. I phoned a lawyer, and said "Is anything happening", and he said "Well, you need \$5000". "For what? I didn't rob a bank, I'm asking you to get me into the jail". He said, "Well, you need to print", (and he didn't say photocopy, and you can photocopy), "ten copies of your transcript in court and there's your trip to Ottawa". I said, "If there aren't enough of you guys in this province who can get it together to work on this case to set a precedent, I may be the first, but I'll not be the only one, then what the hell is the matter?" And he said, "Aren't you getting royalties on your books?" And I said, "First of all I'm not, I never collect royalties. My Vietnam book went to medical aid in Vietnam. Banned from Prison went to Prisoners' Rights Groups and Still Banned from Prison was published by Black Rose; they're more of a cooperative so I leave my money there so they can print more books. It's a matter of principle. I can say buy my book, look the person in the face and say I'm not making any money off it. You don't make money off people's backs. And apart from that", I said, "If I had \$10,000, I wouldn't give you one cent". So that was the end of that.

While you read all kinds of research and studies about how important it is for prisoners to maintain contact with their communities and families, the system does everything it can to destroy it. So here I am, I can see anybody, anywhere, everywhere and I seem to be the only person in this whole god-damned country who can do it. It bothers me. I tell everybody, "I've done it so you can do it. Use me. Say 'Claire Culhane can do it so why can't we?' But nobody will fight. And all I can say is, 'I'm ready, I'm ready. Any time you want to use me'".

When people say, "What can I do, what can I do?", I say "Stick to your guns". You can't have rights without responsibilities.

All I'm interested in is keeping prisoners alive and getting them out at the earliest possible date. Anything I can do that makes the system work better is purely coincidental. If I'm fighting for better health care it's not to make the system work better...\$10 million to build a new youth prison in Prince George and we shut down four counselling centres. Aid for street kids? Open lines for suicidal teens? No money...



Since 1981, Stockholm has only built small regional prisons. How come we're not doing that? When I talked to the Deputy Commissioner in Ontario, I said, "Let's agree before I start that when I talk about the need for programs you're not going to say there's no money for it because if you do I'll tell you to take a shovel and go to Drummondville where they were starting to build a SHU [Special Handling Unit], then Mulroney was elected and he wanted to have a prison built for his constituents when they were 80% unemployed. So they turned their backs on Drummondville, turned their backs on \$40 million, found \$68 million and built Fort Cartier.

I was telling a colleague of his out here about Drummondville and he said, "Drummondville? Forget Drummondville, you should see what they did in Millhaven". They were starting to build a SHU at Millhaven, then they decided to put it Prince Albert. So they turned their backs on what was in the ground and walked off [that was more than \$40 million wasted]. Prisons are supposed to deter people from committing crimes, protect the community and to rehabilitate. They don't do any of those. The abolitionist approach is that 85% of prisoners are not dangerous, they don't have to be in prisons, they should be making restitution to the victims.

You have 10% who simply aren't able to step out and get a job; they need help. They don't need to be sitting in prison being useless. So then you have 5% left, which is an inflated figure. So we're looking at possibly 100 to 150 dangerous prisoners. So we need one prison in the whole bloody country. There are some who should never be allowed out, but you don't treat 95% of the prison population in that fashion. Every 27 days a woman or man takes their life in Canadian prisons. I fight groupism as hard as I fight sexism and racism. All prisoners are not criminal sex offenders.

I figure there should be a special place in hell for 95% of lawyers. There are more people sitting inside because of their own lawyers.

The only thing that scares me, and I don't scare easily, is knowing that a person with a uniform can carry out any brutality and get away with it by virtue of their class position.

Finally what we're seeing in the government confrontation with the Mohawks, in a sense, is similar to how prisoners are treated. There is no honour, no logic, no respect, no recognition that human values. One encouraging feature that I found in a recent trip to Quebec was that the 50 or so prisoners who I visited with were all for the Mohawks. They all understand the political implications of this struggle.



In Honor of  
Chief Sitting Bull

Greetings! Aho Kola! May your moccasins make happy tracks in many snows and the rainbows always touch your shoulders. On December 15th, 1999, it will be 100 years since the great chief Sitting Bull was killed by the Huntepapa Lakota Sioux warriors who conspired with the US Cavalry to neutralize this great Sioux leader. And in honour and remembrance of him, I send you this here sketch.

Anyways, the brothers here filed suit against the warden and chief guards here -- JL Carr and Glen Sarber that discriminated and slandered and shamed the native brothers here as well as plan to "neutralize" the instigators of all the suits against them. It's been discovered by the latino brothers that heard the warden and chief guard when they approached inmate Kevin Bunn to carry out the plan to neutralize the bros that were instrumental in the filing of all the suits against these guards and warden in exchange for parole arrangement for K. Bunn. After he was confronted with the knowledge that it was not a secret anymore, Kevin Bunn was placed in the mental health segregation unit here for unknown reasons.

We are filing a Section 42 USC 1983 suit to stop all the FBI/Cointelpro tactics that also were used against native leader Leonard Peltier on May 17, 1978 at Marion where FBI agent Wilkins and chief guard RM Carey approached inmate RH Wilson, aka Standing Deer, and asked him to carry out the plan to neutralize Peltier. Not so strange, JL Carr is former chief guard at Marion and Glen Sarber is member of the "Guardians of Ogalala Nation (GOON), terrorizers of the native people on the Pine Ridge reservation. Well, maybe you can send us a copy of your rag. This Keven Bunn was impersonating a native person in letters to our folks -- obviously guards gave him the addresses to our families.

In spirit and in strength,  
Robert Knott.

## Doing solitary in Brazil

On December 16, 1989, over 200 police surrounded a house in Sao Paulo, Brazil. Inside were six people arrested for kidnaping Sao Paulo millionaire Abilio Diniz. Twenty-four hours later, Diniz was released and the six suspects taken into custody. All together, ten people would be charged and convicted of extortion through kidnaping, possession of illegal weapons, and false documents. Among the ten are two Argentinians, one Brazilian, five Chileans, and two Canadians: Christine Lamont and Dave Spencer, both well-known among the radical left, and particularly among the central American solidarity groups in Montreal.

The trial, one of Brazil's most "spectacular", lasted four months and ended in May 1990. The sentences ranged from five to 15 years, with Christine sentenced to eight, and Dave to ten in solitary confinement. The police used the trial in an attempt to compensate for their own inefficiency, dragging up all recent unsolved major kidnappings and claiming the ten were also responsible for these. As proof, they pointed to the past activities of various members charged in the case, including membership in guerrilla groups in Chile, and bank receipts they claim to have found with deposits totalling \$2.5 million sent to Winnipeg and Vancouver bank accounts. Due to lack of evidence, they were unable to charge the ten with any of these.

Seven people, including Christine and Dave, pleaded "not guilty", and three pleaded "guilty". Dave and Christine stated they were unaware a kidnapping had occurred in the house they rented, until police surrounded it on December 16. Diniz himself

claimed this was possible, and in court was unable to identify voices of the suspects (Diniz had been captured December 11, 1989, and held in the house.)

Though Christine received eight years in semi-open prison, the judge must issue a directive ending the solitary confinement she has been held in since her arrest. At this point, the judge has not done this. Canadian external affairs has also discussed with Brazil the conditions for extradition, but no agreement has ever been reached and it is unlikely this case will establish such an agreement.

Presently, the group are appealing their sentences and focusing on the political aspect of the case. Under Brazilian laws, political actions receive lesser sentences than "criminal" actions. During the trial, the prosecution negated the political intentions by pushing the idea that any money received from the kidnaping would exit Brazil, and was therefore not political in Brazil itself.

The appeal process may last up to eight months, and David and Christine are not pursuing extradition at the moment. They've asked for material support (books, magazines, etc), and have indicated they feel that is little else comrades can do beyond this, for the moment.

We encourage comrades to write, and to publicize the case. Write to them at: Christine Lamont, Penitenciaria feminina, Av. Zak, Narchi 2.366, Bairro Carandira, Sao Paulo, SP, Brazil, 02029, and David Spencer, Penitenciaria do Estado, Av. General Ataliba Leonel 656, Bairro Carandira, Sao Paulo, SP, Brazil, 02088.

-- (from Resistance, #14)

## Free the Murrays!

Marie Murray has spent longer in an Irish prison, north or south, than any other woman. She is now in her fifteenth year behind bars, and unlike 17 other long-term male prisoners, she was refused parole last Xmas. Her case is due to be heard soon by the Parole Board, set up by the Department of Justice only last winter. Along with her husband Noel, they are the longest serving prisoners without parole.

The Murrays were convicted in 1975 in the non-jury Special Criminal Court of the murder of off-duty Garda Reynolds. The original convictions of "capital murder" were overturned on appeal in Noel's case, and on retrial in Marie's case. Hence they are serving "life". The average for "life" in the south of Ireland is eight years and eight months.

The Prison Review Board was recommended by the Whitaker report of 1985. Indeed Dr. Ken Whitaker sits on the new board. The Report suggests that anyone who has spent more than seven years in prison becomes "irrevocably institutionalized".

Marie believes that she has been forgotten by the Justice Department, and unless her plight is brought to its attention, she will spend many more years behind bars. She has good reason for such concern. In 1986, the High Court turned down a request, under the constitution, by Noel and Murray, for "Conjugal Rights", despite the able, and free, barrister services of Nobel Peace Prize winner Sean McBride. Marie and Noel are still awaiting an appeal in that case.

Three years ago they were persuaded by a barrister in their trial case, Harrington, to petition the Justice Minister "distancing themselves from political and violent associa-

tions". Despite having no association to disaffiliate from (previously they were involved with the organization now known as the Workers Party, and later active as anarchists), the Murrays did petition, but are still awaiting a response.

Marie, 42, has done much to prevent being "irrevocably institutionalized". She has completed a university degree (the first prisoner to do so in the south), and is currently studying for an M.A. She has won awards for her plays and short stories, one of which was published in the Irish Times, and is working on a play for a Dublin community group. All this after a spell of inactivity as a result of the conditions under which she is kept. In Dublin's Mountjoy Jail she shares the female prison with only one other "lifer", Majella Boland, and 43 short-termers, the majority of whom are serving less than three years. There is little chance of forming

lengthy relationships because of this high turnover.

Noel Murray is in Limerick Jail, after spending the early part of his sentence in the military Curragh Camp Prison. He was offered a one-day release to visit his elderly parents on Xmas day, but declined when the authorities insisted he be taken there and back in handcuffs, a stipulation not required in the other seventeen short releases. Noel's father is now too ill to visit him, a practice he kept up every month for most of Noel's imprisonment. When his father suffered a heart attack in November 1988, Noel was allowed out (handcuffed) to visit his father on three occasions, and Marie was granted one hospital visit.

To write the Murrays, expressing support for them:

\* Marie Murray, Mountjoy Prison, North Circular Road, Dublin, Eire.  
\* Noel Murray Limerick Prison, Limerick, Eire.



# BEYOND

individual human beings whereby one individual attempts to negate the free will of another. When the will of one has been successfully imposed upon another, then there exists a situation of domination. That power is a relationship between two parties -- the oppressor and the oppressed -- and not something metaphysical or otherwise beyond the grasp and control of human individuals, is clearly understood by anarchist thinkers.

In the early part of this century, Emma Goldman quoted these lines from John Henry Mackay's poem in her essay "Anarchism: What It Really Stands For":

*I am an Anarchist! Wherefore I will  
Not rule, and also ruled I will not be!*

These words clearly and succinctly express the integrity that is fundamental to the anarchist position -- integrity born out of the double imperative to both denounce and renounce the exercise of power. Anarchist political philosophy is based upon the belief that people are capable of self-determination, that self-determination is the foundation for human freedom, and that power relationships undermine self-determination and therefore must be constantly opposed. This uncompromising anti-authoritarianism is what makes anarchism so compelling to its adherents, both as a philosophy and as a political movement. Anarchists understand that freedom is grounded in the refusal of the individual to exercise power over others coupled with the opposition of the individual to restrictions by any external authority. Thus, anarchists challenge any form of organization or relationship which fosters the exercise of power and domination. For instance, anarchists oppose the State because the act of governing depends upon the exercise of power, whether it be of monarchs over their subjects or, as in the case of a democracy, of the majority over the minority. Anarchists also rally against the institution of organized religion, which they regard as both implicitly and explicitly engendering relations of hierarchy and domination. Compulsory education, sexual repression, censorship, private property, alienated labour, child abuse - all these are relationships of power that anarchists critically challenge.

Of course, many expressions of power exist in our society other than those I have just listed; what distinguishes the anarchist from other political activists is that the anarchist opposes them all. This condemnation of power per se is fundamental to the anarchist position and gives it a critical impetus that takes it beyond traditional political movements. The feminist movement, with its central concern the liberation of women, does not contain within itself the larger critique of power that is basic to anarchism. What I hope to demonstrate below is that without an implicit condemnation of power as such, feminism ultimately fails by limiting itself to an incomplete struggle for liberation.

In my view, it is absolutely necessary that an explicit anti-authoritarianism be present in a political philosophy if it is to bring about true human liberation. No hierarchy is acceptable, no ruler is allowable, no domination is justifiable in a free society. Clearly, if this anti-authoritarian principle is not fundamental to a political philosophy, then domination and hierarchy can exist in theory and practice without presenting a crisis. As a movement, feminism does not have as a defining characteristic an anti-authoritarian critique of power and domination; therefore, as a political philosophy, it is insufficient for the liberation of all people.

Of course it is possible to point to various groups and individuals within feminism who are critical of power, domination, and hierarchy. The feminist writer Marilyn French, for instance, criticizes power in her book *Beyond Power: On Women, Men and Morals* and advocates building a new world on what she argues is the opposite of power -- pleasure. Another feminist writer, Starhawk, likewise criticizes the exercise of what she calls "power-over" and advocates the use of consensus decision-making as one means to counter power. Angela Miles, in her essay "Feminist Radicalism in the 1980s", argues for

sexism of the dominant culture, but also in response to the lack of a nonsexist and thereby truly humanist left.

The struggle by women for liberation has emerged out of a myriad of contexts and situations, both personal and political. Some women came to feminism through left-wing politics: marxism, anarchism or socialism, for example. Other women embraced feminism because, trapped in suburban kitchens, they confronted and overcame what in 1963 Betty Friedan called "the problem that has no name" by giving it a name: male domination. Still others found themselves involved in the women's movement because it allowed an alternative to heterosexuality. There are probably as many reasons for joining the women's movement as there are women. This has resulted in a wonderfully diverse collection of groups and tendencies within the feminist movement. Among others, these include marxist-feminists, socialist feminists, radical feminists, lesbian separatists, anarcho-feminists, integrative feminists, liberal feminists and eco-feminists. Not only do these various groups differ from one another, but even within groups there exist subtle and not-so-subtle differences and factions. This fluid, ever-changing pluralism, which resists rigid categorization, is one of the movement's strengths, while simultaneously posing challenging analytical problems for theorists concerned with understanding the feminist movement. Therefore, instead of becoming mired in a tiring and unrewarding discussion of what divides the women's movement, it is more useful to identify what these various groups have in common. What unites these women as feminists is their shared belief that women in our society are unfairly disadvantaged relative to men. While there is much disagreement over the causes, effects, and possible solutions to the domination of women by men, all feminists are united in their refusal to accept women's subordination as unchangeable.

This refusal has had enormous effects on the practice of politics in our society. Marxists, socialists, liberals, even mainstream politicians must now in some way or other address the concerns put forth by feminists. While some of the changes have been symbolic, like the decreasing use of sexist language in public, other changes such as the increased availability of birth control and abortion has been undeniably concrete. These changes are due to the militancy of the women's movement over the past twenty years, a militancy that has demonstrated very clearly that if men do not treat women as full members of the human species, we will simply go elsewhere. And go elsewhere we did -- into our consciousness-raising groups, our women-only study sessions, our feminist action committees, our autonomous, self-run women's movement.

This creation by women of a movement for women provided the opportunity for many of us to be taken seriously for the first time in our lives. Instead of fighting with left-wing men to put childcare on the agenda, we wrote the agenda ourselves. This, I believe, is the most important achievement of the women's movement -- women did not ask for freedom, we took it. As Emma Goldman boldly wrote:

*The right to vote, or equal civil rights,  
may be good demands, but true  
emancipation begins neither at the  
polls nor in courts. It begins in  
woman's soul. History tells us that  
every oppressed class gained true  
liberation from its masters through its  
own efforts. It is necessary that  
woman learn that lesson, that she  
realize that her freedom will reach as  
far as her power to achieve her  
freedom reaches.*

The feminist movement has indeed freed "woman's soul", certainly within the movement itself. That this achievement has permeated the rest of the left, and to a lesser extent mainstream society, is a testament to the vitality and strength of women's struggle.

While acknowledging these accomplishments, I would like to turn now to what I see an inherent limitation of the feminist movement: the lack of an intrinsic critique of power and domination per se. The absence of such a critique in the core of feminist thought results in the inability of feminism as a whole either to envision or to create a world where all people can be free. I would like to suggest that the political philosophy of anarchism, with its implicit critique of power, offers an alternative to feminism in the ongoing struggle for human liberation.

To speak of power as a thing or phenomenon that can exist independent of human consciousness is to profoundly misunderstand the whole problem of power itself. Power exists as a relationship between



-- L. Susan Brown  
(reprinted from  
*Our Generation*, 21:1)

Few would quarrel with the statement that societal changes resulting from feminist struggle have been nothing short of profound. These changes have been brought about by the efforts of women belonging to the "first wave" of feminism in the early 1900s and, more recently, by the "second wave" of women's struggle that emerged in the 1960s and continues to this day. It is hard to think of even one aspect of our lives that has not been touched in some way by the women's movement. We need only look at the lives of our own mothers to see how much things have changed in the last 20 years. The restrictions that my mother faced first as a girl and then as a woman in the 1940s and 1950s have been largely overcome by women who fought against the confines of sexism. Today, women are by and large recognized as legitimate citizens of our society and are seen by most as valuable members of the community in their own right.

Women's fight for legitimacy has not been easy. It has been met with great resistance, not only by men, but also by some women. The fact that men as a group have resisted women's emancipation led to the establishment of a separate women's movement. If we look back to the 1960s, for example, we can see that the sexism within the New Left forced women to look elsewhere for satisfying political involvement. As Angela Miles notes:

*The ringing statements of early  
feminist manifestos as well as  
subsequent analyses of the period  
show clearly that feminists left male  
dominated groups, not from weakness  
but from positions of strength and  
experience, to carry forward a struggle  
for a cultural, economic, social and  
sexual revolution that had faltered on  
men's refusal to address their own  
power over women.*

The humanism of the New Left, like the ideology of mainstream society, was male-defined. The contradiction was great -- marxists, anarchists, trotskyists, maoists, and others were all ostensibly fighting for human liberation, but they undertook this fight without confronting sexism. The New Left simply did not take women as women seriously. These movements drove women out of the left because the fundamental conception of the human being within the left was overwhelmingly male. Issues like women's sexual and intellectual freedom, childcare, housework, violence against women and children, sexual harassment, and the objectification of women were not addressed in any serious way by the male left. Left politics was on the whole more concerned with the theory and practice of toppling governments or seizing power than with looking after children. This is not to say that left-wing politics accomplished nothing during the 1960s; in fact, the left was responsible for a critical re-evaluation of late capitalism which shook the very foundations of our society. The movement, at once playful and deadly serious, challenged the authority of the state to send men to war, challenged the authority of the capitalist to steal from workers, and challenged the right of the church to control sexuality. What it did not challenge was the right of men to exercise power over "their" women. On the whole, left-wing men did not question their own dubious right to define the human race in their image -- as male. As a result, a women's movement emerged not only in opposition to the



# FEMINISM: Anarchism & Human Freedom

an "integrative" feminism that opposes all forms of domination. These are only three examples of feminist thinkers who consciously oppose the exercise of power and domination; there exist many others.

However, while one can point to examples of feminist thought that focus on the problem of power, this does not indicate in any sense that a critique of power is necessary or integral to feminist theory taken as a whole. In other words, just as one can be a feminist and oppose power like the three writers cited above, it is also possible and not inconsistent for a feminist to embrace the use of power and advocate domination without relinquishing the right to be a feminist. For example, in her essay "The Future -- If There Is One -- Is Female", Sally Miller Gearhart

Friedan, feminist author of *The Feminine Mystique* and *The Second Stage*, argues in both books that the struggle for and the achievement of women's equality should take place without disturbing the existing hierarchies of the state and the capitalist economic system. Friedan has no quarrel with economic or political power -- she simply wants men and women to be able to compete for power on an equal footing. Gearhart, Freeman, Friedan -- all three are undeniably feminist, and all three accept power as part of their world view. This acceptance of power does not in any way disqualify them from being feminists. Feminism may allow for a critique of power, but a critique of power is not necessary to feminism.

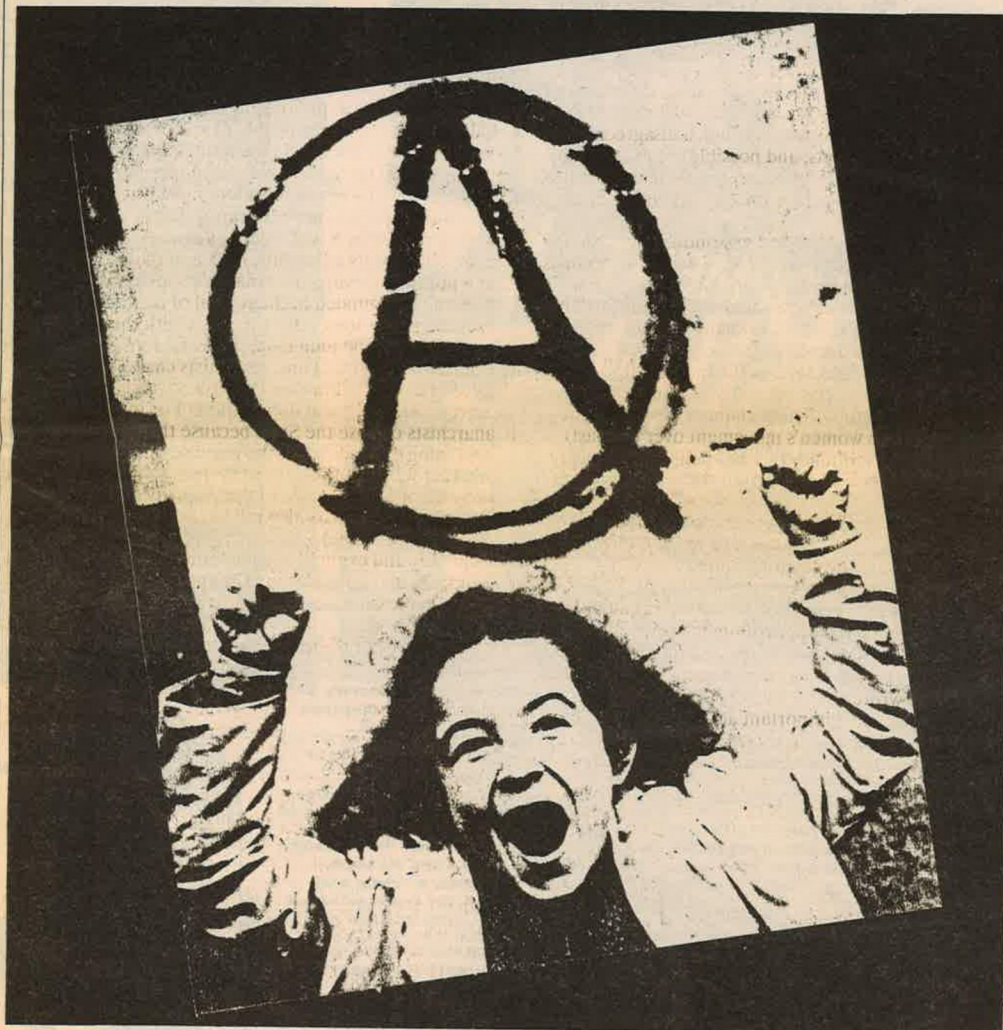
the iniquity of the oppression of women by men; anarchism opposes oppression of all kinds. Certainly some feminists look beyond sexism to a wider, anarchistic critique of power; however, this wider critique is not at all necessary to feminism.

Since it is possible, and in fact quite likely, that one could be a feminist without sharing the anarchist sensibility towards power, then it is logical to ask whether it is possible to be an anarchist without being a feminist. In other words, can anarchism accommodate the oppression of women without contradicting itself? As anarchism is a political philosophy that opposes *all* relationships of power, it is inherently feminist. An anarchist who supports male domination contradicts the implicit critique of power which is the fundamental principle upon which all of anarchism is built. Sexist anarchists do indeed exist, but only by virtue of directly contradicting their own anarchism. This contradiction leaves sexist anarchists open to criticism on their own terms. Anarchism must be feminist if it is to remain self-consistent.

Not only is anarchism inherently feminist, but also it goes beyond feminism in its fundamental opposition to all forms of power, hierarchy, and domination. Anarchism transcends and contains feminism in its critique of power. This implicit opposition to the exercise of power gives anarchism a wider mandate, so to speak, than feminism or other liberatory movements such as marxism. Anarchist political philosophy and practice is free to critically oppose any situation of oppression. While race, class, age, gender, sexuality, or ability, for instance, may pose analytical problems for other movements, anarchism is capable of dealing with all these issues as legitimate because of its fundamental commitment to freedom for *all* people. No one oppression is given special status in anarchism -- *all* oppression is equally undesirable. Anarchism fights for human freedom against each and every form of power and domination, not just a particular historical manifestation of power. This gives anarchism a flexibility not available to any other movements. Not only can anarchism address any form of oppression that exists today, it is versatile enough to be able to respond to any form of oppression that may emerge in the future. If tomorrow, for instance, left-handed people were proclaimed to be criminals for their lack of right-handedness, anarchists would have to oppose such oppression in order to remain true to anarchism's underlying anti-authoritarian principles. It is this fundamental anti-authoritarianism that leads anarchists to fight for the dignity and freedom of such groups as women, people of colour, gays and lesbians, people with AIDS, the differently abled, the poor, and the homeless, among others. Anarchism goes beyond other liberatory movements in opposing oppression in whatever form it takes, without assigning priority to one oppression over another.

Unlike most other political movements, anarchism understands that all oppressions are mutually reinforcing; therefore it urges that the liberation struggle take place on many fronts at once. Thus some anarchists concentrate on challenging state power, others focus on opposing male domination, and still others spend their energy fighting against capitalist exploitation, compulsory heterosexuality, organized religion, and a myriad of other causes. The anarchist movement accommodates a diversity of anti-authoritarian struggles, and while each is recognized as being essential to the establishment of a truly free society, none is placed as prior to or more important than the others. Anarchism fights all oppression in all its forms.

Anarchism goes beyond feminism, indeed beyond most other liberatory movements, in its relentless quest for human freedom. Certainly there are people working within other movements who share anarchism's aversion to power; however, any political movement that does not have at its core an anti-authoritarian critique of power leaves itself open to anarchist questioning. The gift of anarchism lies in this critique -- a thoughtful but relentless questioning of authority and power, one which seeks to create a world where all may live in freedom.



argues for the establishment of a matriarchy; she says we must "begin thinking of flipping the coin, of making the exchange of power, of building the ideology of female primacy and control." A matriarchy, like a patriarchy, is based on power; the fact that in a matriarchy *women* hold the power does not negate the fact that power is still being exercised. Jo Freeman, in her article "The Tyranny of Structurelessness", argues that feminists must abandon their small leaderless groups in favour of designated power and a strong, centralized feminist organization. In place of small grassroots groups that use consensus to make decisions, Freeman advocates large-scale democratic decision-making, without questioning the tyranny of the majority over the minority that is inevitable in any democratic form of organization. For Freeman, if feminism is to be successful, then "some middle ground between domination and ineffectiveness can and must be found." Clearly, Freeman sees nothing wrong with women participating in forms of politics which are based on the exercise of domination and power. Betty

In spite of the fact that some feminists clearly embrace the use of power, the argument has been made by certain theorists that feminism is inherently anarchistic. For instance, Lynne Farrow takes this position when she claims that "Feminism practices what Anarchism preaches." Peggy Kornegger also asserts an identity between the two movements when she states, "Feminists have been unconscious anarchists for years." Both Farrow and Kornegger, in their enthusiasm to link feminism with anarchism, ignore groups and individuals within the women's movement who are decidedly "archic", that is who endorse the use of power in both theory and practice. By collapsing anarchism and feminism into one movement, Kornegger and Farrow disregard the rich diversity of perspectives that make up the feminist movement, at the same time committing a grave injustice to anarchism by rendering it redundant. If "Feminism practices what Anarchism preaches," who needs anarchism anyway? In fact, feminism and anarchism are not identical movements as Farrow and Kornegger suggest; feminism as a whole recognizes

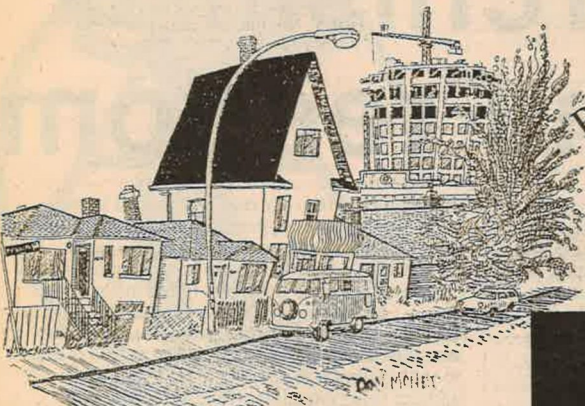


THANK YOU for your kind support and encouragement. Your help is important to us as we continue to work for adequate and affordable housing in Vancouver.

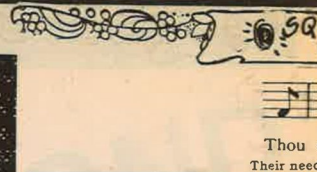
HOME, SWEET HOME

REVOLUTION

Here is a picture  
picturesque home  
The estate was occupied



HOME, SWEET HOME



i guess if i thought they t  
i'd have been shit scared  
challenges of baseball to  
SWAT team to settle onc  
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burnt down the block 000  
after words only charred t  
the hokey pokey out in th  
cameras would be able to  
shake it all about the gang  
around the corner wonder  
someone can hear them si  
sub-machine guns and we  
coming out of her home w  
ERT guys running rifles a  
that prune juice a little too  
Vancouver's finest what i  
nine of us sitting on the ba  
the idea of donuts so much  
waiting for them to come  
hell's taking them so long  
so boring to have high pov  
says Geoff and people lau  
the four of them playing B  
down home by candlelight  
play by play over the walk  
so stupid tomorrow unless  
accident my non-violent fr  
to be reborn in a new unde  
to live on your own terms  
SWAT team evicts me from  
rifles at me for six hours d  
of my eyes and now they w  
i tell ya it oughta be a crim

the FRANCISE STREET SQUATTERS during the year of 1990. A community of people dedicated to exposing some of the lesser known, yet very real problems that exist in today's north america.

The main thing we were doing was, and still is, to show the world, or more realistically, our community, that you don't have to sit by and watch, and that whatever you choose to protest you can make a difference. If you want to save the rain forest's... it's up to you and nobody else, write letters, sign petitions, do something that will help your cause.

We as a group, decided to take action on the current housing crisis, and other issues including Womins rights and native land claims.

The press and the government say that we accomplished nothing, but I put it to you, how many of you have heard anything about this on the news or from a friend? , most of you I would bet, the word is out now it's up to you to take action.

As a group we did take action. Not violent action as the police, government, and multi-media would have you believe, but very loud and very obvious action with civil disobedience and slogans that were aimed at you, just so you would ask why.

The police, have once again, over stepped their bounds in the eviction of the SQUATTERS as they used un-necessary violence, in an obviously "no resistance situation". They brought vicious police dog's, bull dozers, helicopters, S.W.A.T. teams, dump truck's, and at least 80 cop's hyped up to beat poor people with a variety of personal weapons including riot gear, high powered machine guns, sticks, rubber hoses, and other nasties.

Not to mention 30 roof top snipers and another 100 or so police officers waiting in the wings.

We were armed with water balloons, soggy doughnuts, and paint.

When the police realised that we were going to be unarmed and public, they fabricated a story to explain or justify their future actions.

We were unarmed, and they knew it, if you don't

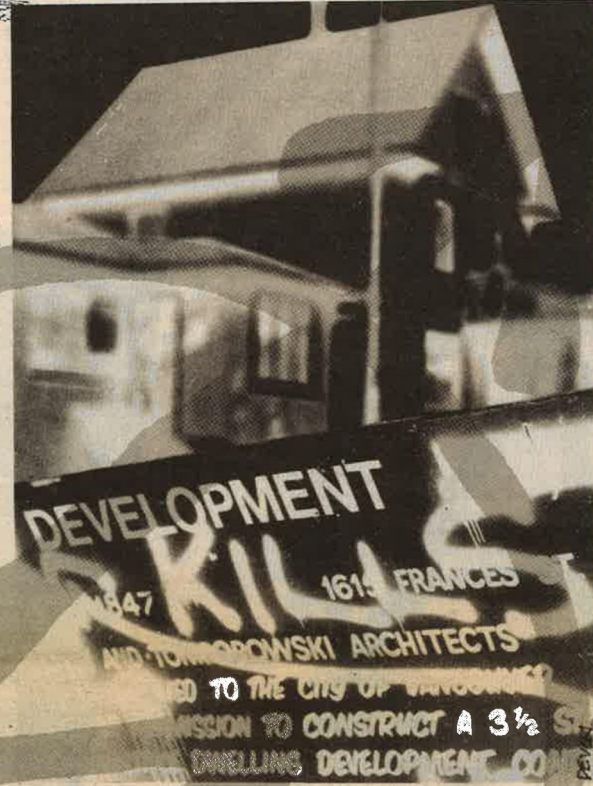
believe me, look a little for your self, NO GUNS WHERE EVER FOUND, and don't you think if the police had had any real reason to suspect us of being armed, some of us would have been kept in jail? Or questioned about it or even followed up on?

Seeing as none of these things came to be, and the evidence of these things are there for the reading and seeing, you should be fairly convinced that the cop's are afraid, the government is afraid, and the rich are too, of loosing their power to manipulate the people and mabeey having to face the problems they have created.

So don't be afraid, voice your opinions and do your best to make a difference.

Tjeerd Rutchinski  
Jan. 10th 1991

'DECriminalize SQUATTING'  
**SQUAT RIGHTS**



HOME  
LIFE  
M  
H  
O  
E  
THE  
HOME

In the Feb. revolution of 1990 the opportunity arose to Squat a series of houses on the 1600 block of Frances St. in Vancouver. We took the available accommodations as a step in the process of highlighting the crisis of affordable decent housing. Developers are buying up older rentable homes & tearing up neighborhoods displacing people so that Condominiums & high priced apts. destroy our cents of community. This gentrification/profit motivation is the cause of bldg. that are bored up & left unusable while homelessness & skyrocketing rents send us deeper into poverty. Piss on those land pimps, eh! No respect or excuse for the mentality of exploiters. So we empowered ourselves and took possession of empty houses before they were greedily destroyed by "development". We lived in community together, not as six separate unrelating dwellings. This sense of unity was what nourished & sustained our ability to survive the pressure to oust us from our home along with (the direct) support of the East End (Van.) community and other parts of town. We are a family/tribe of friends and new political comrades. Sisters & brothers all, we have a wide variety of backgrounds & experience. This strength was reinforced and clarified in political discussion & endless struggle, sometimes with agreement to disagree. The decision to create a wimmin only house/space named Bushwomn, both facilitated and defined the conversations & consciousness of men's sexism. Our practice of communal living included sharing the joys and work of child care, food gathering (free when ever possible- dumpsters) & cooking, non-nutric house cleaning (sanitation) & space sharing (our homes), political outreach/organizing(?), creating music - to make lovely revolution by: the issues of class and racism were also very topical & ongoing. But Direct Actions speak louder than words & that we stand proud of too - the encampment on the lawn of the Van. Art Gallery in the middle of downtown - in support of the Oka Warriors and all land claims based on (the) Sovereignty of Native Peoples (everywhere). Linked together thru struggle for justice and peace, the truth of the attack's bear witness to the context that intimidation thru repression will not stop progressive movements from demanding & getting free from the many forms of oppression. The over kill & sick mentality is best exemplified by the (amount of) nuclear weapons stockpiled. That means police/military brutality is a given...state repression is the logical outcome of our capitalistic system that puts property and profit before the needs, concerns and generations of people. Greed motivates the rich to insure that they keep getting richer at the expense of working folks. media manipulation tellin us were prepared to go to war ...to die for Mr. George (& he don't even like broccoli even tho it's green) and the imbalance of power in that oily part of the world where white makes right. Kops at home think they too are at war/haven't scene nothin yet; could be closer than we think! hope we win-stop them from killing mother earth- or die trying. sos it's two weaks latter & the U.S. of Amerikkka has begun THE war...what do we do as the world burns; cry in belief that they have totally lost what ever small amount of humanness they may have had? if they can't have it their way will they destroy us: resist their crazyness, get MAD-get even, don't let anything in the way of freedom. be responsible for Actions. Join together with like minded people and express rage towards gov't insanity. love life more than money, power or material things. personal & social liberation from the thought police is the begining of the movement away from there total control. believe what you feel ( to be true) not what you told. become what you want. don't listen to THEM. trust your desires. be real, get clear (headed) don't give in to their bulshit &

lles. LIVE life and love people. venceremos! Fight to survive. Resist the death machine culture. there is no other way. it's them or us.



Housing Is a RIGHT!

SQUATTERS ALL



Ready to start



IT THE...  
 OF  
 it not RENT.  
 re few and simple.

ought we actually had guns  
 but instead we yell  
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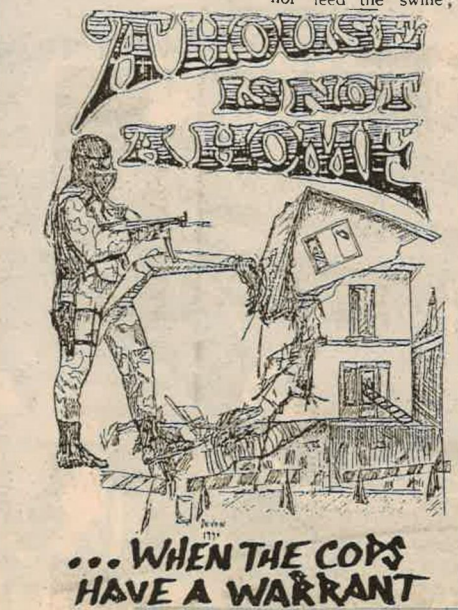
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me on out and say  
 t's stop the overkill  
 the overfed today.

**DANCE OF VANCOUVER EAST**



**Will Vancouver make property rights more important than human rights?**



Dear Steve-n-Cathy-n-Francis  
 Sorry I haven't called recently but I have been very busy of late and of course you know me for keeping in touch. Your probably not getting the real story about the squats in your news so I will fill you in; 25th of nov., Police have told us to get out or they will evict us [AGAIN] this time they say they have gone through the courts and have legal backing, so that morning, barricades go up in the street, sealing off half of our block and lighting small camp fires in the street.  
 The police come at around 4pm, chief of pigs; bob cooper and a small team of cops who where all smiles. They said they couldn't get the legal crap they needed to boot us so if we took down the wall of furniture no further action would be taken that weekend, A VICTORY.

On monday the barricades went back up with more consiteration for the neighbors and for others involved to a lesser extent I.E. closing in three of the houses and having both, inside and outside defences, What where these defences; soggy doughnuts water balloons, and rocks with concenses to use them only on cars and equipment.  
 AND THEN CAME TUESDAY.....

At about 8am a police helicopter began to circle over head The police say they have information that we have stockpiled firearms including 2 shotguns and at least 3 handguns inside the houses , this , of course this was totally false. Soon afterward, city dumptrucks in military fashion sealed off all the streets, busloads of cops were brought in, including 80 regular police officers, and atleast 30 SWAT-team hit men. These men brought with them large amounts of high caliber weapons, including machineguns, teargas, sniper rifles, and other assorted riot control gear. Nobody threw anything. Nobody said anything. As far as I'm concerned that was the right thing to do. No sense in getting killed, better to live to fight another day.

At noon, the police told us we had 10 minutes to vacate the houses. However, by four o'clock, nobody had moved, ANOTHER VICTORY. By five, four of the squatters had gone inside a barricaded house, and the rest were preparing for the worst. When the police finally moved in, they used a backhoe, pointed machineguns, and riot gear to confront the ten or so unarmed squatters outside the barricade. In the meantime, anyone who looked vaguely suspicious was arrested and a crowd was mounting, you can imagine their reaction to a hundred screaming people.

After the people outside the barricade were arrested, a steamshovel crashed through the barricade and all the houses, except for the barricaded one, were emptied of their squatters by means of violent arrest. At this point, I was being arrested for mooning a police officer, and roughly stuffed into a paddywagon with alot of my friends. On the way, and inside the jail, I

was beaten, kicked and punched, then thrown in solitary.  
 Back at the houses, they used heavy machinery, to smash the front and back wall off of the barricaded house. Since the squatters didn't come out, they threatened to use teargas. The squatters emerged with gasmasks and a drum.

Soon after, they were all arrested, slightly beaten, and thrown in jail overnight. NO WEAPONS WERE EVER FOUND, NO CHARGES WERE MORE SERIOUS THAN OBSTRUCTING AN OFFICER AND MISCHIEF.



**DISCONTENT**

Flap your wings.

The remainder of the houses were torn down for health reasons (a good excuse). All of us were released within 24 hours.

In the aftermath, such things were done as; invading Mayor Campbell's office, small civil demo's, and formal and informal letters of complaint to the city. Some of the support we got was amazing, some of it depressing, but all in all, I still figuer it was a victory.

So that's the story, what do you think?.. I remeber what you said about pig abuse, and I think it makes all the difference when your inside, they can't do anything worse than bruise the skin and bleed on your pride. live to fight the powers that be!  
 So I guess this means I'm a full fledged subversive now, like father like son. you've always told me the revolution is coming and the more I see the angrier I get. Somday soon I hope we can agree enough on the smaller details of change to fight together and win. [WE AGREE THAT THE SYSTEM MUST BE CRUSHED THE WAY IT STANDS, AND I'M SURE WE AGREE TO DEVIDE THE WEALTH WHEN IT COMES]

However we differ on the way we would like to see it rebuilt it seems to me that the party can and has been using basicly the same burocratic look and proress, now don't get me wrong I'm still young and learning, but as far as I'm concerned a new system must not exclude any of the people in it, including those with weird hair, strange lifestyles, and anarchists.

where does the party stand on these things? I will be sending a vidio with both news footage and inside recordings to give you a clearer picture. I was hoping mabey this could be shown to the party and other groups in your area.

Jane's fine, and was alot of help on the day of eviction generally harrasing cops and overseeing arrests.

Anyways, I did'nt call, but then again neither did you so, stay in touch, OK?  
 love TJ.



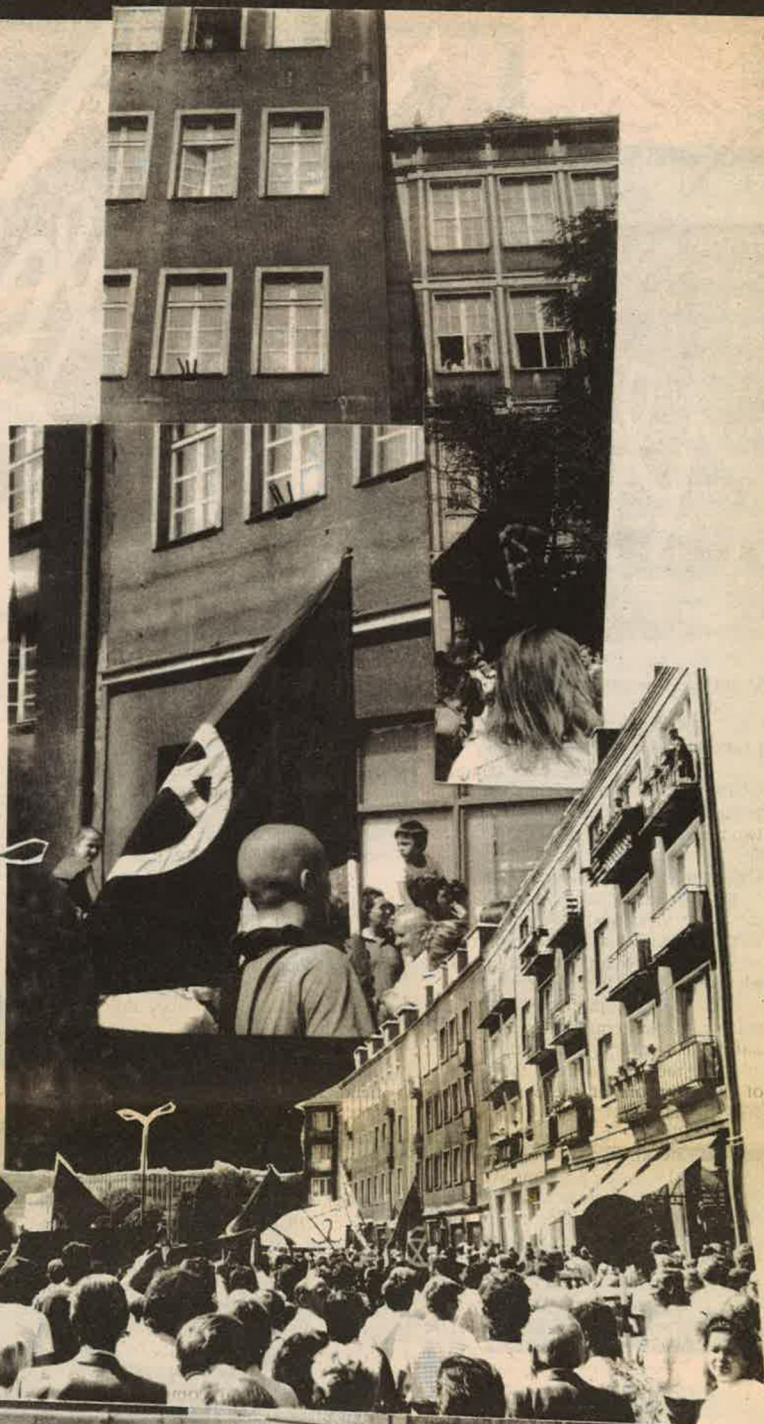
# MEANWHILE, in Poland...

An anarchist demo weaves its way through the streets of Gdansk, timing the march to coincide with churchgoers filing out of sunday mass. The rally attracts young and old alike, eager to hear new alternatives in a country still plagued with food shortages and long line-ups. The speakers called for all-out national strikes in an effort to consolidate workers' power.

The catholic church from which the sizeable masses left to join the demo, itself a political hotbed and main disseminator of Solidarnosc information, requested the demo organizers to postpone their march and first come to consult with the priest.

Nonetheless, the rally went forward as planned, gleaning a large following and attentive public.

-- Sarah Orlowski







# Theatre of the Absurds



Is nothing sacred? Picture this: a play about the Russian nihilists sponsored by Formula Shell, the unofficial sponsor of apartheid. Or a recent production of Dario Fo's *We Won't Pay*, sponsored by Xerox, the company which rendered copyright laws technologically obsolete. These are just two recent examples of what passes for agitprop theatre at Vancouver's most staid and conservative theatre, the Vancouver Playhouse. Would be radicals can vicariously experience the thrill of revolution while rubbing elbows with the wealthy theatre patrons who would be its first victims.

Is this a clever attempt at subverting the system from within, or a harmless evening of light comedy and entertainment? Perhaps the identity of the sponsors of these shows may give us some clues.

Playhouse productions are usually safe and predictable, anything from Noel Coward to Tom Stoppard. When I saw they were staging a production of *Nothing Sacred*, a loose adaptation of Turgenev's *Fathers and Sons* by George Walker, I became curious.

Turgenev was a nineteenth century Russian liberal and one-time roommate of Bakunin. *Fathers and Sons* was his attempt to come to terms with a "new" generation of Russian revolutionaries, the Nihilists.

The Nihilists combined revolutionary idealism with terrorism and a crude utilitarianism. Their sometimes uncritical faith in scientific ra-

tionalism and rejection of conventional morality was shared by other revolutionaries, including some anarchists and, later, the Bolsheviks.

Turgenev's response to the Nihilists was ambivalent. He both feared and admired them. Kropotkin felt that Turgenev's portrait of the Nihilists verged on caricature and failed to reflect fairly their idealism.

Today, in hindsight, it is easy to portray the Nihilists as the precursors of Leninism. By doing so, Turgenev's story could be transformed into a cautionary tale of revolutionary idealism gone wrong, and *Nothing Sacred* a self-congratulatory defence of liberalism (or worse).

Fortunately, Walker's retelling of the story is not that superficial. Instead, we are presented with a raucous and sometimes ridiculous portrait of a group of nineteenth century Russian revolutionaries led by Bazarov, who is at once cynical, crude and charming. There is no air of pretence with this man, although he is a bit manipulative. He involves his friends in a bomb plot and then gets himself killed in a stupid duel with an aristocratic dandy. His death scene is overdrawn and frequently hilarious, more burlesque than tragedy.

The play was billed as a "passionate social comedy." Walker himself says it is about cultural identity. Yet Russian aristocracy thought it was French, and ultimately suffered the same fate as its French counterparts. There is supposed to be some sort of parallel here between Canadians and Americans, but if there is, it is pretty weak. If the Canadian aristocracy suffers the same fate as the Americans, we don't have much to look forward to.

Maybe that is Walker's real message. He has seen the future south of the border, and it makes us work (for less). That the play was sponsored by Formula Shell would no longer be ironic, but very appropriate, the corporation triumphant patron of the arts in a new era of technological feudalism. The new aristocracy can rest easy, the revolutionaries are as pathetic as ever.

Talking to me after the show, one of the actors expressed doubts about the viability of an anarchist society. How could we survive without some sort of authority and rules? Without rules, we wouldn't even be able to express ourselves in ordinary language. All opponents of the status quo would thereby reduced to silence - speaking would be a counter-revolutionary act (move over John Zerzan).

Maybe he had a point. The symbols this culture uses to define itself and others are as persuasive as to

make it almost impossible to conceive of an alternate reality. Whew! That's pretty heavy stuff. Maybe I should go back to watching Rocky and Bullwinkle.

Consider Dario Fo's *We Won't Pay, We Won't Pay*. Fo, an Italian "autonomist" (anarchist Marxists who don't want to admit it), wrote this play to support and encourage the "selfreduction" movement in Italy.

In the 1970's, the working poor in Italy, particularly women, began taking direct action against high prices by looting store shelves. Predictably, their behaviour was condemned by the orthodox left, including the Communist Party which, it was patiently explained to us at the beginning of the play, is more social democratic than revolutionary (surprise).

Fo's play has been staged several times in Vancouver by "alternative" theatre groups, but never before by a theatre like the Playhouse. The first Vancouver production was staged in the early 1980's, during a recession.

The group producing the play, anxious to establish its revolutionary credentials, sent a copy of the script to *Open Road* and invited our participation. We responded with a leaflet advocating "selfreduction" in Vancouver, which we distributed to theatre-goers, much to everyone's embarrassment, except our own. The group staging the play was so disturbed by this that they rewrote the ending of the play after the opening night. Fo's stirring calls for an all out insurrection were transformed into a muted plea for electoral reform, and we were accused by the director of laughing only at anarchist jokes.

Well, they didn't rewrite the ending for the Playhouse production, but they didn't need to. What was topical agitprop theatre several years ago had become an exercise in radical nostalgia, a forlorn, and politically irrelevant, yearning for a revolution which never came, and, as if to emphasize the irrelevance, an Italian revolution. Absolutely no effort was made to relate the events portrayed in the play to contemporary events here in Vancouver. The actors even spoke in fake Italian accents.

For those unsympathetic to the ideals expressed in the play, it merely confirmed cultural stereotypes about those "crazy" Italians. The grand finale, a revolution in the streets, was unbelievable and completely out of place. No more bosses! No more property! No more Playhouse Theatre! The transformation of living theatre into a theatrical spectacle a museum piece.

This was theatre not only as entertainment, but as commodity, the theatrical equivalent of microwave cooking (Italian style). It simply did not speak to the reality of the audience's lives. The cast tried to bridge this gap by getting people in the audience to help pass along sacks of "expropriated" flour, the closest these people will ever come to taking direct action, but they looked more embarrassed than involved or inspired.

In these circumstances, the play came across as an Italian version of *I Love Lucy*, complete with fake pregnancies and hysterical shouting. "Just wait till Lcky gets home! What antics have the girls got mixed up in this time? Boy, is he going to be mad



when he finds out. Stealing groceries! It's all so outrageous."

Imagine the Playhouse staging a play, not about Italian women stealing to make ends meet, or long dead Russians, but more wealthy people with more disposable income than they know what to do with, who consume more than entire nations of poor people and then get to laugh at them at their local theatre's latest "farce", and who attend trendy black-tie dinners to save the Brazilian rain forests after having made a fortune destroying their own and the lives of the of the forests' original inhabitants. That's the sort of farce Fo would be staging if he was in Canada, but it wouldn't be at the Playhouse. That would be a little too close to home.

-- Bob Graham



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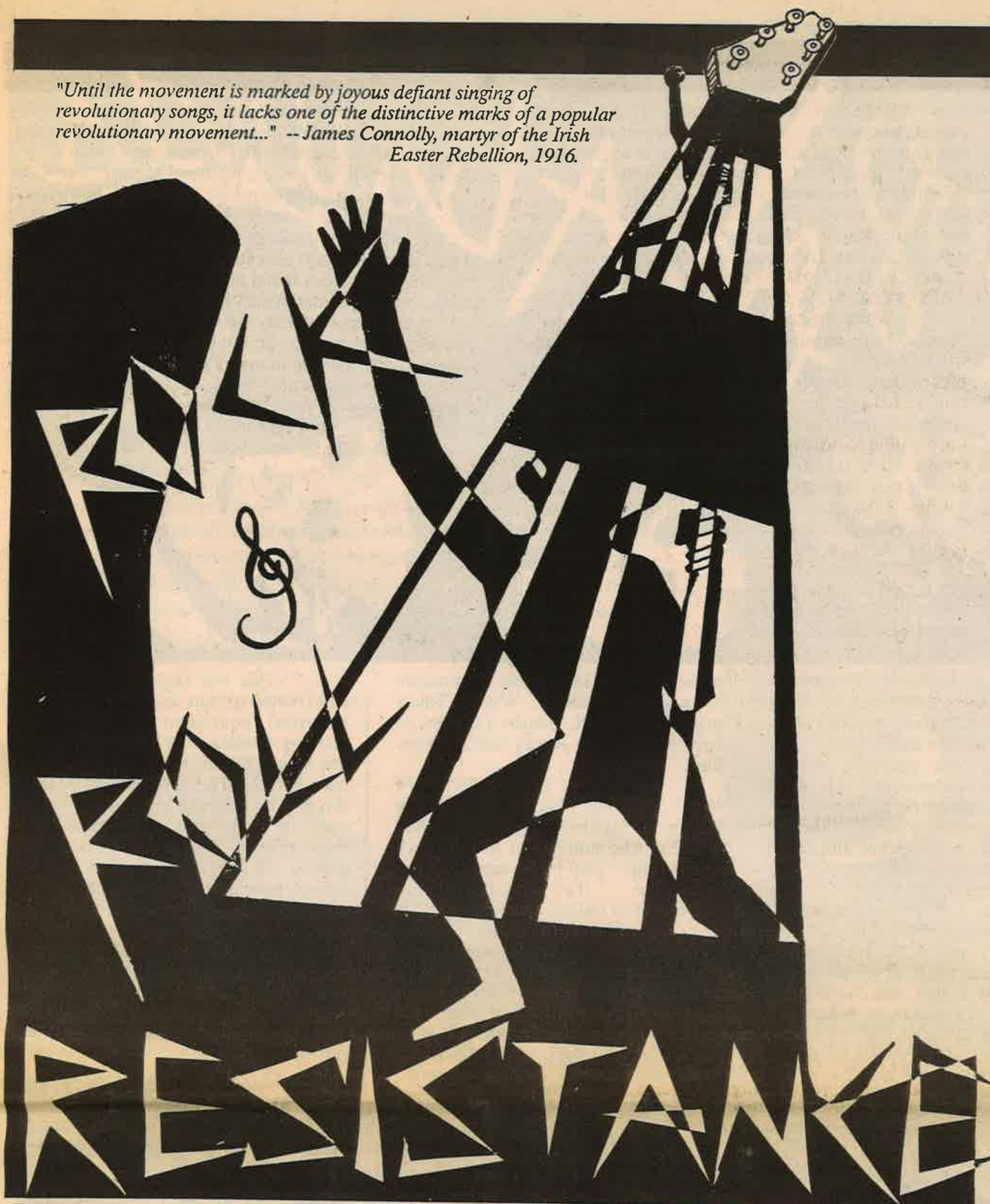
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"Until the movement is marked by joyous defiant singing of revolutionary songs, it lacks one of the distinctive marks of a popular revolutionary movement..." -- James Connolly, martyr of the Irish Easter Rebellion, 1916.



The suggestion that Rock & Roll (R&R) might be a cornerstone of any serious revolutionary activity in the coming decade may be bizarre to anti-authoritarian/anarchist (A/A) thinkers. However, it is difficult to ignore, and is important to recognize for anyone interested in developing and sustaining a viable A/A revolutionary movement in the 90s.

It is no coincidence that most of the European and North American mass social protests and humanitarian movements of the past twenty years have relied on R&R and the broad cultural scene surrounding it as a rallying point. Mainstream R&R artist/activists have organized such varied events as Band Aid, Farm Aid, the Amnesty International Tours, the campaigns to Save the Amazon Rainforest, End Apartheid, as well as being the mainstay of the traditional anti-war and civil rights causes.

Since the new era of R&R activism began in the late 70s with the Anti-Nazi Rock Against Racism (RAR) campaigns in the United Kingdom, the list of events is virtually endless.

The R&R fight against racism continues. In April 1990, 72,000 people jammed Britain's Wembley Stadium for a rock concert celebrating Nelson Mandela's release from 27 years in South African prisons. Over a billion people, in 60 countries, heard Mandela present his first official message to the world by telecommunications technology that was not even invented when he first entered prison in 1963. Only R&R could have provided Mandela and the anti-apartheid cause with such an incredible platform and huge audience for his uncensored message.

In the 90s, it can be argued that R&R, and in particular, the alternative, independent music scene, is the last substantial barrier to total corporate control over popular culture. It's currently the only popular source of radical anti-establishment criticism and opinion, not subject to control of established authorities. Blank cassette tapes and duplicating decks have made R&R available to anyone with a tapeplayer.

Prior to RAR, only the occasional, one-off events, like the Concert for Bangladesh, involved the participation of R&R personalities. Even then, that participation was usually limited to providing a drawing card. Rarely were they involved in initiating,

organizing, giving financial support, or determining the content or direction of political events.

These developments are important since it is only by gaining access to the general public in the arena of popular culture that new and/or radical social ideas may have any hope of presenting a clear alternative to the existing status quo. The A/A opposition can only hope to have an effect if it can mobilize creativity -- art, music, any cultural activity -- into the service and defence of the Earth and Freedom!

#### Culture under attack

In an era in which the creation of popular culture is almost completely dominated by television, R&R has survived as the only means of mass communication capable of expressing an alternative perspective toward the dominant status quo.

The disintegration of the 60s counter-culture saw much of the cultural territory liberated in those years reclaimed later by the multinational corporate elite. Having seen popular culture, in particular R&R, "out of control", they quickly recognized just how important their control of it was to retain their overall management of society. They now jealously guard over the creation and control of popular culture against any encroachments, campaigning vigorously to "legislate against" and "criminalize" R&R, with the objective of censoring anything alternative, radical or revolutionary that has a possibility of being heard by the public. Any artist or activist with a chance to punch through the Happy Face fascism of consumer society becomes a target for "criminalization".

According to People for the American Way (PAW), a liberal watchdog organization, 1989/90 was the worst year on record for censorship, USA-wide. Although they document only a fraction of actual censorship, PAW reports 244 "attacks on freedom" this year, up from 172 in 1988/89.

"The censorship movement in America is flourishing," says their president, Arthur Kropp. "From novels, to TV programs, to fine art, to music, to movies, to textbooks, we are witnessing an explosion of

censorship, sparked by the match of far-right and religious-right intolerance".

In the music business, most of the recent attention has been focused on a few high profile cases, like the conviction of Two Live Crew in Florida for obscenity on their rap album, *As Nasty As They Wanna Be*, and the acquittal of Judas Priest in Reno, Nevada, for causing the suicide of two teenagers who listened to the group's 1978 album *Stained Class*. The "victory" for Judas Priest cost them and their record company CBS well over \$100,000, of which forty thousand went "to the plaintiff's attorneys to reimburse them for the cost of bringing the lawsuit".

This clearly illustrates the greatest danger of the New Right and pro-censorship forces' current two-pronged strategy: 1) to economically destroy the financial infrastructure of the independent, alternative music industry, including outspoken bands or artists that may be on or distributed by major labels; and 2) the creation of a repressive atmosphere that forces major record companies and artists to "self-censor" to avoid controversy and/or a "nuisance" lawsuit.

It was left to the punk/hardcore rock insurgency of the late 70s/early 80s to administer the creative shock treatment that resulted in a renewed public commitment by artist/activists and saw them come to embrace the causes of social change. They first reacted to the creative stagnation that had gripped the mainstream music industry and then responded to the economic stonewall that held back their new music.

The initial punk/new wave phenomenon sprouted like a juicy pimple on the smooth perfect face of the 70s Me generation. It was a profound and unexpected negation, an almost nihilist rejection of the corrupt and complacent status quo. The punks rocked the boat, making it impossible for anyone in the R&R scene to rest on their cultural laurels when confronted by a society that was in the process of committing ecological suicide!

The banner of the anarchist idea was once again embraced as uncompromising rejection of a future being offered to the young that was not worth living in. The British punks lead the initial creative rebellion and, a couple of years later, the West Coast hardcore scene, in North America, confronted and rejected the giant record companies and mega-chains stores that weren't interested in signing, promoting or handling new talent, especially if it was controversial, or worse, "political".

The new artist/activists found it necessary to employ the methods of mutual aid and cooperation to insure their cultural and economic survival outside a mainstream R&R industry that had frozen them out. They were forced by necessity, if nothing else, to become conscious activists.

By the early 80s, the economic and organizational infrastructure for a completely independent alternative music industry was fully functional and included dozens of indie record labels, several elaborate distribution networks capable of servicing the world, hundreds of autonomous retail outlets, thousands of bizarrely diverse performing artists and groups, and, a completely new concert tour circuit, including alternative booking agents, promoters and venues.

In addition, the creative explosion had given rise to an influential network of non-profit campus and alternative radio stations that are even now giving commercial programmers a run for their money.

In the face of such an elaborate, unexpected explosion of radical activity, the more conscious and active elements within the mainstream R&R scene (and other media personalities) were, by the late 70s, compelled to take some initiative in confronting pressing social issues. It became increasingly clear that they were the only dissenting voices left in modern mass media society that had access to a population base capable of being mobilized, in the form of their audience. In addition, they had access to the financial resources and media contacts and outlets necessary to organize effective protests.

The independent organization bases and mechanisms for mobilization that once enabled the civil rights and anti-war movements of the 60s to animate their constituencies had been effectively frozen out, co-opted or discredited by the mass media as early as the mid-70s. Only R&R retained the popular base and, most significantly, the moral impetus to act, embodied in the form of an extremely radical independent, alternative music scene that was influenced by A/A ideas. It was this active element within the R&R scene that, more than anything else, pushed the established mainstream R&R artists into the activism of Band Aid, Farm Aid, etc.

#### The politics of rock

Out of the energy unleashed during the initial outburst of the punk phenomenon in Britain came the Rock



Against Racism (RAR) campaign in 1978. If economic necessity forced the creation of an independent, alternative music industry in North America, necessity of a different type resulted in a new area of political activity in the UK.

RAR represented a new level of participation in social/political activity by a committed group of alternative music scene artist/activists. Confronted by ingrained British racism and the overt organizing drives of the neo-nazi National Front, a racist organization that was actively engaged in recruiting from and causing violence in the punk scene, rock'n'rollers were, for the first time since the 60s, dealing with an issue that came out of their own experience, not the latest trendy anti-nuke or anti-war march. As such, it was an issue that directly affected the punks and the other elements of Britain's extremely fragmented youth culture.

For the first time rock'n'rollers were heavily involved in defining an opposition campaign, initiating and organizing its various manifestations and determining the overall character and extent of its activities. Overall, RAR turned out to be a watershed campaign, a sustained, multi-faceted, consciousness-raising series of events -- some small, some immense -- that both brought together British youth of all colours and cultural persuasions and educated them in practical ways about the dead-ends of fascism and racism!

RAR brought together the most articulate and committed artist/activists of punk rock and those of the British reggae scene for a series of widely publicized and successful anti-nazi concerts and outdoor carnivals that effectively exposed the poverty of the National Front's racist program. Through RAR, the punks were able to exhibit their affinity for reggae's values and show that music was not only entertainment but inseparable from the social content of its lyrics. They thus opened the door to full participation by the alternative music scene in the social/political struggles of the day.

RAR was such a successful opposition movement event, it led to a flood of similar Rock Against (fill in the blank) concerts all over the world. They were events that gave tangible substance to the social content of much of the music being produced as a result of the alternative music scene. The commitment to social issues exhibited by the Rock Against... concerts also showed up the lie of the massive late 70s media barrage that tried to proclaim the definitive death of the 60s counter-cultural values and, along with them, the commitment of youth to fighting social injustice.

#### The war against consciousness

It is clearly by no accident or quirk of history that R&R still finds itself under sustained attack by the established authorities. Even with their ownership and control of society's omnipresent mass media, the multinational corporate elite still fear even the weakest of opposition voices and any criticism at all contained in R&R.

Like so many established authorities before them, contemporary anti-R&R and pro-censorship forces feel threatened, fearing that R&R contains a challenge to the existing social order and authority that is mysteriously hidden within the musical genre itself, invisible to adults and irresistible to the victimized younger generation.

As we have seen, the objectives of the New Right and pro-censorship forces are far more serious than the repression of a few "obscene" artists. They are out to destroy the entire alternative music industry and any other form of viable resistance culture!

The chilling effect of their work is evident in the recent decision by Geffen Records to "withdraw" the first major label release by the rap bad Geto Boys from distribution because it might cause controversy! This is particularly disturbing because, among the major labels, Geffen has been considered one of the "fighters" in the anti-censorship struggle. Only three months earlier, label head David Geffen had said: "It would be a terrible thing if (the record labels) all conspired to keep controversial artists from making records because we disagreed with what they have to say. That would be terrible".

The response of other major labels has been nothing short of repulsive. The mega-label WEA recently informed the heads of their component companies that they "must screen lyrics before artists enter the studio" citing the reluctance of retailers to carry albums with "lyric-content warning stickers". Equally disgusting, RCA president Bob Buziak asked one band to remove the word "motherfucker" from an old blues song they were recording. The band dropped the song from their album rather than change the traditional lyrics. Buziak had previously said, "I'm not for censorship".

Right now, almost 35 states in the USA are currently considering legislation that would make it a felony to not put the following label on appropriate records: "WARNING: May contain explicit lyrics descriptive of or advocating one or more of the following: nudity, satanism, suicide, sodomy, incest, bestiality, sadomasochism, adultery, murder, morbid violence, or any deviate sexual conduct in a violent context, or the illegal use of drugs or alcohol. PARENTAL ADVISORY".

While the censorship legislation being proposed will certainly fail to stand up in US courts, it will still serve its purpose. "Labelled" or "rated" records have already had their sales restricted or removed altogether from mainstream record store chains. Major labels are screening their artists' lyrics for possible "controversy" citing the reluctance of retailers to carry albums with warning stickers. Worst of all, recording artists and lyric writers themselves are starting down the dead-end of self-censorship, rather than have controversial new material rejected and their livelihoods extinguished.

Beyond the limitations imposed on the expression of ideas and images, the practice of labelling records is only one manifestation of the real objective -- the whole campaign ultimately is aimed at putting into place a regulating mechanism by which the potentially radical and/or critical artist can be excluded from access to the mainstream popular culture. We see the current repression breaking the financial infrastructure of the alternative music industry and in particular, its independent distribution system.

Once the labelling and rating, whether legislated or "voluntarily" adopted, has successfully isolated offending material from being displayed or distributed en masse, it will then be possible to single out the alternative "specialty" stores for concerted and sustained attack. These stores which are essential to the survival of any real resistance culture will first be harassed, even picketed, and then dragged into the courts where they will be subjected to lengthy and expensive litigation, forced to defend their "right" to sell "offensive" material.

Until recently, the pro-censorship forces have cleverly avoided drawing the major record chain stores or labels into a legal battle. They show their true colours by restricting their legal offensives to independent stores and alternative artists because they realize the majors have financial resources to turn the tables on their financial strategy. The major record companies and retailers have already established a "war chest" of \$1,000,000 to defend themselves against such attacks.

In the widely-publicized case of the Dead Kennedy's *Frankenchrist*, the album was alleged to be obscene because a provocative poster, by the Academy Award-winning artist HR Giger, was included as part of the album's thematic packaging. Jello Biafra, the DK's lead singer and owner of Alternative Tentacles, the independent label that released the album, was also charged with distributing "material harmful to minors". Also charged was Mordam Records, a distribution company that specializes in music with progressive political content.

In the end, the showcase prosecution ended in defeat for the pro-censorship forces. The jury deadlocked 7-5 in favour of the artwork. However, the victory did not come cheap, nor without casualties. The trial cost Alternative Tentacles over \$85,000, and untold hundreds of hours in diverted energy. It seriously eroded the company's ambitious program of new releases and their development of controversial artists for the duration of the financial recovery period.

#### Resistance culture needed

In the face of the current New Right pro-censorship offensive, it is essential that activists and radicals of all persuasions take a more active role in the defence of R&R and, in particular, the independent alternative music industry.

For their part, A/A revolutionaries can encourage the creation of an even wider resistance culture from which it will be possible to eventually conduct a protracted cultural struggle, a guerrilla war, against the status quo, no matter how repressive conditions may get! It is only by actively contributing alternative solutions as popular struggles develop and by defending/building an independent, alternative culture of resistance that there can be any hope of having an A/A presence felt over the next few years.

R&R artists, in recent years, have demonstrated a militant willingness to musically and socially confront the emerging nightmares that threaten to usher in a new Dark Ages. Collectively, they are using music and art as active catalysts for social change. It is no longer enough for culture creators to merely make comment and reflect on the

desperate condition of our ecological and social reality without actively participating in putting an end to the "unrealities" of our tabloid TV mass media world.

The R&R scene, in general, demonstrates the important role that cultural activities of all types can play if and when they become active vehicles for social transformation and participants in the development of a new popular culture for the 90s -- the beginnings of a resistance culture, a social matrix within which the weak and fragmented forces of opposition can begin to pull themselves together, reforming and reweaving the complex fabric of real community that has been decimated by the dominant society -- *a regenerating cultural environment that dresses and heals the wounds our spirits have collected in the ongoing battle against disempowerment and oppression.*

A conscious development of resistance culture would nurture the skills, values and ethics that will be required to reinvigorate both individual hope and collective action. Such a vibrant resistance culture will be a necessary requirement if we are to survive a protracted cultural war against the overwhelming resources of the multinational corporate elite that currently dominates society.

#### The seeds of resistance

Although it is currently engaged in a survive-or-die battle, there is much to be learned from the formation and brief history of the independent alternative R&R scene and industry. Most important, in terms of developing a resistance culture, is always remembering that the existing "underground" scene did not just "happen" on its own. It grew out of and in response to concrete social realities and was consciously created, just as any future resistance culture will grow.

With the demise of the 60s counter-culture and its brief but influential hegemony over popular culture, there was a rapid and much publicized depoliticization of mainstream popular culture in the 70s. This phenomena is still reflected in the bland content of the R&R being produced, promoted, and allowed air time. Just as the rebellious R&R of the 50s had been consciously denatured or silenced, the outlaw topical music of the 60s was shutdown or systematically co-opted and brought into the service of the status quo.

By the early 70s, conservative corporate interests consolidated their control over the recording industry, its distribution systems and almost all major radio and television stations.

Even FM radio stations which had been born in the counter-culture found the freeform, anything-goes format strictly programmed to the dictates of the major record companies and the wealthy conservative station owners. A period of creative degeneration was imposed on the music industry, while glitzy non-political disco dominated the airwaves and Saturday Night Fever lifestyles symbolized the cultural self-absorption of the Me generation and its optimistic yuppie persona.

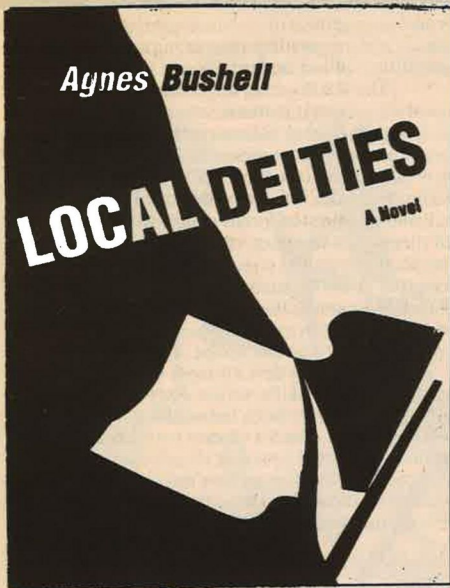
The heyday of the hippie psychedelic shop and eclectic, co-op record store/hang-out was ploughed under as New Age entrepreneurs and business school grads opened chains of record stores, each with more efficient ways to sell the same Top 100. Just as single-crop and mechanized agricultural methods had ecologically exhausted and destroyed once fertile areas, the R&R industry was turned into a creative desert by the mid-70s.

What they cannot accomplish through the front door the pro-censorship forces manage to pull off through the back. Although responding to the enemy's phony legal attacks is not most people's ideas of creative political activity it is important that everyone get involved in this struggle to preserve freedom of expression, even if they can only contribute to defence funds -- an act of resistance that directly undercuts the New Right's attempts to destroy the independent alternative music industry.

R&R will never die if we ensure its survival as a vital mode of revolutionary communication. Let's not find out what we had, when it's gone. The *No More Censorship Defence Fund* can be contacted c/o PO Box 11458, San Francisco, CA, 94101. Ask for their Fact Sheets on this issue. Ken Lester will be publishing his first book of poems, *riots, SEX, BOMBS, depressions & Everyday Nightmares*, which will include an extended essay on *Rock & Roll & Resistance Culture: The Regeneration of the Anti-Authoritarian Revolutionary Project*. For info, write c/o E.Motion Films, 1947 E. 22nd, Vancouver, BC, V5N 2R2.

-- Ken Lester





exclusive interest, a single thought, a single passion -- the revolution".

Luxemburg, the social -- as well as political -- revolutionary, wants more out of life than a constant round of meetings. Maybe a little apartment of her own, even a baby. In a letter to a her lover, she pleads with him to get more personal. "Wherever I turn, there's only one thing. The Cause. Even that I wouldn't mind if besides it, despite it, there was a human being behind it, a soul, an individual". (Shades of Emma Goldman: "If I can't dance, I don't want to be part of your revolution".)

*Local Deities* packages these two tendencies in the relationship between two women, Annie and Erika, long-time friends from the good old days of the Sixties, when the dope was fine and the demos were the entertainment of the week. What was it like to be totally committed at a time in history when it seemed like anything was possible? Bushell captures it in fine style, comparing the New Left radicals to the early Christians:

"Erika can't get this out of her head; that they are destined for these roles, that history is replaying the same struggle over and over, that everything they do here and now reverberates throughout time, and that after all, the women and men who believed in Jesus were revolutionaries, too, had nothing to go on but their instincts, had a friend who was either brilliant or insane, a cause that was either the working out of an ancient prophesy or the highest form of sacrilege and treason, that the choice was never clear-cut, there was always doubt, the fear you could be wrong, could be following a lunatic right to the edge of the abyss. And then asked to jump."

But as the depressing Seventies ripen into the greedy Eighties, the two friends take different paths.

Annie declares total war on the system, going underground with her partner to start bombing things. Their activities are loosely based on a marxist group variously called the Ohio Seven, the United Freedom Front and the Sam Melville-Johnson Jackson Unit, which grew out of the prison movement. In real life, most of the members of the group are now serving long sentences for seditious conspiracy under the Reagan era's all-encompassing racketeering frameup (see *Open Road* #20 and 24, and *Resistance* #7, 8, 9, and 10).

Meanwhile, Erika has a nice house in a New England town, a burn-out of a husband, a couple of kids and a career as an artist. She has forsaken the

"voluntary poverty" of her younger days because it's too hard on the kids. Sure, she still believes in the revolution, but the day-to-day slog has a way of dampening enthusiasm. She goes to the odd Central America demo, but really, she spends more time and energy in her secret affair with the young guy from the corner bar.

Every novel has a plot twist, and *Local Deities* is no exception: Annie's husband gets busted, and the two women's lives are joined again. Now they have to come to terms with the life choices they have made. There is a trial to be fought: should it be all thrilling political speeches -- leading to certain martyrdom and burial in the Man's dungeon; or smart legal manoeuvring, offering a hope of acquittal? There are Annie's three kids to take care of: should they become Movement orphans, schooled in the legend of their parents (the "local deities"), or should Erika try to give them a "normal" life in Yuppie Acres?

All of this rings absolutely true to anyone who has been wondering where all the flowers have gone. *Local Deities* is no glossed-over Thirty-something fantasy. Yes, it's a political tract and a cautionary tale, but it's also a real page-turner of a novel, with a bang-up ending. The characters are recognizable from real life. They are treated sympathetically, but their warts are not airbrushed out. Being underground is not all glamour; doing your own thing aboveground can leave you feeling restless and unfulfilled.

Bushell writes from inside the scene. She was a New Lifter and close friend with the people who went underground. When they got scooped, she was involved with their legal defence. (Her husband was the lawyer on the case before William Kunstler got involved.) Now she's an artist, and is working on a new novel about a North American fighting with the guerrillas in Central America.

The first printing of *Local Deities* is already sold out. But that's only 3500 copies. The book is now in its second printing and deserves far wider exposure. Curbstone Press, the publisher, is a small outfit that specializes in works about Central America. Ask your local bookstore to order it.

-- Ben E. Noir



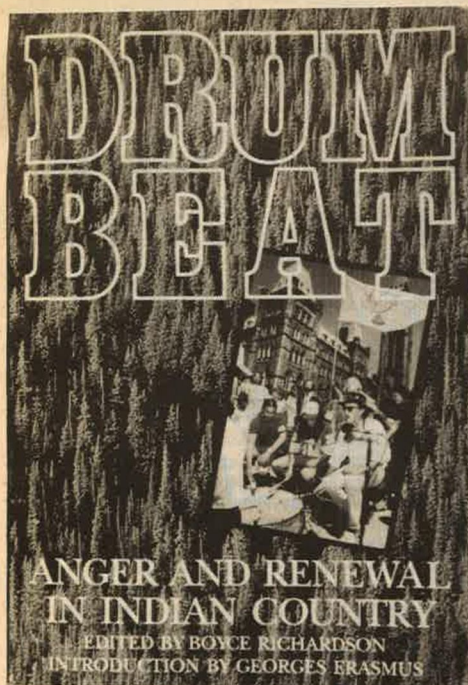
*Local Deities*, by Agnes Bushell, Curbstone Press, 321 Jackson Street, Willimantic, CT, 06226, USA.

Any novel that starts off with dueling quotations by Bakunin and Rosa Luxemburg has got to be serious. You know, full of important ideas about the struggle and how to wage it.

*Local Deities*, by Agnes Bushell, is indeed a very serious novel. Its theme is nothing less than how politically-conscious people in the First World should lead their lives, especially in times -- like ours -- when the revolutionary movement is at a low ebb.

Serious though it is, *Deities* is not heavy or leaden. It's a lively and knowledgeable read through the secret universe of clandestine direct action groups (what kind of handgun fits best in a purse?), and through the above-ground radical movement (does an "open" marriage bring liberation or anxiety?)

The opening quotes pose the dilemma. Bakunin, the neurotic male ideologue, insists the revolutionary "has no interests of his own, no cause of his own, no feelings, no habits, no belongings, not even a name. Everything in his life is absorbed by a single,



what did we do? We welcomed you. STUPID MISTAKE."

Well, we think so too. Given the ongoing acts of degradation, disrespect and dishonesty (light words for two centuries of genocide) put upon native people by their "guests", is it any wonder Bill Wilson would attempt to shatter some peoples' fairytale view of white justice for Indian peoples and get the wheels of communication rolling. All attempts so far have fallen on mute ears.

Certainly not all first people will agree with Wilson's remarks, as was evident by the response of some who attended the conference, but then again, if they applaud him, wouldn't you if you were on the treadmill of deceit, disease and destruction?

The list of examples continues to this day in spite of the first nations' willingness to find a solution.

*Drumbeat*, with an intro by George Erasmus, National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations, is a collection of the more prominent confrontations between First Nations and the political/law enforcement authorities of the dominant society. "Our people have not undertaken these extreme measures lightly. They have faced hostility from competing interests, arrest, imprisonment, and hardship. They would much rather be engaged in honest negotiations with governments than be standing for weeks and months at road blockades at great hardship to themselves and inconvenience to the public. But their patience is exhausted."

From the Innus of Ungawa's fight against "militarization of our homeland for jet bomber training by NATO airforces" to the Gitksan-Wet'suwet'en's unprecedented land claims action against the provincial and federal governments, *Drumbeat* describes in detail the making and breaking of treaties and the cultural war that the white settler governments have imposed upon the first peoples as well as the colonizer's unwillingness to settle land claims.

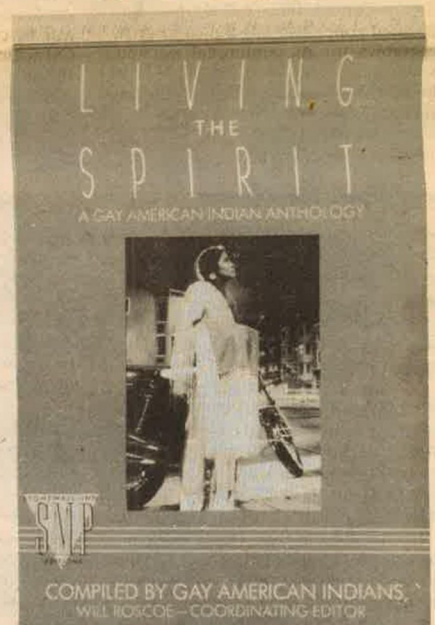
We support Bill Wilson's remarks in that he hasn't given up trying to break through the illusion that the first people are gonna be nice and assimilate.

You can get *Drumbeat* from the University of Toronto Press, 5201 Dufferin Street, Downsview, ON, M3H 5T8. Send \$15 Canadian plus postage.

When First Nations congress chairperson, Bill Wilson, spoke at a conference to discuss recent court decisions involving aboriginal rights, none of the academics, lawyers, or social (sic) servants were prepared for his forthright remarks.

If it weren't for the generosity of the Native people, the majority of Canadians would still be "homely, diseased, smelly people on boats," Wilson said in his closing address to the stupid-you've-been-filed crowd.

"You came here because you couldn't make a living and because you had nowhere else to go. And



Realizing the oppression that gay Indians must endure on a daily basis in or out of their communities, we feel as non-natives it is important for us to look at the misconceptions our forefathers laid the groundwork for, and to examine our own racism and homophobia. On the other hand, as non-Natives we don't wish to explain or pretend to speak for the native gay community. They do that just fine.

*Living The Spirit: a Gay American Indian Anthology*, with Will Roscoe as coordinating editor, reclaims a place of respect and honour for gay Indians. It's a wonderful collection. Individual poems, at times erotic or personally inspiring, but honest and to-the-point. Historical accounts of traditional gay practices juxtaposed by the nullifying effects of european voyageurs and homophobic missionaries. Entertaining and insightful myths and tales. Present-day accounts of coming out and celebrations by present day native gays from every corner of their Indian nations.

It's well worth the read. You can get it from St. Martins Press, 175 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY, 10010. It's \$10 (US); send a couple more bucks for postage and handling.



# ON THE ROAD

After fourteen years the Open Road will cease to exist for the (un)forseeable future. The collective has gone through many changes and has involved scores of people. At various times, from a high of a dozen to a low of two, and now we are three. The collective has consisted of a disparate group of people, covering all facets of the anarcho-movement. This has helped in keeping the "correct line" out of the paper and actually making it what someone once called the "Rolling Stone of Anarchism".

For the most part the paper has been fun to put out and we believed it was relevant to the anarchist movement. We no longer see the paper as useful. Not to mention that we haven't come up with too many original articles or fresh ideas in (your guess) years/days?...which renders us rather redundant.

When we first came out in 1976, there were few anarchist papers in the English language. There are now dozens of enthusiastic people, and we'll leave the stage to them. For now, we have no enthusiasm left for this paper, and putting out the Open Road has turned into one big chore. There is much work to do in the community and that is where we will put our energies.

We still need money to pay for this issue and any monies left -- ha ha -- will be given to the native legal fund (which isn't a laughing matter). Also, we'll still be here at this box # to answer mail and would appreciate continuing to receive english-language papers for our ongoing political work. The papers we have received since our last issue have been used by a local anarchist radio show project, other anarchist publishing projects, and for some prison work. If you are in prison, and want to keep communicating with us, please write. Also, we will fill orders for back issues of the paper, and would like to hear from our distributors (preferably with cash!)

This is not to say that the Open Road will not publish again (with a whole new collective), but time will answer that. Thanks for all your support in the past and we're sorry if you sent money for a new sub which cannot be fulfilled or refunded (we ain't a mail order catalogue). If you write us, maybe we can send you some back issues to make up the difference. It's worth a try. And we're even more sorry if you miss us. Bye.



One acre of the Gardens is given over to individual plots -- about 200 in all. There are many collective plots, too, including sections devoted to the local daycare, women's centres, and raised beds for the disabled. Carnegie Community Centre, the local drop-in and liberated zone, also has a plot to grow vegetables for its communal kitchen. A children's play area for all kids in the neighbourhood has been operating since Day One.

A second acre is being developed as a herb garden and orchard.

The orchard will have 100 "heritage" apple trees -- descendants of century-old European varieties. The fruit and herbs will be available to the community, once an equitable distribution system can be established.

Nearby is the community composting area. Naturally, composting goes on at each plot, but the gardeners want to get into it in a big way by collecting kitchen wastes from Carnegie Centre and other local institutions. City Hall has already approved a large-scale labour-intensive plan, pending that the gardeners come up with a way to keep it rat- and smell-free.

About a third of the site is being kept in its "natural" state of bushes and wildgrasses. A low spot in the centre of this wild shelterbelt is maintained as a marsh year-round by being connected to the garden drainage system.

A whole range of wild blackberry brambles have been a delight for local gatherers for years. The bushes have traditionally sheltered people. Numbers vary, but in summer, up to 30 people inhabit everything from bedrolls to elaborate tarps and plastic structures. Some of them actively choose the outdoor life; others, through force of circumstance, feel they have no alternative.

The gardeners respect the right of the squatters to be there; after all, the squatters were there first. Still, goodwill is required on both sides. Gardeners get uptight when their hard-earned crop is expropriated by a neighbour -- even a hungry one -- just when it's at its ripest. The increased agricultural activity on the site is definitely putting a squeeze on the inhabited areas. For that, there is no easy answer.

Ironically, there is a certain bloc (now a minority) on City Council that looks at the gardeners themselves as squatters. They simply can't see why a group of citizens, allegedly representing no one but themselves, should have free access to public property, when the land could be turned into something useful, like a soccer field, or beautiful well-manicured park lawn.

Two hundred miles north of the Strathcona Community Gardens, in a vast and sparsely-populated region called the Cariboo, is an agricultural enterprise on an entirely different scale.

The Community Enhancement and Economic Development Society (CEEDS), runs four organic farms of over 100 acres each as well as gardens on two Indian reserves, all on

a strictly communal basis. Vegetable gardening, the raising of livestock - it's all done organically. The wealth produced (not much above a subsistence level) is shared equally.

The Cariboo is cattle country with a definite redneck element. But the "hippies" (as they're known) from CEEDS have developed a mutually respectful relationship with their neighbors the past 15 years, sharing a love of the land and a long time commitment to farming. Even CEEDS' organic methods are starting to take root.

In early 1989, CEEDS members began an exchange of visits with the Strathcona/Downtown Eastside community. Since then, about 20 city people have gone to help milk the cows, bale the hay and weed the cabbages. Some stayed for as long as three months. The Downtown Eastside Poets, a group of street artists, also visited CEEDS twice to take part in farm-style cultural exchanges.

CEEDS members see themselves as conscious revolutionaries, using a Marxist vocabulary to explain why they are building a rural food-producing base. But their day-to-day practice is consensual and egalitarian, so they get along fine with the less "political" types from the city.

It's a process of cross-fertilization. The farm and its rigorous lifestyle can be a welcome escape valve when the pressures of city life and the welfare cycle get too intense. And then again, the city provides a needed reality check for isolated back-to-the-landers. For both sides, it's a way to contribute to the greening of society.

For more information on the Strathcona Community Gardens, write them at 601 Keefer Street, Vancouver, BC, V6A 3V8. CEEDS welcomes visitors and new members. To inquire, write c/o Box 8 Miocene, via Williams Lake, BC, V2G 2P3. For info on the Green Cities Movement, contact Planet Drum Foundation, Box 31251, San Francisco, CA, USA 94131.

## LETTERS

Glad to see that you're still rolling along... "Call of the wild"? Hmmm, yes well, I can only hope you realize that what you profess to desire is just beyond the echo of those words, in practice, indeed (as in, "...ganda of the deed") to be exercised. Presently, the situation is such that there are considerations which have little to do with the doing-done (eg: *This ain't no party, this ain't no disco*). But then did you expect an apology or some sort of reconciliation? Well, you see (as in, *Oh say, can you see?*) the matter comes down to a very basic and ancient principle...namely in answer to the question as to whether or not one is worthy of real freedom...

Relative, you might say. But think again -- though try as you might it cannot be had both ways, and the truth (principle which will not submit to mere rationalization) be known, you who would know the essence of this call must choose one or another (ie: the confusion of not exercising meaningful choice). Nonetheless, or rather, evertheless, you -- the survivors -- will eventually choose... what choice exists...

Indeed, some more than a few have little or no choice.

Eventually, you who have not merely talked yourselves to death (or into situations from which one cannot merely talk or walk), must choose those alternatives which will amount to something more than fashionable or symbolic resistance -- as enough choose to pay the ultimate respect for life -- otherwise, full of sound and fury -- but signifying nothing, you will merely exist until it is your turn as the latest extinct "endangered species". If you don't evolve your turn will come soon enough, sooner than later. The fact is, that many have only dying left...

Nevertheless, I'm pleased to see that you continue to use the R-word...even though I personally don't much care for the traditional logic of moving in circles (but really, going nowhere) or worse, moving a step forward only to retreat several steps back...

The question remains: at what point does too much become enough to motivate an endangered species to action...and conscientious

inactivity or abstinence?

Are we to suppose that a predatory mentality will voluntarily relinquish control via corrupt authority or embrace a conscientiousness which is less ego/ethno-centric and destructive? But of course the present order exemplifies respect for its behaviour (you know, rape and pillage of the earth, genocide, specicide, ecocide, and policide of its own kind) by being more conservative and concerned for their demographics. "Oh this here people farm..." That you may be tax-paying citizens of the various countries can mean that the matter of choosing has not yet become so vitally important as to cause one to realize the addiction and relationship -- that it is not so much a matter of what to do as it is a crucial matter of doing no longer, so that the real issues become critical and implode.

In any case, do keep uppermost in mind that mere reportage is not sufficient for any qualitative solution to the dilemma of existence in occupied countries. Indeed, you may have noticed that some nation/states have secured the mass psychology as

well -- consequently we enjoy quasi-free speech and supposed right to seek redress of grievances while the less civilized countries have no sense of humour whatsoever... right?

Be this as it appears, the real deal comes down to a rather simple matter of exercise and practice, lest life become a grotesque pet-shop rat race, punctuated by reactions which better serve crowd control techniques (like holding the head down or degrees of sexual assault) of the military industrial technology. Or you may continue to revel in those recurring reruns of outraged peasants or students, whose spontaneous episodes, and bucolic or captured weapons do little more than provide excuse/exercise for the legions of this present reich (whatever the symbol/flag or colour star) or regime. However, it should be very obvious, at this late date (later than is commonly understood), that some people are concerned for the well-being or others in proportion to the social situation and corresponding repercussions -- indeed it should come as no surprise that the disoriented

and weak are exploited.

Furthermore, do not imagine that merely "living well" is of any real consequence to the order of reactionary domination -- please recall not so distant his and herstory... Was it the mentally disoriented or criminals who were first to be interned? Later it was the underclass of "homeless" nomadic...extra-legal...aliens? Eventually, wasn't it those who would not serve in silence (eg: *The White Rose*)? True?

Well, better later (as in, later than is commonly understood) than never -- at least the only real surprise will be that the recurrence seemed all too familiar. Question is: will you realize that they who believe that "some are more equal than others" exercise this realpolitik, even now as totalitarians, and do so in the hope that, "there'll be no more turning away..."

Nevertheless, take care communicants; with love and onward,

-- Obiter Dicta

ps: Don't let them sleep so long this time, intelligentsia...





**Okay, we're leaving.** We've had enough. But we'll still be around to answer letters, fill backorders, catch up on other english-language anarchist news, and collect any cash you want to send us to pay off our debts. Write us: **Open Road**, Box 46135, Station G, Vancouver, BC, Canada, V6R 4G5.